

# ISRAEL CROSSES JORDAN

BIBLE TEXT: Joshua 3:1-17; 4:1-24

LESSON 154 Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the Inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him" (Psalm 33:8).

## BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

### Joshua 3:1-17

<sup>1</sup> And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over.

<sup>2</sup> And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host;

<sup>3</sup> And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it.

<sup>4</sup> Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed *this way* heretofore.

<sup>5</sup> And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.

<sup>6</sup> And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

<sup>7</sup> And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, *so* I will be with thee.

<sup>8</sup> And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan.

## BIBLE REFERENCES:

### I The Dividing of Jordan

1 Joshua comes to Jordan, Joshua 3:1-6

2 The Lord encourages Joshua, Joshua 3:7,8

3 Joshua encourages the people, Joshua 3:9-13

4 The waters of Jordan are divided, Joshua 3:14-17;

#### Psalms 114:5-7

<sup>5</sup> What *ailed* thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, *that* thou wast driven back?

<sup>6</sup> Ye mountains, *that* ye skipped like rams; *and* ye little hills, like lambs?

<sup>7</sup> Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob;

### II Two Memorials

1 Twelve stones are taken for a memorial out of Jordan, Joshua 4:1-8

2 Twelve stones are set up in the midst of Jordan, Joshua 4:9

3 The people pass over Jordan, Joshua 4:10-13

4 God magnifies Joshua, Joshua 4:14-18

5 A monument is set up in Gilgal, Joshua 4:19-24

## NOTES:

### Marching Orders

When but a young man, Joshua stood on the banks of the Red Sea and heard the words of Moses, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD." He had seen Moses take his rod and stretch it over the sea. Joshua had walked along the dry path that God had hewed through the midst of the waters.

Forty years have gone by; Moses is now dead; and God promises Joshua, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee." Encouraged by these words from God, Joshua leads his people to the shores of Jordan and then instructs them, "When ye see the ark ... go after it." Their eyes were to be focused upon the Ark, not on the person at their side or anyone about them. "See the ark" of the covenant of the Lord your God; be sure that the ark is your guide. Man is prone to wander, but the Ark of God will lead you on. Go after it!

Paul instructs us to look "unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." We must come to Him to be saved; we must abide in Him to continue in the way. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith — the Alpha and the Omega — the beginning and the end. If we come to Him, remain in Him, and endure to the end, we shall be saved.

### New Ground

The Israelites were told, "Ye have not passed this way heretofore." There was new territory ahead for them to possess. No one on earth has ever reached the heights, nor explored the depths, of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we keep our eyes upon Him and follow Him, He will lead us into territory that we have not passed heretofore.

### The Divided Jordan

At the command of Joshua, the priests took the Ark of God

<sup>9</sup> And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God.

<sup>10</sup> And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God *is* among you, and *that* he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites.

<sup>11</sup> Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan.

<sup>12</sup> Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man.

<sup>13</sup> And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, *that* the waters of Jordan shall be cut off *from* the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap.

<sup>14</sup> And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people;

<sup>15</sup> And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,)

<sup>16</sup> That the waters which came down from above stood *and* rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that *is* beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, *even* the salt sea, failed, *and* were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.

<sup>17</sup> And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites

and headed straight for the river Jordan. When the soles of their feet touched the water a mighty miracle took place. Oftentimes we, too, must put our feet by faith in the brink of the river before God undertakes. We must step out in trusting faith, at times, into places we cannot see. But just as the water gave way and the river bottom dried before those bearing the Ark, so God makes a way for those who have faith in Him. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee" (Isaiah 43:2).

As the priests marched to the middle of the river, the waters piled up in a heap on the upstream side. The waters below did not back up, but ran on down to the sea. In the middle of the bed of the stream the priests stood firm while all Israel passed over Jordan into Canaan. The priests continued to stand firm before the heaped-up waters until a man chosen from each tribe picked up a stone from before the Ark and carried it to the place where Israel was to camp that night. Joshua then set up twelve stones in the very place where the priests were standing in the middle of Jordan. When the priests who carried the Ark reached the Canaan shore, the river again flowed down as before.

### Monuments

At their first camp in Canaan the twelve stones out of Jordan were set up as a monument — a monument which told of a mighty miracle that God had wrought. The Psalmist wrote of this great event and said, "What ailed thee, ... thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs? Tremble, thou earth, . at the presence of the God of Jacob" (Psalm 114:5-7). God wanted His name to be honored in Israel, that in time to come when the children asked their fathers, "What mean these stones?" the fathers would answer: "Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear, the LORD your God for ever."

