

Joshua Chapter 03 Commentary

1 ¶ 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.

I remind you again; scripture is not always in chronological order. Remember in *Jos 1:10-11; 10 ¶ "Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 11 Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it."* Joshua, having received orders from God, moved the people that very day. Therefore, they are already here camped by Jordan river.

2 And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host; 3 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.

Israel moved to this camp by the river the day they received instruction. This is the third day and now they are going to cross over. Here begins the fulfillment of the actions to do what God commanded forty years ago. Israel has wandered in the wilderness for forty years because of disobedience. How often do we wander in the wilderness of sin because we refuse to do what we know to be the commandment of God?

Moving forward is a ritual that the Israelites are very used to doing. They have followed the ark of God for forty years now. Each knows his place and duty that is required to move according to God's commandment.

This example, of discipline to duty, should be taken to heart by every Christian, every born-again sinner. Though we may think we don't make a difference, every Christian has a designated duty in their Christian walk of life, and in their church involvement. We need to not neglect to know what our duty is and not neglect to do our duty. Also, we need to not be trying to do someone else's duty.

Wouldn't it be great if we were always moving at the command of, and in the way, God has prescribed? Sometimes we get it right, and sometimes we want to do it in our own way, and then we fail in our efforts, because we are disobeying God.

4 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.

We see a beautiful prophetic picture in this verse. Let the space, of about two thousand cubits measure, represent the about two thousand years of the law service and see the coming to fruition of the church of salvation by grace coming into existence. Understand, the ark of God, Christ incarnate, must go before us to provide the way of entrance into the land of promise. This tells us that the Christ of God must first come, and do his work, to provide a way for us through the sea of life, represented here by the river Jordan, and provide for us the land of promise, the New Testament church.

When we are saved by grace, what do we do? Jesus has provided for us the way, the new birth so that we rise up and sanctify ourselves and follow Jesus, and enter into the land of promise, which is the church of salvation by grace established by Jesus Christ, our land of promise here on the earth. We must follow in the way Jesus established for "***we have not traveled this way before.***"

5 And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.

Again, we see that all scripture is not in chronological order. Remember the scripture example we have seen already in: ***Ex 19:10-11; 10 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, 11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai."*** Having this example in his memory, I believe that Joshua gave this order the same day they moved to this camp. Preparing the people to see God working in their midst in the crossing of the river Jordan.

6 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. 7 ¶ 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. 8 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.

God tells Joshua; I will magnify you in the eyes of Israel as I did Moses. Joshua now gives instruction to begin the movement that God has commanded. As Joshua follows the instructions of God, and the people see God do his marvelous work, Joshua will be magnified in the eyes of Israel, just as Moses was magnified in the sight of Israel.

9 And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God. 10 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. 11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan. 12 Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man. 13 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.

Joshua tells the people; this is how God is going to provide a way through the river, which separates them from the land of promise. The provision of this way is to be an encouragement and the strength of your faith moving forward. It is a testimony that God will drive out the inhabitants of the land of promise before you, if you obey him fully.

Notice, the ark of the covenant of the Lord will enter into Jordan. It doesn't cross the river first, but it provides the way for you to cross the river. When you get over the river, then God will meet you in the land of promise, and lead you in battle of the enemy. This demonstrates; Jesus must cause your new birth, and provide an open door for you to enter into his church.

14 ¶ 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; 15 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,) 16 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. 17 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 passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

There is a circumstance pointed out here that magnifies the power of God even more. Did you notice the river is at its peak of width and depth, because it is that season of the year? Now Israel sees the power of God manifested, by his own visible presence, the ark of the covenant, entering the river before them, and providing them the way to cross the river on dry ground.

Next, we notice that there are two sources of water feeding the river Jordan. Those waters "***the waters which came down from above stood***", and "***and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off:***" From this thought we see a prophetic picture of the end of time. How? God, in his infinite wisdom and mercy has provided, over time, two ways for God's people's sins to be laid aside, and to come into communion with him. God first gave the church of the sacrificial and ceremonial law service. Next, God gave us the New Testament church. When Christ returns the second time; we shall enter the eternal land of promise, which Christ has gone to prepare for us. Both churches will no longer be needed, and they shall be cut off. The waters of separation, which have kept our mortal bodies from entering the land of promise, will fail and be cut off. We shall be resurrected from the dead, or changed in the moment, and so shall we ever be with the Lord, Praise and glory, to our Saviour and Lord! for this great and glorious promise! Hallelujah! Amen!