

Joshua 3:1-17 – Dominion: The First Step

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Poole, Gill, Henry, Trapp, JFB, Delitzsch, Geneva, Clarke, Barnes, Bezuyen,

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The greatest journey begins with one step. Today you will hear from God's Word about the first step the children of Israel took as they moved toward the Promise Land(应许之地), the Land of Milk and Honey, the land that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Our headings are:

The Command to Move Forward.

The Confidence to Move Forward.

The Crossing-the Step Forward

Our goals are: That you will learn that **Dominion requires a firm confidence in God** in order that you **will trust his Word and take on your evangelistic (布道的, 传讲福音的) battles.**

The Command to Move Forward

1 Then Joshua **rose early in the morning**; and they set out from Acacia Grove and came to the Jordan, he and **all the children of Israel**, and **lodged there before they crossed over**.² So it was, after three days, that the officers went through the camp;³ and they commanded the people, saying, "**When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, the Levites, bearing it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it.**" (3: 吩咐百姓说, “你们看见耶和华你们神的约柜, 又见祭司利未人抬着, 就要离开所住的地方, 跟着约柜去。”)

1. Joshua, the old but tireless ruler, and all Israel, came to the edge of the Jordan River where God gave them clear directions: When his covenant people saw the priests and the Levites moving the Ark of Covenant (约柜), they had to follow it.

4 "Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about **two thousand cubits by measure**. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed this way before."

2. But the Israelites were instructed to follow the Ark from a distance of about 1km. Why were they to follow the Ark from such a great distance?

a. Israel had to follow the Ark from a distance **so that they could see where to go**. It would have been difficult for the entire nation to see it if they were too close to it.

b. Israel had to stay far behind the Ark, for the Ark represented the presence of God. **Sin separated them from God**. Only limited people had access to God.

c. When the people saw the priests and Levites leading with the Ark and walking across the Jordan on dry land, **it would have strengthened Israel's faith and helped them to know that God had**

given them Canaan 迦南- even before they set their foot in the water. God does miracles to strengthen his children's faith.

5 And Joshua said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves (你们要自洁), for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you." 6 Then Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, "Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over before the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.

3. Even though they would be far away from the Ark, God's people had to be prepared to follow it.

This sanctification (成圣, 使圣洁化) or consecration had to be inside and outside. I don't know exactly what this entailed 招致, 带来. Usually they had to wash in the Jordan like Naaman the Syrian was told to do. They would wash their clothes. And they would make some prayer.

Consecration (分别为圣, 奉献) meant that the people pledged their faith in and showed their humility before a holy God.

Illustration: When Hindus get married they rub down their entire bodies with turmeric in order to cleanse themselves.

But can you imagine what this night was like for Israel? How could they sleep? Imagine the excitement. They had waited as a people for 40 years...and it was going to happen the next day.

The Confidence to Move Forward

7 And the LORD said to Joshua, "**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.

1. In order to increase his people's confidence in God, God publicly exalted Joshua. How did God exalt Joshua at the Jordan River? Joshua's words about God damming up one side of the river and drying the other and allowing Israel to cross on dry land were confirmed! Israel was reassured that Joshua was God's true servant to lead his people.

And isn't it true that by the Jordan River another Joshua would come, except that the Greeks spelled his name *Jesus*? He came to the Jordan and was baptized. **And wasn't he too exalted by God?**

Luke 3:21 When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. 22 And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

Later, this Son after was utterly humiliated, scorned, crucified, buried, and rose from the dead. He is now exalted at God's right hand, ruling from there. **Under guidance of this new Joshua you are to take possession of the land – the whole earth.**

As the people of God now, will you go where he is sending you? And did Jesus not say that he would go with you as you go? And did he not command you to capture the world and bring it under his dominion?

8 "You shall command the priests (祭司) who bear the ark of the covenant, saying, 'When you have come to the **edge of the water of the Jordan, you shall stand in the Jordan.**'"9 So Joshua said to the children of Israel, "**Come here, and hear the words** of the LORD your God."10 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(迦南人) and the Hittites(赫人) and the Hivites(希未人) and the Perizzites (比利洗人) and the Girgashites (革迦撒人) and the Amorites (亚摩利人) and the Jebusites (耶布斯人): 11 "Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan. **12 "Now therefore, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man from every tribe.** 13 "And it shall come to pass, as **soon as the soles of the feet of the priests** who bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, **shall rest in the waters of the Jordan,** that the waters of **the Jordan shall be cut off,** the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap."(13: 等到抬普天下人主耶和華約櫃的祭司把脚站在约旦河水里,约旦河的水,就是从上往下流的水,必然断绝,立起成垒.)

