

## Conquest of Canaan – Israel Crosses the Jordan Josh. 3:1-4:24

Introduction:

### I. Notice the significance of this event for Israel.

- A. Notice Israel's history up until this point.
  - 1. This is the land that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
    - a. Abraham – Gen. 15:12-16
    - b. Isaac – Gen. 26:1-5
    - c. Jacob – Gen. 35:9-15
  - 2. This was the land that Joseph wanted his bones to be carried to after he died (Gen. 50:22-26).
  - 3. Ex. 3-4 – God appears to Moses from the burning bush.
  - 4. Ex. 5-12 – Moses demands Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go to this Promised Land.
  - 5. Ex. 14 – Israel crosses the Red Sea on dry ground.
  - 6. Ex. 16 – God provides Israel with manna and quail and water in the wilderness.
  - 7. Num. 13-14
    - a. The spies are sent into the land of Canaan and come back with an unfavorable report.
    - b. Because of this report, Israel refuses to enter the land of Canaan.
    - c. Because of their unbelief, the entire generation would die in the wilderness during the next 40 years, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb.
  - 8. All along the way, Israel has faced many enemies and suffered through many battles.
  - 9. Israel has wandered in the wilderness for 40 years and are now ready to take this Promised Land!
- B. Jews would look at the crossing of the Jordan River in the same manner as Christians look at Acts 2.
  - 1. This is the beginning of their life in the Promised Land, just as the Acts 2 is the beginning of the church of the New Testament.
  - 2. Even though they came out of Egypt forty years earlier, this is the time when their dreams are being realized and their nation finally has a home.

### II. God commands Israel to cross the Jordan River (3:1-17).

- A. Joshua commands Israel to prepare themselves to cross over the Jordan.
  - 1. This command is initially given in Josh. 1:10-11.
    - a. Joshua tells the officers that they are going to cross the river within three days.

- b. Joshua wants to make sure that when they are told to go, they are ready.
  2. Israel comes to the edge of the river and prepares to cross into Canaan (3:1).
  3. After three days, the officers of Israel go throughout the camp and give certain commands to the people (3:2-4).
    - a. When Israel saw the ark of the covenant and the Levites bearing the ark leave the camp, they were to follow it (3:3).
    - b. However, they were to keep 2,000 cubits (3,000 feet or a little more than ½ mile) between the ark and themselves (3:4).
    - c. The reason for keeping this distance is given: “For you have not passed this way before” (3:4).
  4. Joshua also gives a command to the people (3:5).
    - a. They were to sanctify themselves.
      - 1) To be sanctified is to set yourself apart.
      - 2) They were to be pure and holy when they enter the land of Canaan.
    - b. They were also told that God would do great wonders among them the next day.
  5. Finally, Joshua gives the command to the priests to take the ark and cross the river (3:6).
- B. God give Joshua a command for the priests (3:7-8).
  1. God promises Joshua that because of the events that were about to happen, all who were in Israel would know, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that God was with Joshua (3:7).
  2. God also commands Joshua to tell the priests who are carrying the ark to go stand in the edge of the water (3:8).
- C. Joshua encourages the people just before they cross the river (3:9-13).
  1. Joshua tells the people that they will know that God is with them because of what God is about to do for them (3:9-11).
    - a. God is going to drive out their enemies from before them.
    - b. God (and Joshua) wanted to remind the people of this before they begin to cross the river.
  2. Because of the great events to come, Israel is to select one man from each tribe for a special purpose (3:12).
    - a. That purpose will not be revealed until Josh. 4.
    - b. The purpose of these men is to build the memorial stones at the river.
  3. Joshua tells the people exactly what is about to happen (3:12).
    - a. When the feet of the priests enter the Jordan River, the waters are going to stop flowing and stand as a heap so that Israel can cross on dry ground.
    - b. You can imagine the joy of the people and the encouragement that they would have because of this news.
- D. God divides the river before Israel (3:14-17).

1. As soon as the priest with the ark stood in the river, the waters stopped flowing.
2. One amazing thing about this crossing is that it took place during the flood season (3:15).
3. Israel crossed over on dry ground (3:17).

### III. God commands Israel to set up memorial stones (4:1-24).

- A. The main for the memorial stones was to teach their children of what God had done for them by bringing them across the Jordan.
  1. Josh. 4:4-7
  2. Josh. 4:19-24
- B. God had always wanted His people to teach their children about Him.
  1. Throughout the book of Deuteronomy, God demanded that Israel teach their children about Him.
    - a. Deut. 4:9-10 - Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren, {10} especially concerning the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, "Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children."
    - b. Deut. 6:6-7 - And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. {7} You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.
    - c. Deut. 6:20-25 - When your son asks you in time to come, saying, "What is the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?" {21} then you shall say to your son: "We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; {22} and the LORD showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household. {23} Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers. {24} And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day. {25} Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us."
    - d. Deut. 11:18-21 - Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. {19} You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit

in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. {20} And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, {21} that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth.

2. Even the Passover was observed, in part, so that they could teach their children about what God had done for them in bringing them out of Egypt.
  - a. **Ex. 12:26-27** - And it shall be, when your children say to you, “What do you mean by this service?” {27} that you shall say, “It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.” So the people bowed their heads and worshiped.
- C. One of the great lessons that we learn from Israel is the need to teach our children the way of God.
  1. **Pr. 22:6** - Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.
  2. **Eph. 6:4** - And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.
  3. The worst thing that we could do to our children is to not teach them the word of the Lord.

### **Conclusion:**

We should teach our children about God, just as Israel taught their children about God.