



Key References:

All quotations taken from the English Standard Version (ESV), except where noted.

Joshua 5:1 (ESV) 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.

Psalms 23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

Genesis 17:1-14, ref. vs. 10 (ESV) This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.

Ezekiel 36:27-28 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Joshua 5:8-9 (ESV) When the circumcising of the whole nation was finished, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed. 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.

Joshua 5:10-13 (ESV) 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. And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. And the manna ceased the day after they ate of the produce of the land. And there was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

1 – LABELS: HELLO! MY NAME IS...

The Israelites were slaves in Egypt for 400 years. However, even after they were freed from slavery, they still carried the label or name tag of ‘slave’ with them. Labels – whether put on you by yourself, or by other people – are powerful.

- **Why is self-image and identity so important?**
- Are there examples from your own life where there was a ‘label’ or a ‘name tag’ put on you that affected your reputation? Was this label put on you by yourself, or by other people? Was it positive or negative, and how did that affect you?
- As children of God, where should we derive our real identity from? Why?

2 – CIRCUMCISION: A SIGN OF COVENANT

Genesis 17:10, Ezekiel 36:28. God chose circumcision as a reminder of God’s covenant promises to Abraham and his descendants. This external physical sign reminded God’s people of an internal spiritual covenant, and the special relationship they had with God. If you weren’t circumcised, you weren’t part of God’s people. For whatever reason God’s people stopped doing this in the wilderness. This was disobedience and created a relationship separation between God and his people.

- Healthy relationship with God flows out of obedience. **Why did Jesus say, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments”?** ref. **John 14:15-17.**
- What is the difference between healthy obedience towards God, vs. doing things for God out of legalism or obligation?
- What kind of heart should we have when we obey God?

3 – ROLLING AWAY THE REPROACH

Joshua 5:8-9. Reproach means, ‘To bring into discredit’. In essence, by choosing to obey God and re-instate circumcision, the reproach or stigma of those 400 years of slavery in Egypt were instantly removed in God’s eyes. Essentially, God was saying, “Because you obeyed me, I’m changing your name, your label, your identity. You are once again blessed by God.” Today, we can have negative stigma/reproach removed by:

1. RENEWING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. **Revelation 3:20**
 - What can we do to remove roadblocks between ourselves and God?
2. READING OUR BIBLE DAILY. **Ephesians 5:26**
 - How does the Word of God wash away our ‘stinking thinking’ and change our label/identity?
3. RE-KINDLING OBEDIENCE. **John 14:15-17**
 - What are some examples of areas in our Christian lives where we need to actively be obedient?