

MILITARY INDUCTION

Let me begin by reminding you of the importance of the phrase, “Now it came about.” It is used three times in Joshua 5 to mark three important historical events in the Conquest of the Land. These three were connected to the fulfillment of the land and seed sections to the Abrahamic Covenant (Josh.5:1, 8, 13) (Gen.12:1-3).

We will use these three historical markers to divide chapter 5 into the following three sections of studies.

- Josh.5:1-7 Circumcision of the men of war.
- Josh.5:8-12 Celebration of Passover in the Land.
- Josh.5:13-15 Captain of the Lord’s army.

In today’s lesson, we will discover that the Israelites had an induction policy into the military that might seem strange to Americans. In stead of raising the right hand, they were circumcised!

“And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, died in the wilderness along way, after they came out of Egypt. For all the people who came out were circumcised, but all the people who were born in the wilderness along the way as they came out of Egypt had not been circumcised.” (Josh.5:4-5)

Ritual circumcision was also required to celebrate the Passover: “But if a stranger sojourns with you, and celebrates the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near to celebrate it; and he shall be like a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person may eat of it.” (Ex.12:48 / next week’s lesson)

You may be wondering how many males 20 years and older were inducted into the military by this method at this time? The second census since the Exodus recorded 601,730 males (Num.26:51).

This explains why the place of circumcision at Gilgal was called Gibeath Haaraloth (hill of the foreskins) (Josh.4:19; 5:3).

We will examine our lesson text by the following four homiletical points.

- Josh.5:1 Psychological warfare
- Josh.5:2-3 Place of circumcision
- Josh.5:4-6 Policy of induction into the military
- Josh.5:7 Parental failure

This lesson will study FIVE aspects of the doctrine of circumcision and its messianic significance to the Abrahamic covenant and to the New Covenant and the Church.

1. Ritual circumcision was associated with the messianic seed section of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen.12:1-3; 17:1-8, 20-27).

Abraham was saved by the prophetic gospel of Gen.3:15 while an uncircumcised Gentile (Gal.3:8, 16). **He** was saved at the age of 70 of the Shemite race and the Akkadian nation (Gen.11) but was not circumcised until 99 (Gen.17:1, 24). **Abraham** was called the father of faith while an uncircumcised believer (Rom.4:9-12). After his circumcision, **Abraham** became the father of the Jewish race and of the Israelite nation (Gen.17:1-8, 20-27).

2. Circumcision was a physical sign with a spiritual message from a doctrinal covenant like the rainbow.

The rainbow had a spiritual message from the Noahic Covenant (Gen.9:11-17).

Ritual circumcision also had a spiritual message from the Abrahamic covenant (Gen.17:1-14). It was the message of the messianic seed of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gal.3:15-18).

Since ritual circumcision didn't save Abraham, salvation was not the doctrinal issue in it – “Since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.” (Rom.3:30)

3. Ritual circumcision was a sign of the O.C believer's custodian faith in the importance of the prophetic gospel of Christ as the Savior of the world (Gen.3:15; 12:2; 15:1-7; 17:1-7, 24-27).

“And the Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘all the nations shall be blessed in you.’” (Gal.3:8; Gen.3:15; 12:1-3; Acts 3:25-26)

“Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘and to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one, ‘And to your seed,’ that is, Christ.” (Gal.3:16) (Rom.3:27-31; 4:13-25)

4. Under the O.C, Jewish parents were required to circumcise their sons as well as slaves born or purchased (Gen.17:12-14; Lev.12:1-4).

This was done 8 days from birth while still under AOS (Rom.5:12-21). It was done to teach the doctrinal lesson that the solution to AOS was the prophetic gospel of Christ and to show that they were custodians of evangelism and word of God – “And that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim.3:15/ Paul to Timothy)

John and Jesus received ritual circumcision (Luke 1:59; 2:21). It certainly wasn't for salvation as the apostate legalists taught – “And some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, ‘unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, YOU CANNOT BE SAVED.’” (Acts 15:1, 5-11). **“But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.”(Acts 15:11)**

5. Under the N.C, circumcision of heart by the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the spiritual sign of regeneration by faith in the historical gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Cor.15:3-4; Rom.1:16; Acts 10:44-48).

The circumcision for salvation group immediately took issue with the message of grace salvation and eternal life (Acts 11:1-3, 17-18; 16:1-3; 21:21, 28; Gal.2:1-5, 11-16; Phil.3:3-7).

“Therefore (2:8-10) remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called ‘Uncircumcision’ by the so-called ‘Circumcision,’ which is performed in the flesh by human hands.” (Eph.2:11) (Gal.5:1-6, 11-12; 6:12-16; Acts 6:11-14; 1 Cor.7:18-20)

“And **in Him** you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried **with Him** in baptism (1 Cor.12:13; Gal.3:27), in which you were also raised up **with Him** through faith in the working of God who raised Him from the dead.” (Col.2:11-12)
