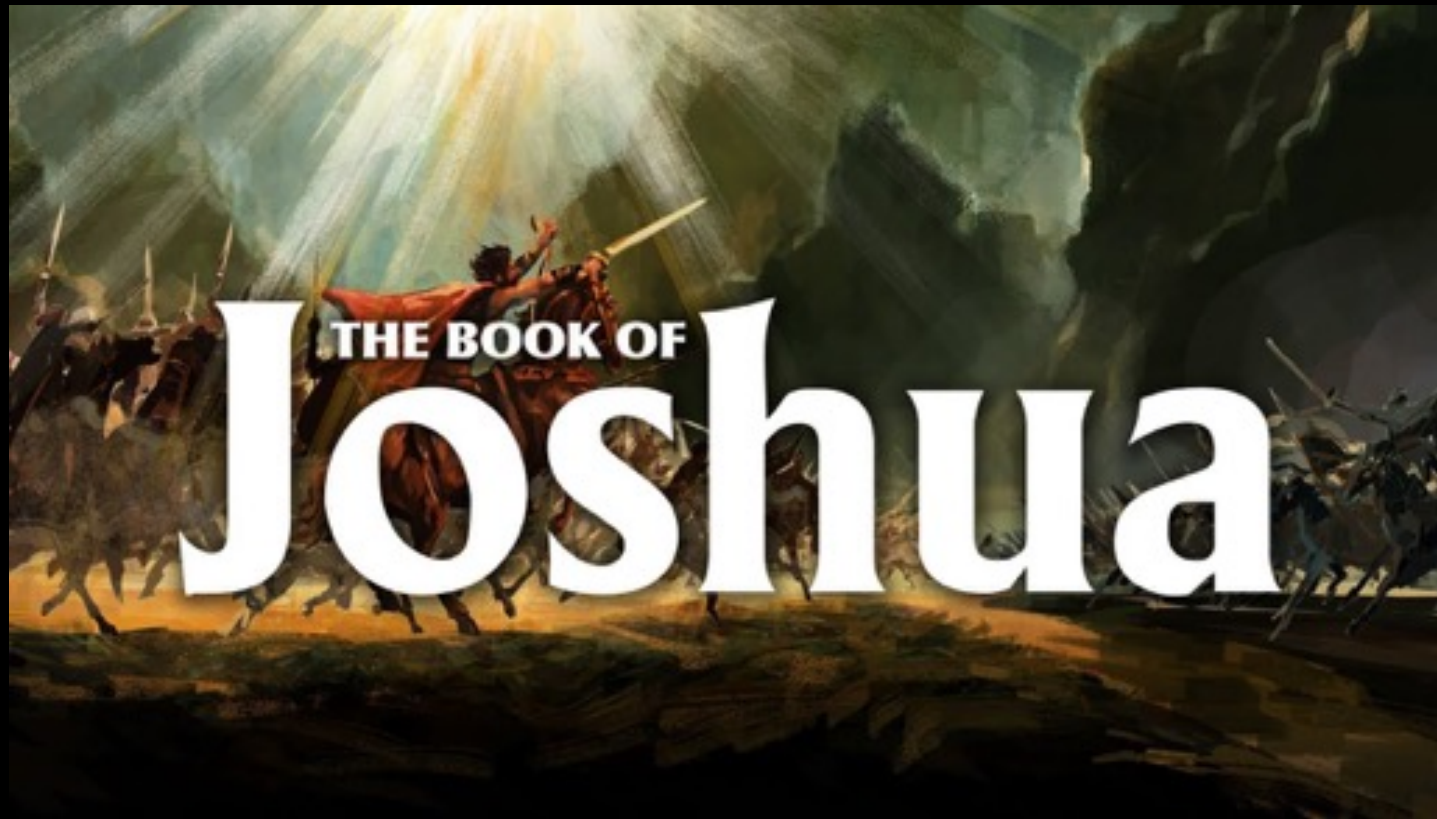


First Things First—
Joshua Consecrates the People of Israel

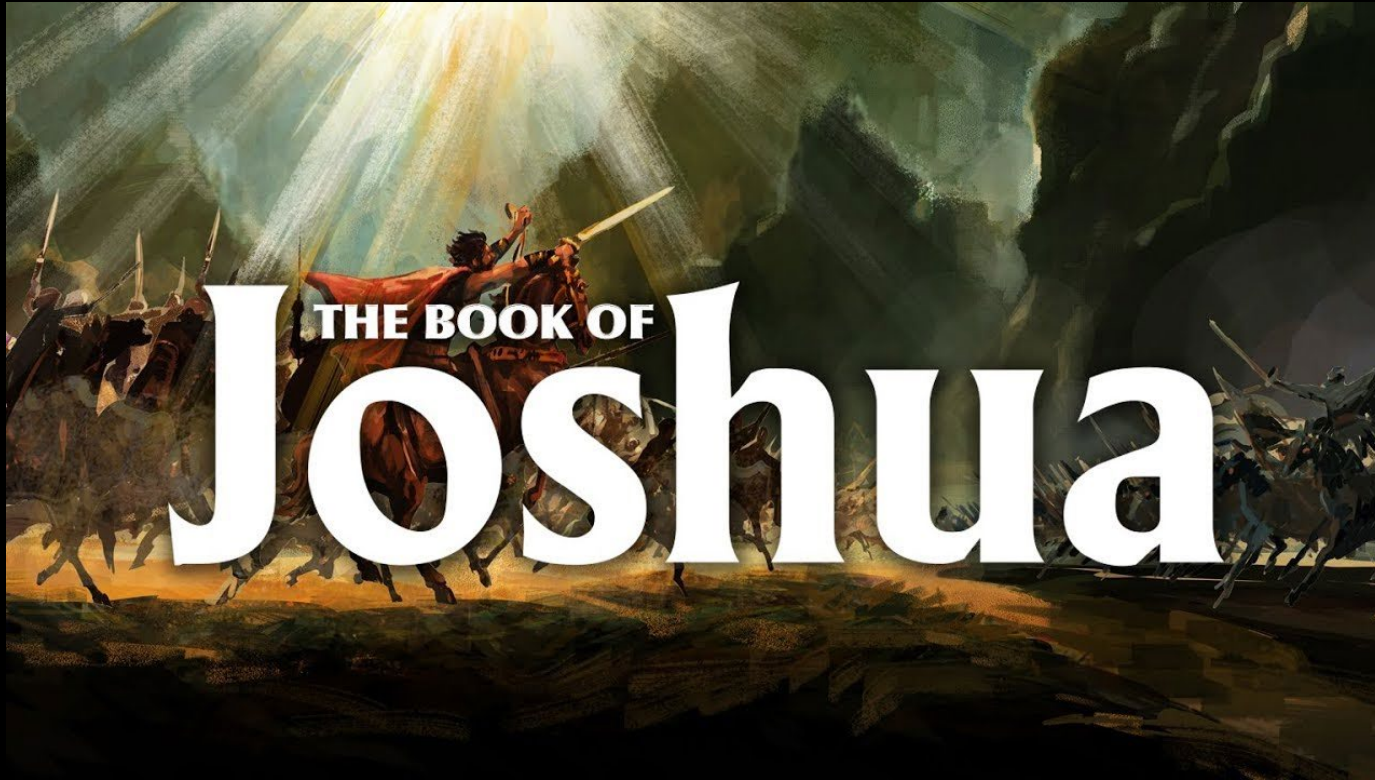


Joshua 5:1-5, 8-11

¹ As soon as all the kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the people of Israel until they had crossed over, their hearts melted and there was no longer any spirit in them because of the people of Israel. ² At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the sons of Israel a second time." ³ So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth. ⁴ And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males of the people who came out of Egypt, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way after they had come out of Egypt. ⁵ Though all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people who were born on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised. . . .

