



A Systematic Expository Study on the book of JOSHUA

Study 7: PREPARATION FOR A SUPERNATURAL BREAKTHROUGH **Joshua 3:1-5**

Supernatural breakthrough! Exploits! Passing through the impassable! Accomplishing the impassable! All these are possible in your life and ministry, but there is a necessary preparation. The chapter before us is both instructive and encouraging. God had promised, yes; He had given the land of promise to the children of Israel but Jordan (which even overflowed all its banks - Joshua 3:15) stood between them and their inheritance! Very often, between God's promise and our possession of it may lie a great problem. Though Israel was faced with a most formidable obstacle, there was no ground for fear or discouragement. The same God who divided the Red Sea is able, willing and ready to divide river Jordan. ***His methods may change, but His power remains the same.***

River Jordan lay at the very entrance into Canaan, the Promised Land. Does a seemingly insurmountable problem, a great obstruction confront you, standing between you and the promised success in ministry, between you and the promised healing, deliverance or childbearing; between you and the promised provision, progress or promotion; between you and the promised recovery of a spiritual loss; between you and the promised victory and triumph over trials? Listen, look up and believe. Jordan is not an impassable obstacle when the God of miracles is on the side of Israel. We can be certain that there is a passage through the most formidable obstacle and you will soon go forward into the promised blessing.

RISING EARLY AND OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION.

Joshua 3:1; Genesis 22:3; Psalm 119:60; Jeremiah 7:25; 25:3; Mark 1:35; Proverbs 27:1; Ecclesiastes 9:10; 2 Corinthians 6:2.

Immediately after receiving the necessary information from the two spies, "**Joshua rose early in the morning**" to move forward in the path of duty. He was not slothful but diligent. His heart was in his work and he did not entertain the habit of procrastination. The minister of the Gospel who will show himself "**a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth**" (2 Timothy 2:15) must not be slothful in the business of study and prayers (Romans 12:11; Acts 6:4). He must be diligent in his service for the Lord if he is to "**stand before, kings**" on behalf of the King of heaven (Proverbs 22:29). Unless we are industrious and deny ourselves of ease and pleasures, we have no reason to expect that God will use us to bring supernatural breakthroughs into the lives of others.

Procrastination is the thief of success, the foundation of failure and defeat. It is the fertilizer that makes difficulties grow. A lot of people postpone until tomorrow those things they should do today. No one can build reputation, success or spectacular achievement on procrastination. No farmer ever plowed a field, planted the crops or reaped a harvest by only turning it over in his mind. Rise up early and do what needs to be done, today. When we have a work to do, it is our duty to do it, and not to take our rest till it is done. Procrastination is not only foolish, it is wrong. Every Christian should manifest punctual attendance to duty in spiritual matters as well as in his secular profession. It is our duty to wait until the will of God is made known, but once it is made known, there should be no hesitation, no delay, and no procrastination.

"And they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged them before they passed over" (Joshua 3:1). They implicitly obeyed Joshua's command, though they had not seen the way through Jordan. They had been told that "**within three days**" they should cross Jordan (Joshua 1:11) and there was neither murmuring nor disputing. So we ought to follow the directives of our Joshua, even where situations seem hopeless and success seems impossible. Where no way appears to human eyes, our God can make one when He pleases. .

REFLECTIONS ON THE ARK BEFORE PROGRESS

Joshua 3:2-4; Exodus 25:10,11,16,21 22; Deuteronomy 31:26; Hebrews 9:4; Numbers 10:33; Hebrews 12:2; Psalm 89:7.

The children of Israel were now commanded to fix their eyes on "**the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God**" (Joshua 3:3). The Ark is the central object in this miraculous event, being mentioned by name in chapters 3 and 4, sixteen times and referred to as "**it**", five other times. So "**The Ark**", is mentioned, a total of twenty one

times. The Ark contained, the law of God and manna - that is, God's Word. Over it was the mercy-seat, the symbol of the presence of Christ, through Whom we have the mercy of God and pardon for our sins. They fixed their eyes on the Ark in order to cross Jordan and enter into the promised land. By keeping our eyes on Christ, **"looking unto Jesus"** (Hebrews 12:2) in public as well as in private, we shall pass through the waves and storms of this troublesome world, and enter into our eternal rest at last.

