



## Session 6 | The Time to Go is Now | Joshua 3:1-9

I didn't count each occurrence, but it appears the phrase "it came to pass" is used more times (139) in the book of Joshua than any other O.T. book; perhaps denoting that Yes, this is really going to happen; the children of Israel are going into the Promised Land just as God had decreed. They escaped Egypt by God's hand, wandered in the desert for forty years and now God's promise is coming to pass, they are about to enter into their Promised Land, leave the hot desert and live in heavenly sunshine.

The spies have returned with a good report and Joshua is ready to make his move. There may be a life lesson we can learn, that is, when a decision must be made, gather as much info as possible, then make our move. Too often Christians say, "I'm just waiting for God to show me a sign" and yet, how can we ever know what that sign might be? The result is we make things up. Make your calculated plan and then make your decision.

Verse 1,2—

**Joshua rose early in the morning** he didn't waste time, he got moving! **After three days**, probably refer to the same three days in 1:11. In trying to figure out the chronology, it makes sense to put the events of chapter two before chapter one. Nevertheless, the time has come and **they...came to the Jordan**. The **Jordan** is a rather small and narrow river. It flows from southern Lebanon to the north into the Sea of Galilee (-699 feet) where it discharges in the south and makes it way south, dropping in elevation about 700 ft to the Dead Sea (-1404 feet; the lowest place on earth). The name **Jordan** means *to go down*. The Jordan is located in the enormous Great Rift Valley that extends from Syria, through the Red Sea, and across East Africa. The Jordan was exceeding large in Joshua's day, but it did overflow its banks during the time of the harvest (Joshua 3:15).

Verse 3—

The officers **commanded the people...when ye see the ark of the covenant of God**. The confidence of the people had to have been high after the successful mission of the spies. Now, they are to follow the Ark of the Covenant (different from Noah's Ark!) carried by the Levite priests. The Ark of the Covenant was a box or better, a chest that was the main feature in the Tabernacle (or tent) that Israel erected while they wandered in the wilderness for forty years. It was a portable structure that could be constructed and deconstructed whenever it was time to move their camp. Inside this tent, or Tabernacle was the innermost holy chamber, called the Holy of Holies. It was here that the Ark resided. We can read about what was so special about the Ark of the Covenant in Exodus 25:10-22). The Ark contained the tablets of stone of the ten commandments written by the finger of God, and it was the place where God communicated with Man.

Verse 4—

We have the priests leading the way to the Jordan and the people following a good distance back, **about two thousand cubits by measure**, which is maybe about a mile depending on the actual length of a cubit which scholars place anywhere between 18 – 25 inches.

Verse 5—

**Sanctify yourselves**. Under the Law of Moses a person had to do works of righteousness in order to be accepted by God (See Acts 10:35). In our dispensation of grace, we are not under Law, but grace. When we believe it is the Lord himself who sanctifies us (1 Cor. 6:11). Our salvation and sanctification is *not of yourselves*, (Ephesian 2:8-9). But for Israel, in order for God to be with them, they had *sanctify themselves in preparation for the work God would do*.

Verses 6-9—

The Ark will now **pass over before the people**, It will cross the Jordan first indicating that God is leading the way. And as they come to the **brink of the Jordan**, God is about to perform a miracle similar to one he performed forty years earlier. And that we will see next time.

God is leading his children home.

