



Joshua 3 Crossing Over the Jordan



Jordan River

- 156 miles long; From Sea of Galilee to Dead Sea; elevation drops 9 feet per mile
- 98 feet wide (avg) and 3-10 (avg) feet deep;
- Flood stage (Jan-Mar) water overflows its banks; width is half mile
- Fed by 3 river tributaries up north; melting snow/ice from Mount Hermon
- Normally several crossing points (fords); but no crossing at flood stage
- Israelites approached Canaan from the east.
- Jordan River is the border. Crossing over signals arrival in the Promised Land.

Shittim:

- 6 miles east of Jordan River; in plains of Moab
- Last encampment before crossing the Jordan River
- Israel remained there several months
- Moab king (Balak) targets & intices Israel into Baal worship & pagan culture
- Israel falls into deep sin:
 - Sexual immorality
 - Inter-marriage with Moabite & Midianite women
 - God judges Israel with plague; 24,000 men die
- Where God talks to a prophet (Balaam) thru a donkey.
- Where Israel prepares to enter Canaan
 - Defeated Midianites from its HQs in Shittim (massive spoils of war)
 - Tribe-by-tribe census to count men ready for battle (>20 yrs old)
 - Moses delivers farewell message; blesses people
 - Joshua named Moses' successor
 - Joshua sends 2 spies into Jericho

It must have been a day like that on which the Israelites finally moved out of the desert across the Jordan River into Canaan. They had been waiting for this moment for a long, long time. Most had been born in the desert as part of that new generation that had replaced the one that had refused to trust God for the conquest years earlier. Joshua and Caleb had waited even longer. These men were about eighty years old, and had been waiting for the conquest for most of their lives. Still, even this does not exhaust the extent of the Jewish anticipation of this moment. God had promised the conquest to Abraham more than 500 years earlier (see Gen 15: 18-21). That promise had been repeated to the patriarchs for centuries. Properly considered, there had been half a millennium of fervent anticipation, and now the moment had come.

James Montgomery Boice

Israel Crosses the Jordan

3 Then Joshua rose early in the morning and they set out from Shittim. And they came to the Jordan, he and all the people of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. ² At the end of three days the officers went through the camp ³ and commanded the people, "As soon as you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God being carried by the Levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place and follow it. ⁴ Yet there shall be a distance between you and it, about 2,000 cubits in length. Do not come near it, in order that you may know the way you shall go, for you have not passed this way before." ⁵ Then Joshua said to the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you." ⁶ And Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on before the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.

⁷ The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. ⁸ And as for you, command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, 'When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.'" ⁹ And Joshua said to the people of Israel, "Come here and listen to the words of the LORD your God." ¹⁰ And Joshua said, "Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Gergashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites. ¹¹ Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is passing over before you into the Jordan. ¹² Now therefore take twelve men from the tribes of Israel, from each tribe a man. ¹³ And when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap."



Principle:

Don't give up on WHAT WE KNOW.....for..... WHAT WE DON'T KNOW

Engulfs our perspective

WHAT ISRAEL KNEW	WHAT ISRAEL DIDN'T KNOW
God is: ✓ Faithful ✓ Always right (no mistakes) ✓ Powerful ✓ Knows the future, we don't ✓ Committed to us ✓ Made a covenant (promise) to us for this land ✓ Loves us completely ✓ Rehearse the goodness of God in our past	- How to cross a river at flood stage - How to protect our children in the river - How God could command such a thing at this time - If Canaan is all that great

¹⁴ So when the people set out from their tents to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, ¹⁵ and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest), ¹⁶ the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho. ¹⁷ Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.

How do we read this passage and apply it to our lives?

What does this chapter teach us about God?