**I HAVE ROLLED AWAY THE REPROACH OF EGYPT**

Joshua 5:1-15

Key Verse 9

Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” So the place has been called Gilgal to this day.

**Introduction**



When the Israelites crossed the Jordan River through God’s help, the enemies were melted in fear. They lost their fighting spirit against the Israelites. So it would be the perfect time for Joshua to launch a massive military campaign against the Canaanites. But instead of commanding his people to attack, God commands them to circumcise and to celebrate the Passover at the place where they are. Here God’s commands appear to be strange. They seem to put the Israelites at risk before their enemies. But God has a different thought than that of Joshua and the Israelites. And God’s way is right and perfect. The Israelites must be conquered by God first. Then their victory virtually guaranteed! So, today let us understand God’s thoughts and ways toward His people!

1. Read verses 1-9. Why did the hearts of the Amorite kings and the Canaanite kings melt in fear? (1) What command did the Lord give Joshua? (2) Why did the Israelites need to be circumcised? (3-8) What did the Lord say about its meaning? (9)

1-1, Read verses 1-9.

Now when all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the coast heard how the Lord had dried up the Jordan before the Israelites until they[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=joshua+5&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5936a)] had crossed over, their hearts melted in fear and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites. 2 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. 4 Now this is why he did so: All those who came out of Egypt—all the men of military age—died in the wilderness on the way after leaving Egypt. 5 All the people that came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness during the journey from Egypt had not. 6 The Israelites had moved about in the wilderness 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 he had solemnly promised their ancestors 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. 9 Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” So the place has been called Gilgal[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=joshua+5&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5944c)] to this day.

1-2, Why did the hearts of the Amorite kings and the Canaanite kings melt in fear? (1)

***Now when all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the coast heard how the Lord had dried up the Jordan before the Israelites until they had crossed over, their hearts melted in fear and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites.***

* No sooner had the enemies seen that the Israelites were trusting in God, and were willing to step out in obedient faith than they instantly lost confidence in their battle against God’s people.
* We may forget, but our spiritual enemies always remember that If God is for us, who can be against us? ([Romans 8:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/romans/8/31/s_1054031)) They know that when we are really trusting in God, their defeat is assured.

1-3, What command did the Lord give Joshua? (2)

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***2 At that time the Lord said to Joshua, “Make flint knives and circumcise the Is*raelites again.”**

* It is God’s first command in the Promised Land to the Israelites that they are to be circumcised.
* Apparently, all during the forty years of waiting in the wilderness, none of the sons born during that time had been circumcised.
* This new generation was raised up in place of the generation of unbelief. God's work would go on, but the people of God who had unbelief would not share in it.
* That was why God told Joshua to make flint knives and circumcise the new generation.

1-4, Why did the Israelites need to be circumcised? (3-8)

***3 So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath Haaraloth. 4 Now this is why he did so: All those who came out of Egypt—all the men of military age—died in the wilderness on the way after leaving Egypt. 5 All the people that came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness during the journey from Egypt had not. 6 The Israelites had moved about in the wilderness 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 he had solemnly promised their ancestors 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.***

* According to verse 5, all the Israelites the first exodus generation who came out of Egypt, were circumcised based on the Abrahamic covenant.
* Yet, they wandered in the wilderness forty years and died there. Although they had been circumcised, they could not enter the Promised Land because they had not obeyed God.
* They rebelled against God and God’s servants and broke God’s covenant. God has sworn to them that they would not see the Promised Land.
* As the first generation had been wandering in the wilderness, their children were born and grew in God’s discipline.
* While their parents disobeyed God and lived exactly like slaves in Egypt, they obeyed God sincerely and loved him with all their heart and strength.
* While their parents grumbled against God’s servants, they humbly listened to God’s servants and worked with them in one spirit when they crossed the river.
* Although they had not been circumcised physically in the desert, their hearts were circumcised and aligned with God and God’s servants.
* It is quite surprising that God had not commanded them to be circumcised for 40 years. God brought them to the Promised Land.
* And God then commanded them to be circumcised as soon as they entered the land. Biblically speaking it has a very significant meaning to the people of Israel.
* Circumcision is the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant. God called Abraham to give the land of Canaan and countless descendants to become a great nation.
* Then God told Abraham to circumcise himself, his household and his slaves as an everlasting covenant in their flesh.
* The circumcision to Abraham was the sign of his fundamental repentance before God and gave his heart commitment to God again after the matter of Ismael.
* God’s command to circumcise the new generation of Israelites meant that they should put to death their earthly nature and put on the new self.
* It meant that they should cut away slavery of sin, laziness and complacency and consecrate themselves to God willingly and wholeheartedly.
* Circumcision was a physical reminder that they were the covenant people of God. God really wanted his people to have clear identity as covenant people.
* They were all circumcised and remained there until they were healed. The place where Joshua circumcised them was ***Gibeath Haarloth***.
* Gibeath Haaraloth means the hill of foreskins. We can imagine the pile of foreskins, along with the smell of blood and people’s groaning in pain.
* The second gen of Israelites made a decision to put to death their sinful nature and to commit their lives to God at the hill of foreskins.
* Their circumcision was their decision that they would no longer live as children of their godless parents but have a new beginning in God in the Promised Land.
* Unlike the first generation, they trusted God to protect them from their enemies’ attack until they healed.
* They believed that to obey God’s command to be circumcised was right rather than to be engaged in the speedy and fierce military campaign.
* They were willing to live in the covenant relationship with God in the new land. Praise God and His wonderful counseling!