Joshua 5:1-5, 8-11

⁸ When the circumcising of the whole nation was finished, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed. ⁹ And the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." And so the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day. ¹⁰ While the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal, they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain.



After 40 years of wandering in the desert, Israel was finally in the Land of Promise. But before they could begin the conquest of the land, there were **two overriding spiritual matters** that had to be taken care of first: the reinstatement of the covenant sign of **circumcision** and the celebration of the **Passover**.



Joshua had just led the nation and his army across the Jordan.

They had established a beachhead at **Gilgal**.

The morale of the people of Canaan had utterly collapsed in the face of the news that Israel **had already defeated the powerful kings of the Amorites** in Transjordan and that God had miraculously dried up the Jordan River just like he had the Red Sea.



From every human point of view, it was time to strike immediately at the strongholds of Canaan.

Recovery time for a modern adult circumcision can be as long as **4-6 weeks**.

It probably did not seem like the right time for a military commander to incapacitate his entire army in a hostile environment.

But from God's point of view Israel was not yet ready to fight on Canaan's soil.

They had some important unfinished spiritual business to do.

God calls us to put first things first.



1. Your relationship with God takes precedence over everything else.

Under the Old Testament, **circumcision** was **God's sign** to remind his people of their privileged **covenant relationship** with him.

Genesis 17:10–11

¹⁰ This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹ You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.





Circumcision may seem to us like an odd sign of faith, but it reminded a Jewish man in the most intimate part of his own flesh that he **belonged to God.**

The sons of Israel who were **born during the wilderness wanderings** were **not circumcised**, which may be further evidence of their parents' spiritual indifference.



The spiritual sign of circumcision is paralleled in the New Testament by **baptism**, which is the sign of our covenant relationship with God.



Colossians 2:11–12

¹¹ In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.



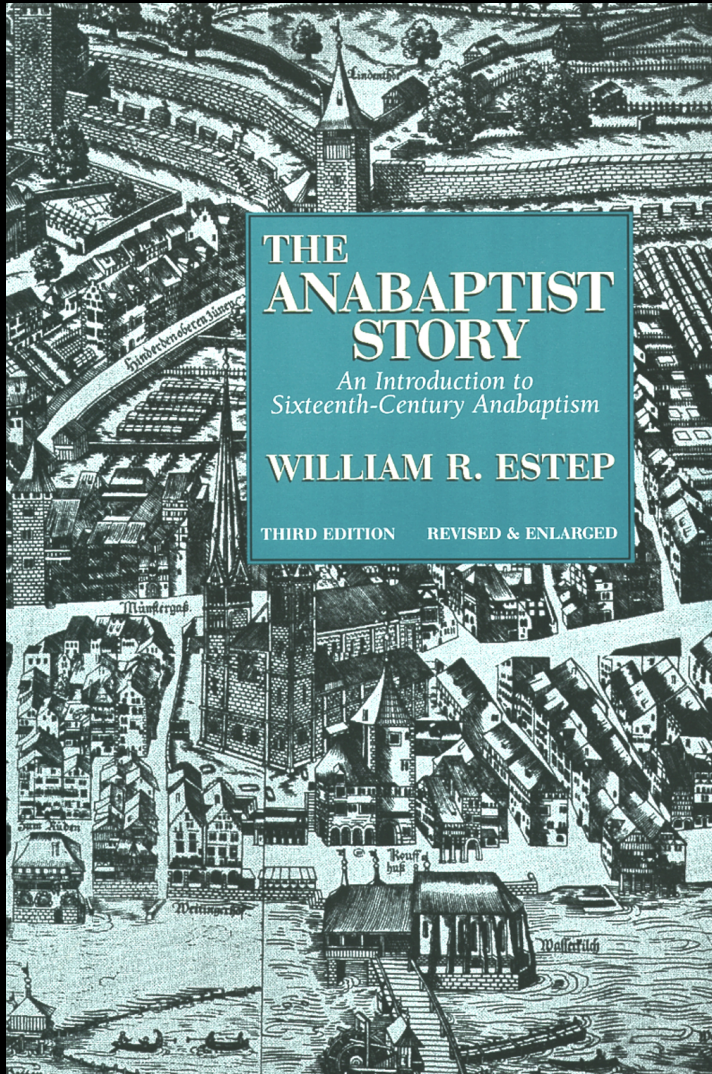
“Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer’s faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer’s death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord’s Supper.”

