

# Joshua 03 - Crossing the Jordan; Parting of the Waters; Entrance Into the Land

I. Israel's conquest of Canaan (Joshua 1:1—12:24)

(2) Israel crosses the Jordan (3:1—5:12)

(A) Crossing described (3:1-17)

## Joshua 3

(2) Israel crosses the Jordan (3:1—5:12)

(A) Crossing described (3:1-17)

**1** Then Joshua got up **early in the morning**; and he and all the sons of Israel set out from Shittim and came to the Jordan, and they spent the night there before they crossed.

**1** Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and he and all the sons of Israel set out from Shittim and came to the Jordan, and they lodged there before they crossed.

**1** Joshua got up early the next morning. Accompanied by all the Israelis, he set out from the Acacia groves and arrived at the Jordan River, where they encamped before crossing it.

**1** And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over.

- "...early in the morning" - the next morning, after the return of the spies

— Joshua's heart was in his work (also 6:12; 7:16; 8:20; so, too, Jesus: Mark 1:35; Luke 4:42, et al.)

- Shittim was as far as Moses got (Num 25:1). [The Ark was made of shittim wood (Ex 27); mentioned 21x in Josh 3-4]

**2** Then at the end of three days the officers went through the midst of the camp;

**2** At the end of three days the officers went through the midst of the camp;

**2** Three days later, the officers went throughout the camp,

**2** And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host;

## Three Days

Joshua 1:11 describes one three-day period during which the spies were in Jericho and hiding in the hills. A second, overlapping three-day period began on the next day (day 4) with the people's arrival at Shittim (3:1), and concluded two days later (on the sixth day)

with the officers giving the people last-minute instructions about the crossing (3:2-4). The people then crossed the Jordan on the next day (day 7).

3 and they commanded the people, saying, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God with the Levitical priests carrying it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it.

3 and they commanded the people, saying, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God with the Levitical priests carrying it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it.

3 giving orders to the people. They said, "When you see the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD your God being carried by the Levitical priests, then get up, leave where you are, and follow it.

3 And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it.

4 However, there shall be a distance between you and it of about two thousand cubits by measurement. Do not come near it, so that you may know the way by which you shall go, for you have not passed this way before."

4 However, there shall be between you and it a distance of about 2,000 cubits by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you shall go, for you have not passed this way before."

4 Be sure to keep a distance of about 2,000 cubits between you and it. Don't come near it, so you can be certain where you're going, since you haven't passed this way before."

4 Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore.

From this point forward, God continued to lead His people by means of "the ark." Whereas in the wilderness, the cloudy pillar over the ark was the focus of the Israelites' attention, now the ark itself became the primary object of their interest. The writer mentioned the ark 17x in Joshua 3-4. It was the visible symbol that *God Himself* was leading His people into the land and against their enemies. The people were to keep their distance from the ark, however: "about 2,000 cubits," more than half a mile.

5 Then Joshua said to the people, "**Consecrate yourselves**, for tomorrow the LORD will do miracles among you."

5 Then Joshua said to the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you."

5 Then Joshua addressed the people: "Consecrate yourselves, because tomorrow the LORD will do marvelous things among you."

5 And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.

- "...Consecrate yourselves" - consisted of turning their hearts to God and getting their attitudes and actions right with Him (Cf. Matt 3:2; 4:17)

— Eliminate sinful practices, wash their bodies and put on clean clothes (Gen 35:2-3; Ex 19:10-11)

— The ark represented God's powerful and atoning presence with them

— God had previously promised to do wonders ("marvelous things") upon Israel entering the Land (Cf. Ex 34:10)

6 And Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, "Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over ahead of the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went ahead of the people.

6 And Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, "Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over ahead of the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went ahead of the people.

6 After this, Joshua instructed the priests, "Take up the Ark of the Covenant and cross over ahead of the people." So they took up the Ark of the Covenant and went on ahead of the people.

6 And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

- What next? One step at a time appears to be God's way for those who walk the path of faith (2 Cor 5:7)

7 Now the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I will **begin to exalt you** in the sight of all Israel, so that they will know that just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you.

7 Now the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you.

7 At this point, the LORD told Joshua, "Today I'm going to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, so they'll be sure that I'm going to be with you just as I was with Moses.

7 And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.

- "...begin to exalt you" - the Lord was still involved and acting among the Israelites, but now He began working through Joshua to provide them many miraculous victories

8 So you shall command the priests who are carrying the ark of the covenant, saying, 'When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand *still* in the Jordan.'

