

## 3. RENEWING YOUR COMMITMENT



Read: Joshua 5:2-9

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The children of Israel crossed the Jordan in full view of the enemy stronghold of Jericho, which lies in the great open plain (3:16). From this city, especially from the vantage point of its walls, the whole Jordan valley from Adam to the Dead Sea was visible. After the Children of Israel had crossed the river Jordan in that great miracle, and were camped at Gilgal, they did six things before taking possession of the Promised Land:

- ✓ 1. Their faith put fear in the hearts of the Enemy (2:2-11; 5:1)
- ✓ 2. They stopped but they didn't stay (4:20-24)
- 3. They renewed their commitment to the covenant with God (5:2-9)**
  - 4. They remembered their roots (5:10)
  - 5. They destroyed the manna mentality (5:12)
  - 6. They worshipped the Lord

They did all these **six things**, before they fought one battle, before they attacked one city stronghold. All these things were done in full view of the enemy (3:16). These are principles that we need to follow prophetically.

The third thing the Israelites did, after crossing the Jordan, was **to renew their commitment to the covenant of God**. In Old Testament times this was done by circumcising the men.

Josh 5:2-3 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 [Gib'eeath Haar'a-lowth, the 'Hill of Foreskins'].

Imagine him standing there, telling the people! How would you have received that announcement? Perhaps the women would be praising the Lord, for making them a woman and not a man???

But, let's carry on:

Josh 5:4-8 *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.*

**\*\* blessing follows obedience!**

## 2. RENEWING ISRAEL'S COMMITMENT

After the miraculous crossing of the Jordan, Israel renewed their commitment to the covenant of God and, as we've already seen, the way they did it in the Old Testament was to circumcise the men.

### 1) Now, this event may seem totally unrelated to you, living:

- here in nearly the 21st century; and
- under the New Testament promise.

### 2) So, what is the relevance of the meaning of their act of circumcision for us today?

Let's look at five key factors:

- Relationship
- Commitment
- Conduct
- Dependence
- Responsibility

#### a. Reminder of relationship

We need to understand the true purposes of circumcision. One of these is to **remind** them of their **relationship with their God**.

When you get saved (Jn 3:16), when you give your whole life to Jesus, the Bible says your heart is circumcised:

Rom 2:29 ... *and **circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code ... (i.e. physical circumcision according to O.T. Law)***

In other words, God puts His mark on you, i.e. His seal and sign of ownership.

*“We are not our own, we've been bought with a price”* and that price is the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Being bought with a price means being ‘redeemed’. Christ is our Redeemer, ‘*Hallelujah!*’ Let us now pray, and seek first that fresher, deeper relationship with Christ now,

today!

## b. Reminder of commitment

Before we go any further, we have to realise that we must renew our commitment to the covenant of God, to the word of the living God - as a church and as individuals.

Circumcision would **remind the children of Israel of their commitment to their God**, because there was no turning back. For them, the Jordan flood waters had closed, and were running powerfully, as before.

- We've become Christians not to try it out; we've become Christians for life. The same is true for us as for the Children of Israel; there's no turning back.
- Some are under pressure right now - we've already talked about, and prayed about strongholds, and we need to continue to minister and pray over these issues. But, in addition to this, some of you have friends criticising you. Some are experiencing persecution. You may even be on the verge of giving up. Yet, when you gave your heart to the Lord Jesus, He became a friend to you that sticks closer to you than any brother.
- In the midst of persecution and trials, and when the temptation to turn back pulls at you, remember your commitment to the covenant of God - He remembers His commitment! Renew your covenant ... Lord I don't care what they're saying or what they're doing, this is for life and I'm not turning back.

**Anyone like this now?**

## c. Reminder of their conduct

Circumcision reminded them of their conduct when they entered the land. This mark, they had, reminded them that they were not their own; there was no going back. So, how should they and we live?

1 Pet 2:9-12 *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were **not** a people, but now **you are** the people of God; once you had **not** received mercy, but now you **have** received mercy. 11 Dear friends, I urge you, as **aliens and strangers in the world**, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. 12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

The world is not our home. We've been born again by the Spirit of God and we live by different principles, we live in a different kingdom and we have a different Lord whose name is Jesus Christ. Because of this, Peter said "*abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.*" Please note, that even those of you who are Luxembourgers – you are foreigners in this land! You are citizens of the Kingdom of God, not citizens of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg!

## d. Reminder of their dependence on God

Circumcision was to remind them of their relationship, commitment and conduct, but it also spoke

of their dependence upon their God. Let's turn to Joshua 5:8:

Josh 5:8 And after the whole nation had been circumcised, they remained where they were in camp until they were healed.

- For 3 whole days in the open plains of Jericho, with the **enemy looking on**, all the fighting men were rendered helpless ... after circumcision, the men couldn't even walk, and it took 3 days for them to heal. In this time the men could go nowhere and they could do nothing.
- The fighting men **allowed** it to happen; **faith** in God's command to Joshua defeated the fear of enemy attack during their time of healing (3 days!) ... an attack which would have annihilated all Israel.
- Circumcision reminded them that their **help and strength** came from God and not through their own ability.

They were rendered useless in the very face of the enemy, because God was teaching them a lesson. And He came to them again and said *"it's not by might, it's not by power, not by your wisdom, not by your ability, but it's by My ability to protect you and win your battles for you."*

### e. Reminder of their responsibility

When God spoke to Abraham, to seal His covenant with circumcision, God promised *"I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring **all nations on earth will be blessed.**"* (Gen 26:4).

We must stop and remind ourselves that God has circumcised **our** hearts (Rom 2:29), which places a responsibility upon our lives.

### 1) So, the spiritual atmosphere of this country is not going to be changed/affected by:

- Politicians
- Kings, Queens or Grand Dukes
- Greenpeace or Friends of the Earth
- The European Union, the United Nations
- Any man-made organisation

### 2) The spiritual, mental, physical and financial temperature of a Nation can change

The spiritual, mental, physical and financial temperature of a Nation can only change, when we, who have circumcised hearts, remember that we have a responsibility to fulfil our commission from Jesus Christ, to:

- *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”* (Mark 16:15);
- lay hands on the sick and see them healed;
- speak the Word and see devils flee;
- speak to dead people and see them raised;
- break the back of the devil with the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

We have to stop and realise our commission. It's **not** to have **spiritual parties**, but so that this lost, broken and dying World can receive **healing** and **salvation**. Celebrations and conferences are great, but unless we roll up our sleeves and 'get stuck in', souls will continue to cascade into hell – every day.

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