

Circumcision: A Sign of Being in Covenant  
Obedience to the Lord  
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Take your Bibles and turn to Joshua 5 please. Brian Schultz said to me in a text and in person to make sure I got the message loud and clear, "Pastor, we don't have a parking problem at this church, we have a walking problem in the church." He said it, not me. He's right, isn't he? It's a walking problem not a parking problem. We need one of those conveyor belt things where you just stand on it like at the airport. That way you don't have to burn any calories. You just step on there and it just brings you into the church. The doors rotate open and you just come down. Somebody grabs you and pushes you to Sunday School. I was out in the parking lot this morning and I'm going to chastise the 8:30 service. We have this mass exodus that occurs. I thought it was y'all not going to Sunday School, now I realize there's just as many of those 8:30 folks that are not going there. I'm going to start preaching from the back of the church and then I'm going to beat them out the door. That'll take care of that problem right there. Everybody needs to go to Sunday School.

This is our monthly bulletin and it's got a beautiful cover on it about Vacation Bible School. I've got a personal note in there that I'd like you to read this week some time. So, make sure you grab one of these. If you take them all, we'll print some more. This is our June one. Take the back of your bulletin this morning and I want you to take notes this morning. We've got too much to cover so we'll have to talk fast and that'll be a change of pace for us. Four of you are paying attention.

Joshua 5. You all that are joining the church this morning, come very quickly at the end of the service, don't wait a bit. We're not going to have too many stanza of "Just As I Am" so come right away. These folks are hungry and they don't want to wait for you.

Joshua 5:1, "And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward..." Let's stand for the reading of God's Word, you know what we do, "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. At that time the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time. And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. 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. 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. 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 sware that he would not shew them the land, which the Lord sware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey. 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. 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. 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.”

*Father, thank you for your grace. Bless the preaching of your Word this morning in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Let's start off right away by saying that if you were committed to verse-by-verse chapter-by-chapter preaching, this is not a text that you would select for a Sunday morning message. Several times during the week I thought, can I just move on. Let's get to Jericho, that's some good stuff right there. I've never said circumcision so many times in such a short period of time. What a text.

For all our guests and visitors, let's bring you up to speed for where we're at in the Bible narrative or in the story. Let's start with Genesis 1 with Adam and Eve and there are three sons who had other sons and we see that that's the beginning of creation. We move to Genesis chapter 6 and Noah finds grace in the eyes of the Lord and God saves Noah, his wife, three boys, Shem, Ham and Japheth, their three wives. Eight are saved in the ark and God starts all over there. Let's move to Genesis chapter 11 with the Tower of Babel and the scattering of the people into different languages. In Genesis chapter 12, God calls Abraham out of the Ur of Chaldees and he and Sarah together have a child by the name of Isaac. Isaac grows up and marries Rebekah. Rebekah and Isaac together have two twin boys, Jacob and...church? Esau. Jacob is the favored one and wins the birthright, marries first Leah and then Rachel, two handmaids, four wives. Together they have 12 boys and some women. Quite a family right there.

That basically takes us up for the rest of the book of Genesis, closing out with Joseph in Egypt with the entire family. Then in Exodus chapter 1 a new Pharaoh rises up, you recall this, who does not like the Jews, puts them in bondage and the Israelites begin to cry out to God for deliverance. God raises up a man by the name of Moses who will lead them out of Egypt en route to the Promised Land. 1446, God gives Moses the law in Sinai and we start this whole idea of the people being the people of God, following the law of God en route to the Promised Land. We get really close to the Promised Land, 12 spies are sent out, ten come back and say, “No way. The giants are in the land. We are as like grasshoppers in their eyes. No way, we can't go in.” The punishment for that

disobedience was 40 years in a wilderness wandering around and around until that entire generation dies. That'll been an important point to our sermon in just a minute. Moses is not able to go into the Promised Land. He dies in Deuteronomy 34. You recall, he can't go into the Promised Land because when he was supposed to speak to rock, he struck the rock and that was God's judgment on Moses for his sin of disobedience. By the way, God still expects people to obey him. That hasn't changed.

