

APRIL 11

Joshua 3-4

Joshua 3

Vs. 1-6 There is something in this I've never seen before. According to the Bible Knowledge Commentary, Joshua moved the entire nation seven miles and they camped out near the Jordan. They moved those seven miles, with no clue as to how they were going to cross the Jordan. It was March, just before the Passover, and apparently the snow from Mt. Hermon in the north was melting and the river was overflowing its banks. This shows how much the people had changed and what God had been doing in them for 40 years. This generation of Israelites might have been the godliest generation that ever represented the nation. They didn't complain and make problems when faced with "impossible" circumstances. They simply followed and waited. Now they waited three days, getting organized, but waiting for God's provision.

As disciples, following isn't easy, and that's why many don't follow in the harvest. What if God doesn't do His part? Why get so "uncomfortable" for nothing? God will love us anyway. But it is only in sacrifice, following, depending and waiting in this harvest, that we really get close to God. It is in the impossible that we see His power and bear fruit for God. But it all comes down to faith and following, absolutely convinced that even a "dead end" has meaning and will lead somewhere. It didn't make sense that God led 2 million + people to the edge of a swollen river. But He did. It doesn't make sense for us to follow from day to day without security, for the sake of the Kingdom and for the harvest and the Lord. But we do. And if we have a very big God, we don't have to complain.

Philippians 2:13-16 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

V. 4 Notice that the people had to keep a distance from the ark. It symbolized the presence of God, and although all they could see were the priests carrying something draped in ornate skins, they knew to respect it.

Vs. 7-13 All of these people had only known Moses' leadership and many had never seen what happened at the Red Sea. They would all enter the land of promise with a unique sign that would show them the certainty of God's presence and the authority of Joshua.

Vs. 14-17 There were a couple of miracles here. Not only did the water gather far north, but the river bed dried up quickly. If the Levites holding the ark were in the middle of the river, and the people had to keep a distance of 3000 feet, it must have been a crossing that took place for miles on each side of the ark. It might also have been a miracle for the priests to have stood there with those poles digging into their shoulders, waiting for 2 million people to go across the Jordan.

This was not only a big day for Joshua, but also for the priests representing God and leading the people.

Joshua 4

There are a lot of things that can feed your heart in this passage. How incredible that God fulfilled this incredible promise. They were in the land.

Vs. 1-10 Notice the monuments for remembrance that God had the people make. One was in the middle of the Jordan and the other was where they camped on that first night in the land. I don't think God is into "scrapbooking," but He does go for remembrance and education of the next generation. What items of remembrance do you have at home, in your family, in your office, that

remind you of God's faithfulness? It is something that disciple makers/ leaders do for a group as you work together in the harvest making disciples, who make disciples. I have a couple of "stones of remembrance" in my office right now that remind me of God doing great things when it seemed like the doors were shut.

By the way, those stones that Israel moved were big stones. Those guys must have been strong, or were made strong in a way they didn't realize. I have carried natural stones for landscaping that were about two ft long and one ft high and one ft thick and they were *hermiatingly* heavy. A pile of 12 of those wouldn't have made much of a monument. I think that God must have given these guys superhuman strength. Also, If Joshua set up 12 stones that could be seen when the river was still flooded, how big were those stones?

Vs. 11-14 The 2.5 tribes went first, fully armed and looking ready for a rumble. If the Canaanites had planned a surprise party, the river going dry and the appearance of these guys would have given them second thoughts. By the way, you can bet there were people somewhere watching this happen. This gave the new generation a sense of awe, both of God and of Joshua.

Vs. 15-18 What an awesome moment. After all those years since Jacob left Canaan for Egypt, Israel is finally, completely, back in the land.

Vs. 19-24 are really great verses and 23-24 explain something important in our own lives. God leads us through tough times, so that when He delivers us, He can use His work in our lives as an example to others. He strengthens our faith in following and shows others that He is mighty so that we might fear and love the Lord forever.

