

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

JOSHUA 1-4

If the book of Joshua were a Blockbuster video you'd find it in the "Action" section - on the shelf with the "Js" – between "Jaws" and "Jurassic Park".

Joshua is a story of military conquest. It's full of action, intrigue, and espionage. It contains examples of bravery and dedication - deceit and trickery. Joshua is full of spectacular battle scenes with out-of-this-world visual effects. It's a war epic!

Joshua is full of chills and thrills – but it has deeper levels of meaning as well...

Spiritually, Joshua is full of instruction for Christians. Moses led the people to the border of the Promised Land, but he was unable to lead them into victory and rest. That task was left up to his predecessor, General Joshua.

Moses represents the Law - whereas "*Joshua*" is the Hebrew word for the Greek name "*Jesus*". The Law could never bring us into God's peace and rest. Only Jesus – our *Yeshua* or Joshua can give us the victory. This Old Testament book shows New Testament believers how to trust our battles to General Jesus!

Organizationally, Joshua is a model for effective leadership. The book is laced with leadership principles. It's a challenging study for aspiring leaders.

Militarily, the book is a blueprint for military campaigns and

battle strategies. Joshua employed a divide and conquer approach that's been mimicked by many.

And it may surprise you, but Joshua also speaks to us **prophetically**.

You wouldn't think the sixth book in the Old Testament would paint a portrait of the end times, but that's exactly what we discover in this book. Joshua's conquest of Canaan is an amazing model of the Revelation. We'll discuss how later...

The book of Joshua is divided into two sections...

The first 12 chapters describe the *conquest of the land*.

The last 12 chapters discuss the *land's division and settlement*.

The first 9 verses of chapter 1 could be subtitled "*The Making of a Leader*". They introduce us to Israel's new chief, and his qualifications for leadership.

As we read through chapter 1, I'll point out to you 7 principles for leadership... If you want to be a leader in the body of Christ here's a good place to start...

Verse 1, "After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying:"

Here's principle # 1, **preparation**. Before taking the helm Joshua had been an assistant to Moses. Before assuming *leadership* he first served an *apprenticeship*.

Billy Graham was once quoted as saying, "If I knew the Lord was coming back in three years – I'd spend two years

studying and one year preaching.”

Never underestimate the importance of preparation. Before a person can lead they first must be willing to be led. The Hebrew term “*assistant*” refers to a menial role - a servant, a waiter. Joshua would lead a nation to claim God’s promises, but for a time his job description was simply “*do what Moses tells you to do.*”

God says to Joshua in verses 2-3, “**Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them - the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses.**” Leadership principle # 2 is **purpose**.

A good leader has to have a purpose, a vision. A spiritual leader gets a vision from God - then sets out to fulfill that God-given vision. He is *purpose-driven*.

Harry Truman said, “**I wonder how far Moses would have gone if he had taken a poll in Egypt? What would Jesus have preached if he’d taken a poll in Israel?...**”

It isn’t the polls or the public opinion of the moment that counts. It’s right and wrong and leadership – men with fortitude, honesty, and a belief in the right – that makes **epochs**.” Your church, business, family needs leadership with conviction and godly purpose. A true leader stays the course even when it’s not popular.

God continues in verse 4, “**From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going**

down of the sun, shall be your territory.” Leadership principle # 3 is **perspective**. God wants to make sure Joshua has a grasp on the big picture.

Joshua’s men are eager to fight, but their leader sees the full scope of God’s plan. A broader perspective enables him to determine where and when to fight. Perspective makes a good leader. Joshua learned to be *a big picture person*.

Verse 5, **No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you...”**

Here’s principle # 4, **persuasion**. A true leader doesn’t wait on someone else’s initiative. He’ll take a stand. He’s the One who says, *“Follow me, as I follow God.”*

It was said of one successful leader, **“His great attribute was that he made decisions. You never had to say, ‘Well what are we going to do tomorrow?’ He told you.”** Our families, our churches - need people willing to make the tough decisions, and assume responsibility. We need leaders who are not afraid to take the heat.

