

## **2010 JUNE 20 LIFE IN THE PROMISED LAND - CROSSING THE JORDAN Joshua 3:14-4:7**

Today on Father's day we continue our Series of "LIFE IN THE PROMISED LAND"  
We look at the crossing of the River Jordan, as symbolic of the Israelites crossing from death to life From the past in to the future.

We all face crossings in our lives,  
A few weeks ago some of your crossed over in Graduation.  
Another crossing is when a young husband,  
Is handed his first infant child.  
He crosses over from a man to a dad.

Whether it's a birthday or anniversary.  
We are crossing over.  
**A man asked his grandson when he would turn 6. He replied,**  
"When I'm tired of being 5."  
That kids crossing over.

Knowledge or learning is another way we cross over.  
**A grandmother was shampooing her grandson's hair, when she commented,**  
"Well I See your hair is growing so fast you'll soon need it cut."  
He replied: "Maybe we shouldn't water it so much."  
That kid is crossing over!

Sometimes the crossings in life are sad.  
**Take the man who was filling out an employee form for work and when he came to:**  
Single, Married, Divorced. He marked single. Then he glanced at the man next to him also filling out the form. He noticed that the blanks were empty. Instead he'd written,  
"Yes, in that order."  
That man was crossing over.

**Even in the challenges of life there is a crossing over.**  
**Take the story of Sir Edmund Hillary,**  
who was the first to reach the top of Mt. Everest.  
It happened on his third try.  
On Hillary's previous attempt he not only failed to reach the summit,  
but he lost one of his team members.  
After the failed attempt, Hillary spoke to an audience about his experience.  
Behind him on the platform was a huge photograph of Everest.  
Hillary turned toward the photograph and said, "Mount Everest,  
you have defeated us. But I will return.  
And I will defeat you. Because you cannot get any bigger ... and I can."  
That's crossing over.

In Joshua 3,  
The Israelites were standing on the edge of the promised land.  
The only obstacle between them and the promised Land is the Jordan river.  
God tells Joshua to cross over.

**Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: 'When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river.' " Joshua 3:8**

What's interesting is that when God parted the Red Sea for Moses  
All Moses had to do was raise his staff.  
But when he parted the Jordan for Joshua,  
The priest with the Ark of the covenant had to get into the water.  
Sometimes God expects us to get our feet wet.  
To do what we can do,  
Before he does what he is able to do.  
What is the crossing over you're facing today?

**Lets look at the**

### **I. SYMBOLISM OF THE JORDAN RIVER**

**<sup>15</sup> Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, <sup>16</sup> the water from upstream stopped flowing. Joshua 3:15-16a**

When you hear about crossing the Jordan today,  
What do you think about?  
That somebody is dying.  
The Jordan River symbolizes the last river of death  
We sing about it,  
Write poems about it.  
Eulogize over it.  
Because the Jordan River,  
Is that last gulf to be cross over  
As a symbol of DEATH.

The Jordan at flood stage didn't just symbolized death, it was death.  
The Jordan river at flood time was death to all who entered.

We are familiar with the power of flood water.  
A couple of weeks ago the aquatic rescue team  
Was called to the Missouri river to search for a fisherman  
Who fell out of his boat into the high water and died.

We also read about the young man who evaded police  
By jumping into the river at flood time,  
To escape being arrested.  
Whatever the reason the river took that drivers life.

The Jordan River ran through a deep gorge –  
Down into the earth's deepest valley – into the Dead Sea,  
which lies 1286 feet below sea level.  
At flood time the river trough is over 2000 yards wide,  
That's more than a mile,  
Joshua and Israel needed to cross the Jordan at flood stage (Josh 3:15).

Once the priest with the Ark of the Covenant stepped in  
God piled up the Jordan.

**It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt or dead Sea ) was completely cut off. Joshua 3:16b**

Historians say the town of Adam was 15 miles up river,  
Where the great mud cliff or walls of the Jordan were the steepest  
So when God placed his hand in it,  
it made a perfect dam.

I don't think it was coincidental that God had a town  
Named Adam, symbolic of the first Adam,  
Whose sin brought death to the whole human race.  
And that Joshua's name meant Savior,  
And he led the people thru the Jordan of death.  
Just as Christ has led his people though the valley of death.

Isn't it ironic that Joshua 3:16,  
And John 3:16  
Both talk about what it is that prevents eternal death.

**When we believe in God, we shall never perish, but have everlasting life. Jn 3:16**

Even when we face the flood times of our lives.  
When sin has overrun its banks,  
And life seems destined to death.  
God offers a crossing over.  
From death to eternal life.  
In a promised land.

## **II. SYMBOLISM OF PRIESTS AND ARK.**

Joshua's makes the symbolism of salvation  
More concrete by moving the Ark of the Covenant  
Right into the middle of the Jordan.  
Just as Jesus moved right into the middle of death.  
To bring about a bridge  
And a security for our salvation.

**The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground. Joshau3:17**

The Bible says:

**God is on one side and all the people on the other side, and Christ Jesus, himself man, is between them to bring them together. By giving his life for all mankind. I Timothy 2:5-6LB**

If you want to cross over death,  
You must go past Jesus and the cross  
He is the only way.