Some space and distance were to be kept between the people and the Ark. The natural reason why the Ark of the Covenant should proceed so far in advance was that it could readily be seen by all the vast multitude. Being borne by the priests half a mile ahead of them, the Ark would be visible to all. We too must not allow anyone to obstruct our view of Christ. The ministers and preachers must so lift up Christ before everyone, so that all will see Him and believe and follow Him, **"And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him"** (John 10:4). He has left us an example, and it is our duty to **"follow His steps"** (1 Peter 2:21). Looking unto Jesus and following Him in unwavering faith, we will cross every Jordan and experience many breakthroughs.

"And the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD went before them ... to search out a resting place for them" (Numbers 10:33). **"When ye see the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, the Levites bearing it, then ye shall.... go after it"** (Joshua 3:3). Jesus Christ, typified by **"the Ark"** has gone before to search out and secure a **"resting place"** for us. Go after Him. Do not turn your eyes or your mind, your attention, your faith, your concentration away from Him, **"that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore"** (Joshua 3:4). You are treading an unfamiliar path, keep your eyes on the Lord.

"The priests, the Levites bearing" the Ark. "The priests.... took up the Ark of the Covenant and went before the people" (Joshua 3:3,6). The ministers of Christ's Church as the guides and teachers of the people must reveal Christ the people by both life and ministry. In all things required of Christians, the Christian minister must set the example. In zeal for his Master's cause, in unwearied efforts to spread the gospel, in purity of life, in acts of love to the sick and the aged, in kindness to all, in truth, in prudence, in self-denial, the servant of God should be in the forefront of the members of the Church. And the members must follow the leadership.

READINESS FOR EXPLOITS THROUGH PURITY

Joshua 3:5; Exodus 19:10,11; Joel 2:16-29; 2 Chronicles 16:9a, 2 Kings 20:3-6; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 2 Timothy 2:21; Deuteronomy 23:14; Luke 1:5,6,11-17

"And Joshua said unto the people (not just to the priests), **Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you"** (Joshua 3:5). Expecting a great display of God's power, an unprecedented manifestation of God's glory, a repetition of spectacular miracles done for their fathers (many of them were not yet born when the Red Sea was divided) expecting the formidable obstacle between them and the promised blessing to be removed, they needed to be sanctified, spiritually prepared!

The word **"sanctify"** has different shades of meaning - there is a divine side and a human side to sanctification. On the human side, to **"sanctify yourself"** means to separate yourself from religious and moral defilement, to cleanse yourself from all forms of evil and uncleanness. It is to **"cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit"**, to **"abstain from all appearance of evil"**, to **"make you a new heart and a new spirit"**, it is to **"circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked"**, it is to consecrate and **"present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God"**, **"not being conformed to this world"**, parting with anything and everything that causes sin or uncleanness in us (2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; Ezekiel 18:31; Deuteronomy 10:16 Romans 12:1,2; Isaiah 52:11; Matthew 5:29,30). We must be sanctified, holy and clean: our hearts must be **"perfect toward Him"**, sincere and upright, honest and holy, if He is to **"show Himself strong in our behalf"** (2 Chronicles 16:9).

On the divine side, to **"sanctify"** means to cleanse, to make holy, to purify. In sanctification, God responds to our prayer and **"purges"** us, making our head **"whiter than snow"**, **"takes away the stony heart"**, giving us **"an heart of flesh"**, **"circumcises our heart"**, in order to **"love Him with all our heart and soul"**, **"cleanses us from all sin"**, **"redeems us from all iniquity and purifies us unto Himself"**, **"puts His law in our inward parts and writes it in our hearts"**, makes us **"unblamable in holiness before God"** (Psalm 51:7; Ezekiel 36:26; Deuteronomy 30:6; I John 1:7; Titus 2:14; Jeremiah 31:33; I Thessalonians 3: 12, 13). God the Father sanctifies and makes consecrated believers holy through the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. **"Sanctify yourselves therefore and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I AM THE LORD WHICH SANCTIFY YOU"** (Leviticus 20:7,8).

*If you are blessed by these bible study outlines, we'd like to hear from you.
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