Luke 14:7-35

I don't think Jesus was picking a fight here. I believe He might have received an impulse from the Spirit as He observed how vain and petty these important people were.

Vs. 7-11 It appears that when Jesus was invited to a party by a Pharisee, He was a real party-pooper. Talk about having guts. Anyway, these lessons were for the Twelve, and for us as His disciples. If you live your life to receive the recognition of men, you cannot be a disciple. In another conflict with the Pharisees, Jesus said to them in John 5:44, *How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?* I think that verse puts this section together pretty well. They looked to each other for recognition, but in the parable, when invited by God, well, they were busy.

Vs. 12-14 And He had a special lesson for the host. Apparently his goal in inviting some of these people was to receive from them.

In both of these parables, Jesus is teaching His disciples something He has explained before; that is, if your treasure is in heaven, you can live and serve down here with reckless abandon, without anxiousness and without the need to win approval from others.

Vs. 15-24 This looks like someone tried to change the subject or get Jesus to say the "amen" to his statement. Verse 16 shows that Jesus was rebutting what this man said. Apparently it was assumed in what this guy said, that they would all get to heaven. So, why should Jesus take all of this so seriously? This fits together with what Jesus said yesterday about striving to get into heaven now, while the opportunity presented itself. These people who were invited took this all too casually. This earth is about life and death.

Vs. 25-35 It almost seems to me that Jesus was walking later and thinking of all that had happened. He realized that most of the people following Him had no clue how humanly difficult it was to come to Him.

Vs. 26-27 To follow Jesus would require such an allegiance to Him that it would take total priority over every other relationship. Following Jesus would mean willingly going to your death.

Vs. 28-32 I think these stories are given to get people to want to follow Him, and to do it with a serious understanding. Even today, people become believers and remain at a place in their lives of casual commitment. They love church and worship and pot-lucks. They'll even become missionary tourists and paint a building in Haiti. That is not the same as living a disciplined life of death and denial on earth every day to follow Christ, to reach the lost and to make disciples, who make disciples.

V. 33 This is the point of all that Jesus has said. I think "all" means "all."

Vs. 34-35 A disciple is supposed to be different and make a difference.

Psalm 80

This looks like another post-exile psalm. This psalm echoes what Moses/God said would happen. The people would be removed from the land because of their sin. The appeal made to God is to His faithfulness and His glory, to remember His promise to their fathers.

This psalm breaks down nicely into three parts, each concluded by the appeal and refrain of the psalm.

Vs. 1-3 God saved Israel from death by sending Joseph into slavery in Egypt. Remember how Benjamin played a part in this story. When God raised up Joseph, He gave Joe two sons who became tribes in Israel. Then comes the refrain.

Vs. 4-7 But now after their disobedience and exile, God seems to be ignoring them and their enemies laugh at them. Then comes the refrain.

Vs. 8-19 God brought them out of Egypt and planted them like a vineyard with a wall. In v. 12 God broke down their walls, because of the sin of Israel, and allowed wild animals to ravage the vineyard. In v. 17 the psalmist asks for *the son of man* to come and help them and lead them to restoration. I think that is prophetic, looking ahead to Jesus. When they call on Jesus in those final days, the glory of His face will shine upon them.

It is interesting to find portions of Scripture that inspired songs. I missed mentioning one in Matthew 9:28, when Jesus asked the two blind men if they thought He could heal them. They said to Him, *Yes, Lord*. You know what song that's in, right? Psalm 80 is sung almost verbatim by a group called The Sons of Korah and is very good. And on that note, in the NT we read Jesus' warning for the would-be disciple to "Consider the Cost," which is a great song by Steve Camp.

Proverbs 12:27-28

I prefer and agree with the other reading of v. 27 given below in the margin of The One Year Bible, "but diligence is precious wealth." Diligence is the reward that makes a man rich. And to make the connection to v. 28, the righteous are diligent to live following the Spirit, following Christ, in His Word, in His harvest, making disciples, who make disciples.