Joshua 3:1-17 Crossing the Jordan

Today we are looking at the miracle of the Israelites crossing the Jordan River.

This reminds us of the crossing of the Red Sea. God rescued the Israelites from the slavery in Egypt by slaying the firstborn of the Egyptians, but the Israelites escaped the angel of death by the blood of the lam on their door posts. Then they got to the Red Sea and they were trapped by the pursuing Egyptian army who wanted to kill them. They were distraught, but God dried up a path through the sea for them to walk through unscathed and eliminated the pursuing army. God brought them safely to the Promised Land, but they did not trust Him and as a consequence, they were then sent wandering through the desert for 40 years to allow for those that did not trust God to die, since those were not allowed into the Promised Land.

During these 40 years God protected them, He fed them and provided water and even their shoes did not wear out after 40 years walking in the desert. God showed His presence as a pillar of light at night and a sheltering cloud during the desert sun in the day.

Moses also disobeyed God on one occasion and therefore he was not allowed to enter the Promised Land. God chose Joshua, a man with a history of trusting God to lead them into the Promised Land.

Joshua became a great leader and led the Israelites well. The reason for it was that he trusted God as evidence of his report at the spying of the land 40 years previously. He was confident that the Lord would overcome the giants in the Promised Land, but he could not convince the rest.  He also became a good leader, because he accepted the instruction of his mentor Moses and even more so, because he had an intimate relationship with God. This is evident as God speaks to him in Joshua 1***:***[***1***](http://biblehub.com/joshua/1-1.htm)***After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant,***[***2***](http://biblehub.com/joshua/1-2.htm)***“Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel.***[***3***](http://biblehub.com/joshua/1-3.htm)***Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses.***[***4***](http://biblehub.com/joshua/1-4.htm)***From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory.***[***5***](http://biblehub.com/joshua/1-5.htm)***No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.***[***6***](http://biblehub.com/joshua/1-6.htm)***Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.***[***7***](http://biblehub.com/joshua/1-7.htm)***Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success***[***a***](https://biblehub.com/esv/joshua/1.htm#footnotes)***wherever you go.***[***8***](http://biblehub.com/joshua/1-8.htm)***This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.***[***9***](http://biblehub.com/joshua/1-9.htm)***Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be*dismayed,*for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”***

Joshua was able to be a good leader, because he trusted in God being with him in all circumstances in order to be strong and courageous, he lived by the book of the law, he meditated on it and spoke the truths  contained in it.

Joshua responds by getting up early in the morning to likely spend time with God before leading  the Israelites to the shore of the Jordan. I believe there is something getting up early when it is quiet and I am fresh to open my day spending time with God and getting His instructions for my day.

Joshua did not rush the Jordan as he noticed the river is very full and he knew there are hostile nations on the other side. So he waited on God and once he felt lead by God, he sends officers to inform the people. That is also a valuable strategy – to keep the people informed about what is happening and that eliminates speculation and dissent. It is also crucial that the people know and learn to trust God.

More important is the message. They said to them – my translation: “folks the time has come – we are going to cross the Jordan, you do not know where to go and how to cross the full river, but God is with us. The priests will carry the arc and you need to follow, but be aware you need to show God the respect He deserves, you need to keep your distance”

For those who are curious this distance is about 900m for them to follow the arc.

What significance does the arc of the covenant have?

The arc was the evidence of God with them. Inside of the arc was manna- a reminder that God provided for them, also the tablets of the law given to Moses by God, this to remind them of their relationship with God and the rules for living in the presence of God as well as Aaron’s staff which became a snake before the Pharaoh as well it budded to show God’s anointment on Aaron when it was challenged. This represented God’s authority and power.

Then Joshua gave a very important directive. God is going to do something big and you need to be ready for it. He commands that everyone should consecrate  themselves. This means to cleans oneself and to prepare for what is coming by considering the past and planning for the future.

To do this well one has to review the past. In their case the needed to reflect who God was and what He has done for them up to then. It also entails to acknowledge ones relationship with God and what is hindering that relationship. We have seen in the instructions given to them in how they needed to conduct themselves in the Promised Land that they needed to eradicate sin from themselves even to the point of killing those who walk in sin in order to prevent polluting the community. It is also time to reflect on one’s confidence in God to overcome the barriers and the dangers ahead. They needed to remove sin from amongst them and put their faith and trust in God.

God chose Joshua to lead the Israelites, but the people still needed to accept him as leader in order for them to follow him. God promised to be with Joshua and make him successful. God was going to do a miracle and involve Joshua in order to confirm him as God’s chosen leader. Because he trusts God he announced to the people that God is going to do this amazing miracle and how it is going to happen exactly.

