

The Book of Joshua

Preparing for the Conquest of Canaan

First Events in the Land of Canaan

Text: Joshua 5

- I. The Fear of the Canaanites (Joshua 5:1)
 - A. Just as God had promised, and as Rahab had observed, the Canaanites greatly feared the Israelites because of the power of God.
 - B. This explains why they did not attack Israel as they prepared to take Jericho.

- II. The Circumcision of the Israelites (Joshua 5:2-9)
 - A. During their time in the wilderness, the first generation of Israelites had failed to circumcise their children born during their wandering.
 - B. Thus, before the Passover could be observed and before the conquest of Canaan could take place, all the Israelite men had to be circumcised.
 - C. From the story of Jacob's sons' attack on the family of Shechem one learns that recovery from circumcision took at least 3 days (cf. Gen. 34:24-25).
 - D. Israel crossed the Jordan on the 10th day of the month, circumcised the men on that day or the 11th day, and kept the Passover on the 14th day of the month.
 - E. It was because of this event that the place where Israel encamped became known as Gilgal - meaning, "Rolling" - for God rolled away the reproach of Israel.

- III. The Keeping of the Passover (Joshua 5:10-12)
 - A. This is the first time that the Passover has been mentioned since it was kept at Mount Sinai in the second year of the exodus (Num. 9:1-5).
 - B. Apparently, it had not been kept since then due to the sins of the first generation and their punishment from God.
 - C. On the day after Passover, they were to make a sheaf offering to God and sacrifice a lamb.
 - D. Then, and only then, could they eat corn of the land (cf. Lev. 23:5-14).
 - E. Once they had done this and eaten of the food of Canaan, God caused the miraculous provision of manna to cease.

- IV. The Appearance of the Lord (Joshua 5:13-15)
 - A. As Joshua stood near Jericho, he saw a man with a drawn sword in his hand.
 - B. Joshua approached and asked if he was on the side of Israel or Canaan.
 - C. The man replied that He was the Captain of the Lord's host.
 1. This refers to God's innumerable host of angels.
 2. Cf. Exodus 23:20-23; Gen. 18:1ff; 32:24-30; Jud. 13; Hebrews 2:10
 - D. Joshua recognized this as an appearance of God.
 - E. Thus, he fell down and worshipped Him, asking, "What saith my Lord unto His servant?" *{Note that angels do not receive worship (Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9).}*
 - F. The Lord told Joshua to remove his shoes, for he was on holy ground (cf. Exo. 3:5; Acts 7:32-33).
 - G. The purpose of the Lord's appearance was two-fold:
 1. To encourage Joshua
 2. To reveal the plan for defeating Jericho (Josh. 6).