

10/12/03

Joshua 3-4

The time to move out of the wilderness experience has finally come and to enter the promise land by crossing the Jordan.

But the Jordan is at flood season and it would be humanly impossible for the people to cross it, only God could help them to cross the Jordan.

So Joshua receives the charge for the crossing of the Jordan. Josh. 3

Followed by the charge to erect a memorial at the crossing of Jordan. Josh. 4

3:1-13 The instruction to cross over the Jordan.

3:1-6 *Joshua and the officers made final preparations.*

3:1 Joshua leads the people from Acacia Grove.

- 1) The morning after the two spies returned Joshua broke camp and he set out with all the people.

- 2) They camped before the Jordan, without doubt wondering how they were going to cross it.

3:2-4 The officers commanded the people.

- 1) The chain of command in delegated leadership is very important for order and efficiency. Vs. 2
- 2) The marching signal would be when the people saw the Levites and priests bearing the ark. Vs. 3a-f
* Kohathites duty to carry. Num. 4:15
- 3) They would follow the ark. Vs. 3g
 - a) The camp of Israel had an orderly manner of breaking camp, according to tribes. Num. 2-4
 - b) No longer would they see a cloud or the pillar of fire to lead them, the ark would be the only physical evidence of the presence of God, apart from the miracles.
- 4) The detailed instructions to the people. Vs. 4
 - a) The people would have to leave a distance of 2,000 cubits or 3,000 feet between them and the ark. Vs. 4a-b
 - b) They were to do so in order to know where to go. Vs. 4c-d
* The distance would mark an honorable distance by all except the priest and also given them a

- view of the ark for faith and encouragement.
- c) The reason was that they had never passed that way before. Vs. 4e

3:5-6 Joshua addressed the people and priests.

- 1) Joshua tells the people to sanctify themselves that very day. Vs. 5a
- 2) The reason was that God the next day would do wonders among them. Vs. 5b-c
- 3) Joshua told the priest to take up the ark and cross before the people and they did so. Vs. 6

3:7-13 *The Lord instructs Joshua.*

3:7-8 Joshua is established as the leader.

- 1) The Lord told Joshua that He would begin to exalt him in the sight of all Israel, that very day. Vs. 7a-b
- 2) The purpose behind it would be that they might know that, as God had been with Moses, so He would be with him. Vs. 7c-d.
- 3) Joshua was to command the priests who bore the ark of the covenant and tell them that when they came to the edge of the water of the Jordan, they were to stand in the Jordan. Vs. 8

- a) The life of sight was over, the wilderness journey.
- b) The life of faith was now beginning.
- c) God parted the Red Sea and then the people crossed.
- d) God would now part the Jordan only after they stepped into it.

3:9-13 Joshua communicated the words of God.

- 1) Joshua called the people to hear the words of their Yahweh Elohim. Vs. 9
 - a) The importance lay in the fact the God was in control not Joshua.
 - b) These commands were not Joshua's but God's.
- 2) Joshua calls the people witness his promise. Vs. 10-11
 - a) And Joshua said they would know that the living God was among them and that He would without fail drive out from before them the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites. Vs. 10
 - * Living in contrast to the dead idols of the pagans, Baal, Molech, Astoreth. Ps. 115
 - b) The ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan. Vs. 11

- 1)) The earth belonged to God.
- 2)) The land of promise would be given to His people, Israel.
- 3) Joshua instructed Israel Joshua commanded the people to choose from among them twelve men, one man from every tribe for the memorial to be erected. Vs. 12
- 4) Joshua told them God was going to part the Jordan during the flood season as the priest stepped into the Jordan. Vs. 13

3:14-17 The priest and the people cross over Jordan.

3:14 The order of the crossing.

- 1) The people broke camp to cross the Jordan.
- 2) The priest bearing the ark went first, examples of faith.
- 3) Then the people followed them.

3:15-16 The miracle for the crossing.

- 1) The obedience in faith of the priest was seen, as they bore the ark and dipped their foot into the Jordan's flooded banks. Vs. 15
 - a) The time was spring and the melting of Mount Hermon swelled the banks of the Jordan.