Then Joshua calls the Israelites to not listen to him, but to the words of God. God is going to do this miracle in order to show to them who He really is as well as to encourage them to trust and obey Him the troubles they are soon going to face.

He points out that God that can split the waters of the Jordan even during the flood season is the same God that promised them victory over the local nations previously and still now. They have nothing to fear when they trust in God for their future.

The next day the miracle happened just as God promised Joshua. The river was in flood with high water and fast flowing and impossible to cross, but God stopped the waters and gave them safe passage. The priest and Levites task was to stand with the arc and leave God to do the miracle and bring the nation old and young safely across the Jordan into the Promised Land.

I believe that Israel was then accepting Joshua as leader and God as their protector and ready to take on the hostile nations. No turning back this time.

They heeded the words of God and Joshua and in faith in God, crossed the Jordan in flood on dry land, ready to conquer the hostile nations in the Promised Land.

Dear brother and sister, I believe as the human race, we stand before the flood waters of our Jordan. We can with fear and trepidation look at the height of the water and the strong dangerous rapids and we want to climb back in our tents. But God has a promised land for us, but we can only get there if we know Him and trust Him.

He has provided us with a Joshua, but a far superior one! The name Joshua and Yeshu'a which is Jesus in Aramaic means “YAHWEH is salvation”.  Our leader is Yahweh, is God and is fearless and completely powerful. He has loved us from before the creation of the world and He has prepared for us ultimately a place in the ultimate Promised Land, heaven! The Passover lamb’s blood protected the people of Israel from death and set them free from bondage. Jesus is the ultimate Passover Lamb who was slain in order for His blood to protect us from the spiritual death and give us new life and freedom in Christ.

Unfortunately we as a people will still wonder about the authority of Jesus in our lives. The evidence of that is that we take control of our lives regularly and do what we like to do instead of living surrendered lives to Him. Fortunately, we can be reassured of His love for us and His power in His word. He is the Word made flesh who came to dwell amongst us. He still performs miracles today, every day! I am overwhelmed at the miracles He has done in my life and still does and I rejoice in the miracles He does in my life and in so many lives across the globe! He also plans to do miracles in your life, if you allow Him to.

Before we can cross our Jordan we need to consecrate ourselves. This and review our lives and consider all  Jesus has done in our lives and who He is in our lives and our dependency on Him. We also need to be cleansed from sin that separates us from Jesus if we want to fully experience Jesus. We are forgiven sinners, saved by grace, through His paying for our sins on the cross. He has given us the Holy Spirit to live in us and guide and direct us. Everything good we have ever experienced is from Him and all the tough things are either as a consequence of sin or Him disciplining  us or preparing us for ministry!

***Heb 12***[***1***](http://biblehub.com/hebrews/12-1.htm)***Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,***[***2***](http://biblehub.com/hebrews/12-2.htm)***looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.***

The desires of the flesh are powerful and pervasive. We see in our culture that sexual orientation defines people and it consumes them. Our identity should not be in our sexual desires, but in Christ. Our identity should not be in our job or social status or Facebook likes, but in Jesus. God has given us desires with a purpose and we need to honour God with all our desires, whether they are for food, acceptance, wealth, power, sex or any other thing.

***Gal 5:17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do***

Brother and sister I can tell you, that allowing the desires of the flesh to overcome the desires of the spirit, will not only prevent you from what you want to do, but also cause you separation from Jesus and eventually spiritual death!

Jesus wants to lead us into the Promised Land. All the promises in the Bible come true in Jesus. He has a purpose for you and He wants to bless you, beyond what you can imagine.

***2 Cor 1:***[***20***](http://biblehub.com/2_corinthians/1-20.htm)***For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.***[***21***](http://biblehub.com/2_corinthians/1-21.htm)***And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us,***[***22***](http://biblehub.com/2_corinthians/1-22.htm)***and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.***[***d***](https://biblehub.com/esv/2_corinthians/1.htm#footnotes)

God like a loving father wants you to experience His promises. Unfortunately you will be unable to share in His promises if your heart is not totally His.

***2 Chron 16:9 The eyes of the LORD search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.***

God wants to bless and strengthen you, but He wants your heart fully committed to Him to do that.

We need to have Jesus as our biggest treasure. Not what He gives us but our relationship with Him!

We also have a better Arc of the covenant. We have the author of the covenant, the covenant written in His blood. This is a much better covenant, our sins are forgiven and we have a personal direct relationship with Jesus– He provides for us , His Word teaches us and His staff leads us.

