

Joshua 3 & 4

Crossing the River

October 1, 2009

Joshua 3:1 – 4 “Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over.

2 After three days the officers went throughout the camp,

3 giving orders to the people: “When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, who are Levites, carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it.

4 Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep a distance of about a thousand yards between you and the ark; do not go near it.”

Q A. Looking at verse 4, what appears to be the reason given for not coming near the ark?

Joshua 3:5 “Joshua told the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you.”

Joshua 3:9 – 11 “Joshua said to the Israelites, “Come here and listen to the words of the LORD your God.

10 This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites.

11 See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you.

Q B. Why specifically name all these groups of people? What difference might that make?

Joshua 4:13 - 17 “And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the LORD-- the Lord of all the earth-- set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap.”

14 So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them.

15 Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge,

16 the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea) was completely cut off. So the people crossed over opposite Jericho.

17 The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.”

Q C What is the focus here, what is mentioned several times?

Q D. What does verse 17 remind you of? What effect would this miracle have on their beliefs about their situation? How would it affect their attitude toward Joshua?

Joshua 4:20 – 23 “And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan.

21 He said to the Israelites, "In the future when your descendants ask their fathers, 'What do these stones mean?'

22 tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.'

23 For the LORD your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The LORD your God did to the Jordan just what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over.

Q E. What is the point of this? Why is it important? How can we do this same thing ourselves – what are some examples?

24 He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God."

All the nations would see that God is powerful and faithful. God is glorified in our own lives when we trust Him.