

Joshua Chapters 3

Crossing the Jordan Part One

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Old matter – “morality” of lying

Did Rahab sin when she lied to the king’s men? If Rahab did not sin, can we follow her example?

- The Ten Commandments – (Number 9 *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor*)
- Matthew 5:33-37 – Let your Yes be Yes
- Read Luke 6:9 and 14:1-6
 1. Reaction to legalism excusing morally necessary behaviour
 2. Mark 2:27: *The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath*
 3. Let’s not go to the extreme on the other end – example: lying to IRS to save my “life” from jail
- Prioritizing life over legalism
- Is this *situational ethics*?

Read Joshua 3

Remembering the structure of the Book of Joshua CROSS TAKE DIVIDE
SERVE

Elements of the story Preparation – what is going to happen – what happened

- There are basically two main themes in chapter 3:
 1. Description of events (preparation for the crossing of the Jordan, crossing of the Jordan)
 2. Divinely revealed the meaning of the events
- The immediate flow of the story is "interrupted" by the LORD God conversing with Joshua
- The narrative clearly shows God's miraculous provision during the crossing of the Jordan river

Preparations for the crossing Verses 3:1-6

- Travel from Shittim to the banks of the Jordan river
- Resting for three days
- Joshua gives instructions about the order of the crossing (the Ark goes first, then the people)
- Joshua commands the people to consecrate themselves – probably washing their cloths and abstaining from sexual relations (Exodus 19:10; 14-15)
- The Ark of the Covenant goes first:
 1. We have a detailed description of the Ark in Exodus 25:10-22 (how it was to be built, and what materials were to be used)
 2. The Ark contained the stone tablets, the testimony of the covenant that God made with Israel at Mount Sinai
 3. On top of the Ark were two cherubs covering with their wings the mercy seat, which was to be sprinkled with blood of the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement by the High Priest (Leviticus 16:14)
 4. The Ark reminds that the presence of God among the sinful people is bound by the covenant

5. The Ark going first is the symbol of God leading His people so that they may know where to go, because they have not passed this way before (verse 4)
 - It is the LORD, like a good shepherd, who leads His people, showing them the way (Psalm 23:1-2)
 - Jesus Christ as the "Captain of our salvation" – Hebrews 2:10 (*archegos* – chief leader, champion); He made the way and is the way to the Father
 - Jesus Christ as the Ark of the Covenant – John 20:11-12

Joshua hears from God and speaks to the people Joshua in his prophetic role:

1. The LORD God promises to exalt Joshua in the sight of all Israel
2. This is to assure the people of Israel of God's presence with Joshua and with them
3. It will be accomplished when the prophecy of Joshua will be fulfilled before the eyes of the children of Israel
4. *When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken* – Deuteronomy 18:22
5. *Listen to the words of the LORD your God*, verse 9, compare with *ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth*, verses 11 and 13
 - The expression *the Lord of all the earth* – "Adon" not "Adonai" – occurs in only in 3 other places in OT (Psalm 97:1-5; Zechariah 4:14; 6:5)
 - The context is showing that the covenantal God of Israel is God of all the world
 - We see this in the ministry of the prophets, and in Romans (God speaks through the prophets both to people of Israel and to the nations)
 - We see this in Rahab's confession

6. The event of the crossing of the Jordan has redemptive historical significance for the whole creation, not only for the people of Israel
7. It did not happen in secret – by miraculously transporting the Israelites through the dangerous waters of Jordan the LORD revealed His glory and might to all creation

Joshua's prophecy fulfilled Israel crosses the Jordan exactly as promised by God:

1. The crossing took place at the time when the river overflows – verse 15
2. The crossing took place in the manner commanded by God
3. The waters of Jordan moved aside to allow the people of Israel cross on the dry ground
4. The safe crossing of the Jordan river confirmed the certainty of God's promise regarding the promised land – revealed meaning of the historical event
5. This special revelation is given only to Israel, to God's covenantal people
6. The nations are left with the general revelation of the mighty acts of God
7. Yet the lack of special revelation does not excuse the nations from the righteous judgement of God (Romans 1:20). So the rebellious, sinful nations living in the land will face God in judgement
8. The crossing of the Jordan river provides yet another example of people reacting to God's redemptive acts in two different ways (acceptance or rejection)