***Ps 23: The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.***[***2***](http://biblehub.com/psalms/23-2.htm)***He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.***[***a***](https://biblehub.com/esv/psalms/23.htm#footnotes)[***3***](http://biblehub.com/psalms/23-3.htm)***He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness***[***b***](https://biblehub.com/esv/psalms/23.htm#footnotes) ***for his name’s sake.***

[***4***](http://biblehub.com/psalms/23-4.htm)***Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,***[***c***](https://biblehub.com/esv/psalms/23.htm#footnotes) ***I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.***

[***5***](http://biblehub.com/psalms/23-5.htm)***You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.***[***6***](http://biblehub.com/psalms/23-6.htm)***Surely***[***d***](https://biblehub.com/esv/psalms/23.htm#footnotes)***goodness and mercy***[***e***](https://biblehub.com/esv/psalms/23.htm#footnotes)***shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell***[***f***](https://biblehub.com/esv/psalms/23.htm#footnotes)***in the house of the LORD
forever.***[***g***](https://biblehub.com/esv/psalms/23.htm#footnotes)

Are you ready to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land? Are you looking at the rushing water or at the raised water on the banks? Or are you looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith? Are you going to sink in the river because of sin weighing you down?

We are all in different seasons of life and our Jordan’s look different, but our Saviour is the same!

Look at what made Joshua strong and courageous. He had faith in God. He learned from someone that walked with God.  He spent time in the Word of God.. Joshua listened and waited on God. He also trusted and obeyed God

For us to be strong and courageous we need to do the same*.*[***8***](http://biblehub.com/joshua/1-8.htm)***This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success*  *Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success***[***a***](https://biblehub.com/esv/joshua/1.htm#footnotes)***wherever you go.***

There is a pandemic virus that is destroying not only lives, but communities and livelihoods. There is no cure and perhaps not an effective vaccination, even in the future. There is panic and fear. Brothers and sisters Jesus knows this virus and has allowed it and is using it to bring people to Him. Our communities need Christians that are not afraid of the future, but confident that God is in charge and whatever happens to those who are called for a purpose –everything will work out for our best interest! This is a time we can be like Joshua and wait on God and trust in His provision.

We need to love Jesus. That is the most important thing in our lives. God has done miracles in our lives and is blessing us every day. Only from Him is salvation and forgiveness of sins. Only in Him can we trust the future. We have to be careful not to be in love with God’s blessings, but with the giver of the blessings. We get to know the heart of him who blesses us and we love Him. If we are in love with His blessings instead off Him it becomes idolatry. With being in love with Jesus we will have an intimate relationship with Him and be sensitive to His Word and His prompting in our lives.

Then we live such lives of courage and love and people will notice and want to know what is the hope our lives are built on and we can tell them about our leader Jesus in gentleness and respect. Not to win the argument but to win over the person.

Also as a congregation we are at a Jordan, but the Promised Land is waiting. Pastor Leland is with us and we appreciate it that he could lead us through this time, but he will leave at some time. We need to pray for direction and vision. We need to consider and be grateful for the past, consecrate ourselves in order to hear from Jesus and follow Him across our Jordan when the time comes. We are looking forward to experience His promises!

What brought Israel into the Promised Land?

They were chosen by God, saved by the blood of the Passover lamb, they followed a godly leader and totally depended on God and therefore got to know and trust Him.

We are His chosen people. Every child of God has been chosen by Him before the creation of the world, has been saved by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus. When we surrender to Him we will get to know Him and trust Him.

We are reminded what made Joshua strong and courageous leader: He knew God intimately, He meditated on God’s Word day and night. He obeyed and proclaimed the word of God. He remembered the deeds God has done in His life and trusted that He will be able to help him conquer his challenges in the future. He stepped out in faith trusting God.

I encourage each of you to make certain that you know the Lord Jesus who was sacrificed at the Passover Lamb for our salvation. To read and know and proclaim His word in the Bible as you trust and obey Jesus to cross over any river in flood in your and our lives today and in the future.

The future of our world in the view of a virus that kills people and destroys lives and communities and the future look very uncertain. There is fear and uncertainty in all communities, but we do not have to fear, but trust and obey! We are followers of the King in charged, Jesus.

In England at the little chapel of Saint Gilgen there is a tomb and it has this inscription, "Look not mournfully into the past, it comes not back again. Wisely improve the present, it is thine. Go forth to meet the shadowy future without fear and with a manly heart."

God’s promises and His blessings are ahead. He will lead us through the turbulent waters and we will be victorious in all the battles we engage with Him and for Him!

Joshua 1:*.*[***9***](http://biblehub.com/joshua/1-9.htm)*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”*

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*07-26-2020*