



Crossing the Jordan

Date: June 30, 2024

Text: Joshua 4

BIG IDEA

The Jordan River always symbolizes transition in the Bible. In a similar way, this scene represents a transition in the story of the people of God; until now, their journey has been one of looking ahead toward the Promised Land and leaving things behind to enter it. As the people approached the Jordan River, the priests stepped into the waters first and as they did, the waters were held back like a wall. Then, for the first time, they are walking in the Promised Land and instead of leaving things behind, they build something (an altar) for the first time. We too are called to be “priests;” to follow God’s call and step into the waves first, to pave the way for those behind us and to make our lives an altar to the Lord.

Conversation Starter

- Has anyone ever “paved the way” for you by stepping into uncharted waters first? Explain.
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COMMENTARY #1

(Verses 1-7) The Israelites have wandered for 40 years and now, they cross the final geographical border between them and the Promised Land. The priests went before them, holding the Ark of the Covenant, and all the people walked across this barrier in victory—God had paved the way. The Lord then tells Joshua to gather the leaders of the 12 tribes and have each bring a stone of remembrance from the riverbed; they would make an altar here to remember the victory of the Lord and demonstrate their faith before the final battle had been won.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever faced a barrier (spiritually or otherwise) that seemed impossible to overcome? Explain.
 2. Why was it important for the priests to take the first steps into the waves?
 3. What are some “stone of remembrance” you have gathered in your own life (reminders of God’s faithfulness)?
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COMMENTARY #2

(8-14) Joshua not only built an altar on the other side of the Jordan, but he built one in the place where the priests had stood. This altar would become visible during seasons of drought when the water level decreased. The people all hurried across as the priests stood firm, and once the priests’ feet had touched dry ground, the waters returned to normal.

Discussion Questions

1. The Israelites would see the second altar during times of drought. Why do you think it is important to remember God's faithfulness in our "dry" seasons?
2. What are some altars you can build in your life in order to remember what God has done?
3. In what areas is God calling you to be a priest, to take the first steps of faith and stand firm in His promised provision?

GOING DEEPER

The Jordan River represents a crossing point from the old life to the new, marking significant transitions from sin to redemption, and from death to life. It also symbolizes cleansing, renewal, initiation, freedom, and breakthrough.

1. Do you think it is significant that this symbolic river was the last geographical barrier before the Israelites would face battle? Why or why not?
 2. How would crossing this river be beneficial to the Israelites faith and unity?
 3. Have you ever experienced these benefits from a circumstance or situation you had to cross? (growing closer to friends or family, increased faith, etc..)
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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[The Spiritual Significance of the Jordan River in the Bible - John Baptist Church](#)- Jordan River Study

[Sermon: The Lesson of the Stones - Joshua 4 | Lifeway](#)- Devotion on Joshua 4

Group Activity

Identify the “Jordan Rivers” in your life (barriers you need to cross before you can step into the Promised Land). Then, identify priests that you can look to (people who have gone before you in this area and can share their faith). This week, reach out to those people and learn how they walked across and how you can follow their steps.