

JOSHUA 3-4

GOD PROVIDES
LEADERSHIP TO
THE BELIEVER

INTRODUCTION

- The Israelites follow the presence of the Lord through the waters of the Jordan River into the Promised Land.
- It is a crossing reminiscent of their miraculous exit from Egypt through the Red Sea.
- At Joshua's prompting, the occasion is memorialized forever by an altar erected in the midst of the waters.

**GOD'S DESIRE IS TO
LEAD HIS CHILDREN**

JOSHUA 3:1-17

PREPARATION FOR THE CROSSING

- Joshua marches his people toward the Jordan, in preparation to invade Canaan.
- Once they arrive, the Israelites camp for three days.
- “The delay also gave everyone an opportunity to get close and see the river, now a strong and rapid current due to the melting of the winter snows of Mount Hermon in the north. They must have faltered at the seeming impossibility of the crossing.”

PREPARATION FOR THE CROSSING

- The obstacle before the people is clear and overwhelming; God was going to move a nation across the Jordan at one of the most difficult times of the year.
- The Jordan river was at flood stage. Experts estimate that it was probably one mile wide with water rushing by at about 10 miles per hour carrying brush and other tangled debris.

PREPARATION FOR THE CROSSING

- The people would have little doubt that only the power of the LORD would provide a way into Canaan.
- At the close of the third day, officers alert the people: God is moving and we will follow.
- The focus now shifts from the problem (river) to God's power and the miracle (Ark of the Covenant) that is about to take place.

PREPARATION FOR THE CROSSING

- Follow God's direction (vs. 4). The people are to walk 2,000 cubits (about one-half mile) behind the Ark of the Covenant.
- The ark was generally located in the midst of Israel's ranks; but for this mission, the presence of the LORD needed to lead the way.
- God was going to lead His people on a path they had not known before.

PREPARATION FOR THE CROSSING

- Consecrate yourselves (vs. 5). The people were preparing to have an encounter with the living God and they needed to be ready.
- They were to sanctify themselves; actions involved in sanctifying often included washing one's clothes and temporarily abstaining from sexual relations.
- Their leader, Joshua, not his subordinates, told the people to be prepared because the LORD was about to do something incredible.

PURPOSE OF THE CROSSING

- The purpose of the crossing - they had to cross in order to begin the conquest of the seven wicked nations in Canaan.
- These pagans worshiped false gods, while the Israelites worshipped the true God.
- The term “Canaanites” is used here as an all-inclusive term denoting any people living in Canaan.

PURPOSE OF THE CROSSING

- Choose 12 representatives (vs. 12). A man from each one of the tribes of Israel would be called up.
- Watch as God cuts off the river (v. 13). As the soles of the priests carrying the ark rested in the Jordan, the waters stood in a heap. Israel would gain a confidence and strength from the wondrous display; this appreciation for the capability of the Lord would reinforce their belief that God was with them and would defeat the inhabitants of Canaan.

PROCESS OF THE CROSSING

- Process of the crossing - the crossing occurred during the Jewish month of Nisan, which is the first month of the Israelite year in March or April.
- Although the Spring floods were at the highest, the water stopped flowing upstream the minute the feet of the priests touched the water's edge.
- At least twice earthquakes upstream temporarily stopped the flow of the Jordan River (December 8, 1267 and July 11, 1927).

**GOD'S VICTORIES IN A
BELIEVER'S LIFE
SHOULD BE
REMEMBERED**

JOSHUA 4:1-24

TWELVE MEN, TWELVE STONES

- Few knew the value of passing on God's legacy to the next generation as well as Joshua.
- He and Caleb saw an entire generation wiped out because of unbelief (Numbers 14:28–30) and they stood as story bearers to the next generation.
- At this moment in history, Joshua says to the people, "Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan ... and bring them over with you."

TWELVE MEN, TWELVE STONES

- Two memorials are constructed in this passage:
- The leaders of each tribe are instructed to carry stones from the midst of the Jordan and arrange them in a memorial in the middle of the encampment at Gilgal in the Promised Land (4:20).
- Gilgal became a memorial park for the Jews.
- Joshua himself arranged twelve stones into a memorial in the middle of the Jordan (4:9).

TWELVE MEN, TWELVE STONES

- Joshua emphasized that the memorials originated from “where the priests’ feet stood firmly” (4:3, 9).
- The memorial was placed where the priests’ feet touched the waters—“as soon as the feet of the priests were dipped in the brink of the water” the waters were cut off, the people crossed on dry land.
- One can see the cooperation between God and man: God did the work of cutting off the waters as man obeyed by stepping his feet into the river.

PRIESTS LEFT HIGH AND DRY

- While the priests stood patiently in the middle, this procession passed by them to the other side.
- The people stood on the eastern bank and watched the priests enter the water and stand in the middle of the water. Now they stood on the western bank.
- Then the water came roaring back from the north. This was a visual reminder that there was no turning back now.

MEMORIAL MOMENT

- Memorials remind of us of things that once were and inspire us to what things might be.
- The steps across the Jordan should not be lost on one generation alone but were meant to inspire and encourage future Israelites.
- When little ones asked about the stones, parents were to give this answer:

MEMORIAL MOMENT

- “Then you shall let your children know, ‘Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.’ For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over” (4:23).
- Gilgal would become a place of historical significance as well as the first encampment outside of Jericho.

MEMORIAL MOMENT

- Historical significance:
 - Passover was celebrated there (Joshua 5).
 - Samuel calls it a city of judgment (1 Sam. 7:16).
 - Saul is anointed King in Gilgal (1 Samuel 11:14-15).
 - Apostasy in Gilgal was condemned by Hosea (9:15; 12:11) and by Amos (4:4; 5:5).

