

Sunday Night Message

December 10, 2017

Joshua 5 – *Final Preparations for the Invasion of Jericho*

Series – Joshua

Text – Joshua 5

Introduction

In this passage of Scripture, we see the Israelites, now on the Jericho side of the Jordan River. They had boldly stepped out in faith and crossed over the Jordan on dry ground. Now God, through Joshua, will take care of some final preparations before the army will launch the attack against Jericho.

There are five significant events that take place in this chapter, and with each of these we can make observations as to what we need to do in order to move forward in accomplishing the will of God.

I The Consternation of the Monarchs (v. 1)

We must recognize the inability of the enemy to stand against God. The enemies within Canaan were shaking in their boots because they recognized the power of Israel's God. Rahab already assured the spies of this in Joshua 2:

"And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath." (Joshua 2:9-11)

Rahab said the people were already afraid because God dried up the Red Sea, and because they utterly defeated the kings of the Amorites. Now, in chapter five, the inhabitants of the land had more to be afraid of. God had now revealed more of His power by drying up the Jordan River.

II The Circumcision of the Men (vs. 2 – 9)

We must recognize that we are Ambassadors for the Lord and, as such, we must be completely set apart and yielded to Him.

Circumcision was a seal of the Abrahamic Covenant:

The Abrahamic Covenant that God made with Abraham included land and a nation. (Genesis 17:1 – 13)

"Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

(Genesis 12:1-3)

"And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob." (Exodus 2:24)

"And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant." (Exodus 6:4-5)

God's people broke the covenant with God when they had rejected God's promise to bring them into the land victoriously at Kadesh Barnea (Numbers 13 and 14), and while they wandered in the wilderness for forty years, they neglected the commandment to circumcise their male children, though it was clearly commanded in the Law. (Leviticus 12:3)

God wanted the Israelites to be sure that His covenant with them was still in force, but He wanted them to renew the seal of the covenant with Him.

Interestingly, Moses was also commanded to be circumcised before God would allow him to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt:

"And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision." (Exodus 4:24-26)

Circumcision was an outward sign of the fact that a person belonged to God. Circumcision should really be just the outward symbol of an inward, heart condition. In Romans, Paul said:

"For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." (Romans 2:25-29)

Paul was not stating here that circumcision was wrong, or that the Jews should no longer observe it. What he is saying, however, is that if an uncircumcised man is living a life that is yielded to God

through faith, is he not more set apart for God than the man who is circumcised in his flesh, but is in rebellion.

Dr. Paul Fedena states:

What Paul is saying is that circumcision may identify a person physically with a nation, but it cannot change the heart. That requires an inward “cutting away” of something more than mere flesh! Lawbreakers negate the symbolism of circumcision and God looks on them as His people only nationally, not spiritually.

Paul argues that the righteousness of the uncircumcised is more likely to gain God’s favor than the unrighteousness of the circumcised.

In Colossians Paul speaks of a circumcision “made w/out hands” which is superior to a fleshly circumcision.¹

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: (Colossians 2:11)

Circumcision had become a mere formality, a ritual. What was intended to be a symbol of a wonderful relationship with God had instead become a badge of superiority and pride. The Jews looked down their noses on those that were uncircumcised.

Baptism also becomes a mere formality when we just participate physically in the rite of immersion in water, without being immersed in the Spirit and will of God.

Notice this test of their faith came right after the victory of crossing the Jordan River on dry ground. God often will test our faith after a great victory. The Scottish preacher Andrew Bonar (1810–92) used to say, “Let us be as watchful after the victory as before the battle.”²

One final point to consider regarding circumcision. This move made absolutely no sense militarily. The entire army of Israel would be unable to fight for a few days until they were healed. The army of Jericho could have easily defeated this incapacitated army. Jacob’s sons were once able to destroy all of the men of Shechem while they were “sore” from their circumcision. (Genesis 34)

Notice in v. 9 – “this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off of you”. “Gilgal” means “rolled”. God had not only taken them out of Egypt, He was taking Egypt out of them. After forty years of wandering in a desert wilderness, they were finally ready to walk by faith and let God bring them into the land, His way and in His power.

III The Celebration of the Meal (v. 10)

We must never forget God’s deliverance – where we came from.

¹ Fedena, Paul Bible Studies in Romans, Lesson 11 “Are You a Jew”

² Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). Be Strong (p. 59). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The Passover meal was a remembrance of God's deliverance of the People of Israel out of Egypt. It was the night of the last of the ten plagues. The Israelites were commanded to apply blood to the doorposts of their houses, and when the death angel passed by them, seeing the blood, he would pass over their house and spare their firstborn. (Exodus 12:1 – 14) The Israelites celebrated the Passover on the eve of their leaving Egypt, and then again before they went to Kadesh Barnea. (Numbers 9:1 – 14) There is no Scriptural record of them observing the Passover since that time up until Joshua 5.

This would be the first observance of the Passover in their own land.

The Israelites were never to forget where they came from, and how they got out.

IV The Ceasing of the Manna (vs. 11 – 12)

We must recognize that God will always meet our needs as we are yielded to Him, fulfilling His will.

As they wandered in the wilderness, God provided food for the daily; but, now God was providing them a very fruitful land – a land that flowed with milk and honey. Food was no longer going to fall down from Heaven, but it would be provided by God nevertheless.

