

• *Getting ready - four significant events*

The people of Israel are now in the promised land that they have been expecting for centuries. The inhabitants of Canaan hear about their victories and fear being destroyed by the Israelites<sup>□1</sup>. Now there are four significant events which get the people ready for inheriting Canaan.

□1 5:1

**Restoration to God's fellowship**

1. **Restoration to God's fellowship was a preliminary to gaining God's promised inheritance.** For thirty-eight years the people had lapsed from a close relationship with God <sup>□1</sup>. The people had been prevented by God from making any further progress, and the older generation had continued in rebellion. Only the younger people had any interest in the things of God.

□1 see Deuteronomy 2:14

• *Circumcision – renewed dedication*

Now it is necessary for the new generation to be circumcised. This will be a sign of renewed dedication to God. Circumcision spoke of Abraham's faith and of what it brought; spiritual renovation and readiness for obedience. At God's command Joshua has stone knives made and the men are circumcised<sup>□1</sup>. A new generation had grown up and none of them had been circumcised<sup>□2</sup>.

□1 5:2-3  
□2 5:4-7

After the circumcising the people rested<sup>□1</sup>. Then Joshua received a word from God. The disgrace of displeasing God has been 'rolled away'<sup>□2</sup>. The place became known as Gilgal – 'Rolling'<sup>□3</sup>. It was a time of spiritual recovery and readiness to serve God.

□1 5:8  
□2 5:9  
□3 5:9b

**Living by the blood of the passover sacrifice**

2. **Living by the blood of the passover sacrifice was necessary for the gaining of God's promised inheritance.** The people spent some time in spiritual recovery before attempting to win Canaan for God.

They keep the passover and the festival of unleavened bread <sup>□1</sup>. Uncircumcised people could not take part in the Passover<sup>□2</sup>. It was the third time Passover had been celebrated; the last time was a year after the original Passover events<sup>□3</sup>.

□1 5:10  
□2 Exodus 12:48, 49  
□3 see Numbers 9:5

• *The Passover speaks of living by the blood of Jesus*

Passover was a yearly reminder of how they had been redeemed by the blood of a lamb. For the Christian it speaks of living by the blood of Jesus. The blood of sacrifice gave Israel its annual redemption (renewed each year on the Day of Atonement); it gave cleansing; and it made inheritance possible. Similarly for the Christian, the blood of Jesus Christ gives 'eternal redemption' which never needs to be repeated<sup>□1</sup>; it gives daily cleansing <sup>□2</sup>, and in these ways it makes the gaining of our inheritance possible<sup>□3</sup>. The eating of unleavened bread<sup>□4</sup> spoke of abrupt removal from any kind of corruption. For the Christian it speaks of cleansing from sin.

□1 Hebrews 9:12  
□2 Hebrews 9:14  
□3 Hebrews 9:15  
□4 see 5:11

• *Daily confession brings daily cleansing*

The Christian has to learn to live every day upon the blood of Jesus Christ. We are hindered from inheriting God's promises by the inclinations to sin that are still within us and by failures big and small. But we have an Advocate with the Father. Daily confession of our sins brings daily cleansing by the blood of Jesus. This is the way we have to live if we are to achieve God's will for our lives.

The people move from an emergency-miracle to regular provision

• The firstfruits given to God

• But God can do anything at any time!

Joshua is reminded that he is fighting God's battles not his own

• The only thing God asks for is Joshua's worship

3. **The people move from an emergency-miracle to regular provision.** For a long time the people had lived on manna falling from heaven. It was a miracle that had lasted for forty years. Now the people began to enjoy the produce of the land of Canaan<sup>□1</sup>. There was corn growing in the fields which they were able to use, left by those who had fled for safety to the walled town of Jericho.

Moses had been given instructions about this forty years before<sup>□1</sup>. As soon as the people reaped some of the crops of the land they were to bring the 'firstfruits' – the first part of the harvest – and give it to God<sup>□2</sup>. The offerings would be lifted up and waved before God<sup>□3</sup>. At the same time an animal sacrifice would be offered<sup>□4</sup>. The grain would be cooked so that it would be a meal offering<sup>□5</sup>. None of the produce of the land was to be eaten until this was done. This ceremony was to be performed as soon as the people arrived in the land, and then the same procedure was to be followed each year as part of Israel's law<sup>□6</sup>.

At that point the manna stopped! We cannot live on miracles all the time. Miracles are extraordinary. God gives miracles from time to time but often – there is no rule – God's miracles come in the early days of His doing something new. Then maybe a time comes when we have to move from the miraculous to the ordinary. Yet when this happens we must not assume that the time for miracles is finished for ever; God can do anything at any time!

4. **Joshua is reminded that he is fighting God's battles not his own.** At this point the people are ready to start moving forward to conquer Jericho and the rest of the land. But as Joshua is near Jericho he sees a man with a sword in his hand<sup>□1</sup>. He knows it is a supernatural figure. 'Are you for us or for our enemies?' he asks<sup>□2</sup>. The angelic figure does not say 'I am on your side' or 'I am on their side'. He is not on anyone's side! He is the Captain and Joshua is on his side! 'No! It is as the Captain of the armies of Yahweh that I have come' <sup>□3</sup>. Joshua recognises that an angel is representing God. It is an appearance of God Himself – although Joshua is not seeing the 'stuff' – the innermost essence – of God. He is seeing a **representation**. No one can see God and live<sup>□4</sup> but God can use angels to make something visible that represents Him. Joshua asks God what he must do<sup>□5</sup> and is told to worship God <sup>□6</sup>. The only thing God asks for is Joshua's worship. Joshua has been given an added assurance that God is with him.

□1 5:12

□1 Leviticus 23:9–14

□2 Leviticus 23:10

□3 23:11

□4 23:12

□5 23:13

□6 23:14b

□1 5:13

□2 5:13

□3 5:14a

□4 John 1:18

□5 5:14b

□6 5:15



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