Joshua chapter 1, God raises up Joshua and commissions him as the new leader. Joshua chapter 2, two spies are sent out and you recall, Rahab the harlot protects them. Joshua chapter 3, we cross the Jordan River on what kind of ground? Dry ground which is a glorious miracle and one that we'll talk about this morning. In Joshua chapter 4, 12 memorial stones are set up in the river and outside the river as a reminder of what God has done for the Israelites. This takes us to where we're at right here and this morning's sermon.

Starting in verse 1, we're going to look at God's sovereignty and closing in verse 9 we want to look at this idea of God rolling back a reproach. This is our message for this morning. Let's get started.

Look at this text in verse 1. "Their hearts are melting neither was their spirit in them any more." Now, think about this. You're going to have to get into the text this morning to enjoy this. Put your sanctified imagination on and get into the text. You are in the Promised Land and you are one of the ones that the Israelites intend on killing. You're a Canaanite or a Amalekite or any of the other 'kites that are out there. You're in that land and they're over there on the other side of the Jordan. Well, that's wonderful. You've got a nice break, they're on that said, we're on this side. That's pretty good. They're over there and we're over here. But wait a minute, they're now over here. How did they get over here? I mean, what did the spies report? "What spies are you talking about?" The enemy's spies, the ones that were looking at the Israelites. Remember, if you've got two million people on that side of the river intent on coming over here, that is a threat to you and your way of life. You just imagine for a minute. What's that little river we have down here? The Cape Fear River. Just imagine two million people on the other side of the Cape Fear River intent on taking Fayetteville down. Your heart, too, would be troubled, especially when you found out how did they get across that river? God parted it for them. Say what? God parted it for them. Wait a minute, I thought that God was dead. Remember, it had been 40 years since he'd done something like that. I thought that God was dead. I thought that God was through with them? No, he's alive and well is what the report is.

Right away, we see God's sovereignty. We're reminded that every wind, every storm, every river, every planet, every ounce of gravity, you name it, God's in control of it. Every molecule, every atom, every neutron, proton, all of it, God is in control of every bit of it. And so, God uses his mighty power not only to part the Jordan River, but the parting of the Jordan River sends shockwaves throughout the entire land. Hearts are melting, spirits are leaving people. Fear is now being used to keep the enemy at bay. Why? Why does the enemy need to be kept at bay? Why do we need the enemy kept at a

distance? Because we are getting ready as a fighting force to completely debilitate ourselves for 2-3 weeks. What do you mean? These were not eight day old infants that were being circumcised. These were the adult fighting males that were being circumcised.

You're looking at 2, 3, 4 weeks of barely able to move. No ability to defend the people of God. They are laid up. So, who will protect them during this time? Jehovah will. Jehovah will protect them. Jehovah will send shockwaves of fear throughout the land and keep the enemy at a distance so that Israel can focus in on the spiritual things in preparation for the battle of Jericho. So, God uses fear. He creates in the Canaanites fear, to protect Israel from the attack.

What is the origin of circumcision? This is a picture of a flint knife. Every lady is like, "Boy, I'm thankful I'm a female this morning." That is awkward at best. If you're not connecting, you're not paying attention. Maybe you're glad you're not paying attention this morning. Genesis 17, let's turn back to Genesis 17. What is the origin of circumcision? Verse 9. God renews his covenant with Abraham. The renewal of the covenant requires a sign and the sign that God insists for Abraham and all the males in his household is the sign of circumcision.

"And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. 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. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant."

Let me ask you church, could language be any stronger? Could you really have much stronger language than that right there? Everyone that disobeys this will be cut off from the people. You will die if you do not obey God in this covenant requirement. Let me remind you that the Abraham covenant had three components to it. It was a unilateral covenant. Unilateral means it was God who originated and it was God who would keep it. It wasn't a joint effort, it wasn't bilateral, it wasn't dependent upon Abraham's obedience. God said, "This is what I'm going to do. I'm going to bless those that bless you, Abraham, and I'm going to curse those who curse you. Abraham, I'm going to give you and your descendants a parcel of land that's gigantic. Number three, I'm going to make your name known by giving you descendants as the stars of the sky, the sands of the sea." That was the blessing. The reality was that physical circumcision was an outward sign of a right inward relationship with God.