Though the manna provided everything that the Israelites needed nutritionally, the people quickly grew tired of it. (Numbers 11:4 – 9)

V The Captain of the Military (vs. 13 – 15)

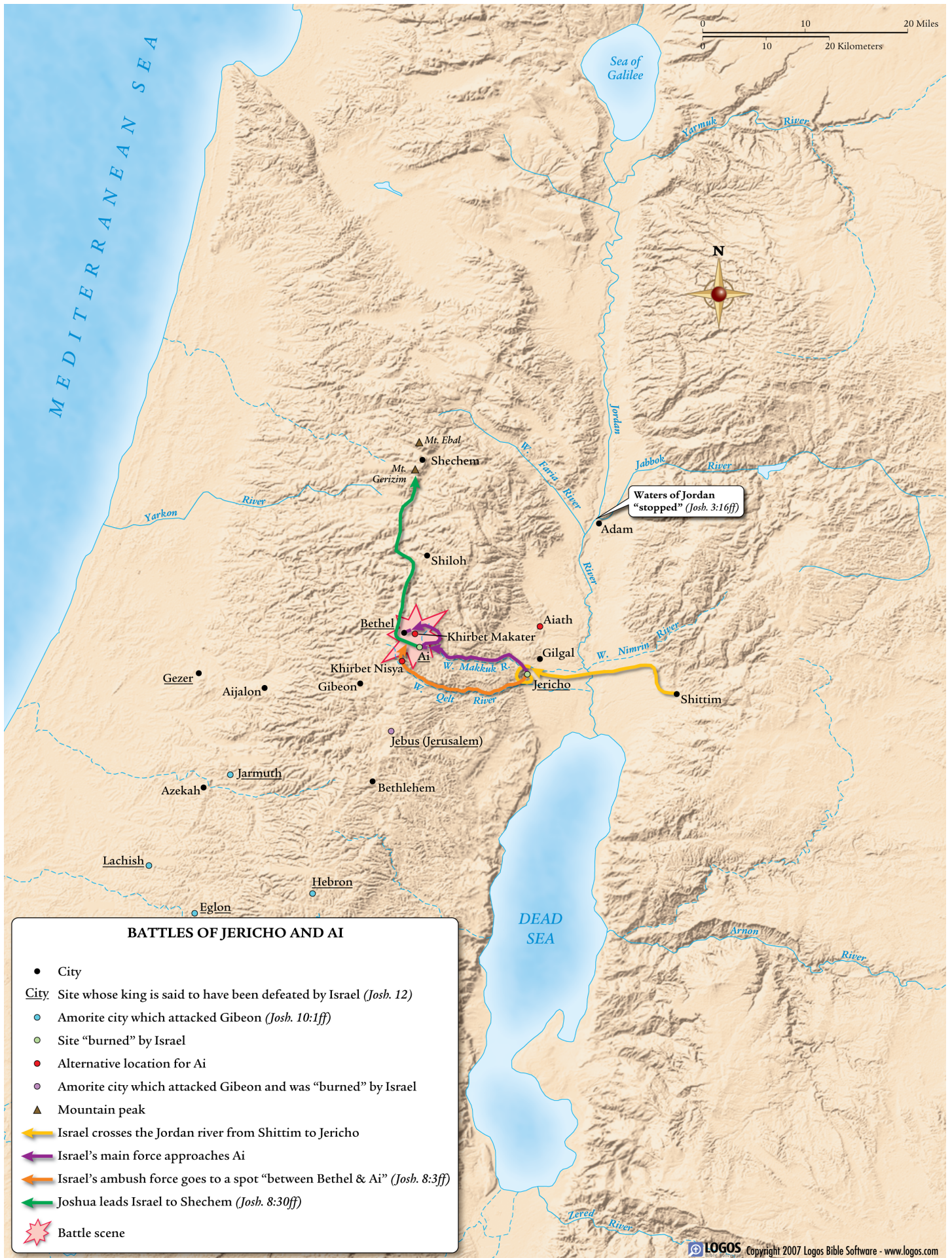
We must recognize that God is in control and we must be completely yielded to His will.

The Captain of the Host of the Lord is considered by mostly all theologians to be a "Christophany" – a pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice that the commanded Joshua to remove his shoes just as God commanded Moses from the Burning Bush. (Exodus 3:5)

The Lord was reminding Joshua that He was in charge, and Joshua certainly recognized the Lord's authority as he "assumed the position". (See notes - 01R TN Berean Revelation One for more about people collapsing at the sight of God - Genesis 17:3; Numbers 16:22; Joshua 5:14; Ezekiel 1:28, 3:23, 43:3; Isaiah 6:5; Daniel 8:17, 10:9; Matthew 17:6; Acts 9:4)

In a meeting with a small group of missionaries in China, James Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission (now Overseas Missionary Fellowship) reminded them that there were three ways to do God's work: "One is to make the best plans we can, and carry them out to the best of our ability ... or, having carefully laid our plans and determined to carry them through, we may ask God to help us, and to prosper us in connection with them. Yet another way of working is to begin with God; to ask His plans, and to offer ourselves to Him to carry out His purposes."³

³ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). Be Strong (p. 67). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.



BATTLES OF JERICHO AND AI

- City
- City. Site whose king is said to have been defeated by Israel (*Josh. 12*)
- Amorite city which attacked Gibeon (*Josh. 10:1ff*)
- Site "burned" by Israel
- Alternative location for Ai
- Amorite city which attacked Gibeon and was "burned" by Israel
- ▲ Mountain peak
- Israel crosses the Jordan river from Shittim to Jericho
- Israel's main force approaches Ai
- Israel's ambush force goes to a spot "between Bethel & Ai" (*Josh. 8:3ff*)
- Joshua leads Israel to Shechem (*Josh. 8:30ff*)
- ★ Battle scene