CAPITOL COMMISSION
Gospel Hope & Spiritual Strength for Government Leaders

MOPray

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Weekly Bible Study Schedule | Tuesday, March 4, 7:00-7:45 AM | HHR #3
Capitol Commission is NON-PARTISAN and MULTI-DENOMINATIONAL

INTRODUCTION

The crossing of the Jordan symbolized a transition from wilderness wandering to covenant fulfillment. It was in Gilgal (Promised Land) that God stopped providing manna from heaven every morning.

> *And if the Lord is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey.* Numbers 14:8

Gilgal was the first place they celebrated the Passover after crossing the Jordan River (Joshua 5:10), the first place God instituted the practice of circumcision reminding the community of God's faithfulness and their responsibility to God.

HEARTS MELTED

5:1 – When all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings who lived along the Mediterranean coast heard how the LORD had dried up the Jordan River so the people of Israel could cross, they lost heart and were paralyzed with fear because of them.

The purpose for the twelve stones taken from the dry ground of the Jordan River was to be a memorial or testimony of God's mighty power to the future generations of Israel. They were to tell the story of God's presence and power in the Jordan River. Just as God was faithful to Israel, He remains faithful to you today. We have a story to tell our children, grandchildren, great grandchildren to a 1000 generations.

These stones were a permanent reminder of God's miraculous power and faithfulness demonstrating His power to other nations. Only the God of Israel has ever parted the Red Sea. Only the God of Israel has ever parted the Jordan River. It was the LORD who fought Israel's battles. He is mightier than the pantheon of gods worshipped by the Canaanites. Is it any wonder why the Canaanites lost heart, their hearts melted from fear? They lost courage, they became immobile, frozen in time. Forty years wandering in the wilderness Israel feared the Canaanites: "Giants in the Land". The tables turned in the Promised Land as the Canaanites feared the God of Israel. God was going to do through Israel what the previous generation did not do.

When you let God fight your battles no opposition can stand against you. What is your present opposition? What has you in fear? What is causing you to say: "I don't know what to do?" Surrender your situation to God, ask Him to help you, and trust that He will.

CIRCUMCISION

5:2, 7-8 – At that time the LORD told Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise this second generation of Israelites…So Joshua circumcised their sons—those who had grown up to take their fathers' places—for they had not been circumcised on the way to the Promised Land. After all the males had been circumcised, they rested in the camp until they were healed.

Circumcision involves cutting the foreskin from the male reproductive organ.

> *All must be circumcised. Your bodies will bear the mark of my everlasting covenant.* Gen. 17:13

It was a sign of the everlasting covenant between God and His people. They identified as God's chosen people. Circumcision was used by other cultures to show the emergence of adulthood. Israel is the only nation where circumcision marked the distinctiveness of Israel from the other nations. They belonged to God.

> *O people of Judah and Jerusalem, surrender your pride and power. Change your hearts before the LORD…Therefore, change your hearts and stop being stubborn.* Jer. 4:4; Deut. 10:6

One need not wait until the New Testament to recognize God cares about the heart (internal) as well as the body. The heart demonstrated inner obedience and devotion to

God. They were all in with God. With everything, they gave themselves to God.

In the New Testament, with the coming of Jesus circumcision took on a new spiritual meaning, salvation is now through faith in Jesus. Paul explains that true circumcision is a spiritual transformation of the heart, done by Christ, not by human hands.

> *When you came to Christ, you were "circumcised," but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature. For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.* Colossians 2:11-12

Instead of circumcision, baptism and faith in Christ became the marks of belonging to God's people. Religion does not change the heart, only a personal relationship with Jesus transforms what was old to new, what was dark to light, what was ritual and form to faith and love.

> *And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you…And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.* Gal. 3:27-29; Rom. 6:4

PASSOVER

5:10-12 - While the Israelites were camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, they celebrated Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month. The very next day they began to eat unleavened bread and roasted grain harvested from the land. No manna appeared on the day they first ate from the crops of the land, and it was never seen again. So from that time on the Israelites ate from the crops of Canaan.

Israel is no longer enslaved to Egypt, no longer under Pharaoh's genocidal threat of their first born, no longer wanderers, and after 39 years Israel celebrates the Passover for the first time in Gilgal (Joshua 5:9). Every day for the past 40 years God performed the miracle of bread from heaven. Daily, an abundant supply of manna fed the Israelites. Once in the Promised Land His supply was not manna from heaven rather a land promised flowing with milk and honey (Exodus 12:25). This fertile and fruitful land will produce enough food for harvest all the days of their lives.

Provision in the Promised Land looks different, here God gives gifts and skills: craftmanship, agricultural, military and strategy, leadership and wisdom, music and making of instruments, principles of engineering, economics and trade, and other innovation.

> Someone once said: *"pray like it depends on God, and work like it depends on you."*

THEOPHANY

5:13-15 – When Joshua was near the town of Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with sword in hand. Joshua went up to him and demanded, "Are you friend or foe?" "Neither one," he replied. "I am the commander of the Lord's army. At this, Joshua fell with his face to the ground in reverence. "I am at your command," Joshua said. "What do you want your servant to do?" The commander of the Lord's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did as he was told.

The commander of the Lord's army is generally understood to be a theophany, or a manifestation of God Himself. The "commander" accepts worship and speaks with authority as God Himself, and Joshua offers worship and speaks with humility: "*I am at your command*". The commander told Joshua to remove his sandals just as God instructed Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:5). Holy ground is not about geography, it is about the presence of a Holy God. Joshua acknowledged he is in the divine presence of the sovereign God of heaven and earth.

Joshua asked the wrong question: "are you friend of foe?" The commander answered, "Neither," emphasizing that the real question is not whether God is on Israel's side or the side of their enemies. God is not on the side of the isle to the right or the isle to the left. God is not bound by human categories of "us" versus "them." The issue is not God's allegiance but Israel's willingness to follow His lead. This encounter foreshadows the coming of Christ, who one day will conquer sin and death. Are you willing to follow God's leadership? I invite you to come over to God's side.

Circumcision