

Joshua 5 - Thursday, March 29th, 2012

(1) So it was, when all the kings of the Amorites who *were* on the west side of the Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites who *were* by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we had crossed over, that their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel.

- Right at the start, we have a couple of very important lessons that we can learn from just verse one alone, but it's not that visible at first glance.
- I find it interesting that the Holy Spirit would deem it important enough to include this detail about the Amorite and Canaanite kings in the record.
- The question becomes, what does God want us to see here? I believe the answer is twofold and has profound implication and application for us.

- First and foremost, the Lord wants us to know that if He is for us, and He is, and goes before us, then, there is absolutely nothing to be afraid of.
- The fact of the matter is, the enemy fears us, and we should never fear him, because greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world.
- The problem is that Satan will often succeed in giving us "a spirit of fear," so as to get us to both cower and falter in our faith and trust of God.

- Notice it's not the Amorites and the Canaanites who's hearts melted in fear, but it's the kings of the Amorites and Canaanites who were afraid.
- As I was musing about this the Holy Spirit ministered something to me and I'd like to share it with you as it relates to another King named Saul.
- I would suggest to you that not only did Saul's heart melt in fear of Goliath, but Goliath's heart also melted in fear of another King named David.

- Here's how I get there, and it's our second one; the common denominator with all these kings is that fear came vis-à-vis what they would hear.
- For the kings of the Amorites and Canaanites, fear came when they heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the Israelites.
- For King Saul, fear came when he, and the Israelite army with him, heard Goliath talking stink and blaspheming the name of the Lord their God.

1 Samuel 17:11 NKJV When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

- For Goliath, fear came when he heard David tell him that while he comes with a sword, spear and javelin, David comes in the name of the Lord.
- I'll take it a step further and suggest Goliath became paralyzed in fear when he saw that David was actually running towards him, not from him.
- Actually, Goliath's paralyzing fear may explain why it is that there's no record in the text of Goliath throwing his sword, spear or javelin at David.
- Here's what I'm thinking, if fear comes by hearing the words of the enemy, then it stands to reason that faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

Romans 10:17 NKJV So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

- In other words, faith is the antithesis of fear, and I will either have fear from what I hear, or I will have faith come by virtue of the Word I hear.
- There's one last thing that I want to point out before we move on. Saul went from fear to faith upon hearing the words that David spoke to him.

1 Samuel 17:33-37 NIV Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth." (34) But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, (35) I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. (36) Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. (37) The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you."

(2) At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time."

- Perhaps you'll indulge me just a moment, as I must candidly and honestly say verse two really disturbs me, and not for reasons you may think.
- Let me explain, logically, practically, and strategically having Joshua make knives to circumcise the sons of Israel at this time is a foolish idea.
- This is the optimum time to attack! The enemy's hearts have melted in fear! Instead of making knives, I'm making swords, spears and javelins.

- Furthermore, if all the men are circumcised at this time, they are going to be out of commission for some time, and by that time it will be too late!
- Certainly this cannot be the right time for this, nor can it be the right way to go about this, right? Wrong! Why? God's ways are not our ways!
- Oswald Chambers once said we do err when we assume that God's way is to come through an open door, when He may choose a window.

(3) So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. (4) 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, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt. (5) For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised. (6) For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people *who were* men of war, who came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD—to whom the LORD swore that He would not show them the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers that He would give us, "a land flowing with milk and honey." (7) Then Joshua circumcised their sons *whom* He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.

- Conspicuously absent from the narrative is any argument on the part of Joshua, and perhaps more astonishingly so too are the men also silent.
- Why is it that, what we read instead, is unflinching obedience to simply do what God had commanded them to do when it doesn't make sense?
- I'm of the belief that the reason they just obey God and do it is because of what God had just miraculously done for them in crossing the Jordan.

- By the way, it's not the last time we see unflinching obedience to God's commands when it makes no sense logically practically or strategically.
- The Israelites won't so much as bat an eye when they enter into the battle of Jericho with a plan that would arguably be certain suicide militarily.
- God is preparing them for that which He has been preparing for them namely, that they're to trust in the Lord, with all their heart, no matter what.

Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; (6) in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

(8) So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed. (9) Then the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons chief of which is that not only are they quite incapacitated physically they're quite vulnerable militarily.
- Here's why; this place called Gilgal is right smack in front of the impenetrable city of Jericho which was the worst possible place for them to be.
- Does this place called Gilgal sound familiar to you? I think we've all been there before, in the sense that we were in the worst possible place.

- Why does God do it this way? I'm of the belief, having experienced this my own walk, that God will put me in my Gilgal, so I have to trust Him.
- In other words, I can't lean on my own understanding, I can't trust in my own heart and strength I have to acknowledge Him in all of my ways.
- It's for this reason that we often find ourselves in an impossible situation, so perplexing, that only God can both straighten it out and work it out.

(10) Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. (11) And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day.

- Well now isn't this something. We still can't engage in battle even after we're all healed, because now it's the holiday of the Feast of Passover.
- Please don't misunderstand me here; I am in no way wishing to make light of the Passover celebration, or our communion commemoration.
- However, I am wishing to point out the "why" behind the "what" of God's ways in having them do all of this before the actual Battle of Jericho.

- We saw this at the conclusion of our study in the previous chapter where it all sort of boiled down to three basic truths related to God's ways.
- 1-Commemoration of God's Faithfulness in the Past 2-Exaltation with God's Leaders in the Present 3-Preparation for God's Battles in the Future
- The bottom line is that God will remind us of His faithfulness in the past, in order to encourage us the present for His victories that are yet future.

(12) Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.

- I don't know about you, but I have to confess that I had long ago forgotten all about the manna and that they had still been the recipients of it.
- Here again we have further reinforcement of how it is that God's ways are not our ways, in that my way would be to not have the manna stop.
- What I'm learning is that God will always provide for me in His way, in His time, and for His glory. When the time is right, God will say no or go!

(13) And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" (14) So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" (15) Then the Commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.

- These last three verses here in Joshua chapter five are so intriguing that it would almost be criminal to not devote the necessary time to them.
- What I mean by that is, in the interest of time, we'll close our time tonight here, and in so doing we'll sort of wet our appetite for what is next.
- Be that as it may, suffice it to say, this Man that Joshua sees with His sword drawn in His hand is none other than the person of Jesus Christ.