

## **Claiming Your Canaan – Part Three**

### **Get Past Your Jordan**

**Key Verse: Joshua 3:1-6; 14-17**

**Key Thought: Trust in God, He will get you through!**

Because of their unbelief, Israel was sentenced to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. Those years have now expired, and the children of Israel are composed to enter into Canaan Land. They are ready to claim their inheritance in the land of promise. However, before they can enter Canaan, they must first get past one final, major obstacle: the Jordan River. Normally, this would not have presented much of a problem, since the Jordan was only 100 feet wide at Gilgal where they crossed. However, it seems that God always does things in such a way that no man can boast of having done them on their own. This crossing would be no exception. You see, God brought them to the Jordan River at the time of harvest. Those who have been there during the harvest time tell us that the Jordan swells to an impassable width of over 1 mile! It was over 50 times wider than it normally would have been when Israel arrived. There was no way they could cross this river on their own! They needed supernatural help.

We each have “Jordans” that we face from time to time! When we look at the obstacles that stand between us and spiritual victory in our own Canaan, we may feel that we will never be able to enter our Canaan of victory and enjoy the abundant life that Jesus promised His followers. Well, it is true that I do not know what kind of obstacles that you face in your life, but I do know a God who specializes in overcoming the overwhelming and leading His children to victory.

This morning, I would like for us to look into this account of Israel as they got past their Jordan. As we do, I would like to offer you some hope as well.

You see, the things that worked for them over 3000 years ago will still work for you and me today. Allow me to show you from chapters 3 and 4 of Joshua “*How To Get Past Your Jordan.*” There are 3 steps that we must take to guarantee that we will be able to get past that obstacle that blocks our way and enter our Canaan.

## **I. WE NEED TO EXAMINE A MESSAGE**

**A) It Involved a Challenge** - When it came time for the people to move forward to cross Jordan, God had a message that they needed to hear. In the words they heard, they were challenged to do three very important things. These things were designed to help them follow the Lord better. These are the same things that we need to hear this morning that will help up to follow the Lord better as well.

**1. Watch God** - Notice that the Ark of the Covenant is mentioned 7 times in chapter 3. The Ark, you may remember, was that special piece of Tabernacle furniture that symbolized the presence and power of God. When the Ark was in the Holy of Holies, the glory of God rested upon it, and it was the dwelling place of God. To Israel, it represented God's presence amid His people. In other words, when God moved, they were to move. When God stopped, they were to do the same. There is a valuable spiritual lesson in this passage for you and me. We would do well when we face times of crisis, or when we need direction in life, to learn to be sensitive to the movement of the Lord in and around us. It is a fact that God loves you and that He will show you what He is doing, John 5:19-20. If you watch Him, He will teach you how to live day by day.

**2. Follow God** - When they saw the Ark of the Covenant move, they were to ***"leave your place and go after it."*** Not only were they to watch God, they were to move when He did. They were to pursue God!

Again, the lesson for the believer is that it isn't enough to know what God is doing, there comes a time when you must ***"leave your place and go after Him."*** This may require us to leave our comfort zone! Israel was about to follow the Ark through a river that was over 1 mile wide! That couldn't have been easy, but it was still necessary and right! Following God may not be the easiest thing you will ever do, but it will be the best thing you ever do. If you ever expect to get past your obstacles and enter your Canaan, you must learn to follow God.

**3. Honor God** - Notice that the Israelites are told to stay at least 3000 feet behind the Ark. This was so that they could easily see what was happening ahead of them. Another reason is that the Lord wanted only the Levites near the Ark. To get too close would have meant death. Again, there is a lesson here for us as well. We must never be guilty of treating God like He is one of our buddies. There must always be Holy Reverence and a fear of the Lord in our hearts. God help us that we never allow a spirit of familiarity to cheapen our walk with the Lord. Simply put, these three things are most easily accomplished by learning to walk in the Spirit. That is, learning to give control of your life to the Spirit of God and to follow God as He leads you through His Word and through prayer. It may not always be easy, but I can promise you that if you follow, He will certainly lead!