- b) This is during the barley and flax harvest in April, not to be mistaken with the wheat harvest in June, six or seven week after. Ex. 9:31-32
 - 2) The description of the parting is given in a two-fold manner; the waters from the north rose in a heap and the waters in the south, going to the Dead Sea ceased. Vs. 16a-f
 - a) Adam has been identified by some as Tell ed-Damiyeh just south of the junction of the Jabbok and the Jordan?
 - b) Some have attempted to explain the parting by natural damning by landslides of the high, 150 feet cliffs of the Zor.
 - c) The problem is that it still is a miracle, because there would have had to of been the exact timing for the people to get across!
 - 3) The obedient people crossed opposite Jericho. Vs. 16g

* God with us, water, fire, etc. Is. 43:1-2
- 3:17** The completion of the crossing.
- 1) The repetition is for emphasis of the fact, the priest first.
 - 2) The people all crossed over, no one was left behind.

4:1-9 God commands Joshua to erect a memorial.

4:1-3 The specific instruction by God to Joshua.

- 1) The crossing being completed God spoke to Joshua. Vs. 1
 - a) Once again the emphasis being that God was leading and guiding.
 - b) It is so easy for people to get their eyes on a man.
- 2) God called Joshua to put into affect the plan for the erection of the memorial by calling the twelve men previously chosen. Vs. 2
- 3) Joshua was to command them carry out twelve stones from the place where the priest had stood in the midst of the Jordan and place them on the west bank of the Jordan, where they would lodge that night. Vs. 3

4:4-9 Joshua commanded twelve men to execute the memorial.

- 1) Each tribe was represented by the twelve appointed men. Vs. 4
- 2) They would cross ahead of the ark with a rock on their shoulder. Vs. 5
- 3) The purpose behind the memorial was for the future generations. Vs. 6

- a) The rocks would be a sign among them, to not forget what happened.
- b) A sign to their children when they asked, “What do these stones mean to you?” Gen. 28:28, 31:45, 34:14
- 4) They were to retell the miraculous crossing forever, to assure them that it did happen, a memorial! Vs. 7
 - a) The responsibility of communicating our faith to our children and the next generation is not an option but a command which every parent will be held responsible for as Christians. Ex. 12:26, 13:14, Deut. 6:6-9, 20-24
 - b) The perils of prosperity. Deut. 8:11-14
- 5) The children of Israel did so, just as Joshua commanded. Vs. 8

4:9 Joshua erected a second memorial.

- 1) The indication would seen to a second memorial in the place where the priests stood.
- 2) The is no reason to make it say otherwise.

4:10-19 The Jordan resumed it’s flow after the priests and remaining people crossed.

4:10-14 The summary and recapitulation

- * The Hebrew narrative is not always in chronological order, so some see contradictions in certain texts!

4:10 The priest were the models of faith.

4:11-13 The priests and the two and a half tribes cross over the Jordan.

- 1) The priest were the last to cross. Vs. 11
- 2) The two and a half tribes had kept their word and went armed to help settle the land, 40,000, 70,000 stayed to protect the women and children. Vs. 12-13

4:14 The outcome of crossing Jordan.

- 1) On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel. Vs. 14a
- 2) The people feared him, as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life. Vs. 14b-d

4:15-18 The Lord commanded Joshua to have the priests come up from the Jordan.

- 1) The LORD was the One who command the priests who bear the ark to come up from the Jordan, not Joshua. Vs. 15-17
- 2) The detailed account is purposeful. Vs. 18
* The instant the feet of the priests touched the dry land, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks as before.

4:19 The day was to be remembered.

- 1) The date of the crossing of Jordan was on the tenth of April, the first month. Vs. 19a

* Forty years to date, April 10th when they prepared the Passover Lamb to protect the first born, prior to the Exodus!

- 2) The people camped at Gilgal, on the west side of the Jordan, on the east side of Jericho. Vs. 19b

4:20-24 The purpose for the memorial.

4:20 The location of the memorial.

* Joshua set the memorial up at Gilgal.

4:21-24 The memorial was to provoke inquiry by the future generations.

- 1) Joshua addressed the people. Vs. 21a
- 2) He told them that the memorial was to be a witness to the delivering power of God. Vs. 21b-c
- 1) They were to tell them that God commanded the people to cross over during flood season on dry land. Vs. 23
- 2) That God dried up the waters of the Jordan before their eyes, until they all crossed. Vs. 23
- 3) That God wanted the inhabitants of the land to know the power of Yahweh is mighty beyond any of their gods. Vs. 24a-b
- 4) That God wanted the children of Israel to fear God for ever. Vs. 24c

4:24 The memorial was to be world-wide.

- 1) That all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty. Vs. 24a-b
 - 2) That they may fear the LORD their God forever. Vs.24c
- * A better division would be verse one of chapter five to be the last verses of chapter four!