—*Baptist Faith & Message 2000*

In the New Testament **every believer** was baptized by immersion and **only believers** were baptized (no infants).



During the 16th century, when the first **Anabaptists** refused to allow their children to be baptized and reinstated believer's baptism by immersion, they were **persecuted** by the mainline Protestant reformers.



Some were **martyred** by drowning, called "The Third Baptism."

2. Remembering your redemption by Christ is the most important thing you could possibly put on your calendar.



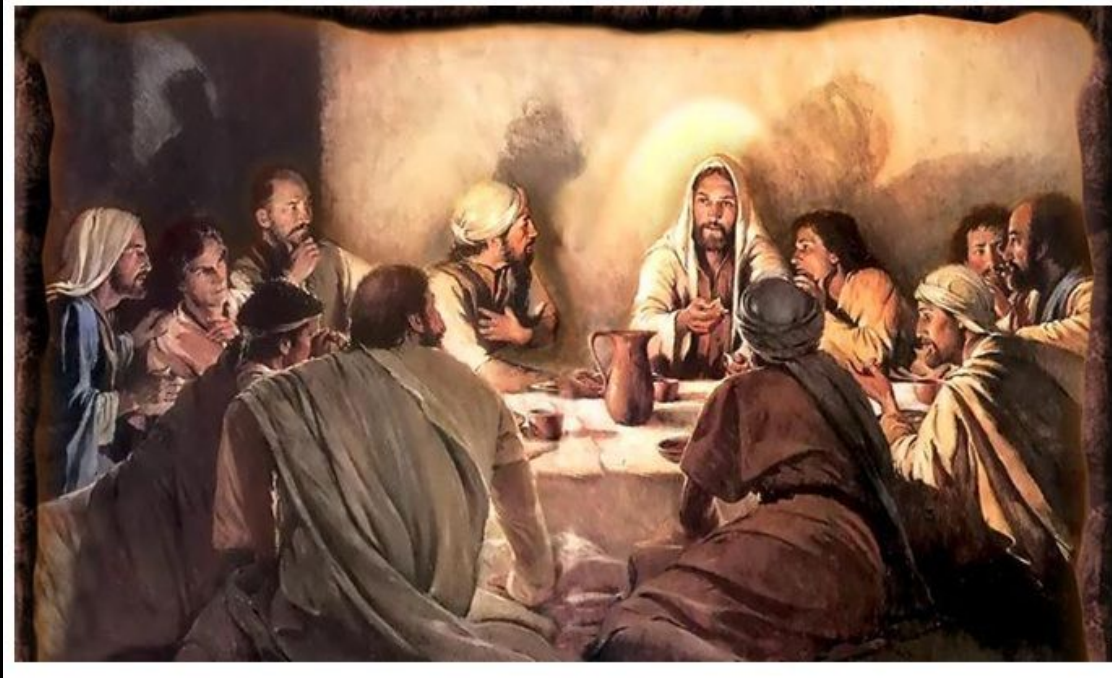
The blood of the first Passover Lambs was **the sign** on homes that were **marked to be saved** when death passed through the land of Egypt.

So, the **yearly Passover** feast became **God's sign** to remind his people that he had redeemed out of bondage.

Exodus 12:24–28

²⁴You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. ²⁵And when you come to the land that the LORD will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. ²⁶And when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' ²⁷you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the LORD's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.' " And the people bowed their heads and worshiped. ²⁸Then the people of Israel went and did so; as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.





The spiritual sign of the Passover is paralleled in the New Testament by the *Lord's Supper*, which is the Christian's sign of our redemption from the bondage of sin through the sacrificial death of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

The Last Supper when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper was a Passover meal.

