

A Study of Joshua 3 & 4

A Note from Kathy

As I read chapters 3 and 4, I was reminded of a time, I too, came to a place of decision: obey, and enjoy the blessings of God, or give into fear, once again. Facing obstacles is never easy. The choice for believers is simply, will I believe God for protection and victory? God wants us to trust him. He longs to demonstrate His love. We must take our eyes off the difficulties in front of us and fix them on Him. God is always faithful to His promises.

Observation

Read the chapter, at least twice, before beginning the study guide. This will give the Lord an opportunity to help you see the things He desires for you to know.

1. This is such a beautiful chapter of hope and mercy. God has led the Israelites, once again, to the bank of the Jordan River. This is a turning point for the nation. Once Israel crosses the Jordan, they will be facing what they previously feared. But faith is never really faith without action. What similarities and differences can you find between this miraculous crossing and the crossing of the Red Sea in Exodus 14?

Similarities	Differences

2. Joshua 3-4 speaks of one event, but it is described in detail in several segments. In order to truly understand all that God did, we must read the segments together, paying close attention to the details and the chain of events. Below, is a brief list of these events for you to arrange in order of occurrence from 1 to 13.

- ____ People are told to prepare to cross the Jordan River and not to move until they see the Ark of the Covenant, which will be carried by the priests.
- ____ Twelve men are chosen - one from each tribe.
- ____ Joshua states the reason for the 12 stones.
- ____ People camp at Gilgal.
- ____ Priests enter the river, and the waters upstream stop flowing.
- ____ The 12 men each choose a stone from the middle of the river bed where the priests stand.
- ____ Joshua commands the priests to come up out of the river.
- ____ When the priests leave the river, it returns to flowing as before.
- ____ Priests remain in the middle of the Jordan river on dry ground.
- ____ People cross on dry ground.
- ____ Joshua sets up the stones where the nation is camped.
- ____ People instructed to consecrate themselves in preparation for the event of the next day.
- ____ People move when they see the Ark of the Covenant move.

3. The measurement for a cubit is approximately 18 inches. How far, in feet, were the Israelites instructed to keep their distance? _____

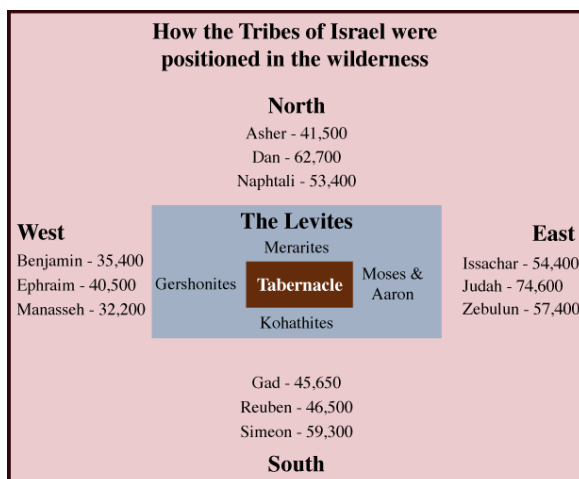
4. Imagine for a moment, how easy or difficult it would have been to see the Ark of the Covenant, which is roughly 45 inches long, 26 inches wide, and 18 inches high, from this distance. The Ark of the Covenant is described in Exodus 25:10-13.



Exodus 25:10-13

Have them make an ark of acacia wood – two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high. ¹¹Overlay it with pure gold, both inside and out, and make a gold molding around it. ¹²Cast four gold rings for it and fasten them to its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other. ¹³Then make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold

5. The spies had returned and told Joshua that the inhabitants of the land were fainting in fear. They had heard that God had promised the land to Israel. They had heard of God's mighty works on Israel's behalf. Even though the king of Jericho knew spies had entered the city, he may have had a false sense of security. What natural barrier stood between the Israelites and the inhabitants of Jericho? As if this was not enough, what interesting facts did the scripture tell us about this natural barrier?
6. The entire nation was instructed to keep their eyes on the Ark of the Covenant and follow. What did the Ark represent to Israel? Where had it been while the nation had been traveling through the wilderness?



7. After the people had all crossed the Jordan, Joshua gave specific instructions to 12 men. Why 12? What did Joshua tell these men to do?

8. The task Joshua gave the 12 men was not an easy one, since it was roughly a 5-mile walk from the Jordan River to Gilgal. These men were probably young, strong, and trustworthy. What lessons can be drawn from these men and their assignment?

9. What was the purpose of taking these stones from the river?
10. Joshua took the 12 stones that had been chosen and set them up as a memorial. What specifically did they represent?
11. What was the intended purpose of these stones? How would they benefit future generations?
12. What did the Lord want all the nations to know?

Application

1. Unlike the last time the Israelites went to spy out the land, this time the spies returned with an optimistic report. Had the giants shrunk since the last time God sent them to spy out the land? What had changed?
2. After comparing the Red Sea miracle with the Jordan River miracle, did it help you see that God does not always do things in the exact same way? When God moves on our behalf, what is the important thing for us to acknowledge?
3. The Israelites were instructed to stay focused on the Ark of the Covenant. What are believers to focus on today? Before writing your answer, read Colossians 3:2, Romans 8:5, and Philippians 4:8.

Colossians 3:22

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Romans 8:5

Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.

4. Joshua chose 12 men to represent the Israelites. Today, when choosing someone to represent believers, what character qualities do you think one should look for?
5. Joshua set up the 12 stones taken from the Jordan River for a memorial. Do we have memorials today? Name a memorial that has been set up in the past 20 years. What is the purpose of this memorial?

6. Have you set up family memorials? Do you have special days that draw the attention of your family to the goodness and the loving care of your heavenly Father?
7. The Israelites were given instructions to stay quite a distance away from the Ark of the Covenant. This was the very throne of God. It was to be treated reverently. Are there things believers are to treat with special reverence today?
8. What does our reverence for God say to the world around us?