

JOSHUA 5:2-12 STUDY NOTES (2/27/22)

Joshua's Big Theme: The Israelites are finally ready to enter into the land that God promised - that God is *gifting* to them - that is currently inhabited by enemy forces which need to be pushed out. Over the course of Joshua, they will learn what it means to be strong and courageous in the Lord as they follow God and trust Joshua in the scariest and most overwhelming of situations.

Today's Context: Joshua 5 brings us into Canaan, but then immediately stops. Before going a step further, God calls the Israelites to engage in the Old Testament sacraments of circumcision and the Passover.

Additional Study Notes:

- God clearly takes circumcision and Passover very seriously when he says that the person who fails to obey them will be "cut off" from His people (Gen 17:14, Num 9:13). The person who fails to obey these rules (as well as others) will be removed from God's family. However, at the same time, God's mercy is always available. Even after 40 years of the Israelites *not* being circumcised, they are *not* immediately cut off, but are given mercy to finally circumcise themselves here. Even after large chunks of time where Israel will fail to properly obey the Passover, God provides mercy and doesn't immediately cut them off. Similar to passages like 1 Corinthians 6:9, God promises to ultimately cut off wicked and disobedient people, but always provides mercy for those who eventually turn to Him (see: the book of Jonah). Additionally, the mark of circumcision or practicing the Passover never magically saves a person. It is not enough to obey the actions, but one must have a loving and faithful heart towards God as well (Rom 2:28-29).
- As Presbyterians, we see the Lord's Supper as the new Passover meal, and we see Baptism as the newer and better circumcision. While the Passover points to the faithfulness of God in the slain lamb of Egypt for the rescue of the people, the Lord's Supper modifies this by pointing to the faithfulness of God in the slain lamb of Jesus Christ for the

redemption of all people! While circumcision is a mark on the bodies of males to identify them and their children as belonging to God's covenantal body, baptism marks the bodies of males, females, Jews, Gentiles, and all people to identify them and their children as belonging to God's covenantal body. These do not save us, and we are not immediately condemned for failing to practice them. However, they show the blessing of God's presence in our lives and show our obedience to Him! We should engage with these sacraments as much as possible and find joy in how they mark our identity and shape our story.

- Being a part of God's covenantal family comes with both responsibilities and blessings. The people are called to follow and obey God as their leader and God. But God also promises to bless the people since they share in the inheritance of His riches. God, in His love, has blessed us as His children, and it's this blessing and love that calls us to *desire* obedience to Him!

For Additional Study (most are available to borrow from CFC):

- NIV Study Bible
- ESV Study Bible
- Other commentaries available upon request

Discussion Questions

CATCHING UP ON LAST WEEK

- (1) What was most significant for you from Joshua 4:1-5:1? What's stuck with you as meaningful or impactful?

TODAY'S TEXT

KNOWING God

- (2) What questions do you (or members of your group) have about this passage? Discuss.
- (3) What does this passage tell us about God?
- (4) What does this passage tell us about humanity?
- (5) Alpha and Omega Question: How/where have you seen the sacraments of circumcision and the Passover pop up in your reading thus far?
- (6) What sort of repetition do you see in this passage? What might it highlight or emphasize?

GROWING Together

- (7)* If people in your group are following the Alpha and Omega reading plan, take time to discuss/encourage their reading for 5-10 minutes.*
- (8) God calls His people to pause here instead of rushing right into their mission. Are you good at slowing down or do you feel the need to constantly move to the next thing? How are you at making intentional time for God? How can we grow in this?
- (9) What might be the significance of the Israelites eating "the produce of the land" (v.11)? Can you relate this to your journey with God?
- (10) How do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper shape us? How does worshiping God in general (prayer, Bible study, Sunday mornings, etc.) help shape our identity?
- (11) What questions, ideas, or themes would you want to study further?

SHOWING God to Others

- (12) What in this passage serves as good news for the world around us?

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

- (13) For next week, spend some time reading Joshua 5:13-6:20. What's interesting? What questions do you have?

QUESTIONS FOR CHILDREN (from Children's Director Emily Reiser)

- (14) What stood out to you in this story? What did you find interesting and what was confusing?
- (15) What do you remember about Passover and its significance? Why is it important for the Israelites to remember this sacrament? Who is our Passover Lamb?
- (16) How would you react to a commander in the Lord's army? If the commander isn't for Joshua or his enemies, who is he for? Are you for the Lord too? How can you spread this good news to those around you?