

Crossing The Jordan River – 05/03/20

TEXT- Joshua 3

INTRO – The Jordan River occupies a unique place in Christian music. For centuries poets and musicians have used the river to represent great spiritual truth. For instance, we have this Welsh hymn written by William Williams in 1771:

*When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death and hell's Destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side.*

Samuel Stennett of England penned these familiar words:

*On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wishful eye
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie.*

*Deep river,
My home is over Jordan.
Deep river, Lord.
I want to cross over into campground.*

*I looked over Jordan, and what did I see
Coming for to carry me home?
A band of angels coming after me,
Coming for to carry me home.*

*When I come to the river at the ending of day
When the last winds of sorrow have blown
There'll be somebody waiting to show me the way
I won't have to cross Jordan alone
I won't have to cross Jordan alone
Jesus died all my sins to atone
In the darkness I see he'll be waiting for me
I won't have to cross Jordan alone*

*And when my task on earth is done,
When, by thy grace, the victory's won,
E'en death's cold wave I will not flee,
Since God through Jordan leadeth me.*

Why does this particular river matter so much?

The answer is that the Jordan River serves as a boundary marker. **Jordan marks the step of obtaining the blessing of the Christian life by fighting the battles to possess all that God has for us.**

Israel crossed the Red Sea where they were identified as God's people leaving Egypt behind.

It is instructive to contrast the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. 14-15) and the crossing of the Jordan. The first crossing illustrates separation from the past (Egypt, the world), while the second crossing pictures entrance by faith into our spiritual inheritance in Christ – Warren Wiersbe

In the wilderness they learned many lessons and trials. 1 Co 10:11 *Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*

Now a new generation has the opportunity to claim the Land of Promise made to Abraham and confirmed to Isaac, Jacob and Moses.

The people of God had to cross that river to enter the Promised Land.

Joshua 1:1-2 *Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, 2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.*

Exo 12:25 *And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service.*

There are many pictures and types with the Jordan River but the primary meaning of the Jordan is that it symbolized taking a step of faith into a land of promise by fighting battles and possessing the land.

For the Christian it is a picture of possessing all that we have in Christ resulting in the victorious life.

God's work must be done God's way in order to receive God's blessing.

1) They waited three days. - Parked on the Banks

- They listened to the Word of God
- They consecrated themselves.

2) Joshua put the ark in front of the people. - Came to the Brink
The river was at flood stage

3) The priests entered the water before the miracle took place. - Stepped in the Brim

The water didn't part until they stepped into the brim.

This was a step of faith.

4) The water stood in a heap - Stopped in the Bottom

This was a miracle that never would have happened unless they stepped out in faith. It was proof that God was with them.

Jos 3:17 *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.*

5). The entire nation crossed on dry ground – Crossed the Boundary

He goes before us to open the way; He stands with us until we cross over; and He follows behind to protect us!

This was a fearful move and now they faced Jericho and possible defeat. They didn't know how it would all turn out when they took the step of faith.

- Joshua had to give up any plans of his own.
- The priests had to have the courage to step into the rushing water.
- The people had to walk across the riverbed to get to the Promised Land.

Yielding means giving up our right to give God advice. It means when the time comes to move, we step out in faith, leaving the results in his hands.

When we dare to follow God, we will often find ourselves walking new paths. What God said to the Jews, he still says to us: *“You have not passed this way before.”* **Following God often leads us out of our comfort zone.**

If you want some good news, here it is. When God calls us to move forward into the unknown, we need not fear because he is already there.

God never asks us to go anywhere without going before us as we travel by faith.

Why be afraid of crossing Jordan when Jesus has crossed it already for us? He went into the dark waters of death and came out victorious on the other side. And that's why “We won't have to cross Jordan alone.”

CONCL- There are moments when we may feel alone, but there is never a moment when we are truly alone. Just as the ark led the people of God into the river and protected them while they crossed over to the Promised Land, Jesus our Savior will lead through the darkest moments and bring us safely to the other side.
