

Joshua 5:1-9 –Provisions for Dominion

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Today you will hear about 2 ways God protected Israel as they prepared to conquer and inherit Canaan. These 2 things, I believe, are good reminders to help you continue the work of your Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ, to bring the world under his dominion(统治，治理).

Our headings are:

God protected Israel by putting fear into their enemies

God protected Israel by Joshua circumcising them

Our goals are: **That you will know that God protects you through his sovereign power and through your obedience, and that you will then be reinvigorated to work for dominion through Jesus Christ.**

God Protected Israel by putting fear into their enemies

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. (1 约旦河西亚摩利人的诸王和靠海迦南人的诸王，听见耶和华在以色列人前面使约旦河的水干了，等到我们过去，他们的心因以色列人的缘故就消化了，不再有胆气。)

1. The Israelites rejoiced that God miraculously opened the Jordan River so they could pass through to Canaan in safety. While Israel celebrated, their crossing was bad news for the people of Canaan. And bad news travels fast, doesn't it? This news of what God did put fear into the hearts of the Canaanites. They did not have the will to fight.

2. That 'fear' that God put on the Canaanites was an intense fear (强烈的恐惧). It was so intense that the Canaanites hearts melted. Consider how this phrase is used in the Bible! Nahum described Nineveh's destruction.

Nahum 2:10 She is empty, desolate, and waste! The **heart melts**, and the knees shake; Much pain is in every side, And all their faces are drained of color. (那鸿书 2: 10 尼尼微现在空虚荒凉，人心消化，双膝相碰，腰都疼痛，脸都变色。)

It was one thing when the Canaanites heard of God's miracles far away in Egypt, but now it was at their front door, so Canaan moved from **fainting spirits** to spirits that **melted like wax**. There was incontestable proof (不容置疑的事实) that the true and living God was on Israel's side and he had made a covenant with them to give them the land. Canaan's natural barrier, the Jordan River in flood season, held no power against this true and living God- Jehovah. He made the waters pile up upstream and he made downstream bone dry. And since the Canaanites lived all along the river, imagine their fear! Putting fear into Israel's enemies in Canaan was exactly what God said he would do:

Exodus 23:27 "I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn *their* backs to you.

No wonder Canaan did not attack Israel as they crossed the Jordan! They were shaking in their boots.

3. **God does not always put this fear in our enemies, but they always have hate for us.** This is why the Toronto District School Board gives Muslims a place to worship in schools, but refuses to allow Christian children to pray. This is why Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and Communists all around the world persecute Christians. They have a hatred for the things of Christ. They hate the exclusivity (排他性, 独特性) of Christianity. And isn't it true that most wild animals would only attack when they feel threatened? But we have the assurance that Christ, through his people, will have dominion over land and sea. This is what is carved into the Parliament building in Ottawa. God will keep his church. You must not stop believing this, but you must expect to be hated and persecuted!

God protected Israel by Joshua Circumcising them

2 At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "**Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons** of Israel again the second time." (2 那时, 耶和华吩咐约书亚说: “你制造火刀石, 第二次给以色列人行割礼。”) 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."

- 1. God told Joshua to make flint knives and circumcised all the males who** had not been circumcised before. (This was the bronze age, but they had no bronze knives yet.) This was virtually the entire population, with few exceptions. Most of the men who left Egypt died in the desert because of their rebellion. Because they were rebellious, they did not circumcise their sons. God should have killed all those who were not circumcised, but God was gracious and longsuffering to his sinful people. Furthermore, some foreigners and Egyptians who left Egypt with the Jews were not circumcised. They were part of the “mixed multitude” that left, and they needed to be circumcised as well.

2. Why was circumcision so necessary?

a. Circumcision was a testimony that God was reconciled to his people. Circumcision was God's promise that he had dropped the charges against Israel, for their sins would be covered by the coming Messiah. The Messiah was called “their circumcision.” When Jesus Christ died in his flesh and his blood was spilled, it made them clean. In fact, you will notice that this circumcision was done because God was preparing them to eat the Passover (逾越节), which symbolized their cleansing and reconciliation (和好) with God. It was a reminder that **they were protected**

from spiritual death. Circumcision was a means of grace

b. Circumcision distinguished the Jews from the Gentiles in Canaan. Every time a man looked at his own body he would be reminded that he belonged to the Lord, so he would not follow the ways of Canaan. Circumcision was a ratification (批准, 认可) of the Covenant God made with his people. They were saying that God was their God and they were going to be his people. **This protected them from sin.** It was a means of grace!

c. This application of the covenant sign to the people was not just for the people who were being circumcised, but it was a reminder to all Israel that they were in covenant with God. It was visual preaching – a grace.