1-5, What did the Lord say about its meaning? (9)

***9 Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” So the place has been called Gilgal to this day.***

* After seeing the Israelites go through the painful circumcision by obedience, God must have been greatly pleased by them who had a new beginning.
* He exclaimed, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” The reproach of Egypt includes the shame of slavery in Egypt.
* During their slavery in Egypt the Israelites might have been full of slave mentality, being lazy, immoral, stubborn, depressed and greedy.
* They felt shameful, recognizing that though they were God’s people, they were deeply sinful just like the pagan Egyptians.
* But God has rolled away these reproach, disgrace or shame of Egypt from them after their circumcision after their repentance of their and their ancestors’ sins.
* So the place was called ***Gilgal.*** Gilgal means rolled away. When God rolled away the reproach of Egypt, they were now God’s chosen people in the Promised Land.
* Through Gilgal-circumcision, they no longer took a lingering look at what was behind, but strived toward what was ahead.
* Here we learn what God wants us is to turn our hearts from our sticky sins to God through painful Gilgal-circumcision.
* God’s people are those who have taken off their old self with its practices and have put on the new self renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.
* We know that circumcision is painful, but it is absolutely necessary to have a covenant relationship with God and to enter into God’s inheritance.
* There can be no true relationship with God except our sins are cleansed by God through our repentance from our heart.

2. Read verses 10-12. Why did the people celebrate the Passover at this time? (10) Why did the manna stop right after they ate the produce of the land? (11-12)

2-1, Read verses 10-12.

On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover. 11 The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. 12 The manna stopped the day after[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=joshua+5&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5947d)] they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate the produce of Canaan.

2-2, Why did the people celebrate the Passover at this time? (10)

***10 On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover.***

* Originally passover commemorates the exodus of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt through God’s mighty work.
* Then God told the Israelites to observe the Passover as an ordinance for them and their descendants.
* They were to remember God’s deliverance and to give thanks to him and worship him. So at Gilgal, the second generation celebrated the Passover.
* We see here the Israelites’ complete spiritual renewal at Gilgal. They restored not only through their circumcision but also their worship to God.
* They were full of thanks, joy and spirit. We Christians remember what Jesus has done on the cross as the Lamb of God and worship Him.
* Let us remember Jesus’ loving sacrifice on the cross and love and worship him from our hearts.

2-3, Why did the manna stop right after they ate the produce of the land? (11-12)

***11 The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. 12 The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate the produce of Canaan.***

### When the people were able to provide for themselves from the rich produce of Canaan, God stopped the manna.

### He didn't want them to get lazy, but to enter into a new partnership of trust with Him. They became mature in their dependent faith.

### They ate the food of the land of Canaan that year: God always provides; but He is perfectly free to change the source of His provision from time to time.

### We need to trust in Him, not in His manner of provision, or we will stumble when that changes.

### The city of Gilgal became a beachhead for Israel in their conquest of Canaan, finding strength in the remembrance of the memorial and their redemption.

3. Read verses 13-15. When Joshua was near Jericho who did he meet? (13) What did the commander of the Lord say? (14a) What did Joshua do? (14b) Why was the place where Joshua stood, holy? (15)

3-1, Read verses 13-15.

Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, “Are you for us or for our enemies?” 14 “Neither,” he replied, “but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.” Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, “What message does my Lord[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=joshua+5&version=NIV#fen-NIV-5949e)] have for his servant?” 15 The commander of the Lord’s army replied, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.

3-2, When Joshua was near Jericho who did he meet? (13)

***13 Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, “Are you for us or for our enemies?”***

* One day Joshua was near Jericho, looking over its city. No doubt, he was preparing for the conquest war.
* Then he saw a man stand with a drawn sword. He went up to the man and asked, “Are you for us or for our enemies?”
* In verse 14a, He identified himself as the commander of the army of the Lord. Also He said that I have now come. Biblically, “I” indicates the Lord, God.
* Although he might be an angel of God, he is most likely the commander of the army of the Lord, Jesus Christ.
* Also Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence and called him as my Lord. He paid homage to the Living God! He was not supposed to do so to angels.

3-3, What did the commander of the Lord say? (14a)

***14 “Neither,” he replied, “but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.”***

* The man answered, “Neither, but as commander of the army of the Lord I have come.”
* The commander of the army of the Lord didn’t come to take sides, but to take over. In short, he was in control of the Lord’s army. He was in charge.
* Therefore Joshua and the Israelites should humbly submit to him. They had to listen and obey God and his strategy.
* “The question is not whether God is on their side. Rather the question is whether or not they were on God’s side.”
* He meant that he should humble himself and obey God to be on God’s side. Before Joshua could conquer he should first be conquered by God. He had to renounce leadership to the will of God.

3-4, What did Joshua do?

***Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, “What message does my Lord have for his servant?”***

* Joshua’s response reveals that he was submitting to the will of God who is in control.
* We are Christian soldiers and our supreme commander is Jesus Christ. Jesus is our commanding officer and the Lord, and we are his soldiers ready to move according to His command.

3-5, Why was the place where Joshua stood, holy? (15)

***15 The commander of the Lord’s army replied, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.***

* At God’s command, Joshua took off his sandals. Joshua recognized that the commander for the conquest war was not Joshua himself, but God. Let us give full surrender to God and obey his command.
* Joshua's total submission to Jesus Christ shows that he knows who is really in charge. It also is a virtual guarantee of victory for Israel.
* When we follow after the Commander of the army of the LORD, how can we lose? We are more than conquerors!!

**Conclusion**

Today we learned about the circumcision of the Israelites, the celebration of the Passover and the appearance of the commander of the Lord’s army. May we circumcise our hearts and remember God’s redemptive work in us and join in the spiritual battle. As we have a beachhead like “Gilgal” and humbly obey our Commander in chief, Jesus, may God give us great victories for our spiritual battle.

**One word: The place has been called Gilgal!**