

**Into the Promised Land - Joshua's Story**  
**Lesson #47 - "Crossing the Jordan" - Joshua 3:1-17**  
**• H A N D O U T •**

► This lesson: The focus is on Israel's dramatic crossing of the Jordan. This is the second generation of Israelites who, compared to the first generation, have experienced fewer of God's mighty and miraculous endeavors. But, as they cross the Jordan, God is about to give them a breathtaking experience that will parallel the Red Sea crossing. This event represents the completion of God's redemptive act He began with the Exodus itself. In fact, Psalm 114 declares these two crucial events as the means through which God formed Israel as His own people.

► Joshua 3:1-4 • Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over.

After three days the officers went throughout the camp, giving orders to the people: "When you see the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, who are Levites, carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep a distance of about a thousand yards between you and the Ark; do not go near it."

Q: Israel was camped at a place called Shittim before crossing the Jordan into the Promised Land. Just where was Israel camped?

Q: After walking from Shittim to the shore of the Jordan, why would the officers of Israel wait an additional three days before giving instructions for crossing the River?

Q: What were the instructions given to Israel?

Q: Why were they to maintain such a great distance away from the Ark?

► Joshua 3:5 • Joshua told the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you."

Q: What was involved in the consecration process and why was it necessary?

► Joshua 3:6-8 • Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the Ark of the Covenant and pass on ahead of the people." So they took it up and went ahead of them.

And the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: 'When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river.'"

Q: We have two sets of commands in this passage. The first is what Joshua said to the priests and second, what the Lord said to Joshua. What were these two sets of commands?

1. **What Joshua said to the priests:**

2. **What the Lord said to Joshua:**

Q: What is the amazing promise that the Lord gave to Joshua?

► **Joshua 3:9-14** • Joshua said to the Israelites, "Come here and listen to the words of the LORD your God. This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that He will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. See, the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you.

Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the LORD--the Lord of all the earth--set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap."

So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant went ahead of them.

Q: Joshua states certain attributes about God. What does he say and why is this important?

Q: What is the important significance of stating that "God is the LORD of all the earth" in the context that Israel is about to enter the Promised Land?

Q: What details does Joshua reveal about the crossing of the Jordan?

► **Joshua 3:15-17** • Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the Ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing.

It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea ) was completely cut off.

So the people crossed over opposite Jericho. The priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.

Q: What action caused the Jordan to stop flowing?

Q: The passage says the water stopped flowing and was “heaped up” at Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, causing all the water flowing downstream to the Arabah, the Salt Sea [which is another name for the Dead Sea] to stop flowing. Where was the town of Adam, where the water was heaped up?

Q: How did crossing the Jordan River compare to the dividing of the Red Sea at the Exodus from Egypt?

**The Red Sea:**

**The Jordan River:**

Q: What was God's purpose in the Crossing of Jordan in this way?

Q: Which crossing would have generated the greatest step of faith for Israel? Crossing the Red Sea or crossing the Jordan?

**At the Red Sea:**

**At the Jordan River:**

Q: What is the most important focal point to the crossing of the Jordan River and how do we apply that importance to the church today?

Q: What truth can we take away from the fact that God hadn't told Israel ahead of time how they were going to cross the Jordan at flood stage, in the same way He hadn't told them how they were going to cross the Red Sea ahead of time?

**Chapter 4 opens with the completion of the crossing of the Jordan River. The specific task of the twelve men who were to be selected from the twelve tribes is now disclosed...**



Next Time • Lesson #48  
“Memorial Stones”

