

SUBTRACTION ON THE THRESHOLD

¹ Now when all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the coast heard how the LORD had dried up the Jordan before the Israelites until they had crossed over, their hearts melted in fear and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites. ² At that time the LORD said to Joshua, “Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites again.” ³ So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath Haaraloth. ... ⁷ So he raised up their sons in their place, and these were the ones Joshua circumcised. They were still uncircumcised because they had not been circumcised on the way. ⁸ And after the whole nation had been circumcised, they remained where they were in camp until they were healed. ⁹ Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” So the place has been called Gilgal to this day. ¹⁰ On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover. ¹¹ The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. ¹² The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate the produce of Canaan.

Joshua 5:1-3,7-12

- I. Seven facts about circumcision at Gilgal
 - A. God is subtracting nonessentials from his people.
 - B. God is subtracting false buffers between us and Him.

- C. God is subtracting (false coverings) false selves to get to the real you.
- D. God is subtracting future pain by cutting you now.
- E. There is no recourse to privacy in this season.
- F. God is subtracting and rolling away shame and embarrassment.
- G. God is subtracting the enemy's power by strange commands of obedience. (Like Gideon and Jericho)

II. Beth Eked - the house of shearing

- A. Sheep need to be shorn every spring.
- B. Excess wool creates unnecessary weight, hindering the sheep's advancement.
- C. All sheep would be taken to a safe shearing house known as the Beth Eked. (II Kings 10:12)
- D. Sheep were first washed in a stream, a fearful prospect.
- E. They were then placed in a vulnerable position.
- F. The expert shearer (Gazaz) would then shear the entire coat of wool.

III. A season of shear mercy

- A. God wants to remove the great weight of wool that has grown on you through the difficult seasons of your life.
- B. In shearing, God removes any barrier between you and him, any false buffer or covering between you and reality. The difference between who you really are and how you appear to others.

- C. God has new coverings for you that you've never known before. To receive them, you must first be shorn.
- D. Has God been shearing people, places, things, opportunities, friendships, and former securities from your life? Welcome to Beth Eked.
- E. Shearing reduces you to utter nakedness. Nothing remains between you and the shepherd.
- F. Sheep temporarily lose their identity when shorn. They need the shepherd in new and intimate ways.
- G. We must grieve every coat shorn. It once saved your life, but now it makes advancement impossible
- H. The sheep's nakedness triggers a great season of celebration called the sheep shearing festival.
- I. Only the shepherd can shear you. No one else is credentialed to do it.

IV. Eight facts about the sheep shearing festival

- A. Old scores were settled at the sheep shearing festival. [Tamar's rape was avenged. (II Samuel 13)]
- B. Repayment of old debts occurred during the sheep shearing festival. [Tamar lures Judah into a sexual encounter to secure her rightful progeny. (Genesis 38)]
- C. God would recompense for moral violations during the sheep shearing festival. [Judah was held accountable for his abuse of Tamar. (Genesis 38)]
- D. God would allow escape from domineering masters and manipulative leaders during the sheep shearing festival.

[Jacob escapes his domineering father-in-law, Laban, at shearing time. (Genesis 31)]

- E. God removes people who would block the advancement of your destiny during the sheep shearing festival. [Nabal, David's enemy, is taken out at this time. (I Samuel 25)]
- F. God would deal with unrewarded service and unfair compensation during the sheep shearing festival. [Jacob takes what rightfully belongs to him for tending Laban's flocks for 20 years. (Genesis 31)]
- G. You receive what is rightfully yours during the sheep shearing festival. [David receives amazing blessing after Nabal's death (I Samuel 25)]
- H. God created new ministries that had never existed before during the sheep shearing festival. [Sheep shearing became intimately associated with the emergence of the royal clan and establishment of the Davidic dynasty. (Genesis 38)]