

## Joshua 3

3:1-3 – The ark had been located behind the veil in the tabernacle (Exodus 40:20). Entering into the presence of the ark outside of God's restrictions could end in death (Exodus 16:2). Moses would speak with the Lord and the Lord would respond, speaking from above the ark (Numbers 7:89).

What was in the ark of the covenant? (Hebrews 9:4)

During the exodus out of Egypt, how did God lead and direct His people by day? By night?

The ark represented the presence of God. No longer did the Lord use a cloud or pillar of fire, He used the ark that contained the commandments, Aaron's staff, and a jar of manna that reminded the people of God's holiness, power, and provision. Why do you suppose only certain people could carry the ark?

3:4 - The people were called to follow the ark, but to also to keep 1,000 yards between them and the ark at all times. What does this teach them about their relationship with God?

3:5-6 – "Joshua addresses all the people for the first time. He commands them to *Consecrate yourselves*, to prepare for the next day. This instruction again evokes the image of Israel at Mount Sinai, where God commanded Moses to consecrate Israel" (Hess, 110). Why would God want to reset such an atmosphere?

Deuteronomy 31:24-26 – Israel receives the Law at Mount Sinai in Exodus 20 as they begin their journey to the Promised Land. How does the Lord create a similar situation for this generation? What is He emphasizing for them?

1:7 – After addressing the people for the first time, the Lord speaks to Joshua in verse 7. What does the Lord intend to do for Joshua in the crossing of the Jordan?

Why is this so important for Joshua and the people of Israel?

How is God identifying and establishing the leaders in our church?

### **Setting the Stage**

3:8-11 – Describe the stage that the Lord is setting before the people of Israel:

Everyone is gathered! He even creates anticipation as the priests stand at the brink of the Jordan, He stands and addresses the people, and all wait to see what happens when the priests first place their feet in the water. What does the Lord desire to demonstrate?

How should this experience shape and form their view of God? How does it prepare them for what is to come?

What kind of thoughts should this experience bring to mind months from now when the Israelites are knee deep in war and conquest?

What are some moments in your life from which you draw faith and confidence in God?

3:12 – Multiple times the Lord emphasizes the unity of the many families (tribes) that make up one people (Israel). How well do we do at making this emphasis? How have you worked toward building unity in the church?

What should be done if you find someone creating disunity in the church?

### **Crossing the Jordan**

The Jordan is not a small stream. “The river Jordan had a separating rather than connecting function, running through a deep gorge which may be called the earth’s deepest valley. The Jordan flows into the Dead Sea, which lies 1,286 feet below sea level... The slopes are generally steep and sudden, sometimes forming huge precipices. Also note 3:15, which points to the river’s swollen condition at the time of the crossing” (Woudstra, 58).

3:13 – Notice that the priests had to first put their feet into the Jordan before the waters would stop flowing. This would have been a step down a steep bank holding onto the most precious object in the nation's possession.

The miracle was only going to happen **after** they took that first dangerous and challenging step of faith! ***Only with wet feet will they enjoy dry ground!*** What does this teach us about how God can work?

Does He always open a door to simply walk through?

What might it look like for you to turn that knob or take a step in a direction that feels scary in order to follow the Lord?

Is God calling you into a deeper walk with Him? What steps might you take?

Is God calling you into deeper relationships in His body? What conversations do you need to have?

Is God leading you to get more involved with the church? Where can you serve more? What skills or gifts are you presently not using to benefit and bless the church?

3:14-17 – God clearly communicates and even demonstrates (with the ark leading the people) that He will go ahead of the people to lead and protect. At the same time, God's people are called to stand up, move forward in faith, and actively follow God's lead. How does the church at times get this confused?

What do we need to communicate to inactive Christians?

2 Timothy 2:1-6 – What kind of life are we called to live as followers of Christ?