

JOSHUA 5

GOD DEMANDS
PRIORITY

INTRODUCTION

- Upon entering the Promised Land, Joshua and the Israelites set up camp at Gilgal.
- They then obey the Lord by observing circumcision and Passover.
- In so doing, they make themselves vulnerable to the surrounding enemies, but when the Commander of the Lord's army appears to Joshua, he learns that Israel's protection is assured because the Lord is with them.

QUESTIONS FROM LAST WEEK

- How many people were in the Exodus?
 - More than 600,000 men (Numbers 1:46).
- How many people crossed the Jordan River?
 - Fewer people than in the Exodus.
- How many Israelites were armed for battle?
 - Forty thousand men were armed (Joshua 4:13).



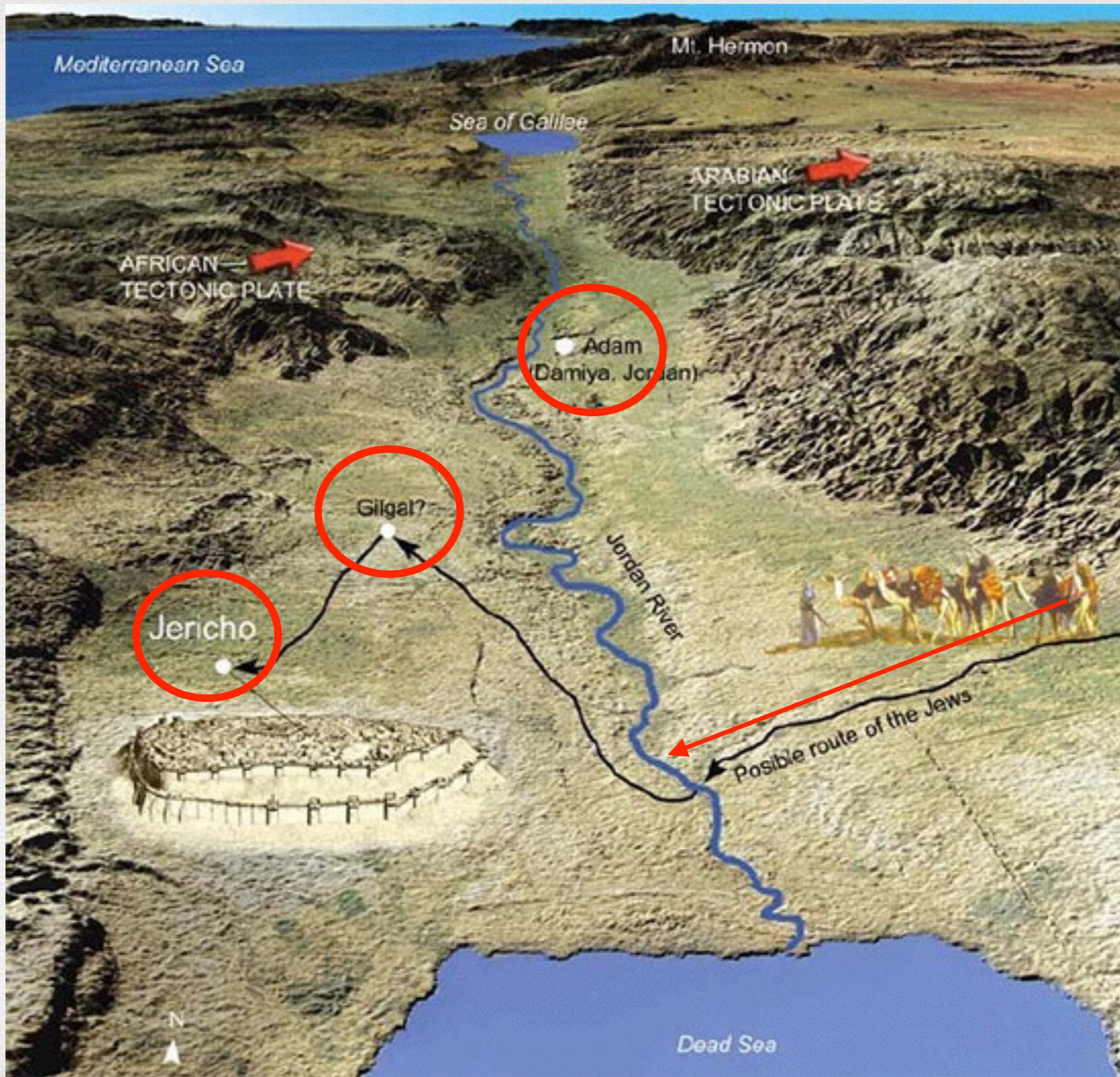
QUESTIONS FROM LAST WEEK

- Did all of the walls of Jericho fall down?



**CHOOSE OBEDIENCE
OVER THE URGENT**

JOSHUA 5:1-9



ANCIENT RITE

- The kings were scared when they heard that the Jordan river dried up. Now was the time to strike.
- Warriors wear armor to protect themselves. The kind of ground combat Israel was expecting with the people of Canaan required shields and helmets and breastplates.
- Yet the first thing Joshua commands his army do is to be circumcised.

ANCIENT RITE

- Circumcision is meaningful and was initiated by God with Abraham in Genesis 17.
- It was a sign of the covenant between God and His chosen people and was an outward sign of their inner dependence on Him.
- Flint knives - ritual described in Exodus 4:25-26.
- Gibeath Haaraloth - means “hill of foreskins.”

ACCOUNTABLE PEOPLE

- Many have speculated why circumcision of Israelite males did not continue during the desert wanderings.
