

Joshua Chapter 3: The Crossing of the Jordan River

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INTRODUCTION

God gave Israel an impossible task: conquer the Land of Canaan. However, He (in a very real sense) conquers it for them. He does the same with us today. He commands us to live righteously before Him, an impossible task, especially since we have the sin nature to contend with. However, He not only gave us this life (John 10:28), He gives us the ability to live it (Romans 6-8). And in a very real sense, He lives it for us, since He's living inside of us (Romans 8:9-11).

ISRAEL'S HISTORY PRIOR TO JOSHUA CHAPTER ONE

- God frees Israel from Egypt. (Ex. 12:29-41)
- God leads Israel to the Promise Land, but they refuse to enter (Num. 13:1-14:12)
- Israel cursed to wonder in the wilderness for 40yrs (Num. 14:20-35)
- Moses is not allowed to enter the Promise Land (Num. 20:5-12, 24; 27:14)
- Joshua is appointed by God to replace Moses (Deut. 31:14)
- God brings Israel back to the Promise Land (Num. 33:40-56)

WHO IS JOSHUA?

He was one of the 12 spies (Num. 13:8). His name was "Hoshea," which means "Salvation," (Num. 13:8), but Moses changes it to Yehoshua (*Joshua*), which means "Yahweh [or the Lord] Is Salvation" (Num. 13:16). He was Moses' Assistant (Ex. 24:12-13) and a military hero against Amalek (Ex. 17).

JOSHUA CHAPTER ONE: VICTORY BEFORE ENTERING THE LAND

God guarantees Israel's victory over the people of the Land and He tells Joshua that no one will be able to stand against him all the days of his life. And what's the key to their victory? God's Word, they must meditate it day and night in order to obey it. They must not veer from it to the right or left; then they will have success.

JOSHUA CHAPTER TWO: THE TWO SPIES CONFIRM GOD'S WORD ABOUT THE PROMISE LAND

Joshua sends two spies to spy Jericho and they find out from Rahab that God's Words are true. The people of the Land are dreadfully afraid of Israel because of the reports they've been getting for the past 40yrs. They know about the parting of the Red Sea and Israel's victory over the two Amorite kings, Sihon and Og, which leaves them terrified. And this is exactly what the spies report to Joshua at the end of chapter two: *And they said to Joshua, "Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us."*

JOSHUA CHAPTER THREE: THE CROSSING OF THE JORDAN RIVER

In chapter three God continues to strengthen and encourage Israel as they make their way to the Promise Land and prepare to conquer it. He performs a miracle for them that (like the parting of the Red Sea) brings the people of the land to their knees with fear (5:1). Through this miracle He also confirms Joshua's leadership over the nation (3:7; 4:14) as He did with Moses and the parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:31).

Observations about the miracle

1. The events happened exactly as predicted in 3:13, the time was exact, 3:15-16.
2. It took place when the Jordan River was overflowing.
3. The wall of water remained in place for many hours; approximately 2 million people and their livestock had to cross the river.
4. The riverbed became dry at once, 3:17.
5. The waters returned to normal as soon as all the people finished crossing and the priests came up from the river, 4:18.
6. The people of the Land understood this as a miracle, 5:1.

Similarities

1. Both involved water.
2. Both were witnessed by the whole nation.
3. Both proceeded by either an act of Moses or Joshua.
4. Both removed a barrier before the people.
5. Each one authenticated the leader chosen by God.
6. Each presented a test of Israel's faith.
7. Both passed on dry ground.
8. Both were done in silence or without the blowing of the trumpets.
9. Afterwards the water returned to normal.
10. Each began a new period in Israel's history.
11. Both showed God's power at the consternation of the enemy.

Differences

1. The 1st one terminated the Egyptian sojourn and the 2nd one initiated the entry into the Promise Land.
2. The 1st was to escape the Egyptians, the 2nd was to approach and conquer the Canaanites.
3. The 1st used the strong East winds as the means, but no specific means was stated for the 2nd.
4. The 1st occurred at nighttime, the 2nd in broad daylight.
5. In the 1st Egyptians were killed, in the 2nd no one died.
6. The 1st was for a murmuring and disbelieving people; the 2nd was for an obedient and believing people.
7. Except for two men, all males 20yrs old and up who experienced the 1st never possessed any of the Land, while the majority of those who experienced the 2nd survived the wars and possessed the Land.
8. In the 1st the waters were divided, while in the 2nd the waters stood up in one heap.
9. The people were not sanctified for the 1st, but they were for the 2nd.
10. After the 1st there were dead bodies everywhere, after the 2nd there were 12 stones.