2. In order to increase his people's confidence in God, God exalted the priests before the eyes of all Israel. How did God exalt the priests? As they carried the Ark of God forward and stood at the edge of the river, God opened up the Jordan River. This miracle would instil further confidence in the people that God would give them the Canaan as he promised. And to back this up, God reminded Israel that he was going to do this miracle in fulfillment of the promise he made to Abraham 500 years before.

And do you not have a great priest who is even more exalted today?

Hebrews 10:11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. 14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

Are you not encouraged that your High Priest is praying for you all day and all night?

3. Imagine how stunning (令人震惊的) the miracle was to Israel who had not seen too many miracles recently! What an incentive to keep moving on! How this would have increased their confidence. Their response was captured in: Trust and obey, for there is no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey! Indeed they had reason to sing:

Psalm 104:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty, 2 Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain. 3 He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, Who makes the clouds His chariot, Who walks on the wings of the wind, (1: 我的心哪, 你要称颂耶和華! 耶和華我的神啊, 你为至大。你以尊荣威严为衣服, 2: 披上亮光, 如披外袍, 铺张穹苍, 如铺幔子, 3: 在水中立楼阁的栋梁, 用云彩为车辇, 藉着风的翅膀而行,)

So with confidence in God's promises, Israel went to sleep that night. They anticipated a mighty demonstration of God's power come sunrise. Do you read about the miracles of Jesus Christ so your hearts can be encouraged to keep on fighting?

The Crossing -the Step Forward

14 So it was, when the people set out from their camp **to cross over the Jordan**, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, 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), 16 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.

1. The next day the Lord demonstrated that with him nothing was impossible and lived up to the expectation of all Israel. The Levites walked to the edge of the water with the Ark of the Covenant and the water stopped upstream instantly. This was the time (March/April) when the water was the highest in the river as the melted snows flowed from the mountains of Lebanon. The work God did was impossible by man's ability. Look at Jehovah's power!

Psalm 104:5-8 - He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved. You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. At your rebuke they fled; at the sound of your thunder they took to flight. The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that you appointed for them.

Psalm 78:13 He divided the sea and caused them to pass through; And He made the waters stand up like a heap.

Psalm 114:1 When Israel went out of Egypt, The house of Jacob from a people of strange language, 2 Judah became His sanctuary, And Israel His dominion. 3 The sea saw it and fled; Jordan turned back. (1:以色列出了埃及,雅各家离开说异言之民。2: 那时犹太为主的圣所, 以色列为祂所治理的国度。3: 沧海看见就奔逃, 约旦河也倒流。)

Believe and prosper: consent and obey, and you shall eat the good things of the land.

2. But can you imagine the terror that the Canaanites experienced? They were terrified by what they heard from 40 years before, imagine when it happened right next to them! **The backed up upstream and it stopped flowing downstream toward the Dead Sea.** Imagine also what the Ammonites, the Moabites (摩押人), or the Edomites (以东人) would have thought when the water disappeared. If only the Canaanites had submitted to God like Rahab! Rahab realized who the true God was when he had opened up the Red Sea and drowned Pharaoh's army and she wanted to learn more of that God. She learned of God's covenant with Abraham and held on by faith to it. But sadly, the Canaanites saw God's power but ignored it.

3. Isn't this the story you must continue to tell...so that men might hear and fear? Do you tell it? Isn't it true that God raised up an ordinary man like Joshua to do extraordinary things for him, and that he can do the same through you? Look at how God raised up a man like John Calvin (约翰·加尔文), forced to be a refugee in Switzerland, to change the history of the world. Think of how God used and blessed men like William Farel, who was extremely shy, and made him a great preacher of the Word. Look how he used Rahab.

Conclusion:

God gave a clear command that Israel had to move forward and take possession of Canaan, the land he had promised by covenant to their forefathers. God gave Israel confidence to move forward by showing by miracles that he was able to give them the land. And in faith, Israel moved forward.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: God the Father gave God the Son the nations as his inheritance (Ps 2). He brought you into his kingdom with a great price and now he is pleased to use you to go, equipped by his Word and Spirit, to conquer the world. You are not too big or too small for him to use you. He will use male and female. And your work starts in your home. Don't fight him. Rather, fight sin in the lives of people by living a godly life and leaving godly words wherever you go.

Finally, Jesus Christ is conquering now and still will conquer, as he rides out as a ruler in his might. I pray that you will surrender to him and be joined to his army and spread his mercies abroad. Either you surrender and find life, or you rebel and die.