



Old Testament Reading – Psalm 105:1-45

New Testament Reading – Acts 17:22-24

Victorious Christian Living **“Faith, Obedience, and The Assurance of God’s Presence”** **Joshua 3:1-17**

The 3rd and 4th chapters of Joshua detail the Israelite’s miraculous crossing of the Jordan River into Canaan.

- The nation of Israel had spent 430 years in Egypt, with 400 of those years as slaves to the Egyptians.
- However, in Exodus 3:5ff, God told Moses that He had decided to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up to a good and large land, a land flowing with milk and honey.
- In Exodus 3:8, God identified that land as the place where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites had occupied for 400 years, but that, in His sovereignty, He had decided to give that land to the Israelites for two reasons.
 - First, in Genesis 12:7, the Bible says Canaan was the land God promised to Abraham and his descendants forever.
 - Second, the removal of the Canaanites was God’s judgment on their grotesque sexual behavior, which included adultery, homosexuality, incest, bestiality, and sacrificing their firstborn children to the false god of Molech.

- In Joshua 1:3, God told Joshua that the Canaanites were so filled with evil that they could not be defeated by military power alone, but that it would require His divine power to remove them from the land.

1. God's Transfer of Power to Joshua – 3:7 *"This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you."*

The timeless truth of this passage is found in verse 7, where God told Joshua, *"As I was with Moses, so I will be with you."*

- God made that promise to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Joshua. God made that same promise to the children of Israel, and to all who will receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. *"Behold, I am with you."*
- The English word **"goodbye"** is a contraction of the phrase **"God be with you."** The Spanish word **"Adios"** means **"I commit you to God."** The Spanish phrase, **"Vaya con Dios,"** literally means **"go with God."**
- In Exodus 3:14, God said His name was **"Ehyeh-Asher-Ehye"**, which means: *"I am who I am, or I will be who I will be."*
- In Isaiah 41:10: *"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."*
- Throughout Joshua 3-4, the symbol of God's presence was the Ark of the Covenant.



The Ark was a wooden box plated with gold inside and out, with four feet at the bottom and four rings on each side for poles to be used to carry it. The lid was of pure gold and on the top were two golden angels that covered the mercy seat.

The three items that were in the Ark of the Covenant:

- The two stone tablets of the Ten Commandments – God's Law
- Aaron's staff that blossomed and produced almonds – God's choice of those who would serve as His Priests.
- The Jar that contained a portion of the Mana – the food God provided for the Israelites every morning for their 40-year journey through the wilderness.
- For 40 years, the Ark of the Covenant had been placed in the Holy of Holies in the tent of meeting, which was the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and eventually, it would be placed in the Holy of Holies in the new Temple in Jerusalem.

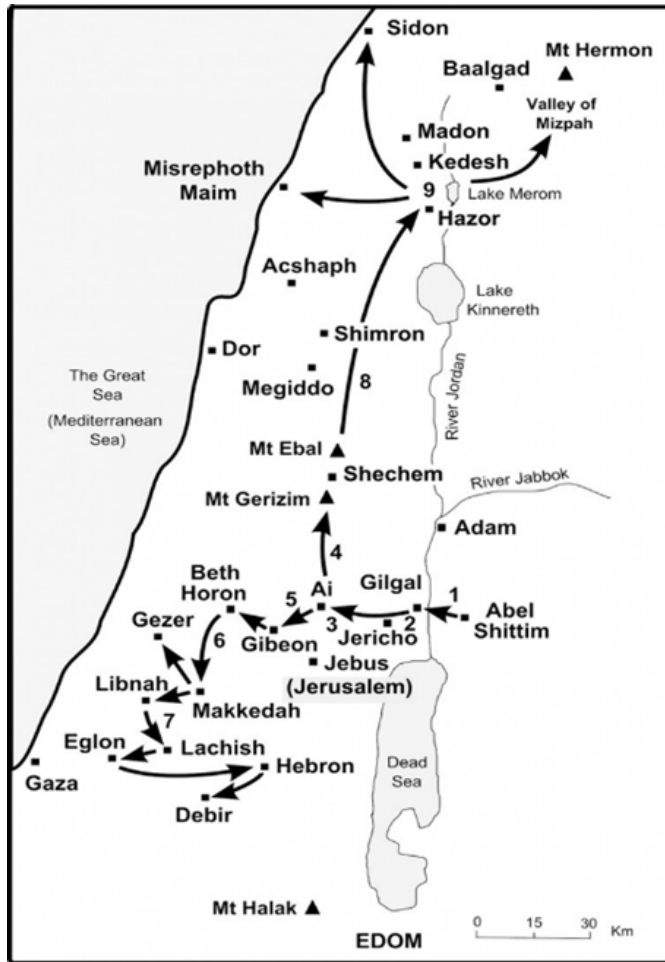
2. Joshua's Transfer of Power Back to God – Joshua 3:9-13 – Vs. 9-10 – *"So Joshua said to the children of Israel, 'Come here, and hear the words of the Lord your God.' And Joshua said, 'By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites.'"*

Joshua wanted the people to know that while God had appointed him to take Moses' place as their spiritual leader, the power that was about to be displayed was from God, not him.

- Joshua was not out "in front" of the people so their eyes would be on him. Joshua was standing on the hillside, telling the people to keep their eyes on the Ark of the Covenant.
- Joshua knew their entrance into Canaan was not a military invasion of the land to eradicate the Canaanites, but rather a spiritual war between the God of heaven and earth and the false gods of the Canaanites. This was God's judgment upon an evil and wicked culture.
- God told the Israelites not to get involved with anything that was connected to the Canaanite culture, lest they become defiled as well, for in so doing they would endanger the nation through which the Messiah would come.

3. The Power of God revealed through the Priests who Carried the Ark – Joshua 3:15-17 – Vs. 15- *"and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So, the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. 17 Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan."*

- Since it was springtime, the Jordan River was at flood stage, which meant the water was deeper and moving faster, and the river's width could have been a half-mile wide.
- For three days, the Israelites saw and heard the sound of that mighty river, and they knew that, apart from a miracle, only a few of the people could make it across.



However, Joshua told the people to keep their eyes on the Ark of the Covenant, and when it passed by them, they were to fall in behind it, but to keep a space the length of 10 football fields between them and the ark so that all of the people could see it from a distance, and because it represented the very presence and power of God.

Joshua said God was about to do some-thing that would convince the people that He was the One who would be driving the Canaanites out of the land and giving it to the Israelites.

- When the priests carrying the ark stuck their feet into the rushing stream, the flow of the the waters stopped, rose up in a heap, and backed the water up the river for 19 miles, giving the 2-3 million Hebrews a place to cross over.

The Israelite's deliverance from Egypt into Canaan is an example or parallel comparison of the Christian's deliverance from the bondage of sin into the abundant life Jesus said He came to give to those who received Him as their Savior and Lord.

- The Jews under Egyptian bondage represents every person who has been or ever will be born – they are in bondage to sin, and the wages of sin is death.
- Just as God called Moses to deliver the Israelites from Egypt, so God sent His Son to redeem sinners from their bondage to sin.
- The Red Sea crossing is a picture of water baptism, which, then, represents the sinner being washed in the blood of the Lamb.
- The 40-years in the wilderness illustrate our sanctification; separating us from the world and setting us apart unto God.
- The crossing of the Jordan River into Canaan is a picture of the believer's final and full surrender unto the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and their entrance into the Victorious Christian Life.
- But the same God who delivered us from the penalty of our sins will also lead us to victory over our sins, **"til every foe is vanquished and Christ is Lord indeed."**

