

# **Joshua 3**

Pass around photos of Jordan River from any standard Bible atlas or dictionary

## **Joshua 3.1-4**

**V1** – This is the first move that the Israelites had made since the death of Moses

-**The significance?** -The people had learned a great deal during 40 years in the wilderness – they were not as rebellious as they used to be

-**Why did Joshua get up early?** He set a good example for the people/sense of urgency, etc.

**Read Joshua 6.12, 15, Joshua 7.16, Joshua 8.10**

-**Note:** Shittim – a town on east side of Jordan River

**V2** – **Next event?** Army officers went through the camp

**V3-4** – **Instructions of the officers?**

1. Leave when you see the Ark of the Covenant leave (go after it)

2. Stay at least 2000 cubits (c.3000 feet) away from the ark

-They were to follow the ark – **Why?** **V4** – You have not been this way before

This is so much like life today in general = we have to follow the word of God for help

-We see disasters constantly taking place/there are terrible predictions for the future/it is hard to know how to plan for the future

**Note the significance of the ark** – It is mentioned 17 times in *Joshua 3-4*

-**Why?** It was their link to God (pillar of fire and cloud were about to disappear, manna, etc.)

-**What had led the Israelites during the 40 years in the wilderness?** Pillar of cloud (by day for shade)/pillar of fire (by night for heat and light)

-Note the unity among the people – no discord or disagreements

## **Joshua 3.5-6**

**V5** – **What did Joshua tell the people to do?**

-Sanctify themselves (*Gen. 35.1-3, Exod. 19.10, 15, 2 Samuel 12.20* – wash clothes or wear clean clothes, no sexual relations)

-**Who was going to do the work the next day?** Lord

**V6** – **Joshua's instructions to the priests?** Take Ark on ahead of the people

## **Joshua 3.7-13**

**V7** – **What was God going to do to Joshua?** Exalt him in the eyes of the people (cause admiration)

**V8** – **What was Joshua supposed to tell the priests?** When they got to the Jordan River, they were to stand still

**V9** – Joshua called in the priests

**V10** – The miracle was about to be performed

-**What would be the purpose of the miracle?**

- To show the Israelites that God was on their side
- Notice the 7 nations living in Canaan – description of each group: *Beacon Bible Commentary*, II, 35-36

**V 11** – Interesting: "*The Lord of all the earth*" [including the Gentiles]

- God was to be the leader of the Israelites, but he was also the God of the Gentiles who lived outside the Old Law (they were under the Patriarchal Age at this time)
- How could they have been saved? Read Romans 2.12-13** – The "law of the heart" - = monotheism and basic morality
- When did the Patriarchal Age come to an end? *Acts 2* (it was the law of God from the death of Christ on the cross until *Acts 2* (the baptism of John was also in effect for Jews)

**V 12** – **What were the people asked to do?** Appoint 12 men (one from each tribe) (purpose: *Jos. 4.2-8* – to bring 12 stones from the middle of the river)

**V 13** – "*Lord of all the earth*" again

- The miracle?** When the feet of the priests touched the water of the Jordan, the flow of the Jordan would stop – imagine the thoughts of that first priest who stuck his foot in the water: great faith This miracle would prove that God was "*Lord of all the earth*" – He could control nature
- How did Jesus prove that he also was the "*lord of all the earth*"?** – He stopped storm on Sea of Galilee/healed the sick, etc.
- The priests were the first ones into the river bed and the last ones out – their feet stopped the water and got it started again

## **Joshua 3.14-17**

**V 14** – People set out – normal width of Jordan River: about 100 feet wide

**V 15** – Priests set their feet in the Jordan River

- What was the condition of the Jordan at this time?** Flood stage
- Why did God choose this time?** To make sure the people would see proof of a miracle
- A crossing during a dry season maybe would have been disputed
- But at flood state, no natural crossing would have been possible

For classes in the state of Illinois: **Do we have any rock ford in our area (a way to wade across the river)?** The rock ford just north of the bridge on State Street in downtown Rockford, Illinois (where the pioneers crossed the river)

- but nobody could say that the Israelites waded across the river (at flood stage)

**V 16** – The city of Adam (or Adamah) was 20 miles north of this point

- At what point on the Jordan did they cross?** Opposite Jericho
- Why at this point?** To terrify the people of Jericho

Anyone seeking God would have been knocking on the door of Rahab's apartment to ask about salvation through the God of the Israelites

- The entire nation of Israel crossed

**V 17** – **What did the priests do?** Held ark in the middle of the river; the people crossed on dry ground

- This reminds us of when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea (*Exod. 14.13-31*)

-Imagine the thrill of walking on dry land across the Jordan River and passing the priests and the Ark of the Covenant

Note: "the nation" – not just the 12 tribes anymore

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