Leadership principle # 5 we could call **people**. God tells Joshua in verse 6, **“Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.”** Once the land is conquered Joshua will be called on to divvy up the land, and that will plunge him into the nitty gritty work of dealing with the personalities, and quirks, and complaints of people.

In the midst of battle *people take orders*. In peace time *people question orders*.

Joshua will need to be a servant to the people. He'll have to listen to them, and show them understanding, and bear with their peculiarities. A good leader is a servant to people. He cares and listens. It's been said, "You can't be a good shepherd if you can't stand the smell of sheep." You've got to love people.

In verse 7-8 God tells Joshua, "Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

Leadership principle # 6 is **precept**. A godly leader leads God's people *by the book*. He studies God's book - the precepts of Scripture, and acts accordingly.

One of Great Britain's greatest leaders, Oliver Cromwell, commented, "The leader's job is to give the people not what they want, but what is good for them." The job of a spiritual leader is not to tickle ears, but teach the people the truth of God's Word. When a leader departs from the Scripture its *spiritual malpractice!*

Principle # 7 I call **presence**. In verse 9 God promises Joshua, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

John Ruskin once noted, “Really great men have a curious feeling that the greatness is not in them, but through them.” The secret of Samson’s stupendous strength was not the size of his biceps or pecks – it was the presence of God on his life. God made him strong! This will be the case for Joshua – *and for us.*

Hey, God is still looking for leaders. The Church is an army - and an army needs leaders. Your church - your community - your family needs a leader who will rise up like a Joshua, and say to His people, “*Follow me, as I follow God.*”

Beginning in verse 10 Joshua prepares the Hebrews to cross the Jordan...

“Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, "Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.' ”

Eight centuries earlier, God promised the prosperous land of Canaan – to Abraham and his heirs. But for the prior 440 years the Hebrews were slaves in Egypt and nomads in the desert. Now though the moment has come. Israel holds the title deed to a land flowing with milk and honey. It’s time to take possession.

Understand all land is God’s land. Psalm 24:1 declares, “The earth is the LORD’S, and all its fullness”. God has every right to give any parcel to any people He chooses. God took the land away from the Canaanites as a punishment and judgment. They were a wicked and evil people. He then gave

the land to Israel.

Today's Palestinians migrated into the land long after God biblically settled the issue of its ownership. The Palestinians have no ultimate claim to the land. There may be cases where they should be recompensed for losses, but the land itself belongs to Israel. It was promised to Abraham. It was possessed by Joshua.

Verse 12 is a reminder to the two-and-a-half tribes that took their inheritance on the east bank of the Jordan River, **“And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying, "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.' "Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan.**

But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them, until the LORD has given your brethren rest, as He gave you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise."

Verse 16 **“And they answered Joshua, saying, "All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you. Only the LORD your God be with you, as He was with Moses. Whoever rebels against your command and does not**

heed your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and of good courage."

Chapter 2, "Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." Remember Moses sent 12 men to spy out the land. All but two came back with a negative report.

Notice this time Joshua only sends two. I'm sure they were men of faith.

Jewish legend suggests they were Caleb and the High Priest, Eliezer.

Joshua tells these men to focus their attention on Jericho. It was the first of Canaan's many city-states. Jericho was a fortified city, seven miles west of the Jordan River. Jericho consisted of seven acres surrounded by a double wall.

Historians tell us Jericho had an outer wall 6 feet thick. Its inner wall was wider, 12 feet. The first wall was 11 feet high. The second wall was 35 feet high, and the wall was tilted at a 35 degree angle. The tilt prohibited anyone from scaling it with ladders. *Jericho's walls would be Israel's first major military challenge.*

"So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there." Some Bible commentators have expressed embarrassment over the fact the spies hid out in a harlot's house. But a prostitute was accustomed to housing strangers. The spies could remain at her house and maintain their anonymity.