APPLICATION

ARK OF THE COVENANT

- According to Deuteronomy 10, the priests were responsible for carrying the ark.
- They had to do so with poles because they were not to touch it (Exodus 25:12-13).
- God was “seated on the cherubim” (Psalm 80:1, 99:1).
- The cherubim were represented as winged lions with human faces and were placed on each side of the ark (Exodus 25:18-19).



STONES

- Rocks and stones were very important in the Old Testament.
 - Yahweh is called the “rock of Israel.”
 - Isaiah 26:4 says we are to trust the Lord who is the Rock eternal.
 - Jacob pushed a stone off a well so Rachels’ sheep could drink. When she died, Jacob set up a stone pillar over her grave.

STONES

- Rocks and stones are visual images used in the New Testament.
 - Jesus refers to Peter as the rock: “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).
 - Peter (1 Peter 2:7) teaches that “the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone.”

WHEN CHILDREN ASK

- These rocks of remembrance are important to future generations to teach them about God's faithfulness.
- Deuteronomy 6 is also given as instruction - "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the LORD is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."
- They were to tie symbols on their hands, bind to their foreheads, and write them on the door frames of their houses and gates.

QUESTIONS

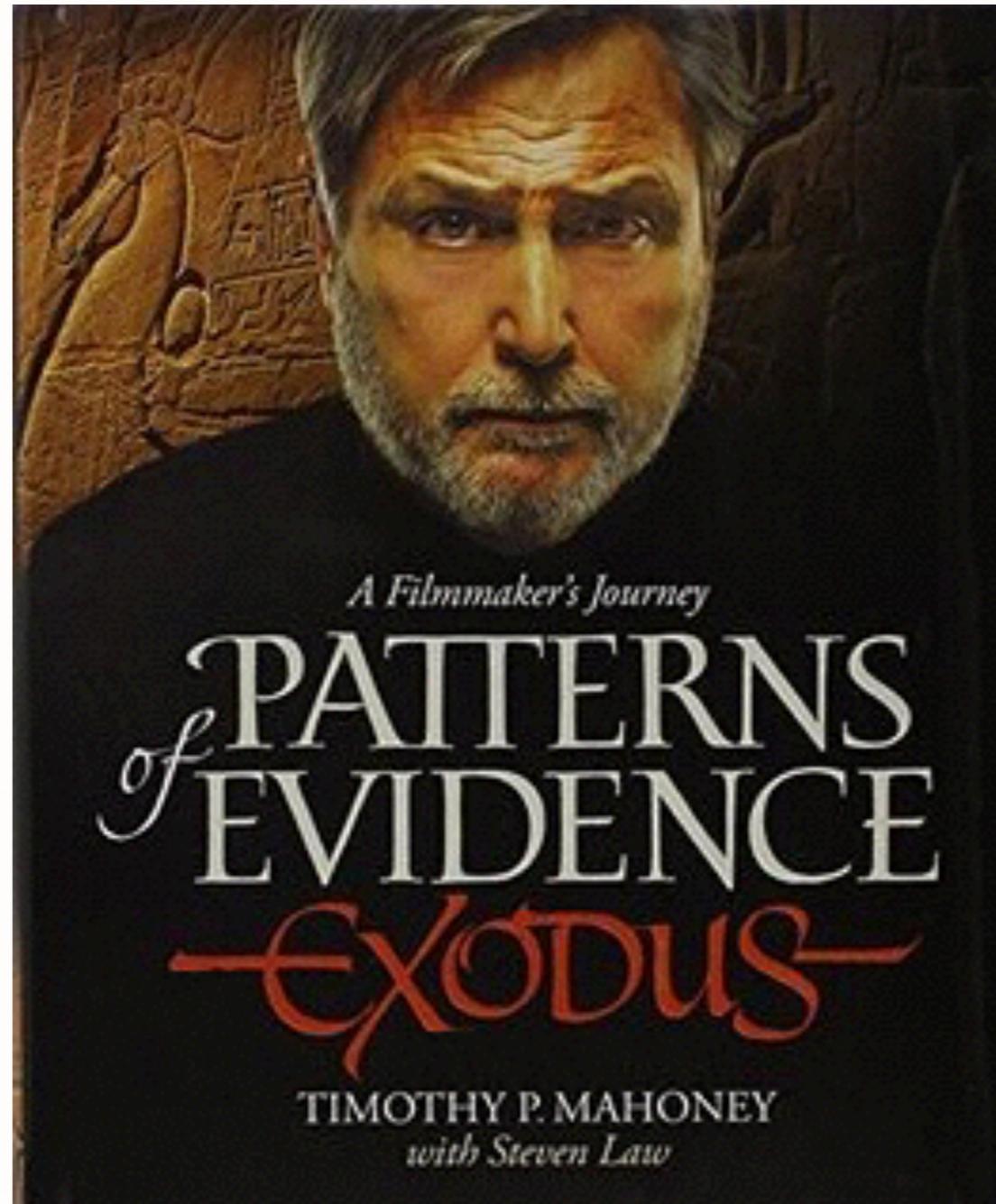
- How many people were in the Exodus?
 - More than 600,000 men (Numbers 1:46).
- How many people crossed the Jordan River?
 - Probably two million people.
- How many Israelites were armed for battle?
 - Forty thousand men were armed (Joshua 4:13).

QUESTIONS

- Did all of the walls of Jericho fall down?



EXODUS AND CONQUEST



SIEGE OF JERICHO

