

# Enter at Your Own Rest

## Studies in the Book of Joshua

*"Full blessing in the Christian life is not bestowed except to eager, hungry people who press in to receive it"*

*Alan Redpath*

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Text

Joshua 5:10-15

Topic

God quits sending manna and  
Gets Joshua ready to be sent into battle

Title

*"Manna & Commander"*

**Joshua 5:10** Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho.

**Joshua 5:11** And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day.

**Joshua 5:12** Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.

**Joshua 5:13** And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "*Are* You for us or for our adversaries?"

**Joshua 5:14** So He said, "No, but *as* Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?"

**Joshua 5:15** Then the Commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand *is* holy." And Joshua did so.

## Introduction

In the big screen adaptation of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, Cindy Lou Who invites the Grinch to Whoville. There's a hilarious monologue as the Grinch reviews his busy calendar. He says,

The nerve of those Whos. Inviting me down there - and on such short notice. Even if I wanted to go my schedule wouldn't allow it. Four o'clock, wallow in self pity; 4:30, stare into the abyss; 5:00, solve world hunger - tell no one. 5:30, jazzercise. 6:30, dinner with me. I *can't* cancel that again. 7:00, wrestle with my self-loathing; I'm booked.

Of course, if I bump the loathing to 9 I could still be done in time to lay in bed, stare at the ceiling and slip slowly into madness.

But what would I wear?

It's meant to be funny but the items on his calendar reveal a great deal about what the Grinch really valued.

We might each of us want to take a look at our schedules to get an idea of what we really value.

But before we do we might want to take a peek at Joshua's busy schedule. On the verge of arguably the most important battle of his military career Joshua nevertheless had a full calendar of prior spiritual engagements:

1. He celebrated Passover at twilight on the fourteenth day of the month.
2. He celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days following Passover.
3. He kept an appointment that had been made for him with the Commander of the army of the Lord.

Only after these spiritual activities and appointment was he battle ready for Jericho.

Too many believers are battle-weary rather than battle ready. Perhaps we should rearrange our busy schedules to accommodate more spiritual activities and appointments.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 Don't Go Into Battle Before Getting Back To Basics, and #2 Don't Go Into Battle Without Getting Down To Bowing.

#1 Don't Go Into Battle  
Before Getting Back To Basics  
(v10-12)

Forty years earlier the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. God sent ten plagues upon the Egyptians to convince Pharaoh to release them. The tenth plague was the killing of the firstborn sons. The Israelites were instructed to mark the doorposts of their homes with the blood of a sacrificed lamb and upon seeing this the death angel passed over these homes. Hence the term "Passover."

The Israelites celebrated Passover once more at Mount Sinai but not again during their wilderness wanderings. God suspended the celebration until all that generation that disobeyed Him was dead. Now that His people were obediently walking in the land and seeing it was the **fourteenth day** of the first month it was time to reinstitute the Passover.

**Joshua 5:10** Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho.

Days and dates were important to Israel. They were a calendar-oriented people. They had several set annual feasts; weekly Sabbaths; and daily sacrifices.

As Christians living after the resurrection of Jesus we're told to not let anyone judge us in the matter of days and dates. We're free from that kind of ritual behavior. It's all been fulfilled by Jesus and we now enjoy an immediate and intimate relationship with Him.

Because we don't have to keep any days or dates we often see our calendars get filled-up with things that keep us away from the immediacy and intimacy we have with the Lord. We can too easily load our schedules to put-off spiritual activities and appointments because we are busy with other things. The other things may be good; they may even be necessary. But they should not crowd out the Lord.

**Joshua 5:11** And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day.

When Pharaoh freed the Israelites they left in such a hurry that they could not wait for bread to rise. In commemoration of their hasty deliverance, for the week after Passover no leavened bread is eaten and it is called the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

**Joshua 5:12** Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.

Manna means, "*What is it?*" It's the name given by the Israelites to the food miraculously supplied to them during their wanderings in the wilderness. It is described as a **small round thing**, like the **hoar-frost on the ground**, and **like coriander seed**, of the **color of bdellium**, and in taste **like wafers made with honey**. It was capable of being baked and boiled, ground in mills, or beaten in a mortar. It must be gathered daily. If any was kept over till the following morning it became corrupt with worms; but as on the Sabbath none fell, on the preceding day a double portion was given, and that could be kept over to supply the wants of the Sabbath without becoming corrupt.