- It is possible that God prohibited the practice because they stood under judgment: (1) rebelled against God, (2) practiced idolatry, and (3) refused to enter the land (Numbers 14).
- Today we do not practice circumcision as a religious act. God has given us baptism instead.

**TRUST THAT THE
LORD WILL PROVIDE**

JOSHUA 5:11-15

ALTERNATE DIET

- Immediately after the army's circumcision, Israel observed Passover.
- Exodus 12:48 explains that, "No uncircumcised person shall eat (the Passover)."
- The nation of Israel is putting God first in the land of Canaan by doing things His way.
- That is why they experience later victories.

ALTERNATE DIET

- The celebration of Passover at Gilgal indicates a new era.
- Immediately after Israel observed Passover, the manna that had fallen in the wilderness (6 days a week, for 40 years) ceased.
- For the first time, families would begin to gather around meals they prepared of bread, meat, fruit, milk, and honey.

ANGELIC COMMANDER

- Joshua is walking the land and finds himself near Jericho. He draws his sword when he sees a man standing near him and extends the question: “Are you for us or for our adversaries?”
- The man reveals Himself as the “Commander of the Army of the LORD” and Joshua falls on his face.
- This encounter is unique because this was obviously more than just a normal man. Many scholars consider this to be a “Christophany.”

ANGELIC COMMANDER

- Joshua then asks “What does my lord say to his servant?” (v. 14).
- The answer may have been unexpected to Joshua. He is to take off his sandals (just like the experience Moses had at the burning bush in Exodus 3).
- This was the time in Moses’ journey where he was being commissioned to begin his leadership. Now Joshua is being commissioned before the battle.