**John 3:17 God sent Jesus into the world not to condemn the world, but to save it.**

When the priest got to mid channel,  
The river was dried up before them.  
You and I stand on a firm foundation.  
A cornerstone of security.

That is found only in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now the world doesn't understand this.  
 They argue about the Jordan crossing being done by the wind,  
 Or by a shallow place in the river.  
 But we know it was by God's hand.  
 Just because the world misunderstands us or questions God's Word  
 Doesn't change the truth.  
 Or mean we're wrong

**Reminds me of a Teacher who asked her class,  
 What is your favorite animal?**

**A boy said: Friend chicken.**

The teacher said: That wasn't funny.  
 My parents told me to always be truthful.  
 Fried chicken is my favorite animal.  
 I told my dad what happened, and he said my teacher  
 was probably a member of PETA.  
 He said they love animals very much.  
 I do, too. Especially chicken, pork and beef.  
 Anyway, my teacher sent me to the principal's office.  
 I told him what happened, and he laughed too.  
 Then he told me not to do it again.  
 The next day the teacher asked the class what was their favorite live animal.  
 I told her it was chicken.  
 She asked me why, just like she'd asked the other children.  
 So I told her it was because you could make them into fried chicken.  
 She sent me back to the principal's office again.  
 He laughed, and told me not to do it again.  
 I don't understand. My parents taught me to be honest,  
 but my teacher doesn't like it when I am.  
 Today, my teacher asked us to tell her what was the famous person we admire most.  
 I told her, "Colonel Sanders".  
 Course you can probably guess where I am now...

**The world doesn't understand the presence and promise of God.**

They don't understand miracles and  
 try to make them into myths or legends,  
 Or co-incidences.  
 But Gods word is a bridge to help us cross over.

### **III. SYMBOLISH OF THE STONE CAIRN**

**<sup>1</sup> When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, <sup>2</sup> "Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, <sup>3</sup> and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan from right where the priests stood and to carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight." Joshua 4:1-3**

**First they were told to set up 12 stones**

in the middle of the Jordan  
 Where the Priest stood.

Second they were told to set up 12 stones  
in the middle of the camp in the Promised land.

Some scholars have squirmed and quibbled over  
the setting up of two memorials,  
commenting on the stupidity of setting up a memorial  
where nobody would see it at the bottom of the Jordan,

But God set one up in the Jordan and the other  
In the Promised land.

One symbolizes death of our baptism through the water,  
The other symbolized life in the promised land by our risen Christ.  
The Israelites were literally rising from the dead out of the wilderness.  
Into the new promised land.

Commentators tell us the two stones pillars represent  
The two sacraments of Baptism and Communion.  
Death and life.

Every person will have to pass over  
Thru the Jordan,  
Into new life.

**<sup>17</sup> So Joshua commanded the priests, "Come up out of the Jordan." <sup>18</sup> And the  
priests came up out of the river carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD . No  
sooner had they set their feet on the dry ground than the waters of the Jordan  
returned to their place and ran at flood stage as before. Joshua 4:17-18**

It is beyond the power of any man who ever lived  
to have concocted a story like this,  
even if he had had one hundred prior sources to help him!  
The hand of the infinite God is in every line.  
The crossing over was not concluded until the priests  
bearing the ark of the covenant came up out of the Jordan;

Our salvation was not concluded,  
Until Jesus came up out of the ground.  
Rose from the dead.

And people rose from the grave when he came alive  
And many were seen walking on the streets

**The Earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many  
holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after  
Jesus resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.**

**Matthew 27:52-53**

The graves were opened  
The people then came alive and showed themselves to their families.  
Then Death closed back over all mankind.  
And every one of us will have to cross over Jordan.  
Some to eternal death,  
Some to Eternal life in Christ.

**As in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. I Corinthians 15:22**

No wonder in the promise land.  
Joshua called the people together and asked them

**Whom will you serve this day?**

**He said: As for me and my house we will serve the Lord. Joshua 24:15**

Here is another life verse for you to memorize.

Remember a few weeks ago the life verse I highlights was

**“As I was with Moses so I will be with you.” Joshua 1:5**

Will you as a father today.

Make that claim for yourself and your family today.

And step out?

Mothers clutching their babies stepped out.

Wide eyed children squeezing their fathers hand - stepped out.

Old men and women hobbled on their staffs - stepped out.

Young wives clutched their husbands arms - stepped out.

Men, put this verse in your home and in your heart.

**As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Joshua 24:15**

Step up and out today.

And become the Spiritual head of your home?

God will give you the Courage and strength

To be the man of God you are called to be.

When we do we find ourselves.

Living in the Promised Land.

And if you need a little duck Tape to help

So be it.

May God bless you on this fathers day.

And we want to honor all our men at the end of the service with a small gift.

**PRAYER:**

Lord Jesus make us men of honor, as we bow before you. Help us to stand to lead our families in a godly way, that you might be honored and we might be blessed. Bless all parents and grandparents, to accept this challenge and give you the praise.