

**Joshua 5**  
**Identity Crisis**  
**part 4**  
8/20/18

Chapter 5 of Joshua is an interesting chapter. There are things in here that we tend to want to skip or at least not consider very deeply. However, each part of the Word of God including chapter 5 of Joshua has things to for us to consider.

It seems to me that the issue is what Neil spoke about on Sunday. It is our identity. In a very real sense the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation from leaving Egypt did not know who they were as God's chosen people. No doubt they had heard about the covenant God made with Abraham because they knew what the ark was. They saw the pillar of smoke and the cloud. They ate the manna and the quail. They were recipients of God's abundant blessings in general terms. However, they had never personally entered into a covenantal relationship with Jehovah themselves.

God is calling them to realize that their identity is with Him and in Him. Apart from Him they are just any other people. God will "role away" the reproach of Egypt, but they must assume a posture of submission and obedience. The New Testament writers make it clear that God is interested in the circumcision of our hearts. It is not simply an outward sign, but an inward reality of letting God literally "peel our hearts back" so that they are laid bare before him. (Romans 2:25-29; Galatians 5:6) The question is will we and do we allow God to continue to peel us back to who we are in Him. Any identity that we cling to other than our identity in Him is a false identity and at it is core idolatrous.

After circumcision, the nation participates in their first Passover in the promised land. Based on being God's people they have the privilege of experiencing God's provision for their sins to be passed over. They have crossed over (literally as they crossed the Jordan) from death to new life.

Thirdly as Joshua encounters who I believe to be Jesus in the Old Testament, he has his potential agenda challenged. He asks the Lord if He is on Joshua's side or their enemies side. He is told neither. The question is really whose side is Joshua on. What I find is that any time I come to God with an agenda and want or expect Him to bless my agenda, my agenda actually ends up trumping by allegiance to God Himself. The agenda becomes my idol. Peter experienced that in the New Testament. (Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33) Who does Peter think he is to rebuke Jesus? He thinks that he is God and Jesus must do his bidding. That was the test that Joshua faced and it is the test we continually face. We are all in as long as God is around to do our bidding. Any identity we hold on to other than who God is and who we are as his blood bought children, is a false identity. It will rob us of the life we are meant to know in Christ.

I am reading a great book entitled "Sidetracked in the Wilderness." It was written by Michael Wells. In the book he challenges the false identities that we hold on to, making them idols. I want to give one quote.

*"We were not created to live independently of Him (Christ); that brings insanity. It is only in humble dependence on the Creator that mind and emotions enter into soundness and trustworthiness. Being born dead to God in the spirit has caused us to be self-centered in our attempts to have our deepest needs met; it also has caused us to exist in a condition of insanity, wherein we have listened to and acted upon false thoughts and emotions" The final result of being born dead to God in the Spirit is loss of identity; we were created for God, and yet are not brought into the world Possessed by Him or Him by us. Therefore, our very reason for existence is not apparent."*