3. Why didn't God wait to give the sign after the fighting and after Israel was established in the land? We think that it is good to get to the celebrations and signs after the fighting, but God thought otherwise. He wanted them to know that the battle was a good as done. They could celebrate. Israel could live victorious lives even before the fighting started. You can imagine that the children of Israel had sweet sleep, even in the presence of their enemies.

4. How awful that many Christians are not willing to have their children baptized! Having the sign of the covenant was and is the norm. If someone doesn't want to put the sign of the covenant on their children, then they have to prove from God's Word that they shouldn't. They have the burden of proof. Look how much God hates those who reject his covenant and its signs!

1Samuel 17:26 Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (大卫问站在旁边的人说：“有人杀这非利士人，除掉以色列人的耻辱，怎样待他呢？这未受割礼的非利士人是谁呢？竟敢向永生神的军队骂阵吗？”)

Someone who was uncircumcised had no right to be part of God's family. And remember how God wanted to kill Moses for not circumcising his son!

According to one historian, it was a thing of pride to be a good circumciser. They made a hill of all the foreskins.

5. What did God do to those who rejected the covenant sign for themselves or their children?

Numbers 14:33 `And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. (你们的儿女必在旷野飘流四十年，担当你们背信的罪，直到你们的尸首在旷野消灭。)

The sign of the covenant was an investment into the Promised Land, so those who rejected the covenant were robbing their children. But Israel did it willingly.

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.**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.

6. And here is the trust, the absolute trust that God demanded from Israel. He knew that they would need to trust him when they met the mighty warriors of Canaan. After their circumcision, the men of Israel were vulnerable, just as the Shechemites (示剑人) were vulnerable (虚弱的) when they were circumcised and were all killed Jacob's sons. .

Genesis 34:25 Now it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males. 26 And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went out.

With Israel, there was no anesthetic (麻醉药) . There were no antibiotics if there anyone developed an infection (炎症) . The intense heat of that location would have made life very difficult, and Israel would have been susceptible (易受影响的) to Canaanite attacks. God wanted Israel to trust him for protection. **If they trusted in God for protection they would not make any foolish confederacy** (联盟, 同盟) with the wicked people of the land for mutual protection. Remember how Hitler pushed England to make peace, but then he took a piece of Poland, France, and many other countries in Europe?

7. Furthermore, in order to strengthen them just a little more, God then required that they stayed there until they were healed. They had to wait on God's timetable. They had their desires, and they probably thought that they knew what was best, they were probably eager to fight and feast of the goodness of the land, but God had other ideas.

8. Furthermore, as they waited, they celebrated and enjoyed the Feast of the Passover – another means of grace before the fight. God was saying to them: "Enjoy this feast in the middle of the desert. I will go with you when it is time to fight. I will add power to your sword. I will protect you. Rest in me." Graciously God did not destroy those who had eaten the Passover and were not circumcised.

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. (耶和華對約書亞說：“我今日將埃及的羞辱從你們身上滾去了。”因此，那地方名叫吉甲，直到今日。)

9. Circumcision was truly a blessing for God's people, so much so, that God described his people as having their reproach removed. The shame of Israel's past was rolled away. "Gilgal" means "rolling" pointing to the fact that just as the foreskin was rolled back in circumcision and the child becomes clean, so God had rolled back Israel's sorrowful past of slavery. He had protected them. This is also true for the Christian:

Colossians 2:11 **In Him you were also circumcised** with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, **by the circumcision of Christ, 13** And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **He has made alive** together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

Ephesians 2:11-14-Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace...

This is why we can work together now for world dominion for Jesus Christ. We are joined by one Christ, who is our circumcision. In Christ Jesus God's anger has turned away. We are safe!

Conclusion:

God God protected Israel by putting fear into their enemies, so much so that their hearts melted like wax – from a perfect shape to nothing. Canaan had no courage to fight. They hated Israel, but they could not fight them. God protected Israel by Joshua circumcising them. By receiving God's mark, God means of grace, it confirmed that they were saved from God's judgment.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Know with confidence that God's hand holds off (阻挡) your enemies. No weapons that the Devil uses against you will prosper. You are safe in his electing love.
2. Keep in the covenant. Love your baptism and the baptism of your children. Feast at the Lord's Table (在主的桌前领圣餐) regularly. These means of grace will strengthen you and protect you in your battle for dominion. You can't fight for dominion if you aren't fed for duty.
3. Remember that it is Christ's kingdom that you are building so you have to use only the means he has designated.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, you can wait for God to mete out his judgment (上帝施行祂的审判) on you, or you can repent of you sins and plead Christ's life and death for them. You will then find him to be a faithful Father, one who will protect you from your greatest enemy, Satan.