And isn't this also where our Joshua found acceptance...

The religious crowd hated Jesus. He never felt at home in the Temple. Yet Jesus was embraced by the harlots and the tax collectors. They longed for His love and forgiveness.

Verse 2 “And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, “Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country.” Someone saw the Israeli covert, and ratted on Rahab. They reported the spies to the king...

“So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, “Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country.” Then the woman took the two men and hid them.” A tense moment occurred when the Jericho detectives knocked on the door to interrogate Rahab.

One sneeze and it would’ve been curtains for the spies *and for Rahab*.

“So she said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them.” (But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.)”

Rahab *lies* for the *spies*.

She says the Israelis have already left the city, but if the king’s men hurry they can catch’em. You might say she sends the Jericho police on *a wild Jews chase*.

Which brings up a provocative question, *are we ever*

justified in telling a lie?

For me the answer is *yes!* When Nazi Storm troopers rounded up Jews to send to the death camps it was not only excusable, but noble, to lie to save their lives.

When telling a lie can avoid a greater sin than the lie itself – *I believe God looks at the heart.* I don't advocate situational ethics, but I do believe in Spirit-led ethics.

2 Corinthians 3:6 tells us, “**the letter (of the Law) kills, but the Spirit gives life.**”

A strict, wooden, legalistic application of the Law will never take into account life's many ironies. That's why God has given us His Holy Spirit. The Spirit helps us apply morals and ethics in a loving, and consistent, and godly manner.

Verse 7 “**Then the men pursued them by the road to the Jordan, to the fords. And as soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the gate.**”

Rahab's scheme worked. The spies were safe, until the posse returned.

“**Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, and said to the men: "I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you."** Rahab was a believer. She believed Israel's God was the one, true God.

“**For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly**

destroyed.”

I imagine Rahab heard the stories from travelers visiting her brothel.

In verse 11 she says, “And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.”

Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." What a statement of faith!

The harlot had heard of what God did in Egypt, and east of the Jordan. She realized Israel's God was the one, true God. She knows Jericho will fall and the Hebrews will triumph - so she tries to position herself on the winning team! Hey, God's side always wins. If you're a smart person you'll also want to join His team!

“So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you." A prostitute is promised a place in God's family.

Rahab was a hooker – a whore – a madam - a woman who sold her body for sexual favors. She had fallen off the ladder of morality a long time ago. It was not Rahab's lilly-white goodness, or perfect purity that saved her – *it was her faith!*

And it's by faith we too are saved. Hey, if God saved Rahab,

He'll save you!

Both Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25 note the faith of Rahab. If you want to know the extent to which faith can save, turn to Matthew 1:5... in the lineage of Jesus, the spotless lamb – in *the pedigree of the purest* you'll find Rahab the hooker. It's all a testimony to the saving power of faith in God's mercy!

“Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall.” In ancient cities houses were built between the two walls. It was in one of these houses the two spies found refuge.

“And she said to them, "Get to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way."

So the men said to her: "We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, unless, when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home. So it shall be that whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we will be guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him.

And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear." Then she said, "According to your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the

window.”

Let's recap what's happened...

Two spies rappel down the wall on a rope lowered from Rahab's window. They hide for three days in the mountains - and then return to their camp. When Jericho falls Rahab is saved because of a scarlet cord she hangs in her window.

Whether the scarlet cord was a piece of the rope used by the spies we're not told, but it becomes a symbol of Rahab's salvation... *and our salvation as well!*

For Jesus too came to earth to spy out the land.

He hung and was lowered from a scarlet rope – literally, a blood-stained cross.

Afterwards he hid for three days – in the grave.

Jesus then rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven.

He returned to camp.

But He's coming again to judge the world, and the only folks who'll be saved are those holding on to the scarlet cord. It's a picture of the work of Jesus.

