

**Joshua 5:1 ¶** And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which *were* on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which *were* by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.

Once the kings of the Amorites and the other king of the Canaanites west of Jordan heard how the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan River to allow the children of Israel to cross over on dry ground, they became very afraid.

**Joshua 5:2** At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and **circumcise** again the children of Israel the second time.

**Joshua 5:3** And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins.

**Joshua 5:4** And this *is* the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, *that were* males, *even* all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt.

**Joshua 5:5** Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people *that were* born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, *them* they had not circumcised.

**Joshua 5:6** For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people *that were* men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD swore that he would not shew them the land, which the LORD swore unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

**Joshua 5:7** And their children, *whom* he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way.

The LORD commanded Joshua to make some sharp knives and once again circumcise the males of Israel, and he did so. Although the men that came out of Egypt were circumcised, they had not circumcised their children that were born after leaving Egypt. That whole generation that had come out of Egypt had died in the wilderness because of their unbelief. Consequently, most of the men of war at this time were uncircumcised.

The LORD had established circumcision as a sign of the covenant between Him and the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

*Genesis 17:10–11 “This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.”*

Circumcision was a cutting away of the flesh that affirmed the people of Israel as God’s chosen people and acknowledged Him as their LORD.

I liked the application made by Guzik: “Of course, this is the same work God

wants to do in us, taking away the dishonor and shame of our previous sin and rebellion, and seeing ourselves as who we are in Jesus.”

**Joshua 5:8** And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole.  
**Joshua 5:9** And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.

Once all the males had been circumcised, they remained in the camp until they had healed. The LORD declared that their obedience had taken away the shame they had experienced as slaves in Egypt. The place was named “Gilgal,” meaning “rolling,” because there the shame of Israel had been rolled away.

I think the shame being referenced is a reference to the disobedience and unbelief of the previous generation that found root in their sojourn in Egypt.

Although I think it was safe to say that the people of Israel did not have to fear an attack from the people of the land who were so afraid of them and their God, it still left the people of Israel in a very vulnerable position. Adam Clarke makes insightful observation: “But why did not God order them to be circumcised while they were on the east side of Jordan in a state of great security? Because he chose to bring them into straits and difficulties where no counsel or might but his own could infallibly direct and save them; and this he did that they might see that the excellence of the power was of God, and not of man.”

The NIV Commentary noted that males must be circumcised to participate in Passover.

*Exodus 12:48–49* “And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. **One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.**”

**Joshua 5:10** ¶ And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.  
**Joshua 5:11** And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched *corn* in the selfsame day.  
**Joshua 5:12** And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

The children remained encamped at Gilgal in the plains of Jericho and observed Passover on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month. They ate of the old corn of the land on the day after Passover—unleavened cakes and parched grain. Manna was no longer provided after that first meal of the grain of the land. They ate from the produce of Canaan that year.

JFB explains that the grain came from the storehouses of Jericho that were outside the city walls.

Isn't it interesting that deliverance from Egypt began with Passover and taking possession of the land was initiated with Passover.

**Joshua 5:13** ¶ And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, *Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?*

**Joshua 5:14** And he said, Nay; but *as* captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?

**Joshua 5:15** And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy. And Joshua did so.

Some time after Passover it seems, Joshua was near Jericho when he suddenly saw a man holding a drawn sword standing across from him. He asked the man whether he was friend or foe. The man declared that he was captain of the host of the LORD. Joshua immediately fell prostrate in worship before him and asked what his message was for the LORD's servant. The captain told Joshua to take his shoes off because he was standing on holy ground—and he did so.

So, who is the captain of the LORD's host? None other than the preincarnate Jesus. An angel would never have allowed Joshua to worship him. The presence of an angel would not make the ground around him holy. I don't know if Joshua understood this or not. This is another reminder that there are continual spiritual forces working in conjunction with servants of the LORD as they seek to do His will—another example, Elisha's protection from the armies of Syria.

*2 Kings 6:15–17 “And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”*