Matthew 26:26-28

²⁶ Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." ²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.



The **most important appointment** you can put on your *calendar* is being with the Lord's people in the Lord's house when we gather at the **Lord's Table.**



3. Consecration comes before conquest.



Conquering the Promised Land was important.

And after so many years of living in the desert, the urge to begin the conquest must have been strong.

But reinstating the covenant signs of circumcision and the Passover were matters of even greater importance.

God wanted his people to see that **consecration comes before conquest.**



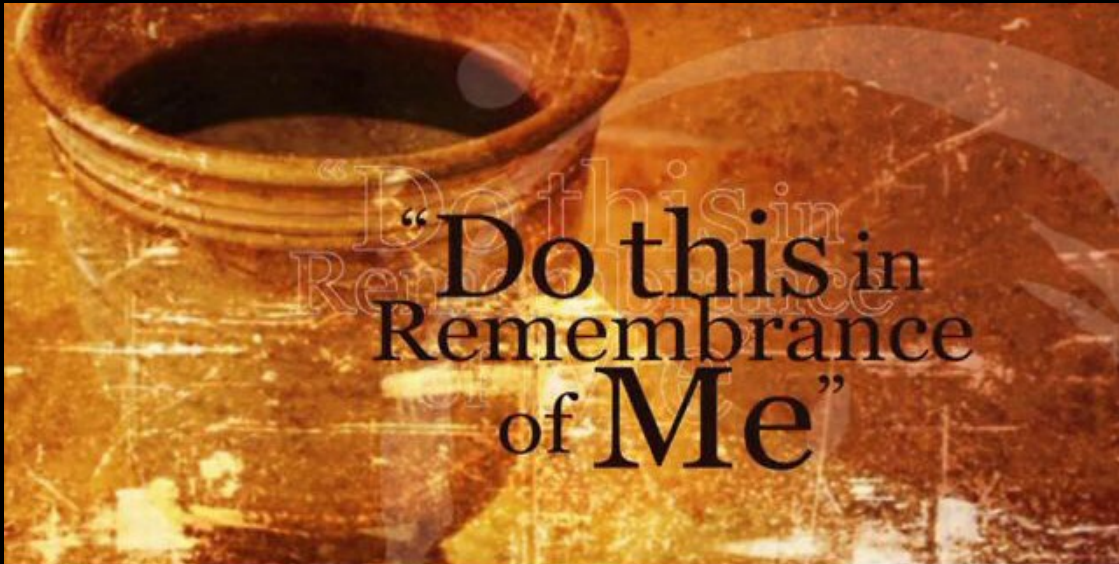
Observing circumcision and the Passover after the Israelites crossed over the Jordan were *acts of faith*.

It required them to **trust God for protection** while they are vulnerable and to commit themselves afresh to basing their life in the land on their identity as God's people.



Baptism and the Lord's Supper are *not small things*.

They are vital expressions of a saving faith that every believer must carefully attend to.



Application

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 BUSY	3 BUSY <small>Election Day</small>	4 BUSY	5 BUSY	6 BUSY
9 BUSY	10 BUSY	11 BUSY <small>Veterans Day</small>	12 BUSY	13 BUSY
16 BUSY	17 BUSY	18 BUSY	19 BUSY	20 BUSY
23 BUSY	24 BUSY	25 BUSY	26 BUSY <small>Thanksgiving Day</small>	27 BUSY <small>Eid-ul-Adha Begins at Sundown</small>
30 BUSY	How Far Is It to Grandma's House?			OCTOBER 2009 S M T W T F S 1 2 3



Application

First Commandment

" You shall love the
Lord your God with
all your heart and
with all your soul
and with all your
mind . "

- Matthew 22:37

Does your relationship with God take precedence over everything else?

Is being in the Lord's house with the Lord's people every Lord's Day the first and most important event on your **weekly calendar**?

Is a daily time alone with God and his Word the first and most important event on your **daily schedule**?

Are your tithes and offerings the first thing you attend to in handling your **monthly expenses**?