



July 19, 2026
Remembering God's Mighty Acts
Joshua 3 and 4



1. Sermon Outline:

- a. God Stopped the Jordan River So Israel Would Trust Both He and Joshua
 - i. God provided another miraculous water crossing to begin the conquest of the promised land
 - ii. God did this to build Israel's trust in Him
 - iii. God did this to build Israel's trust in Joshua
- b. God Commanded A Monument Be Built for Future Generations to Ask About His Mighty Acts
 - i. Faith is personal and not genetic, therefore it must always be taught
 - ii. God commanded ways to remember His mighty acts so future generations would learn and believe
- c. Do You Commemorate God's Mighty Acts In Ways that Invite Questions?
 - i. Jesus ordained memorials of His acts for the church
 - ii. There is also value In personal monuments and memorials to God's works - what are yours?

2. Sunday – As soon as possible after the sermon, consider:

- a. What stood out to you the most in this sermon?
- b. What new truth did you learn, or what truth were you reminded of?
- c. Is there a particular Scripture passage you feel God is leading you to meditate on or commit to memory?
- d. What is one thing God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
- e. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

3. Monday:

- a. This week's focal passage is chapters 3 and 4 of Joshua. Today we recommend reading both chapters together to get the context of the passage.
 - i. How would you summarize these two chapters in a single sentence?
 - ii. While some would just read Joshua 3 & 4 as a historical narrative reporting what happened, what spiritual truths do you see in these chapters?
 - iii. In what you see as the order of importance, who are the primary characters in the two chapters?
 - iv. If you had been one of the "average" Israelites, how do you think you would have felt as you went through the various stages of getting across the Jordan River?
- b. Now go back and meditate on Joshua 3:1-2.
 - i. Although neither the ESV nor NIV tells us that the verse is about the morning after the spies returned (Joshua 2:23-24), other versions do say "the next

morning”. Why might Joshua have been anxious to move quickly (consider his experience 40 years earlier: Numbers 13:30-14:4)?

- ii. While only about 6-8 miles from Shittim to the Jordan River, how long do you think it would have taken to move the entire Israelite camp?
 1. Why do you think they would have moved to a location closer to the Jordan and camped there?
 2. How long did they stay at that camp?
- iii. Some scholars, in an apparent attempt to discredit Joshua’s leadership, have suggested that the statement “the officers went through the camp” shows a division within the leadership. What better reason might there be?

c. If possible, locate Shittim, Jericho, Adam, Zarethan, and Gilgal on a map.

4. **Tuesday:**

- a. Read and meditate on Joshua 3:2-13.
- b. What title or section heading would you give for these verses?
- c. Like modern stories, Biblical narratives are not necessarily presented in strict chronological order. Which event recorded in these verses do you think happened first?
- d. What was one of the main purposes the Lord had for the way He was having the Israelites cross the river according to verse 7? According to 10?
- e. Think about Rahab’s explanation for the fear in Jericho (Joshua 2:10a) we read last week. If an event in a distant land 40 years earlier caused paralyzing fear, what would the reaction be to God’s plan for the Israelites to cross the Jordan?
- f. What similarities do you see between the events and God’s plan in these verses and what occurred in the crossing of the Red Sea (see Exodus 14, especially verses 2-3 & 31)? In what sense do the two events serve as “bookends” to the time in the wilderness?
- g. Imagine that you are one of the priests responsible for carrying the ark. How do you think you would feel about being told to step into a flooding river carrying a heavy object? What would be required of the priests to obey this command (consider Hebrews 11:29-31)?
- h. Some might view the crossing of the Jordan River as the first step in a military campaign. How do these verses show that the crossing was a spiritual act, not a military invasion?
 - i. Verse 3
 - ii. Verse 5
 - iii. Verse 9
 - iv. Verse 11
 - v. Verse 13
- i. Why do you think the Israelites were to remain 2,000 cubits (more than ½ mile) behind the ark?
- j. Twice, verses 11 and 13, Joshua uses the title “Lord of all the earth” for God. What significance is there in that title (see Psalm 97:5, 50:12, and Micah 5:1)?

5. **Wednesday:**

- a. Read and meditate on Joshua 3:14-17.
- b. If verses 2-13 present God’s command for crossing the Jordan, how would you describe verses 14-17?

