

Within the Word

A Study of Joshua 5 & 6

A Note from Kathy

A good plan can be an invaluable tool. But what do you do when God's plan makes no sense to you? Do you obey or get creative? Would you honestly say you are trusting God's plan? The Israelites may not have understood the "how" of God's plan, but they understood the "who," and they obeyed. Obedience to God is always the right plan.

Observation

Read the chapter, at least twice, before beginning the study guide. This will give the Lord an opportunity to help you see the things He desires for you to know.

1. What changes did you see concerning the kings of the Amorites and the Canaanites? According to verse 1, what had their previous feelings been concerning Israel?
2. What event caused this dramatic change in attitude toward the nation of Israel?
3. In Joshua 4, we saw God lead the Israelites across the Jordan river with an amazing miracle of His favor. The people followed Joshua just as they had agreed to do. Chapter 5 opens with God giving Joshua an assignment for the people. What were they instructed to do in verse 2? Specifically, who did God instruct to participate in this act of obedience?
4. How long had the Israelites been traveling in the wilderness? _____
5. Many years earlier, the Lord had commanded Moses to send the 12 spies into the land He had promised them. What do you suppose God wanted them to come back and tell their family and friends? What did their report consist of?

Numbers 13:26-33

They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. ²⁷They gave Moses this account: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. ²⁸But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. ²⁹The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan." ³⁰Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it." ³¹But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." ³²And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. ³³We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."

6. Read the verses below. Was their report unanimous? Whose report differed? What was their report?

Numbers 14:5-9

Then Moses and Aaron fell face down in front of the whole Israelite assembly gathered there. ⁶Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes ⁷and said to the entire Israelite assembly, “The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. ⁸If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. ⁹Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them.”

7. What was the Lord’s response to the spies report?

Numbers 14:26-35

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: ²⁷“How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites. ²⁸So tell them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the LORD, I will do to you the very thing I heard you say: ²⁹In this wilderness your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. ³⁰Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. ³¹As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected. ³²But as for you, your bodies will fall in this wilderness. ³³Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the wilderness. ³⁴For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land—you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.’ ³⁵I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will surely do these things to this whole wicked community, which has banded together against me. They will meet their end in this wilderness; here they will die.”

8. In Joshua 5:4-7, we see a quick recap of the events we just read in Numbers 13 and 14. What event marked a new beginning for the nation of Israel? This was the sign of the covenant, which the people neglected while wandering in the wilderness.
9. According to Joshua 5:9, what was the result of this act of disobedience?
10. The preparations were complete; the Israelites had done everything they had been told to do. What do we see them doing in verses 10-12?
11. Manna was a miraculous provision by God. You may want to go back and read Exodus 16, which describes the day they began receiving manna. What did you learn about the manna in Joshua 5?
12. As Joshua approached Jericho, whom did he meet? What was Joshua’s response?
13. How was Jericho described in Joshua 6:1?

14. Even though the people of Jericho may have done all they could to secure their city, what did the Lord say concerning Jericho?

15. What did the Ark of the Covenant represent?

16. What specific details were given to Joshua and the Israelites on how to take Jericho?

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| a. | d. |
| b. | e. |
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17. What were the specific instructions given for the treasure found in Jericho? Verse 19 clearly stated what was to be done with the silver, gold, bronze, and iron articles. Note the words “all” and “must.” Do those words leave room for doubt or debate?

18. List the chain of events in verses 20-21?

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19. Rahab had been faithful to her word and not revealed anything to any of the people of Jericho. Were the spies faithful to their word? What happened to Rahab?

20. According to verse 24, what happened to all the valuable things found in Jericho?

Application

1. Ten of the 12 Israelite spies sent in to spy out the land brought back a bad report. They had fixed their eyes on the wrong thing. It was not that they did not see the abundant blessing of the land, just as God had promised. It was the size of the opposition that had taken their courage. They were comparing the opposition to themselves. What should they have been comparing it to? Have you ever been faced with an obvious blessing from God, but you allowed your fears to rob you of it?

2. The instructions for circumcision had been given to the children of Israel when God established His covenant with Abraham, according to Genesis 17:9-14 below.

Genesis 17:9-14

Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. ¹⁰This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹²For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring. ¹³Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."

Why do you suppose the Israelites had not kept up with this act of worship? I realize this is simply a guess on our part but try to step into their sandals for a few minutes.

Are there acts of worship that get overlooked today? Acts of worship can be defined as, anything done in obedience to God, any act of service done in His name and for His glory. The following verses may help you see some areas that need your focus. As you read below, underline the specific act of worship mentioned.

Romans 12:1

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Colossians 4:14-17

And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Hebrews 10:23-25

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 13:1-2

Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. ²Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

1 John 3:17-18

If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? ¹⁸Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

3. As believers, what have we been commanded to do in remembrance? What is this called?

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵In the same way, after supper he took the cup saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

4. What is the word for partial obedience? Have you ever wondered how God might bless you, if you were obedient to all you know to do?
5. The Israelites had not been obedient to God's command concerning circumcision, as they wandered in the wilderness. God commanded Joshua to see that all males were circumcised. What would that do to their security? What would it take for them to follow this command knowing it would require approximately 3 days for them to heal?
6. Can you recall a time when you stepped out in faith and trusted God in the midst of a dangerous circumstance? Was God faithful? How did he show himself worthy of your trust?
7. The Israelites had wandered for 40 years. The generation who refused to walk in obedience and trust God had all passed away. The next generation was then given the opportunity to take possession of the land God had promised them. Scripture tells us that this act of obedience (circumcision) brought restoration and resulted in worship. Is there something God has been speaking to you about that would serve as a catalyst for complete restoration and blessing?
8. Joshua met the commander of the Lord's army as he neared the city of Jericho. His response was one of reverence. Notice the question Joshua asked, "What message does my Lord have for His servant?" What question do you have for the Lord? When in His presence, what is your attitude?
9. Do you believe the Israelite leaders followed Joshua because the plan to take Jericho sounded like a good military strategy? Would this have been considered a normal plan for seizing a walled city?
10. It was not with a shot that Israel took this city. It was not the might of their army. It was their obedience to the word of the Lord and His faithfulness to His word. Do you believe God can and will care for you as He has promised? What seemingly impossible thing has God promised you as you follow Him?
11. Joshua 6 focuses on two main themes: 1) the sovereignty of God, and 2) the way God allows people to be involved in His work. God used Joshua, the priests, the men of military age, the congregation of Israel, and even Rahab, the harlot from Jericho, to carry out His will. Our past does not determine our future, nor does it determine our usefulness to God. What does determine our usefulness to God?