**B) It Involved a Command** - Next, the people were told to ***"sanctify yourselves."*** This referred to being sure they were as clean and holy as possible.

They were to put away anything that was displeasing to the Lord. They were to examine themselves and get ready for the Lord to do something great for them.

If you and I ever expect to get past the “Jordans” that arise in our lives, we are going to have to learn that one of the first things we must do is examine our lives to make sure they are as clean as possible. May the Lord help us to realize that many of the things that happen in our lives that prevent us from walking in Christian victory are the results of our sin and the Lord's chastisement.

***“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”***

***Galatians 6:9***

Is everything in your life just as the Lord would have it to be? Remember, there is forgiveness in confessing our sins to the Lord –

***“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”***

***1 John 1:9***

**C) It Involved a Commitment** - This message to the Israelites reminded them that getting across the Jordan did not rest on their shoulders, but on the Lord's. It was His plan to get them over and it was His problem. In these verses, He made them a promise and told them that He would bring them through in a powerful fashion. God, here, commits Himself to bringing His people across their Jordan! All that was required of Israel was that they trust God!

May I remind you that things have not changed one bit? If God could be trusted in those days to keep His promises, then He can still be trusted today! Often, we are unable to get past the obstacles in our lives because we live a life that exhibits a deep lack of faith in the promises of God! How do I know? Because of the worry and doubt that marks the lives of the people of God.

1. We worry over tomorrow, yet the Lord has said – ***“Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” Matthew 6:34***
2. We worry over material things, yet the Lord has promised – ***“And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:19***
3. We worry about facing various things in life, yet the Lord has promised – ***“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” Hebrews 13:5***
4. We worry over so many things, yet the Lord tells us – ***“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” Philippians 4:6-7***

**The bottom line is this: Jesus is all-powerful, He is all-knowing, and He is all-present.** He knows what you are going through. He knows everything there is to know about your situation, and He even knows more about it than you do!

What He says to us is that He is the Lord and that He is greater than any problem we have ever or will ever face in life. His desire is that we simply learn to take Him at His Word and trust Him. We need to remember what the Lord has promised to do, He will do!

## **II. WE NEED TO EXPECT A MIRACLE**

**A) There Was a Problem** - As I mentioned in the beginning, the children of Israel were facing a big problem. The river was over 1 mile wide and there were 2 million people who had to cross, and yet the Lord wanted them to go over. They couldn't build a bridge, there wasn't enough time or materials.

They couldn't transport everyone over in boats, as there were no boats and they would have been sitting ducks for their enemies. There was only one way around their problem and that was through it!

Have you ever sized up your problem and thought about how big it was? Maybe you looked at it and concluded, "***There is no way around, through, over or past this problem.***" I suppose we have all been like the 10 spies that returned from spying out the land of Canaan with Caleb and Joshua. We have sized up our problem and think that it is more than we can ever face. Our problem was the same one we always have when we face a difficult situation: we forget about God! **Where we see only problems, God sees only solutions.** Where we look at things and say, "***There's no way!***" God looks at the problem and says, "***Follow me, I have a plan!***"

**B) There Was a Plan** - The plan was this, God said, "***When the feet of the priests enter Jordan, I am going to part the waters and lead you through on the dry ground!***" There was a catch in this plan, and it was that the waters would not part until the priests who were carrying the Ark stepped into the water. In other words, it took a step of faith, whereby the people obediently followed the Lord for them to see the miracle come to pass.

What a lesson for you and me. Too often, we want the Lord just to fix everything in our lives for us. We don't want to make any decisions, nor do we want to have to exercise our faith in Him. We just want Him to do it and that will be the end of it. However, most of the time, God will require us to take steps of faith in order that we might see our Jordan parted. God had a plan, but for this plan to work, it required faith on the part of His people! The same is true for you and me! If we are trying to solve our own problems we are not walking in faith.