- c. Historians point out that earthquakes in 1267 and 1927 caused landslides that dammed the Jordan for 10-20 hours and propose that the same happened when the Israelites crossed. What fact do these verses provide that makes such a natural explanation impossible?
 - i. How long do you think it takes for ground previously under a river to become “dry ground”?
 - ii. If the “Lord of all the earth” had used a natural event to block the flow of the Jordan for just the exact time it took the nation of Israel to cross, would it have been any less of a miracle?
- d. How much faith do you think it takes to cross a river whose water is being miraculously held back?
- e. If the nation numbered over two million people, as some estimate, how long do you think it would have taken for everyone to cross the river? (In answering, consider that one author calculated that 2,000,000 standing 10 abreast would form a line 85 miles long – the distance to Richmond.) What did the priest have to do during the crossing?

6. **Thursday:**

- a. Read and meditate on Joshua 4:1-14
- b. When did the events reported in chapter 4 begin? Who initiated them? What command did God give?
 - i. When had the 12 men been selected (see 3:12)?
 - ii. As far as we can tell from these two chapters, what had the 12 men been doing while the nation crossed the river?
 - 1. What lesson might we learn from their experience? From the fact that they carried out a great command of the LORD but no one knows their names?
 - 2. How would Isaiah 40:31a describe their experience? How can waiting prepare us for the heavy lifting God has planned for our future (the 12 stones almost certainly were not small)?
 - 3. What was the purpose of the stones (verses 6 & 7)?
 - a. Why was a stone memorial important at that point in history?
 - i. For the stones to be a reminder, what would the children have had to do first?
 - ii. After the children had seen the stones and asked about them, what was the parent’s responsibility?
 - b. What has God given us instead of a stone memorial to remind us of the great things He has done? What object lesson can we draw from this illustration?
 - iii. Verse 9 in most translations, including the ESV, says that Joshua set up a second monument of 12 stones in the river (the NIV and a few other versions translate the verse, so it is the same monument set up in the camp). Why do you think Joshua set up a second monument? Who would have seen it?
 - iv. What do verses 12 and 13 tell us about the people that crossed the Jordan?
 - 1. Would you understand the 40,000 to be just the soldiers from Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, or is it referring to the entire Army?

2. The Bible is often criticized for the exactness of numbers (which were never intended to represent an exact count). Read Judges 5:8; 2 Samuel 10:18; 1 Kings 4:26; 1 Chronicles 12:36 and 19:18. Considering all these verses, other than possibly the exact size of an army, what would you say 40,000 might mean?

7. **Friday:**

- a. Read and meditate on Joshua 4:15-24.
- b. After commanding the collection of the 12 stones, what is the second command that God gives?
- c. What is the mental picture you get when reading verse 18? If you were directing a film of this event, how would you choreograph it to capture the meaning of the verse?
- d. When did the crossing take place? What significant event takes place in the first month of the Jewish calendar (on the 14th day – see Exodus 12:1; Leviticus 23:5; & Numbers 28:16?
- e. What does the repetition of the explanation concerning the 12 stone memorial suggest about the importance?
 - i. Although the child's question in verse 21 is identical to that of verse 6, how does the adult answer differ?
 - ii. What word does the response use twice that would have been a reminder of the wilderness experience?
 - iii. What two facts does verse 24 say were to be learned from the memorial?

8. **Saturday:**

- a. End the week by again reading chapters 3 and 4, meditating on what truths are included that apply to your life as a Christian?
 - b. Why did God make Joshua great in the eyes of Israel (Joshua 3:7 and 4:14)?
 - c. What parallels or metaphors to crossing the Jordan have you experienced in your life? What makes "crossing the Jordan" possible?
 - d. What memorial or sign could you set up to remind yourself of God's work in your life?
9. **Application:** Passing through the Red Sea and crossing the Jordan must rank among the greatest miracles of the Old Testament. And as necessary as these miracles were to the history of the Israelites, Joshua 4:14 gives us an even higher view of their importance: "that all the people of the earth might know". The greatest miracle of the New Testament, and of the Bible, is captured in that most famous verse, John 3:16. As Christians, we benefit immeasurably from that miraculous gift. But with the gift comes a responsibility (Matthew 28:19-20) to help see that "all the people of the earth might know" that "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."
10. **Pray:** This week let's pray for the deaf people of the world. According to the International Mission Board, there are over 300 distinct sign languages in the world, most of which need the Bible to be translated for the deaf to use. In many third-world countries, ministry to the deaf is particularly difficult because they are so overlooked. IMB estimates that about 1,593 souls of the deaf enter a Christless eternity every day.