

Obey, Behold, Remember

Joshua 3-4

The Basic Narrative

Joshua prepares the people for departure (3:1-6)

The Ark of the Covenant will lead

Stay behind by half a mile (so more people can see)

Consecrate yourselves—*tomorrow God will do wonders among you*

The reason behind the commands (3:7-13)

Yahweh will show:

That He is with Joshua (like He was with Moses)

That He is present among His people and will give them the land He promised

The priests carrying the Ark will stand in the Jordan until everyone passes

It is God's doing

The people set out (3:14-17)

The Ark of the Covenant leads

The priests touch the water, the water stops flowing

(O yea, by the way, the Jordan overflows this time of year)

The people are able to cross over

Another Angle or Two

Joshua commands twelve men to take stones from the middle of the Jordan and set it up on the other side (4:1-8)

They follow the commands and set up the memorial (4:9-10)

The people passed over, including those who promised they would fight with their brothers (4:11-14)

The Jordan returned to its overflowing once the priests carrying the Ark stepped out (4:15-18)

It was the tenth day of the first month when they crossed the Jordan and encamped in Gilgal (4:19)

Key Themes:

Ark of the Covenant

The presence of God leads the way

What's in the Ark? [Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod, A jar of manna]

“It is mentioned seventeen times in these two chapters. Our writer refuses to allow us to lose sight of it! Thus the ark—sign of Yahweh’s presence among his people—meets us at every turn, reminding us that it is Yahweh himself who leads his people into Canaan... The whole affair is Yahweh’s feat and the Israelites, though active, are still primarily spectators.”

Dale Ralph Davis

The need to consecrate themselves for a holy endeavor

Cf. Exodus 19:10-15

One scholar notes that we see two aspects of God’s presence:

“his close, comforting presence...”

“his awesome, fearsome glory...”

Wash clothes, prepare to meet the Lord, *don’t go near a woman* (interesting...)

Reminds us of 2 Timothy 2:4—*this is about an attitude of readiness*

Central aspect: God is with them

3:7—He is with Joshua

3:10—He is among His people

3:13—His presence is their shelter, power, refuge...

Memorial Stones

Pile of Stones to mark the place of God’s miraculous intervention—it would be a difficult road ahead, but these stones and this event will help them remember

Note the personal nature of the question of the children in 4:6

The people were to see the work of God *for them*

Yet, it was also to be a sign for the generations to come

How was this memorial to function? Cf. Deut. 6:20-25

Emphasis: 4:21-24

All people may know of Yahweh’s might

You may fear Yahweh forever

How does remembrance work for us today?

Cf. The Lord’s Supper

Romans 8:32

“...the greatest enemy of faith may be forgetfulness.” D. R. Davis

Mount Ararat Bible Church

All-Church Study

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