Let me show you what I mean. Genesis 15 comes before Genesis 17 and in Genesis 15 this is what the Scripture records. "Abraham believed the Lord and it was counted unto

him for righteousness.” Let’s get this connection, let’s not lose this, this morning. Let’s make sure we understand what’s happening here. The heart gets right with God first. And when the heart is right with God there can be outward signs of a right heart. You see, God’s more concerned about the inward than the outward, more concerned with the heart. So, once Abraham’s heart is right with God, then the physical sign comes after that.

So, why weren’t these males already circumcised? Well, Joshua goes out of his way to explain it in verses 4-7. This is the reason why these folks weren’t circumcised. All the males that came out of Egypt they were even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way after they came out of Egypt. So, if you were born in Egypt, you were circumcised because in Egypt we kept those requirements and we were circumcising all the male children of eight days old and we were following the covenant that God had given Abraham, and then subsequently Isaac and then to Jacob. We were following that. We were doing it right. 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.

You see, when God gave them the directive that they were going to die in the wilderness the rebellion must’ve been so great that they were done keeping the covenant anymore. They were done. They were finished with God. They were finished with following Moses’ instructions. They were done with keeping the covenant. And so, you’ve got 40 years of male children being born, none of which were circumcised. None of which were circumcised. None.

Now, I will submit to you that their hearts were right with the Lord. You say, “How do you know their hearts were right with the Lord?” Because they were following Joshua into the Promised Land. So, their hearts, they believed the covenant. Now all that needed to happen is the outward symbol needed to follow the heart that had already been converted. See, if you pay attention, what you’ll see is we’re talking gospel all over again. We’re talking conversion all over again. We’re talking about your heart. Who cares about the outward if the heart is not there. I don’t want to hear about your baptism if your heart is not converted. It’s meaningless. Don’t tell me about your church membership if your heart is not converted. Don’t tell me about what you do in the church. Don’t tell me about the outwardness of your circumcision that everyone can see if your heart is not converted.

“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.” Why? “Because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord: unto whom the Lord sware that he would not shew them the land.” What land? The land of Canaan, the Promised Land. “Which the Lord sware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey. 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.”

Right down Numbers 14 if you want to study this for yourself. It was in Kadesh Barnea that the men of Israel refused to believe in the land, the promise that God had given first to Abraham and then to Isaac and to Jacob, to Joseph and to Moses.

You know, it's very interesting that Stephen picks up on this exact same language, the same language in Acts 7. Let me show you. This is what Steven says, talking to a completely different generation of Jews and he says, "You stiff necked uncircumcised in the heart and ears." Isn't that interesting? Every Jew, no doubt, that Stephen was preaching to in Jerusalem at that time, was probably physically circumcised at eight days old. He wasn't talking to them about their physical circumcision. He said, "You are a bunch of stiff necked and uncircumcised in the heart, eyes and ears." Imagine that. Stephen would get fired in the evangelical church today. He'd get fired, he'd lose his job.

How many people today have the outward sign of water baptism, but their heart, eyes and ears are uncircumcised? How many people have been dunked in that tank right there? And they're so far from God it's not even funny. In that one. In this city. Now, magnify that by hundreds and thousands of churches all across the United States. And suddenly you realize we've got people everywhere that have outward signs of circumcision but their hearts have not been circumcised by the Lord.

Why are you talking like this right now? Because I'm concerned. I'm concerned that even Berean Baptist Church that we could have people that have the outward sign of circumcision but inside their heart is far from the Lord. Is that your heart? Maybe you won't admit it. Maybe you won't admit it. Maybe you're resisting hard. When I look at you, you turn away. Why? Are you uncomfortable with this?

Look what Paul said in Romans 2:29, I've got the Scripture on the screen for you, "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Do you see that? See the beautiful transition, the language that Paul is using there? You want to be a Jew? You think that claiming to be a son of Abraham does it? That's not a true Jew. A true Jew is one that's had a circumcision inside his heart. That's a true Jew. That's the one whose inside has been converted. He said they're not doing this because of the letter of the law, they're doing it because of their love for God. Notice, God is their focus, not the praise of men. They're not joining the church because their small business will do well at that church. They're not joining that church because it's a cool church to be a part of. They're not joining that church or going to that Sunday School class because that's the business connection you get. That's the evangelical church today. That's us today.

