

**Crossing the Jordan (10 Nisan [April] 1406 BC)**

Joshua 3:6–4:24

**Day 7—Crossing the Jordan (10 Nisan)**

3:6 And Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, “Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over ahead of the people.” So they took up the ark of the covenant and went ahead of the people.

7 Now the LORD said to Joshua, “This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you.

8 You shall, moreover, command the priests who are carrying the ark of the covenant, saying, ‘When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand *still* in the Jordan.’”

9 Then Joshua said to the sons of Israel, “Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God.”

10 Joshua said, “By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will assuredly dispossess from before you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, and the Jebusite.

11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over ahead of you into the Jordan.

12 Now then, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man for each tribe.

13 It shall come about when the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan will be cut off, *and* the waters which are flowing down from above will stand in one heap.”

14 So when the people set out from their tents to cross the Jordan with the priests carrying the ark of the covenant before the people,

15 and when those who carried the ark came into the Jordan, and the feet of the priests carrying the ark were dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest),

16 the waters which were flowing down from above stood *and* rose up in one heap, a great distance away at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those which were flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. So the people crossed opposite Jericho.

17 And the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan while all Israel crossed on dry ground, until all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan.

**Memorial Commemorating the Crossing**

4:1 Now when all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying,

2 “Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from each tribe,

3 and command them, saying, ‘Take up for yourselves twelve stones from here out of the middle of the Jordan, from the place where the priests’ feet are standing firm, and carry them over with you and lay them down in the lodging place where you will lodge tonight.’”

4 So Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the sons of Israel, one man from each tribe;

5 and Joshua said to them, “Cross again to the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Israel.

6 Let this be a sign among you, so that when your children ask later, saying, ‘What do these stones mean to you?’

7 then you shall say to them, ‘Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off.’ So these stones shall become a memorial to the sons of Israel forever.”

8 Thus the sons of Israel did as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, just as the LORD spoke to Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Israel; and they carried them over with them to the lodging place and put them down there.

9 Then Joshua set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan at the place where the feet of the priests who carried the ark of the covenant were standing, and they are there to this day.

10 For the priests who carried the ark were standing in the middle of the Jordan until everything was completed that the LORD had commanded Joshua to speak to the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua. And the people hurried and crossed;

11 and when all the people had finished crossing, the ark of the LORD and the priests crossed before the people.

### **Eastern Tribes Keep Their Word**

12 The sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over in battle array before the sons of Israel, just as Moses had spoken to them;

13 about 40,000 equipped for war, crossed for battle before the LORD to the desert plains of Jericho.

14 On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; so that they revered him, just as they had revered Moses all the days of his life.

15 Now the LORD said to Joshua,

16 “Command the priests who carry the ark of the testimony that they come up from the Jordan.”

17 So Joshua commanded the priests, saying, “Come up from the Jordan.”

18 It came about when the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD had come up from the middle of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests’ feet were lifted up to the dry ground, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place, and went over all its banks as before.

### **First Camp at Gilgal**

19 Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth of the first month and camped at Gilgal on the eastern edge of Jericho.

20 Those twelve stones which they had taken from the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal.

21 He said to the sons of Israel, “When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, ‘What are these stones?’

22 then you shall inform your children, saying, ‘Israel crossed this Jordan on dry ground.’

23 For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed, just as the LORD your God had done to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed;

24 that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, so that you may fear the LORD your God forever.”

## **Circumcision of the New Generation (April 1406 BC)**

Joshua 5:1–12

### **Fear Grips the Enemy Nations**

1 Now it came about when all the kings of the Amorites who *were* beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites who *were* by the sea, heard how the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan before the sons of Israel until they had crossed, that their hearts melted, and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the sons of Israel.

### **The New Generation Circumcised**

2 At that time the LORD said to Joshua, “Make for yourself flint knives and circumcise again the sons of Israel the second time.”

3 So Joshua made himself flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth.

4 This is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, died in the wilderness along the way after they came out of Egypt.

5 For all the people who came out were circumcised, but all the people who were born in the wilderness along the way as they came out of Egypt had not been circumcised.

6 For the sons of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, *that is*, the men of war who came out of Egypt, perished because they did not listen to the voice of the LORD, to whom the LORD had sworn that He would not let them see the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey.

7 Their children whom He raised up in their place, Joshua circumcised; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them along the way.

8 Now when they had finished circumcising all the nation, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed.

9 Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” So the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day.

### **First Passover in Canaan (14 Nisan)**

10 While the sons of Israel camped at Gilgal they observed the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month on the desert plains of Jericho.

11 On the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched *grain*.

12 The manna ceased on the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land, so that the sons of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate some of the yield of the land of Canaan during that year.

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### **Chronological Notes**

- 1) The chronological headings in today’s reading follow the arrangement suggested by David M. Howard in his article, “‘Three Days’ in Joshua 1–3: Resolving a Chronological Conundrum,” *JETS* 41/4 (Dec 1998): 539–550.