

## OBSTACLES AND BARRIERS ALONG THE WAY

### Joshua 3:1-17 Key verse 11

#### Introduction:

1. "Crossing the Jordan River" is a phrase that has meant many things to Christians such as dying, going to heaven, leaving this old world, etc.
2. "Crossing the Jordan River" can also be used to describe passing from a life of "self" control to "God" control or the "Christ-centered" life.
3. Every Christian encounters obstacles, barriers sometime in his/her lifetime that prevents him/her from living a life of total, complete obedience and faith.
4. Israel crossing the flooded Jordan river is often used to compare obstacles and barriers we face in our own lives that prevent or slow us down from enjoying all the Lord Jesus has for us.

#### I. ISRAEL FACED CONFLICT BUT ALSO VICTORY WAS IN SIGHT

1. Israel faced conflict:
  - The land promised to them had to be taken by force.
  - There were at least seven (7) nations that occupied the promised land.
  - God had ordered that ever one of the seven (7) nations be exterminated.
    - Four (4) generations earlier God had promised that special land to Abraham and all his descendants. (*Genesis 15:16*)
    - God foreknew that those nations would become evil and forsake Him.
    - The time had come for God's promise to Israel to be fulfilled.
2. Like Israel, we face a similar conflict:
  - Satan and God are battling for our lives and each wants us to live for their side of the "river."
3. Israel also had victory in sight.
  - God had a purpose for them and the promised land.
    - There was to be a babe in a manger.
    - God's own Son was to die on a cross.
    - 120 people would gather in an upper room and God's Spirit would fall on them.
  - Nothing in heaven, on earth or in Hell would stand in God's way.
  - God had a plan for those of following generations, such as ours:
    - A babe in a manger.
    - His own Son on a cross.
    - His Holy Spirit to live within those who believe in His Son.
  - Everything that stands in the way of God's plans for our lives **MUST** be conquered.

## **II. AN OBSTACLE WAS IN ISRAEL'S WAY**

1. Between Israel and the land of promise roared the raging, flooded Jordan river.
2. Between us and the lifestyle God wants us to live are obstacles:
  - an unloving spirit - judging others - sensitive feelings - vindictiveness - jealousy
  - things that lurk deep down in our hearts like the raging, flooded Jordan river.
3. It was impossible for Israel to cross the flooded, raging Jordan river by themselves and it is just as impossible for us, today, to get across, around the obstacles in our lives by ourselves.

## **III. EVERYTHING FOR ISRAEL CENTERED AROUND THE ARK OF THE COVENANT**

1. Having a clear view of the Ark was essential to safely cross the raging river Jordan.
  - The priests waded into the roaring river carrying the Ark.
  - The waters immediately stopped as if a great dam was holding everything back.
  - The people were then told to cross over on the dry land, BUT to be sure to keep their eyes on the Ark while crossing.
  - God's presence caused the "impossible" to become possible.
2. We, too must have a clear view of our "Ark" which is the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - Jesus has done for us what the Ark did for Israel.
    - In the garden of prayer - the cross - the tomb - the resurrection equals VICTORY!
  - As Israel had to keep their eyes on the Ark while crossing, so must we keep our eyes on Jesus while crossing over into the lifestyle God wants us to live.
  - The Ark indicated that God was there. The empty tomb indicates that Jesus is HERE!

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. To get from our "natural" way of life over into the "Christ-style" life, we must cross over many obstacles and barriers in our lives.
2. Jesus will keep back that which would prevent us from living the "Christ-styled" life.
3. We must keep our eyes on Jesus, confessing that there is indeed an obstacle, barriers, and then begin to cross over into that lifestyle He wants us to live.
4. There is such a life free of unloving, judging others, jealousy, vindictiveness, sensitiveness, and many other barriers and obstacles. God wants us to live such a life.
5. Face it! There are conflicts, obstacles, barriers but there is also victory for the Christian and Jesus is the answer to all.
6. Israel made it across the impossible by following God's instructions, we, too can make it across the impossible by following God's instructions and that is by looking to Jesus.