You think this is a New Testament idea? Let's walk the dog back. Let's go to this great Scripture in Deuteronomy 30. "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart." Love it. I love it! God does this circumcision. "Joshua you do that circumcision because I've already done a circumcision in their heart. I've already cut their heart. I've already done my work in there. I've already regenerated them. The Spirit's already moved in their hearts."

“And the Lord thy God he will circumcise thy heart and the heart of thy seed.” And what will be the result of this circumcision? “How will I know, Pastor, if I’ve been circumcised?” Do you love God? Do you love God? Do you love God? Are you bananas for Jesus? Is it hard for you to praise God or does it come natural for you to praise God? Do you enjoy godly music? Do you enjoy things that exalt God? Or is it difficult for you? Has your heart been circumcised? In the New Covenant, God cuts away the dead heart and God gives his people a new heart. In Ezekiel, “I will give them one heart and I will put my Spirit in them. I will take out the stony heart. I will give them a heart.” Suddenly, we realize that this physical circumcision is just a picture of what God does inside the heart. It’s just a beautiful picture of what God has already done in his people. He cuts away the dead and replaces it with living.

If you have a modern translation it’s because they just decided to transliterate the Hebrew. They just run it out. They don’t want to tell you, this is the hill of foreskins. What a graphic image. How many people have to be circumcised for it to become a hill of foreskins? We’re not dealing with a handful of people here, folks. You say, “Why would you stress that? That’s not necessary to stress.” Because I want you to understand the degree to which Israel is putting themselves in a vulnerable position by having every male that’s capable of defending them laid up, completely debilitated. Laying there.

Was this a test of their faith? Was this a test of their faith? What? Was God testing their faith? Does God intentionally bring things into your life to test your faith? Would God bring tragedy and craziness and difficulty into your life to test your faith? Would God use those kind of things to see where you’re at? Could you imagine such a thing?

While recovering from circumcision Israel must trust in the Lord for their protection. One would think they should’ve been circumcised on the East side of the Jordan River. Now, think about this. Can you imagine the pushback that Joshua must’ve got when those instructions were first given out? “Hey, idiot! We were on that side of the Jordan River. That’s where we should’ve done this.”

Let me show you the map so you get a better understanding of what I mean. Here’s the Jordan River highlighted for you in blue. We came up like this and we parked over here all two million of us. There is a mountain range between us and the enemy. Remember, we’d already whipped the folks on this side, we’d already secured this area. All the military guys, you can relate to this this morning. We’re going to cross this mountain, cross this river, get over here close to the enemy and then we’re going to lay up? If you’re a commander, if you have any kind of tactics at all, I’m talking about basic 101 in tactics, you know that this is the place we do the circumcision, not on this side. I mean, any military leader that would’ve led their people there would be considered an idiot.

But, wait a minute, Joshua was a man of faith. And God was asking him to do what looked like an impossible thing, looked like a stupid thing, looked like a non-wise thing. Sometimes that’s what it means to live by faith. Sometimes you’re doing something that the entire world around you looks at and says, “That doesn’t make any sense at all. Why are you doing that?” And the only retort you have is, “This is what the Lord wants us to

do. That's all." And that's good enough. So, they're here until they're healed and I'm reminded that it's by his stripes that we, too, are healed.

Now, let me show you in the text, turn back to Joshua 5, please. Let me show you in the text the two things that come after this obedience. Joshua 5. I want you to see it in your own Bible. We'll preach on both of these, both are excellent. Please notice in verses 1-9 we have children of Israel being obedient unto Joshua their leader in the area of circumcision and then after their obedience comes a celebration of the Passover. And then after the celebration of the Passover, God delivers Jericho into their hands. So, what we see is full obedience to the covenant of God always precedes victory. Always precedes victory. So, if you're not experiencing victory in your life, if there's an area in your life and you say, "Pastor, I'm not experiencing victory." Ask yourself, is there any area where I'm disobeying God? Is there any area where I'm disobeying God? Because obedience precedes victory. Obedience precedes victory. Let's face it church, we're having a hard time with obedience. We're having a hard time with obedience.

Now let's look at verse 9, and this is really good, I want to unpack this for you, "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." What's this all about? What's this idea of rolling reproach all about? Let's get into this and understand what is happening here. What is the reproach of Egypt? What is this reproach of Egypt that God is now rolling away? I want to know what he means to Joshua, "I'm going to roll back the reproach."