It is when we turn loose the reigns of the problem, step away from it and let the Lord have it that we will see it taken care of for His glory. It is never about what we can do, it is always about what the Lord is able to do!

***“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.”***

***Ephesians 3:20***

**C) There Was a Performance** - When the priests stepped into that raging river, it parted, and God opened a path of dry ground through the waters for His people. Verse 16 says that the waters backed up to the City of Adam. This is some 20 miles north of where the children of Israel were crossing. God made them a path through the water that was more than adequate for His people to get through.

We need to remember that faith honours God and God honours faith! When He does it, it won't just be patched up and ready to fall apart again, it will be done right, and it will be done forever! I want to encourage you this morning by reminding you that this God who did this great thing for Israel is still the same God we are serving this morning! What He did then, He can do now. He was ABLE all the way through the Bible, and He is still ABLE today! Regardless of the circumstances, He is still God and He still can!

Just ask, Noah, Moses, Daniel, the 3 Hebrews, the Disciples on a little ship, and Saul of Tarsus. Just look back over your own life. How many times has the Lord opened your Jordan already? He is all we need! He is still the same miracle working God that He always had been. Learn to expect miracles when you are dealing with God!

### **III. WE NEED TO ERECT A MEMORIAL**

When all the people had passed over Jordan, Joshua commanded one man from each of the 12 tribes to get a rock from the midst of Jordan and build a memorial on the Canaan side. That memorial is worth looking at this morning!

**A) The Purpose of The Memorial** - These verses tell us that the purpose of the memorial was to remind successive generations of the power and faithfulness of God on behalf of His people. That memorial would be an important landmark to those who would come after.

By the same token, we need some memorials in our lives as well.

**However, we must use caution, we do not want to preserve the past and by doing so cripple the future.** Many churches have done that and are suffering as a result. What we do want to do, however, is remember the things the Lord has done for us so that we can tell others about them and so that when we come that way again, we will remember that the Lord was faithful on that day and that He will be faithful on this day as well. Never forget what the Lord did for you yesterday. **It is yesterday's experiences that will tie you over when the trials of today and tomorrow arise in your life!**

**B) The Picture in The Memorial** - It is interesting to notice that Joshua constructed 2 monuments. One on the bank and one in the river. These 2 memorials served 2 different purposes. Notice what they were.

**1. A Picture of The Faithfulness of God** - The one on the bank of the Jordan stood as a testimony to the faithfulness of God as I have just mentioned. It was there to remind others of what the Lord had done and of what He could do. Again, we need to remember the faithfulness of God in the past. It will help us cross the Jordan we face today.



**2. A Picture of The Faith of The People** - Now, what about the rock pile in the river? No one could see it but God! It stood as a monument to the faith of the people! You see, when you face a time of trial, others can be guilty of misjudging your motives and actions, however, only God knows the truth about your heart. Even though Israel couldn't see it, they knew the monument was there! They remembered that they had believed God then and it had worked. This was a monument in their hearts.

We need the same kind of monument as well. As I said, too often we are misjudged by others in our times of trial, but God alone knows your heart. When you have trusted Him and He has brought you through, never forget it! Build that monument in your heart, where only God can see it, and where you will never forget it and when the tough times come again, and they will, look at that monument of His faithfulness and of your faith and know that what worked before will work again. God will bring you through your Jordan!

**In closing**, some of you are facing troubled waters this morning. I want you to know you can cross over. I invite you to come before the Lord this morning. **Tell God about the Jordan you are facing and allow Him to get you past it today.** There is a place of victory where you can shout despite your troubles. The first step to getting there is dealing with what is keeping you out: your Jordan. It may be sin, it may be a person, it may be a trial, but whatever it is, God is greater than it is. Come and let Him take care of it for you.

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Place: FCA

Date: Sunday, May 4, 2025

Time: 10:30 am

After Service: Faithful One