Two monuments were set up when Israel crossed Jordan: one on the bank on the Canaan side of the river, the other in the midst of Jordan. The one on the bank of the river spoke of a mighty deliverance and escape that God made for His people when He stopped the waters of the Jordan. The one in the midst of Jordan seems to tell of Jesus Christ who did not escape. He died for our sins. He was our Deliverer. The Psalmist cried, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." Jesus died that we might enjoy the blessings of spiritual Canaan. One monument was on the shore where the children might ask, "What mean these stones?" The other was buried beneath the river where only the eye of God could see it. No man knows the depths that Jesus went through to purchase our redemption. Twelve stones were buried under the waters where no son would ask nor father could explain, "What mean these stones?"

A mighty miracle was wrought when God dried up the Red Sea and led His people out of Egypt, but no monument was erected there. God did not intend to have His people dwell in the wilderness or to go back to Egypt. No son of Jacob was to be there to ask, "What mean these stones?" God Wanted His people to dwell in Canaan. This was the land that He had given

passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

### Joshua 4:1-24

<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying,

<sup>2</sup> Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man,

<sup>3</sup> And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night.

<sup>4</sup> Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man:

<sup>5</sup> And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel:

<sup>6</sup> That this may be a sign among you, *that* when your children ask *their fathers* in time to come, saying, What *mean* ye by these stones?

<sup>7</sup> Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.

<sup>8</sup> And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the LORD spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they

them, and it was His will that they go in and possess it. This was that good land that God had promised, "a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills." "A land which the LORD thy God oareth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year" (Deuteronomy 11:12). It was here that God promised to "give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil" (Deuteronomy 11:14).

### The Promised Land

When Israel left the bondage of Egypt they typified a sinner forsaking the world of sin. The night they left, the Passover lamb was slain, typifying Christ as the Passover Lamb. They were saved from death by the blood that was applied to their dwellings when the Lord passed through the land and smote the Egyptians. After their salvation they were symbolically baptized in water when they passed under the cloud and through the Red Sea — a perfect type of water baptism by immersion (I Corinthians 10:1, 2).

God then led the Children of Israel to Mount Sinai that He might sanctify them wholly. He intended to write the Law not only on the tables of stone but also on the fleshy tables of their hearts. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts" (Jeremiah 31:33).

But even though Israel drew back from God, through fear and unbelief, and as a result wasted years in wandering, the events that took place on Mount Sinai typify the experience of sanctification that God has for all who will not draw back from His will for them.

God led the Israelites across Jordan into Canaan, the land of promise, and this typifies the third great experience God has for us, the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The Christian, after being saved and sanctified, is ready to enter into his promised land — the glorious land of plenty that is his through the experience of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

God has given the former rain and the latter rain according to the prophecy found in (**Joel 2:23-29** <sup>23</sup> Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. <sup>24</sup> And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil. <sup>25</sup> And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. <sup>26</sup> And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. <sup>27</sup> And ye shall know that I *am* in the midst of Israel, and *that* I *am* the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed. <sup>28</sup> And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: <sup>29</sup> And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.) On the Day of Pentecost, when the former, or early, rain was poured out, Peter said, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16). He also stated, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). This Latter Rain is being poured out today. The call to enter into the blessings of spiritual Canaan is to all those who have been saved and sanctified.

lodged, and laid them down there.  
<sup>9</sup> And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day.

<sup>10</sup> For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until every thing was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua: and the people hasted and passed over.

<sup>11</sup> And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over, that the ark of the LORD passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people.

<sup>12</sup> And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them:

<sup>13</sup> About forty thousand prepared for war passed over before the LORD unto battle, to the plains of Jericho.

<sup>14</sup> On that day the LORD magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.

<sup>15</sup> And the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying,

<sup>16</sup> Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan.

<sup>17</sup> Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan.

<sup>18</sup> And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midst of Jordan, *and* the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, *and* flowed over all his banks, as *they did* before.

## QUESTIONS

- 1 What was to mark the way for Israel through Jordan?
- 2 What encouragement did Joshua receive from the Lord?
- 3 When did the waters of Jordan start to pile up?
- 4 Why were twelve stones taken out of Jordan?
- 5 What Christian experiences are typified by the travels of the Israelites?
- 6 For whose benefit was the monument erected in Gilgal?
- 7 Canaan is sometimes used as a type of Heaven. Why is it a better picture of the Christian overcomer's life here below?
- 8 How many times was the Jordan river parted?
- 9 Name all the Scriptural events you can that happened at the Jordan river.
- 10 Why are the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh mentioned separately here?

<sup>19</sup> And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth *day* of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho.

<sup>20</sup> And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal.

<sup>21</sup> And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What *mean* these stones?

<sup>22</sup> Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.

<sup>23</sup> For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over:

<sup>24</sup> That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it *is* mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.