Let's define reproach. We are going to go all the way to the obsolete definition. We're going to look at the obsolete definition. It's one subjected to censure or scorn. So, let's not use reproach anymore, let's start talking about the scorn of Egypt. Let's use the scorn of Egypt. Would you consider with me for a moment, after God parted the Red Sea for Israel, they went into the wilderness and wandered around for 40 years and died. Now, the reason that you're not connecting with this right away is because you know the whole story. But the Egyptians would not have known the whole story. They would not have known the judgment. They would not have known about the ten spies. They would not have known about the eventual promise. All they would've known about is what their spies reported about Israel. That's all they would've known about. Which is, what is Israel doing right now? You say, "Why would they pay attention to Israel?" Because they lost an entire army due to Israel. Do you remember? Into the Red Sea after them. And God says, "Done." And they drown. This Israel caused us to lose the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, the 101<sup>st</sup>, the Tenth Mountain Division and on and on and on. We don't have a standing army anymore because of Israel. You don't think you'd pay attention to what they were doing after such a defeat? You'd pay attention wouldn't you?

What are they doing? What are they doing? Last word is that they're in the wilderness and they're wandering around as nomads. What? Pharaoh sends another dispatch five years later. Still wandering around as nomads. Any evidence that they're going to the Promised Land? No. Any evidence that they're keeping all those things that they told Moses they had to leave to keep? Nope. Any evidence that the Tabernacle is set up? No.

Any evident that God is blessing them like he did before? Very little, very little. Certainly not going into the Promised Land, no victory. They're in a wilderness and they're dying. Eating the same thing. And how are their spirits, good? No. It's a word I can't use in church, that's how bad it is. It stinks. Off the chart.

So now, what is Egypt saying about Israel? What is Egypt saying about Israel, church? Scoffing, mocking. That's the scorn, that's the reproach of Egypt. The utter embarrassment of being the people of God right now because what did we do? For 40 years, we wandered around in the wilderness and we were the scorn of every single nation around us.

So, God says to Joshua, "Today. Today, I'm taking that reproach and I'm rolling it back. I'm going to take that reproach and I'm rolling it back. They're not going to say that about you anymore. They're done scoffing you now. You're going into the Promised Land. When they hear what happens to those walls of Jericho, they'll shut their mouths. They won't reproach you anymore when they see what we do when we walk around that city and the entire thing collapses and you start taking down nations, you start taking down cities. They won't talk about you anymore." God's back and he's fighting for Israel. "They're done talking bad about you, Joshua, you're going to lead them in. And for your entire lifetime, they're going to talk about that God of Israel."

Moses predicted this scorn, do you know that? Let me show you. Do you remember in Numbers 14? Let me just refresh you, where they said we're not going in and God said "I'm done with them. I'm done with Israel. I'm done. I've had it. We're going to start all over with you Moses. We're going to wipe everyone out and we're starting all over with you." And what is Moses? He's a type of Christ. What does he do? He goes into his intercessory mode. Do you remember that? He goes into his intercessory mode. We love what Christ can do for us when God says, "I'm done with you." And Christ says, "I bought them with my blood."

And so, he goes into his intercessory mode and he doesn't say, "Let me tell you about how good they are." He doesn't tell him about all this. He reminds God about what they're going to talk about. You God. "God, what will they say about you." Look at the text with me. "Moses said unto the Lord, Then the Egyptians shall hear it." Moses is concerned about what the Egyptians will say. Moses is concerned about the scorn of the Egyptians. Moses is concerned about what the Egyptians are saying. He says, "They're going to say this, that thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them, they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou Lord art among this people, that thou Lord art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night, now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people..." So now, he begins to call into question God's ability to fulfill the promise that he made and you don't go there with God. You don't go there with God because God is going to fulfill the covenant. Because what kind of a covenant is it according to the text? It's an everlasting covenant.

And so, the reproach of Egypt is a picture of the scorn the world expresses toward the people of God. Let me teach you something for just a moment. Turn to 2 Peter and we'll be done. Those of you that are almost a half a century like me and some of the others in here, let me ask you a question. Twenty years ago, 25 years ago, John, did you ever think it would be like we are right now? Thirty years ago? Those of you that are in the military or associated with the military, did you think that we'd be where we're at right now and some of the decisions that are being made, 10-15 years ago? Could you see the handwriting on the wall? Are we going faster than what you thought we were going to go?