8 You shall, moreover, command the priests who are carrying the ark of the covenant, saying, 'When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand *still* in the Jordan.'

8 Give this command to the priests who are carrying the Ark of the Covenant: 'When you arrive at the water of the Jordan River, stand still in the Jordan.'

8 And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan.

- This event bore many similarities with the crossing of the Red Sea (Cf. Ex 14)

— Moses divided the waters of the Red Sea with his rod; Joshua divided the waters of the Jordan with the ark, which had become the divinely appointed symbol of God's presence since giving the Mosaic Covenant

9 Then Joshua said to the sons of Israel, "Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God."

9 Then Joshua said to the sons of Israel, "Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God."

9 So Joshua told the Israelis, "Come here and listen to what the LORD your God has to say."

9 And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God.

10 And Joshua said, "By this you will know that the living God is among you, and that He will assuredly drive out from you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, and the Jebusite.

10 Joshua said, "By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will assuredly dispossess from before you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, and the Jebusite.

10 Joshua continued, "This is how you'll know that the living God really is among you: he's going to remove the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites right in front of you.

10 And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites.

- Seven nations remain in the land; three nations—Sihon, Og (Num 21:21-35; Deut 2:30-37; 3:1-8) and the Amalekites (Ex 17:8-16)—had already been dealt with east of the Jordan

— Ten nations, now reduced to seven, also appears to be the pattern in Revelation (Cf. Dan 7:24; Rev 12:3; 13:1; 17:3,7)

11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of **the Lord of all the earth** is crossing over ahead of you into the Jordan.

11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over ahead of you into the Jordan.

11 Look! The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of whole the earth is crossing ahead of you into the Jordan River.

11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan.

- "...the Lord of all the earth" - first mention in Scripture; speaks to Yahweh's absolute sovereignty over this planet, which also meant its Owner

12 Now then, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man for each tribe.

12 Now then, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man for each tribe.

12 So take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man from each tribe.

12 Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man. [Cf. 4:2]

13 And it will come about when the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan will be cut off, *that is*, the waters which are flowing down from above; and they will stand in one heap."

13 It shall come about when the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan will be cut off, *and* the waters which are flowing down from above will stand in one heap."

13 When the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the LORD, the Lord of the whole earth, touch the water in the Jordan River, the water that feeds the Jordan will be cut off from above and they'll stand still in a single location."

13 And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap.

14 So when the people set out from their tents to cross the Jordan, with the priests carrying the ark of the covenant before the people,

14 So when the people set out from their tents to cross the Jordan with the priests carrying the ark of the covenant before the people,

14 So the people set out from their tents to cross the Jordan River, with the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant in full view of the people.

14 And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people;

15 and when those who were carrying the ark came up to the Jordan and the feet of the priests carrying the ark stepped down into the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest),

15 and when those who carried the ark came into the Jordan, and the feet of the priests carrying the ark were dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest),

15 When the priests who carried the ark entered the Jordan River, as their feet touched the water's edge (The Jordan River overflows all of its banks daily during the harvest season.),

15 And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,)

- This was springtime, the snows of Mt. Hermon were melting and the Jordan was at the point of overflowing on its trek to the Dead Sea.

16 then the waters which were flowing down from above stood *and* rose up in one heap, a great distance away at **Adam, the city** that is beside Zarethan; and those which were flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. So the people crossed opposite Jericho.

16 the waters which were flowing down from above stood *and* rose up in one heap, a great distance away at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those which were flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. So the people crossed opposite Jericho.

16 the water flowing downstream from above stood still in a single location, a great distance away at Adam, a city near Zarethan. The water that flowed south toward the sea in the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. So the people crossed opposite Jericho.

16 That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of

the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.

- "...Adam, the city" - about 18 miles north of Jericho, near where the Jabbok River empties into the Jordan Valley

— Interestingly, in 1267, 1837 and 1927, earthquakes sent so much soil into the Jordan that it actually stopped flowing for many hours

— It's possible God used an earthquake in this instance as well; it's also possible that the stoppage was entirely supernatural

17 And 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 crossed on dry ground, until all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan.

17 And 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 crossed on dry ground, until all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan.

17 The priests who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan River, while all Israel crossed on dry ground until the entire nation had finished crossing the Jordan River.

17 And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

- The dry ground in the river bed was a miracle as well (Cf. Ex 14:21)

- It's entirely possible for 2 million Israelites to cross the river in half a day if their crossing was a mile or more wide. Since the Jordan dried up from Adam, 18 miles upstream, there would have been plenty of dry riverbed