

JOSHUA

Message Three

**Crossing the Jordan River  
and Being Prepared for Battle**

Scripture Reading: Josh. 3:1—4:24; 5:1-10

**I. Joshua 3:1—4:24 is a record of the people of Israel crossing the Jordan River:**

- A. When the people of Israel saw the Ark of the Covenant of their God and the Levitical priests bearing the Ark, they set out from their place and followed it—3:3, 6:
  - 1. The Ark was a type of Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God—Exo. 25:10-22.
  - 2. When the Ark of God went with the children of Israel, the Triune God went with them, taking the lead and thus being the first to step into the water—Josh. 3:8, 11.
  - 3. That the Ark was on the shoulders of the priests indicates that, in type, the priests who bore the Ark became one entity with the Triune God—v. 3:
    - a. They and God were one corporate person—a corporate God-man.
    - b. God walked in their walking, and they walked in God's walking.
- B. The Jordan River typifies the death and resurrection of Christ—Acts 2:23-24; 3:15:
  - 1. The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord crossed over before the people into the Jordan—Josh. 3:11.
  - 2. The Ark's entering into and coming out of the Jordan indicates Christ's death and resurrection—v. 15; 4:11.
- C. Israel's crossing of the river Jordan typifies not the believers' physical death but the believers' experience of the death of Christ, in which the old man is terminated and buried—Rom. 6:3-6; Gal. 2:20:
  - 1. According to typology, the Jordan River denotes the death of Christ into which the believers have been baptized—Rom. 6:3-4.
  - 2. The children of Israel passed through the death of Christ to bury their old man and become a new man in Christ—2 Cor. 5:17:
    - a. They were ready to enter into the good land, take the land as their possession, and engage in warfare against the Canaanites; however, in their old man they could not gain the victory.

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- b. In type, they were buried in the death of Christ, and then they were resurrected in the resurrection of Christ to become a new man in Christ for the fighting of the spiritual warfare—Eph. 6:10-20.
  - c. We need to realize that our old man, our natural man, is not qualified to fight the spiritual warfare for the gaining of Christ; in Christ we are no longer the old man but a new man—4:22-24.
3. The believers' baptism into the death of Christ, as the crossing of the Jordan River, leads the believers into the resurrection of Christ—Rom. 6:3-6; Col. 2:12:
- a. In the aspect of burial, baptism is the termination of our old man.
  - b. In the aspect of resurrection, baptism is the germination of our spirit so that we may be made alive in Christ with the divine life—John 3:6, 15; Rom. 8:10.
  - c. In the realm of resurrection we enjoy Christ as the all-inclusive good land in which we walk and even are being rooted and built up for the accomplishment of the economy of God—6:4; Col. 2:7.
- D. Israel's crossing the Jordan and entering into the good land are related to Israel's possessing and enjoying the good land, which typifies the believers' practical experience of the riches of the blessings in Christ as revealed in the book of Ephesians—Josh. 4:1.
- E. Israel's entering into the good land after crossing the Jordan typifies the believers' experience of taking over the heavenlies, where Satan and his power of darkness are—Eph. 2:2; 6:12.
- II. Twelve stones were taken out of the Jordan, and another twelve stones were erected in the Jordan—Josh. 4:3-9:**
- A. The twelve stones taken from the Jordan signify the twelve tribes of the new Israel—vv. 3-7.
  - B. The stones' being raised up from the waters of the Jordan signifies resurrection from death—v. 7:
    - 1. These twelve stones were a sign, showing that the “resurrected” new Israel would be a testimony of the crossing of the death water—vv. 6-7, 21-24.
    - 2. This typifies the believers' experiencing with Christ the resurrection from death—Rom. 6:3-4.