Let me ask you a question this morning, if my right hand is the world and my left hand is the people of God, are we coming closer or are we getting more difficult and distant as far as what they think is ok and what we think is ok? Farther apart aren't we? Now, you've got the true people of God and then you've got people of God that claim to be the people of God and then you've got the world. I'm talking about the true people of God. I'm talking about people that believe that Genesis 1:1 is the Word of God, that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. I'm talking about people who believe that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and no man is coming to the Father but by him. I'm talking about people who believe in a real hell and a real heaven. I'm talking about people who believe that there is a Satan and he does have demons and that God has a plan. I'm talking about the people that embrace the Word of God as the Word of God. Alright, that's the people we're talking about.

So, in my left hand I've got a people of God, the authentic, true people of God because God has always had a remnant. And on my right hand I've got the world. The world. The world that scoffs, the world that mocks, the world that insults, the world that can't believe that we're still holding to traditional values, that we claim that there are things that are absolute and must be adhered to. Is this coming closer or is it getting further away? Further away is what the church concludes. So, let me ask you this morning, will the scoffing increase or decrease? Will the scorn of the world like the scorn of Egypt increase or decrease in the generations to come? Increase.

Now, let's look at our text having set that condition. 2 Peter 3:3, I want us to draw a parallel for you and then we'll be done. So, what I'm doing right now is I'm connecting Joshua 5:9 to 2 Peter. So, maybe in the margin of your Bible, maybe you'll write down Joshua 5:9 because I'm making a connection. Peter writes in 2 Peter 3, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days..." underline the word scoffers. Scoffers are the ones that offer scorn up, "scoffers, walking after their own lusts." And what will these scoffers say? The scoffers will say, "Where is the promise of Jesus' Second Coming?" You Christians have been talking about the Second Coming of Christ for hundreds and hundreds of years. He ain't come yet, he's never coming. It's about time to wake up and realize Jesus isn't coming.

What will say? They will justify their argument with this statement, "for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." He ain't

come yet and he's not coming. Don't you see? You live, you work, you die. You live, you work, you die. You live, you work, you die. Stop talking about heaven, stop talking about hell, you ignorant Christians. Don't you recognize you just get created, you live some kind of a life, you die, you're buried and that's it.

So, how does Peter respond to their argument? Let's read the Bible and let the Bible inform our opinion. "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God," the word of God, the power of God, the spoken word of God, "the heavens were of old and the earth standing out of water and in the water, whereby the world that was then being overflowed with water, perished." So now, take your pen and write the word "flood" down there. Write the word "flood" and write the word "Noah" for just a moment. Let's draw a parallel. We have enough time.

What would it have been like to be Noah building an ark in a land in which they'd never seen rain? Think about that? You talk about scoffers. You're married to Noah who's building an ark in the backyard and it's hundreds of miles from the Mediterranean Sea. You're scoffing, right? How much scoffing would there have been? How much? A lot? Let me ask you, when did God roll back the scorn for Noah? The first drop. From where? From the heavens. Are you getting some parallels now? Are you already ahead of me? Are you racing ahead of me in this sermon? Are you ahead of me? Are you already there? So, we've got the scorn of Noah being rolled back when? When the heavens open up and the water comes down and can you imagine, with videotape, CNN reporting on bodies banging on the side of the ark to be let in. Do you think I'm exaggerating? I promise you, I'm not exaggerating. Bang, bang, bang, bang. It must've echoed inside the ark. It must've echoed inside the ark and Noah had strict instructions that it was eight and no more. And the rest perished by the flood. They perished by the flood.

You understand that when the door closes, no one else is coming in. When the door closes, no one else is coming in. You will not wait until you see Jesus to repent. You will not decide that I'll hold off until I know it's true to repent. You will have to believe by faith.

Let's go on, take us to our next slide. "Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." So, yes, it's been a very long time. Yes, it's been a long time. And we're wondering when will it be and will it be in our lifetime. And Peter says to us, "A day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. So, be patient. Be patient. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness but is longsuffering towards us not willing that any should perish but that all the elect should come to repentance." All of them. All of them will come to repentance and the ark will not shut until everyone of them responds in faith.

