

Joshua

The LORD is Salvation

Chapter 3 *The Nation of Israel Crosses the Jordan*

3:1 “Early in the morning”, the Israelites moved their camp from Shittim to a few miles west, so they would be on the bank of the Jordan River where they were preparing to cross a few days later.

Note that Joshua was an early starter, similar to the earthly life of Jesus ^{Mark 1:35, Luke 4:42}.

3:2-4 The officers under Joshua gave the instructions to the people on how the Jordan crossing would occur: they should watch for the Levitical priests ^{Hebrews 7:11} who would go first with the ark of the covenant ^{Numbers 10:33}, then the people would “move out and follow”. The Israelites were to go after the ark; however, they were warned to not go near “it” (the ark) ^{Numbers 4:15}, but follow at a distance of about ‘two thousand cubits’ ^{Numbers 35:5} (“one thousand yards”).

“Three days” ^{Exodus 10:22, Joshua 2:16, John 2:19} was the preparation time before crossing ^{Joshua 1:11}.

The ark symbolized God's presence ^{1 Samuel 4:4} /power ^{Psalms 132:8}, so He actually led the way.

Normally, the family of a son of Levi, Kohath ^{Genesis 46:11}, would carry the ark ^{Numbers 4:15, 7:9}.

The “officers” were the leading men of the tribes appointed to have authority ^{Deuteronomy 1:15}.

3:5 Joshua told the people to be “consecrated” in preparation for the LORD’s special work ^{Psalms 75:1}.

In the OT, being consecrated meant receiving ceremonial washing & abstinence ^{Exodus 19:14-15}.

A Christian becomes purified through the faithful act of confession to the LORD ^{1 John 1:9}.

The result of a person being consecrated is the creation of holiness ^{Leviticus 20:7, 1 Peter 1:15-16}.

“Everything God created is good” by being “consecrated by [the] word & prayer”. ^{1 Timothy 4:4-5}

3:6-8 Joshua commanded the priests to start the procession (they were only given part of the instructions at any one time ^{2 Corinthians 5:7}). The LORD encouraged Joshua by telling him He would validate Joshua’s leadership of Israel. The priests were instructed to “stand in the river”.

The LORD enjoys exalting the leaders of His people: Moses ^{Exodus 1:15} & Solomon ^{1 Chronicles 29:25}.

3:9-13 The Israelites were given additional information and direction from God through Joshua: the miracle of the crossing will be an affirmation of God’s promise to “drive out” the 7 nations who inhabited the Promised Land. Although he did not explain why yet ^{Joshua 4:4-7}, Joshua told

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the Israelites to choose “twelve men from the tribes of Israel”. He also explained that the priests carrying the “ark of the LORD of all the earth” would be the first to “set foot in the Jordan” River, which would immediately stop flowing and “stand up in a heap” (a “wall of water” ^{Exodus 14:21-22}).

The 7 nations ^{v.10}, along with the 3 earlier-defeated nations (i.e., the Amalekites ^{Exodus 17:8-13}, as well as the nations of Heshbon & Bashan ^{Deuteronomy 29:7-8} /kings Sihon & Og ^{Numbers 21:21-35}) may be an allusion to the “seven heads and ten horns” in Revelation ^{Revelation 12:3, 13:1, 17:3,7}.

It is interesting that Joshua described God as the “LORD of all the earth” ^{v.11}, while Rahab had described Him as “the LORD ... is God in heaven above and on the earth below” ^{Joshua 2:11}.

3:14-17 The Jordan River was at its peak of flow (due to the springtime snow melt on Mt. Hermon), but just as Joshua said, the priests with the ark led the way and the waters “piled up in a heap” at Adam. As a result, the priests carrying the ark and the Israelite nation crossed on dry ground.

Note the even greater miracle than God stopping the flow of the Jordan River at flood stage: God not only halted the flow of the Jordan River, but the “priests ... stood on firm dry ground in the middle of the Jordan” ^{v.17}, indicating the LORD completely dried up the ground ^{Psalms 66:6} that should have been very muddy for a long time after the flow was halted ^{Exodus 14:21-22}.

The water stopped at Adam by the LORD seems to be a reminder: sin entered into the world by the first Adam ^{Romans 5:12}, but deliverance was brought by the last Adam ^{1 Corinthians 15:45}.

Closing: The “Parable of the Two Seas: the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea”

The Sea of Galilee and Dead Sea have the same source of water: the Jordan River.

The Sea of Galilee is teeming with life, not only in the lake itself, but also on the shores surrounding the body of water. Conversely, the Dead Sea is lacking life forms both in and around the barren lake, hence the name. The reason for the difference is that the Jordan River flows both in and out of the Sea of Galilee, producing an aquatic environment beneficial to vibrant, healthy life. However, the Jordan River only flows into the Dead Sea, creating a dumping ground for the river’s sediment and forming a stagnant body of water.

There is a parallelism between these bodies of water and the lifestyles of Christians.

The blessings of the LORD are available to all. Christians who takes in and gives out those blessings are alive with the joy of Jesus Christ, and their life testimony radiates the love of God wherever they go. Whereas, Christians who only receive the LORD’s blessings has a faith walk that is stagnant and choked with information that does no good for anyone: neither for themselves or for all those around them who are in desperate need of truth.