

Joshua Lesson 3 Article

During most of the year, the Jordan River was about a hundred feet wide; but at the spring flood season, the river overflowed its banks and became a mile wide. As soon as the priests bearing the ark put their feet into the river, the water stopped flowing and stood like a wall about twenty miles away upstream, near a city called Adam. It was a miracle of God in response to the faith of the people.

Unless we step out by faith (1:3) and “get our feet wet,” we’re not likely to make much progress in living for Christ and serving Him. Each step that the priests took opened the water before them until they were standing in the midst of the river on dry ground. They stood there as the people passed by; and when the whole nation had crossed, the priests walked to the shore and the flow of the water resumed.

When God opened the Red Sea, He used a strong wind that blew the whole night before (Ex. 14:21–22). This was not an accident, for the wind was the blast of God’s nostrils (15:8). When Moses lifted his rod, the wind began to blow; and when he lowered the rod, the waters flowed back and drowned the Egyptian army (14:26–28). When Israel crossed the Jordan River, it was not the obedient arm of a leader that brought the miracle but the obedient feet of the people. Unless we are willing to step out by faith and obey His Word, God can never open the way for us.

As I mentioned before, the crossing of the Jordan River is not a picture of the Christian dying and going to heaven, contrary to what is said in some songs. The crossing of the Red Sea pictures the believer being delivered from the bondage of sin, and the crossing of the Jordan River pictures the believer claiming the inheritance in Jesus Christ. Joshua is a type of Jesus Christ our Conqueror who leads us from day to day into the inheritance He has planned for us (1 Cor. 2:9–10). “He shall choose our inheritance for us” (Ps. 47:4).

What a tragedy it is when God’s people fail to claim their inheritance and wander aimlessly through life as Israel did in the wilderness. The Book of Hebrews was written to challenge God’s people to go on in spiritual maturity and not go backward in unbelief. In Hebrews 3–4, the writer used Israel’s experience at Kadesh Barnea to warn foolish Christians not to come short of all that God had planned for them. We never stand still in the Christian life; we either move forward in faith or go backward in unbelief.

The Lord was in control of all the activities at the Jordan River that day. He told the priests when to enter the river and when to leave and go to the other side. He told the water when to roll back and when to return. Both the water and the people obeyed Him, and everything worked out as God planned. It was a day that glorified the Lord and magnified His servant Joshua (v. 14).¹

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Strong*. “Be” Commentary Series (50–51). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.