Verse 22, “They departed and went to the mountain, and stayed there three days until the pursuers returned. The pursuers sought them all along the way, but did not find them. So the two men returned, descended from the mountain, and crossed over; and they came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them. And they said to Joshua, “Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us.”

Israel was feared by his enemy because of the power of his God.

Chapter 3 recounts the day for which the Hebrews waited 440 years. Joshua mobilizes the people to cross the Jordan River. "Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and they set out from Acacia Grove and came to the Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they crossed over.

So it was, after three days, that the officers went through the camp; and they commanded the people, saying, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, the Levites, bearing it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure." Since a cubit was 18" - 2000 cubits equals 3000 feet. The people stayed roughly 3/5 of a mile behind the Ark.

The Ark represented the holiness of God. It carried the Law of God.

The distance between the Ark and the people of Israel represented the separation that existed between God and those who lived under the Law.

Joshua continues, "Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed this way before." And Joshua said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you."

For three days the nation had camped by the river. They watched the raging water swollen by the spring rains – and

I'm sure they pondered how the 3 million Hebrew men, women, and children would manage to cross a turbulent river.

Its interesting Joshua didn't send out his Army Corp of Engineers. Mechanics of the crossing were God's problem. That's why Joshua sends out the Ark. The Ark represented God's presence. Joshua trusted in God - not Israeli ingenuity.

Verse 6 "Then Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, "Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over before the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people." God would lead them into battle.

And the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. You shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, saying, 'When you have come to the edge of the water of the Jordan, you shall stand in the Jordan.'"

The Levites are commanded to bring the Ark to the water's edge – step into the flowing water - and expect God to work a wonder. The water is Israel's problem. God is willing to work wonders. Joshua's job is to connect God to his problem.

This is what God expects from us. Pray! Take God to your problem. Connect your problem to God, and He'll work. *Have you stepped into the water with God?*

"So Joshua said to the children of Israel, "Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God. And Joshua said, "By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the

Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites:” Seven nations will be evicted from the land.

Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan. Now therefore, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man from every tribe. And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap.”

The same miracle God used to deliver Israel from Egypt, He uses again to bring them into the Promised Land. The same God does the same miracle.

“So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest)...” Notice, Joshua points out this was not summertime – when the Jordan dries to a trickle. This miracle occurred in the springtime when the melting snow from Mount Hermon causes the Jordan to overflow its banks...

The moment the priestly toes dipped into the water’s edge, verse 16, **“the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho.”** The waters backed up

at Adam. This was a city 16 miles north of the crossing point, and 20 miles north of the outlet into the Dead Sea.

At Adam the banks of the river rise 40 feet. God created a supernatural dam.

Verse 17 “Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.”

But notice again verse 15, the miracle doesn't occur until the priests who carry the Ark step into the water. It looked like they would *swim*, but a miracle occurred when they brought *Him* to the water's edge! It's always *Him* that prevents a *swim*.

God will never let us down when we're willing to take a step of faith.

Hey, as with all God's miracles, the damming up of the Jordan was preceded by a step of faith... *You're facing a turbulent problem tonight. God can work wonders. But do we have the faith to step into the river with God?*

Chapter 4 “And it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over the Jordan, that the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying: "Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from every tribe, and command them, saying, 'Take for yourselves twelve stones from here, out of the midst of the Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet stood firm. You shall carry them over with you and leave them in the lodging place where you lodge tonight.'”

Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed

from the children of Israel, one man from every tribe; and Joshua said to them: "Cross over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and each one of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, 'What do these stones mean to you?'

"Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever." God ordains a memorial to the miracle – a pile of twelve stones.

God wanted Israel to never forget the nation's miraculous new birth...

Verse 8 "And the children of Israel did so, just as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones from the midst of the Jordan, as the LORD had spoken to Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them to the place where they lodged, and laid them down there.

"Then Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan..."

