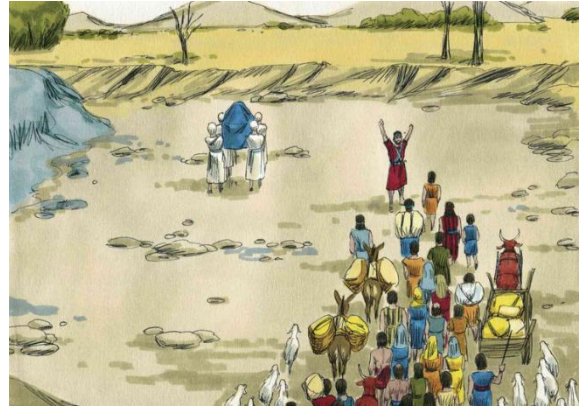


God Prepares a Path: Obedience is Rewarded

The crossing of the Jordan River allowed the Israelites to enter the Promised Land after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. What made the miracle more significant is that the river was at flood stage. It was raging.

The Israelites waiting to cross the Jordan River were a new generation from those who escaped slavery in Egypt, 40 years earlier. What happened to the earlier generation? Those who escaped slavery as they crossed the Red Sea had died off. The new generation had been led by Joshua to the Jordan River, and were now waiting for the right time to cross into the Promised Land. Joshua told the new generation to consecrate themselves – prepare their hearts to be obedient to God’s plan. The waters ahead of them were swift, deep, and dangerous. The river was 1,300 feet wide. It would take God’s intervention to make it safely across. Joshua had received instructions from God to wait for the Ark of the Covenant. When it arrived, the priests would carry it ahead of the rest of the people. The Ark of the Covenant represented God’s presence. It arrived, and as soon as the priests stepped into the river with the Ark, the water upstream was cut off, and they walked across on dry land into Canaan.



Similar to the crossing of the Red Sea, God intervened, providing safe passage. It was a public demonstration of God’s power for the entire Israelite nation to see, and a fulfillment of God’s promise to the descendants of Abraham.

Why is it that it took a new generation before crossing into Canaan? The previous generation died in the wilderness because of their unbelief. Even though they had experienced a miracle escape from Pharaoh when the Red Sea was parted for them, they lost faith. The crossing of the Jordan was a covenant for a new generation. A covenant is a binding agreement in which the Israelites are responsible for following God’s plan.

The Jordan River crossing was tangible proof that God would fulfill the promise made to Abram 430 years earlier in Genesis 12:7 – *“To your offspring I will give this land.”* Canaan was the Promised Land. In the Red Sea story, it took a new generation that followed Joshua’s leadership and God’s command. Without honoring God’s covenant, the previous generation had wandered aimlessly in the wilderness. Without God, we, too, will wander through our lives aimlessly. We won’t reach the promised land – eternal life – unless we truly believe.

Joshua 3:1-17 is a story about trust, faith, obedience, and the miraculous ways that God leads His people. They had to trust God’s plan and follow the Ark into the river. Joshua 4:14 reminds us that God exalted Joshua as He had exalted Moses in the eyes of Israel.

The crossing of the Jordan River was not merely a courageous physical journey, but a spiritual renewal that enabled the Israelites to step into their promised future.

How about you? God has prepared a path for you. Are you ready to show your trust, obedience, and faith as you seek your promised future? Are you ready to do your part in following God’s plan?