So, this is my thought. The reproach of the world will be rolled back when King Jesus stands on the Mount of Olives outside of Jerusalem to establish his kingdom. That's what I'm saying this morning. I'm tell you right now that the reproach of the world against Noah and the reproach of Egypt against the people of God and God rolling back the

reproach in Joshua 5:9 is nothing but a picture of the glorious future in which God through his sovereignty will roll back the reproach of the world. Just roll that reproach back. Right now we live under the scorn and the scoffing of an unbelieving world and they mock us with our ridiculous faith in the inspiration of the Word of God. And they mock us for our obscure standards and our insistence upon wild ideas like God spoke the universe into existence and there's a real heaven and a real hell. And we are ignorant and we are right-wing and we're fundamental and we're stupid from the world's perspective.

But there's coming a time, there's coming a glorious time which God is just going to say, "Let me roll that back right now. Let me just roll that back." And the reason I love to roll back the idea is because the heavens are rolled back and the glory of God comes ushering down when King Jesus leaves heaven en route to the earth. You talk about rolling it back. Let's move this aside. Let's get this over here right now. When they see him, what did Jesus pray? What did Jesus pray? "Father, show them my glory." Roll it back. Roll it back. And when it's rolled back and King Jesus comes riding on a horse and all the born-again believers who have died before us, ride with him...where? To Jerusalem. To what end? To establish a kingdom. For what reason? To separate the goats from the sheep. Read your Bibles. Read your Bibles.

Paul says, "When that happens, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father." So, that's when the reproach will be rolled back. What happened with Noah was just a tiny picture, what happened with Joshua was just a tiny picture of the glorious time in the future that we are anticipating when God says, "It's time. Roll it back. Roll it back. Go, Son!"

So, you have two choices this morning: get on board by faith or prepare to be on the other side. That's it. That's all. It's that simple. Either your heart's been circumcised or it hasn't. That's all. I don't care about your water baptism right now. I don't care about your church membership right now. I don't care about your Sunday School attendance or decision card or the prayer you prayed. What I want to know right now is, has your heart been circumcised? Has your heart been circumcised? Are your ears circumcised? Are your eyes circumcised? You say, "Pastor, how do I know if my eyes are circumcised?" Circumcised eyes love the Word of God. "How do I know if my ears have been circumcised?" Circumcised ears love the Word of God. "How do I know my heart's been circumcised?" Circumcised hearts love God. Love God. Not looking at their watch saying, "How many more minutes do I have to listen to this jabbering mouth?" A circumcised heart loves God, the people of God, the things of God, willingly is baptized. Why? I've already had a heart change more than ready to accept the outward appearance of what's already happened in the heart.

Do you see where we're going with this? I had no idea that Joshua 5 would have this much in it when I started. I wanted to avoid it with a passion, folks. And God just kept on opening up ideas and opening up ideas and opening up ideas as we were studying and just seeing what a beautiful picture this is for this church of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Next slide. One more. So, here's our review. Our conformity to the religious rites like baptism and the Lord's Supper is meaningless if the heart is not converted. You can take the wafer all day long and it's meaningless. 2. Obedience to the will of the Lord always precedes victory. Finally, 3. Be patient. Be patient, God's coming. And the scorn of the world is going to be rolled back.

Let's pray.

*Father, thank you so much for the time we get to spend together in your Word. Thank you, Lord, for the revealed truth. Thank you for the connectivity between Genesis and Joshua and the epistles written by the Apostles. Thank you, God, for being the divine author of all of it. Thank you for providing for us little pictures that we can look at and get a better understanding of truth. Thank you, God, for encouraging us with the divine promise that you will roll back the scorn of the world and maybe not today, maybe not in our lifetime but there is coming a day when you will do it. Thank you, Jesus, for who you are.*

*Let me ask you this morning. Is your heart circumcised? Has your heart been circumcised. I'm not talking about infant baptism, we don't care about that right now. We want to know if you've had an inward conversion. Have you had a definite time where God has given you a new heart? I'm talking about boys and girls this morning, have you been converted? Is Jesus your Savior? Do you know for sure, "I've been converted, Pastor, I know." Why? "I love God, I'm trusting in Jesus that my sins have been forgiven because of my faith in Christ." God, do the work that only you can do right now in this time of invitation*