

JOSHUA 3

1 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 Levitical priests 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 two thousand cubits [3,000 feet] between you and the ark; do not go near it.”

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

6 Joshua said to the priests, “Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people.” So they took it up and went ahead of them.

7 And the Lord said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. **8** Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: ‘When you

reach the edge of the Jordan’s waters, go and stand in the river.’”

9 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. **12** Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. **13** 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 [that is, the Dead

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 stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.

DISCUSSION

- Notice the priests were expected to step into the Jordan in faith before God opened the path! Contrast this with the Red Sea.
- Joshua moved early in the morning, and prepared everyone even before he knew what God was going to do--He only knew “the Lord will do amazing things...”



**JOSHUA & THE ISRAELITES
CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER**

Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over." Though they were not yet told how they should pass the river, and were unprovided for the passing of it in any ordinary way, yet they went forward in faith, having been told (ch. 1:11) that they should pass it. We must go on in the way of our duty though we foresee difficulties, trusting God to help us through them when we come to them. Let us proceed as far as we can, and depend on divine sufficiency for that which we find ourselves not sufficient for. Those that would bring great things to pass must rise early. Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty. Joshua herein set a good example to the officers under him, and taught them to rise early, and to all that are in public stations especially to attend continually to the duty of their place." - Matthew Henry

"THE story of the passage of the Jordan might instructively be used in many ways. It was a very wonderful event. It occurred on the tenth day of the first month, on the same day of the year as the passage of the Red Sea. Of that glorious miracle it was the fortieth anniversary, and you may very properly join the dividing of the Red Sea to that of the Jordan, for so the Holy Spirit has done in the one hundred and fourteenth Psalm: "The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back."

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Children of God, be ready to go from this world. Let not your roots strike deep into this earthly soil, for you must in due time be transplanted; and the more roothold you get to this world, the worse it will be for you. Hold everything with a loose hand. The soldier in a foreign land must not settle down, and begin to gather surroundings about him which would naturalize him in the country. He is an alien, tarrying till his prince shall call him back to the home country. You cannot be in exile long. Heaven is prepared to receive you. Be ready! Your heart is in heaven, send your best goods thither, where they will be safe from moth and rust. Have about you what little things you want for spending money, but make the best of your way through this Vanity Fair. Keep in marching order; be prepared at a moment's notice to start on your way.

Next, note that the people had with them a conquering leader. Joshua was at their head, to encourage and direct them. When you and I shall pass over Jordan we shall have Jesus with us. Joshua is but another form of that dear name in which we triumph. He says, "Be of good cheer. [John 16:33] Because I live, ye shall live also." [John 14:19] He it is who cries, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." [Isiah 43:2] If our Joshua should seem to leave us, it will be on the flowery hill-side, or in the gardens of delight; but he will not even appear to do so when the dark waters flow at our feet, and we are called upon to pass through the stream. Blessed be our Lord Jesus Christ, he never forgets his own."

- Charles Spurgeon



#16 CROSSING THE JORDAN



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"THE SOCIETY THAT
SEPARATES ITS
SCHOLARS FROM ITS
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THINKING DONE BY
COWARDS AND ITS
FIGHTING BY FOOLS."

- THUCYDIDES