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- C. The other twelve stones erected in the middle of the Jordan signify the twelve tribes of Israel in their old life and in their old nature—Josh. 4:9:
    - 1. Joshua erected these twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan where the Ark was, signifying that the Lord wanted Israel in their old nature to remain under the death water of the Jordan.
    - 2. This typifies that the old man of the believers should remain in the death of Christ—Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:10.
  - D. The two sets of twelve stones signify that our old man has been buried and our resurrected new man is living and working with the Triune God as one; this corresponds with the revelation in Ephesians 2:1, 4-6, 15, and 10.
- III. The priests carrying the Ark of the Testimony stood firmly on dry ground at the bottom of the river Jordan until all the nation had completely crossed over the Jordan—Josh. 3:8, 13-15, 17; 4:10-11, 15-18:**
- A. The priests bearing the Ark were the first ones to go into the water and the last ones to come up out from the water; they waited at the bottom of the river for all of God's people to cross over—3:17; 4:15-16.
  - B. God put the priests in the place of death so that the Israelites would have a way to the land of life—v. 10:
    - 1. The bottom of the river is the position of death; it is not comfortable or attractive.
    - 2. To bear the Ark of the Testimony at the bottom of the river is a great suffering.
    - 3. The Lord is seeking for a group of people who, like the priests in Joshua 3 and 4, step into the water, that is, walk into death first—3:8, 17:
      - a. They are willing to be dealt with by the cross first, to stand in the place of death in order that the church will find the way of life—2 Cor. 4:10-12.
      - b. God must first put us in the place of death before others can receive life—John 2:19; 12:24; 1 Cor. 15:36.
  - C. Because the apostle Paul ministered life by dying, he could testify, saying, "So then death operates in us, but life in you"—2 Cor. 4:12:

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1. The work of the apostles is the work of death operating in them so that life may operate in the believers—vv. 10-12.
2. The issue, the result, of the operation of death in us is wonderful—it is life in others—v. 12.
3. The real work of the new covenant ministry is not a matter of working; it is a matter of dying—v. 1; 3:8-9; 5:18.
4. In the Lord's recovery we need to die so that life may work in others; hence, our dying is our working—4:12.
5. "The Lord does not need you to accomplish a work for Him. He needs you to die. If you die, life will work in others. You will minister life to others by dying. Therefore, our work is to be put to death"—*Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, p. 295.

#### **IV. Although the Israelites had been disciplined, trained, and qualified, after crossing the Jordan they still needed further preparation before the attack—Josh. 5:1-10:**

- A. The crossing of the river Jordan was for war against the seven tribes in Canaan—4:12-13.
- B. As Joshua was participating in the miracle of crossing the Jordan, he was strengthened to take the lead to war against the demonic Canaanites—3:6-7, 10; 4:14.
- C. Jehovah charged Joshua to "circumcise again the children of Israel a second time"—5:2:
  1. The purpose of circumcision was to make God's chosen people a new people for the inheriting of God's promised land—cf. Gen. 17:7-12.
  2. The circumcising of the new Israel typifies the circumcision of Christ, by His death, applied to the believers in the putting off of the body of the flesh that they may inherit Christ in resurrection as the portion allotted to them by God—Col. 2:11-12; 1:12.
  3. Spiritual circumcision is a continuation of the burial in the death of Christ—Rom. 6:3-4:
    - a. Through the crossing of the river Jordan, the old Israel was buried and a new Israel came forth; this was an objective work done by God.
    - b. The children of Israel's being circumcised was their practical application of what God had done in the crossing of the river Jordan—Josh. 5:2-9.

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4. In the New Testament spiritual circumcision is the constant application of Christ's death to our flesh—Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11:
  - a. Although in fact we have been baptized into the death of Christ and have been buried and raised with Him, in practicality we still must apply the circumcision of the cross to our flesh by the Spirit day by day—Rom. 8:13; Gal. 5:24.
  - b. This is the reality and practicality of remaining in the death and burial of Christ.
- D. The children of Israel camped in Gilgal and held the Passover on the plains of Jericho—Josh. 5:10:
  1. The Feast of the Passover was held to remember Jehovah's redeeming of Israel from the death-judgment on their first-born sons and also Jehovah's saving of Israel from Egypt and from the tyranny of Pharaoh—Exo. 12:3-7, 11-14; 14:13-30.
  2. The keeping of the Passover indicated that just as Jehovah had saved Israel from Pharaoh and Egypt, so He would destroy the tribes of Canaan and deliver Israel from them—Josh. 5:10.
  3. Israel's keeping of the Passover typifies the believers' keeping of the Lord's table to remember the Lord as their Redeemer and Savior—Matt. 26:26-28.