

Great is Thy Faithfulness

Joshua 5-6

Battle Preparations

1 Now when all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the coast heard how the LORD had dried up the Jordan before the Israelites until we had crossed over, their hearts melted and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites.

2 At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites again." 3 So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath Haaraloth. 4 Now this is why he did so: All those who came out of Egypt—all the men of military age—died in the desert on the way after leaving Egypt. 5 All the people that came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the desert during the journey from Egypt had not. 6 The Israelites had moved about in the desert forty years until all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt had died, since they had not obeyed the LORD. For the LORD had sworn to them that they would not see the land that he had solemnly promised their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. 7 So he raised up their sons in their place, and these were the ones Joshua circumcised. They were still uncircumcised because they had not been circumcised on the way. 8 And after the whole nation had been circumcised, they remained where they were in camp until they were healed.

9 Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." So the place has been called Gilgal to this day.

10 On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover. 11 The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. 12 The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate of the produce of Canaan.

1. What effect did the miraculous crossing of the Jordan have on the Amorite kings?
2. What did Joshua have the people do? Why was this necessary?
3. What is circumcision? This is not the most logical battle plan—wound all of the soldiers before the battle. Why might the Lord have commanded circumcision immediately before they began to take the land?
4. What feast did the Israelites celebrate after circumcision? What does it remember? Why might he have asked them to do this immediately upon entering into the Promised Land and before battle?
5. What provision of the Lord ends at this point? Why?
6. Are there times when the Lord seems to provide in extraordinary ways, and under what circumstances might he cease that provision?
7. These are the two Old Testament bloody sacraments, represented in the New Testament by bloodless sacraments. What are they and how are they related?

The Commander of the Lord's Army

13 Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"¹⁴ "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?"¹⁵ The commander of the LORD's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

8. What are some hints we have as to who this man is? What does this encounter remind you of?
9. What is the point of this encounter?
10. Why do you think the Commander responds, "Neither"?

The Battle of Jericho

1 Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. ² Then the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. ³ March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. ⁴ Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. ⁵ When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in."...

¹⁵ On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. ¹⁶ The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city! ¹⁷ The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. ¹⁸ But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. ¹⁹ All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury."

²⁰ When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city. ²¹ They devoted the city to the LORD and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.

²⁴ Then they burned the whole city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the LORD's house. ²⁵ But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day.

11. The Lord calls Israel to extreme obedience in this chapter. What about the Lord's commands in this chapter would have been difficult to obey?
12. What extreme obedience does the Lord call us to in our day? What particular commands of the Lord are difficult to obey, or seem extreme or unnecessary?