As we'll see in a moment these were a different set of 12 stones. The stones gathered by the 12 men from each of the tribes were stored back at the camp.

But Joshua sets these stones "in the place where the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the covenant stood; and they are there to this day." Appropriately, Joshua places these

memorial stones at the water's edge – at the exact place the people stepped into the river with God. It would serve as a reminder for decades.

God's miracle at the Jordan was a watershed event in the history of Israel.

It solidified their identity as God's people. It was the same miracle, but with a new meaning. When Israel came to the Red Sea they were *slaves escaping their enemies* – at the Jordan they were an *army determined to conquer their enemies*.

The cross of Jesus is likewise one miracle with two meanings...

The Red Sea speaks of salvation. It parallels the day I learned *Christ died for me*. But the Jordan speaks of victory. It marks the day I learned that *I died with Christ*. I'm not the same person I once was. I'm a new creation in Jesus.

In Christ I have a new identity. I'm dead to my past. I'm no longer a slave to sin, but a child of God. The power of the Spirit works in me to overcome my enemies.

Have you crossed the Jordan? Have you memorialized the miracle Jesus has worked in your life? There comes a time when we need fully embrace that for which God embraced us. Do you find your identity and destiny in your relationship with Jesus - or are you still wandering in the wilderness trying to figure it all out?

At the cross of Jesus the Red Sea parts... sin is forgiven... a prisoner escapes.

At the same cross the prisoner becomes a prince - he crosses the Jordan and his enemies cower – an overcomer emerges. *You've passed through the Red Sea - but have you crossed the Jordan?* Do you see yourself as a new person in Christ?

“So the priests who bore the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished 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 over.

Then it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over, that the ark of the LORD and the priests crossed over in the presence of the people.

And the men of Reuben, the men of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh crossed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses had spoken to them.

About forty thousand prepared for war crossed over before the LORD for battle, to the plains of Jericho.” Three million Hebrews crossed over the Jordan, including old men, women, and children. Only 40,000 were armed and ready for combat.

Verse 14 “On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life.” The miracle at the Jordan so closely resembled the parting of the Red Sea Israel realized God’s hand was on Joshua, as with Moses. This miracle validated Joshua’s authority.

“Then the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying, "Command the

priests who bear the ark of the Testimony to come up from the Jordan." Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, "Come up from the Jordan." And it came to pass, when the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD had come from the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet touched the dry land, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks as before."

"Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho." They entered the land four days before Passover. "And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal." Joshua actually established two memorials – one in the riverbed of the Jordan, and the other memorial at Gilgal.

Gilgal will be Israel's base of operation throughout their conquest of the land.

"Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What are these stones?' "then you shall let your children know, saying, 'Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land'; for the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over, that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever."

Two watershed events marked the early history of the nation Israel...

The parting of the Red Sea liberated the Hebrews from slavery. And the rolling back of the Jordan River opened the door to God's blessing. At the Red Sea they said good-bye to *their past*. At the Jordan River they embraced *God's purpose*.

And two watershed realizations mark the life of every Christian

A Red Sea parting occurs when I believe that *Jesus died for me*. I pass from slavery to freedom. But a Jordan River experience happens when I believe that I *died in Christ*. When I see myself as a new creation, and embrace a new identity.

At the Red Sea the Hebrews exited slavery. But they didn't begin to live the life God planned until they crossed the Jordan River, and entered the land of Canaan.

This parallels the Christian's experience...

We want to be free from sin's penalty and power - but that's only part of what God desires. He *brings us out to bring us into* something better.

The Red Sea speaks of salvation, but the Jordan River speaks of victory.

I cross the Jordan when I embrace my birthright. I'm not just free from sin - I'm a child of God - and heir to His blessing. Spiritually speaking, to cross the Jordan is to trust in the power of God's Spirit to work in me to overcome my enemies.

This is what book of Joshua means to us... It's a guide to spiritual victory!