ANGELIC COMMANDER

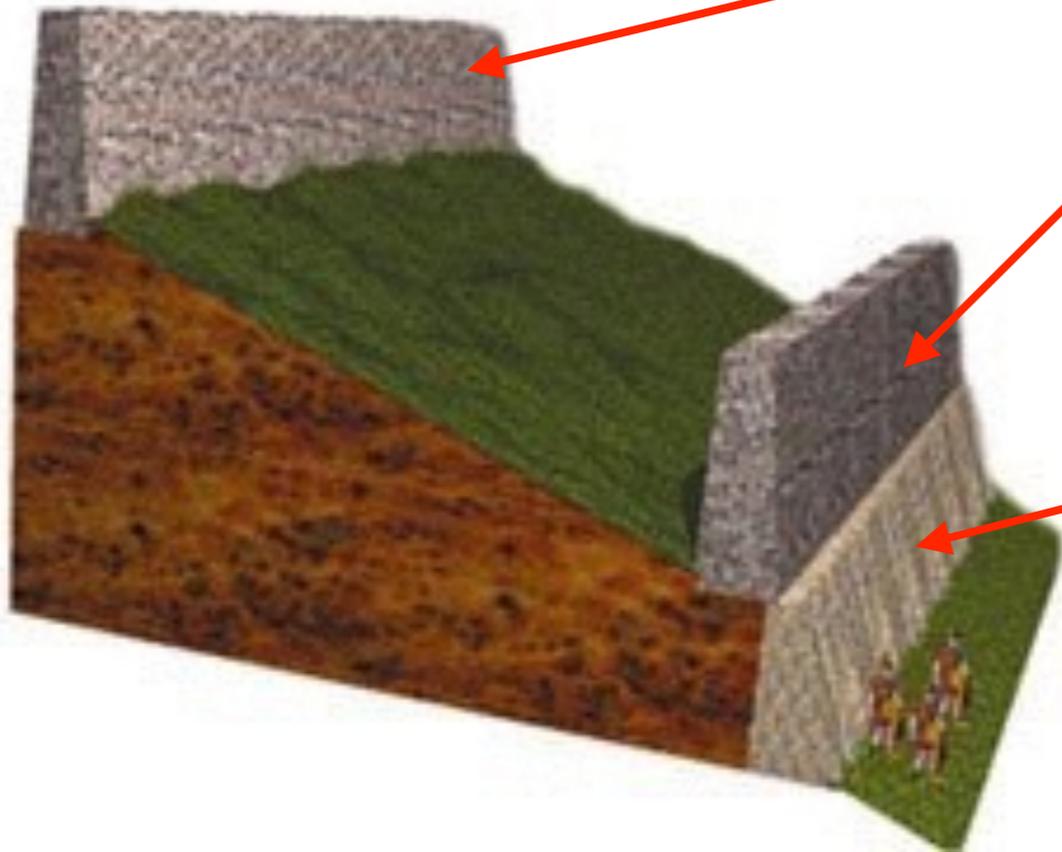
- We also mentioned last week that Gilgal did not remain a holy place.
- Amos and Hosea describe it as a place of apostasy when people took false oaths (Hosea 4:15) and where empty sacrifices were offered by insincere worshipers (Amos 4:4).
- Eventually God abandoned it, even though people tried to seek Him there (Amos 5:5).

APPLICATION

CIRCUMCISION

- Israel departed from this practice in the desert, and God directed Joshua to reinstitute the practice.
- It was both an outward sign as well as an inward commitment.
- Baptism is also an outward sign that expresses an inward commitment.
- Jews may have practiced baptism, but it appears that John the Baptist was the first to baptize others.

WALLS OF JERICHO



Walls 6 feet thick,
26 feet high.

Retaining wall
12-15 feet high

ARMY OF THE LORD

- Many believe this refers to an angelic army that would provide a victory from the skies while Joshua's troops carried out the work on earth.
- This is God's heavenly army fighting on behalf of Israel. The Commander of the Lord's Army is a divine being with a divine mission.
- That is the only explanation for how Joshua and his men could take an impenetrable fortress.

WALLS OF JERICHO

Jericho of Joshua (Old Testament)

Numbers 22:1
Deuteronomy 34:1
Joshua 2:1; 3:16; 6:1
1 Kings 16:34



Stone retaining wall and wall "OER" (cf. Kenyon) on top is the remains of the mud brick wall on top of the retaining wall that collapsed at the time of Joshua

North

First Middle Bronze rampart diagonal line

Second Middle Bronze rampart diagonal line

Hard-packed wash of earlier Early Bronze phases (cream diagonal line)

Third rampart from the time of Joshua late bronze diagonal line