Manna fell for the first time as a judgment for the grumbings of the previous generation when they longed for the foods of Egypt. Thus in the context of Joshua the ceasing of the manna marked moving from discipline to maturity. Eating of the produce was like an infant moving from milk to solid foods.

Forty years earlier the Israelites were supposed to cross the Jordan, keep the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, eat the produce of the land, and conquer their enemies. It was basic Judaism. Now their kids were getting back to basics.

Most of us get so busy we don't have time for basic Christianity. We eliminate devotions (whether morning or evening), prayer, and Bible reading. We want to attend church as often as possible but find it to be a struggle with our full calendars.

It's not meant to be a rebuke, only an observation. When I slack-off in the basics **all** the other things I'm busy doing will suffer. They will lack spiritual quality; they will lose spiritual impact.

Look at your calendar. Ink-in more of the things of the Lord. Everything else you are doing, whether it is essential or elective, will be enhanced the more you maintain a spiritual calendar.

## #2 Don't Go Into Battle Before Getting Down To Bowing (v13-15)

We next see Joshua by himself looking out over Jericho:

**Joshua 5:13** And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho...

Stop there for just a moment. It's commonly commented that Joshua was spying out Jericho to develop his military strategy when he ought to have been seeking the Lord. I submit to you that he *was* out seeking the Lord. He just wasn't expecting an appearance of the Lord!

**Joshua 5:13** And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "*Are* You for us or for our adversaries?"

The **Man** was in military attire. His **sword** was **drawn**. He must be there to fight for or against Israel.

Joshua was a black-and-white kind of guy. You were either for God and His people or you were against God and His people. Ally or enemy. There was no time for neutrality.

**Joshua 5:14** So He said, "No..."

Stop there. **No** was not really an answer to the question. It was suggesting a whole new perspective. Once Joshua understood this **Man** was the Lord he would understand that the battle was won before it had begun. It wasn't a matter of having God on your side so much as it was simply seeing God at work.

Think of it this way. If I go around thinking God is for me then I submit my plans to Him and expect Him to accomplish them on my behalf. If things don't work out quite the way I think they should I start to wonder if God is against me.

Instead I should see the Lord in my every situation. The spiritual battle is already won. I then simply follow Him through it to a spiritual consequence. It may not be the victory I had planned. It will undoubtedly be deeper and more meaningful.

**Joshua 5:14** So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?"

The fact he **worshipped** indicates that Joshua recognized he was in the presence of God. This was what scholars call a Christophany – an Old Testament appearance of Jesus.

Notice how quickly Joshua relinquished command to Jesus. No questions; no concerns. If only we could cast all our cares so quickly upon the Lord.

Joshua worshipped then expected a word from the Lord. There is a preparation of the heart through worship that readies your heart. We cannot approach the Bible from a purely academic point of view. Yes, we must be scholarly and systematic in our study. But only after

and as we realize it is the revelation of the heart of God to those He loves.

**Joshua 5:15** Then the Commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand *is* holy." And Joshua did so.

For a warrior in a desert battle the **sandal** was a crucial piece of equipment. By removing it Joshua was acknowledging he was first a worshipper then a warrior.

Battle-weariness afflicts those who see themselves as warriors first. If you see yourself as a worshipper you remain battle ready knowing that the conflict is over before it ever begins. God has already won. You simply worship Him in and through it, experiencing His presence in ever-deepening ways.

We are not to concentrate on our battles or on our enemies. It's what we have a natural tendency to do and it's why we are often defeated.

Instead we are to do what Joshua did – **lift** and **look**. He lifted his eyes away from the battle. He looked to see the Lord.

In Joshua's case the Lord physically appeared. We are at a much greater advantage. When He departed the earth the Lord told us it was good that He do so because He would give us another Comforter like Himself to dwell in us. He was speaking of God the Holy Spirit.

We do not need a physical manifestation of Jesus because we have His constant presence in our lives. We still need, however, to **lift** and **look**.

Having trouble at work? If not, you will. And everywhere else from time-to-time. Your life is the battleground. When the attack comes you have a choice. You can meet it as a warrior asking the Lord to be on your side. Or you can meet it as a worshipper. You can enjoy the Lord's presence as He takes you through it.

Every war is a ground war to you – and the ground is holy if you will bow down on it.

