

“Are You Facing A Major Obstacle In Your Life?”

Joshua 3:1-4:9

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Teaching Aim: To explore the events surrounding the children of Israel crossing the Jordan River at flood stage. To note the importance of the priests stepping out by faith and leading the way towards the Promised Land. To realize it was God who opened the way for those who would follow Him in faith. To understand the significance of Scripture’s identification of Christians as “*living stones*” and what that means for us today.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: Joshua prepared to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land (Josh. 3:1-13)

1. Following the return of the spies from Jericho, Joshua arose early in the morning and took the children of Israel from “*Shittim or Acacia Grove*,” to the Jordan River (**vs. 1**). The Israelites, now a group of over two million people, made the seven-mile journey before resting for three days. After the three-day delay, the officers prepared the people to cross over into the Promised Land. What did the officers tell the people they were to look for (**vv. 2-3**)?
2. What was “*the Ark of the Covenant*” and what was its significance to the Hebrew people (**vs. 3**)? What are some ways that the Ark of the Covenant pointed towards the redemptive work of Jesus Christ?
3. Why do you think God kept His people at a distance of over half a mile from the Ark (**vs. 4**)? Does sin still separate us from God? (See **Psalm 66:18**) How did the vast distance allow God’s people to see where He was going and what He was doing?
4. What did Joshua command the people to do before crossing (**vs. 5**)? Why? As Christians, do we still need to prepare ourselves if we want God to work in our lives? How? What kind of preparation do you do before meeting God?

5. As leader of the people, what did Joshua command the priests to do in **verse 6**? Why was it important for the priests to step out in faith and lead the people towards the Promised Land? Should it still be the role of priests today to lead people towards the Promised Land? Who are the priests today? (See **1 Pet. 2:9-10**)

6. What can we learn about the crossing of the Jordan River from **verse 7**? The crossing of the Jordan River occurred at the end of the Exodus. What similar event occurred at the beginning? (See **Exod. 14:21-22**) What leader was exalted through that event!

7. What command did Joshua give to the priests in **verse 8**? With the Jordan River at flood stage, why would these acts require faith? Are you facing any raging rivers in your life? Will you step forward in faith and trust God to get you through?

8. What did Joshua do with the Hebrew people before leading them across the Jordan River into the Promised Land (**vs. 9**)? Do you think Joshua gave them a pep talk or did he remind them of the very words and promises of God? How might God's promises encourage you today during the storms of life?

9. According to **verse 10**, what would the Israelites learn from the miracle they were about to witness? The Canaanite god Baal was considered the rain (or storm) god. How would the miracle of drying up the Jordan River at flood stage demonstrate the power of Yahweh over this false god? How were the miracles of the LORD during the plagues of Egypt similar to this event?

10. What significance if any, is there in the Ark of the Covenant crossing over before the people of Israel into the Jordan (**vs. 11**)? What did Joshua say would happen as soon as the priests stepped into the raging river (**vv. 12-13**)? (See **Exod. 15:8; Psa. 78:13**) How does this event relate to baptism and the event described in **1 Cor. 10:1-4**?

Part II: The people moved out with the Ark of the Covenant as the priests carried it leading the way (Josh. 3:14-17)

1. Did events transpire just the way God said they would in **verses 14-16a**? What time of the year did the crossing occur? (See Commentaries) What caused the waters to be so high? How far away was the town of Adam from Jericho? Would over two million Israelites have trouble crossing the Jordan in a day with a swath of dry ground this large?
2. What are you facing in your life today? Have you ever felt like you were about to be swept away? (See **Isa. 43:1-3a**) If you are in God's will and God has called you to a certain action, what can you learn from the story of the Israelites crossing the Jordan River at flood stage? How can you apply this story to your life?
3. For how many miles were the flood waters cut off (**vs. 16b**)? How long did the priests carrying the Ark remain in the dry riverbed (**vs. 17**)? What miracle occurred on the ground beneath the Jordan (**vs. 17**)? God had been with the Israelites at the beginning of the Exodus and throughout the duration of it. Now He showed them through this miracle that He would continue to be with them as they entered the Promised Land to conquer the nations before them. Are you trusting God during the hard times of life?

Part III: Monument to a miracle (Josh. 4:1-9)

1. What did the LORD command Joshua to do once all two million Israelites had crossed the dried-up Jordan River (**vv. 1-3**)? Why did Joshua pick twelve men? What was the purpose of picking up twelve stones from the river?
2. What further command did Joshua give to the twelve men in **verses 4-5**? What was the purpose behind their action (**vv. 6-7**)? Why is it important for us to teach our children accurate history today? Are the schools and society in general teaching our children accurate history or revising it? How can we combat historical revisionism?

3. Where did the children of Israel carry the rocks to (**vs. 8**)? What additional act did Joshua do in **verse 9**, even though Scripture doesn't record God telling him to do so? What was the purpose behind this monument? What, if any significance, is there in this monument being covered up by water once the people passed through? (See **2 Cor. 5:17**)

4. Besides exalting Joshua before the children of Israel as their leader, what two additional purposes of this miracle are revealed in **Joshua 4:21-24**?

5. The Israelites had a history of setting up monuments of stone to commemorate a great event, we see that in **Joshua chapters 3 and 4** along with many other Scriptures. What personal truth do we learn in **1 Peter 2:5**? As believers in Christ we are living stones! As Christians, we are a monument to a miracle that occurred in our lives. What miracle are we a living reminder of? (See **John 3:3, 5; Titus 3:5-7**)

6. Have you received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord? If not, why not do so right now in prayer?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- The Ark of the Covenant represented God's presence on earth with the Hebrew people.
- The Ark of the Covenant and the Israelites were separated by over ½ of a mile; this pointed to God's holiness and the separation from Him that is caused by sin.
- God opened a way for His people to enter the Promised Land; this is exactly what God has done to the ultimate Promised Land through the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- The miracle crossing of the Jordan River at flood stage exalted Joshua as the leader of the Hebrew people just as the crossing of the Red Sea had earlier exalted Moses!
- Only those who followed by faith were able to enter the Promised Land.
- Scripture identifies Christians as "*living stones*;" living monuments to the miracle of regeneration (or new birth) that God has done in our lives bringing us from spiritual death to spiritual life. (**Eph. 2:1-5**)