



+

We continued our series in Joshua this week reaching chapters 3-4 as the Israelites crossed the Jordan River. It was a large chunk of text and so we spent about ½ the time retelling the story and noting the key points and flow, then spent the second ½ thinking about responses and applications for us.

Throughout this passage (and indeed much of Joshua) we have the twin ideas of both God being faithful to his people, but also the people's active response and obedience to Gods faithfulness.

We noted that the Ark of the Covenant is mentioned 17 times in these 2 chapters. The Ark, containing primarily the 2 stone tablets of the 10 Commandments, is a physical representation of both Gods Covenant commitment to His people, but also his presence among his people. It's mentioned 17 times because we're to be under no doubt that the reason they cross the Jordan is because God has made it possible (even more so v15 during flood season when it would be a torrent). That seems to be why the ark is to be 2000 cubits ahead.

The rubber hit the proverbial road for the priests. They knew what they had to do, they knew what the Lord had promised, but did they trust him? As they head into the water so the flow stops, the people cross and the land is entered.

We noted at least 4 responses for us and for Gods people

1. The Leader is exalted

God explicitly says that through this miracle the people of God will trust Joshua as their leader. He is exalted - it's explicitly seen in 4:14. Here we see his faithful leadership in action. As the Lord helps him to enable gel he people to enter the place of Rest, so we drew a parallel with Jesus in Hebrews 2. Where through his death on the cross he was exalted and glorified, that we might trust him to bring us into the place of Rest

2. The Generations remember

There's a good argument that the pile of 12 stones built to help the people (and future generations) to remember this encounter, sits at the heart of the account which acts as a huge 'sandwich structure'. As is often the case in the bible, whether through festivals, feasts or physical reminders the Lord encourages his people to stop and remember (and live afresh in the light of) Gods saving acts. Each of the 12 tribes is represented (even the Trans-Jordan tribes) - this act of remembering is a thing to unite all the nation. For us, our prime act of remembering in this sense is through the Lords Supper where we recall the body and blood of Jesus, broken and shed for us, that we might enter the place of Rest.

3. The Nations might hear of His power

The final verse gives us 2 more responses to the miracle. The first is that news of his power might spread through the nations. We've already heard of this last week with Rahab as news of Gods power has reached their city and melted them in fear. Gods plan has always been for the nations to hear what he is like - this is finally seen in The disciples being told Jesus is with them as they take the message of the resurrection to the ends of the earth.

4. The people might fear Him

The final thing ringing in our ears as we conclude is that *as* they hear of this extraordinary miracle, is that the people are to fear him. He's a God of faithfulness and grace, but also powerful and awesome. He is to be feared and so we are to be a people who bow the knee to him.

+

As always feel free to adapt and tweak questions to suit the people in your group:

1. Re-tell the story so far in Joshua. How has the book affected you so far?
2. Re-tell the story in 3-4. What are the key elements? Why is told in this way? Who sits at the heart of the account?
3. Have a look at Heb 2v9, how do we see Jesus being exalted as Joshua was?
4. The heart of this passage seems to be the people remembering what God has done. Why do we need that? How do we do that? What are the dangers of remembering in this way? What are the dangers of not?
5. How is this act to impact the nations?
6. How is this act to impact His people?