

# DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

*Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.*

August 2012

## *Joshua: Hope for God's People*

### **Lesson #3: The Importance of Faith**

The Israelites were not led by elite soldiers but by a group of unarmed Levitical priests that carried the ark. Joshua showed remarkable confidence in God and the Levites (priests). What would happen if a Commander in Chief did the same thing today?

#### **OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION**

Read Joshua 3:1 – 4:24

*Note: God led them to this dangerous place to cross the Jordan at this time of year. The melting snow from Mount Hermon created a flood stage. The natural ford at "Adam" was 12 miles north. The twelve memorial stones were eventually erected in Gilgal, a site which became the military headquarters of Joshua during the conquest and remained an important religious center throughout the early Israelite monarchy. "Like Moses before him, Joshua received his orders from the Lord, and he obeyed them by faith. Rom. 10:17 It has been well said that faith is not believing in spite of evidence but obeying in spite of consequence. When you read Hebrews 11, the great "faith chapter" of Scripture, you discover that the people mentioned there all did something because they believed God. Their faith wasn't a passive feeling; it was an active force. Living faith always leads to action. James 2:26"<sup>1</sup>*

1. Why do you think God made them camp at the river's edge for two days before crossing?
  2. Why did Joshua ask the people to consecrate (sanctify) themselves? V. 5 Ex 19:10, 14-15
  3. How and when would it be appropriate for us to consecrate ourselves? Col 3: 8; 14
- Note: "Sanctify yourselves" meant that everybody bathed and changed their clothes and that the married couples devoted themselves wholly to the Lord (1 Cor. 7:1-6). In the Near East water was a luxury that wasn't used too often for personal hygiene. In our modern world we're accustomed to comfortable bathing facilities; but these were unknown to most of the people in Bible times. In the Bible the imagery of washing one's body and changing clothes symbolized making a new beginning with the Lord. Since sin is pictured as defilement (Ps. 51:2, 7), God has to cleanse us before we can truly follow Him.<sup>2</sup>*
4. Why did the priests (and the ark) lead the way? V. 11 Why were the people to keep their distance?  
Heb 12:1, 2; Ex 12:12

*Note: The ark contained the Ten Commandments, a reminder of God's covenant with Israel. Ex 25:16*

5. Why do you think God led them to this crossing rather than an easier one? vv 7, 10
6. When did the water recede? V. 15 Why then?
7. Who got to choose the stones? V 2 Why? How big do you think they were? v 4:5
8. Where did the stones come from? V 3, Why there? vv 6, 7
9. Why was the miraculous crossing especially important to Joshua's leadership? vv 3:7; 4:14; Jud 2:7
10. What other goals did the miraculous crossing accomplish? vv. 3:10; 4:21-24; 5:1
11. How did the entrance into Canaan under Joshua's leadership differ from the one described in Num 13-14?

#### **APPLICATION**

- The Israelites saw the value of trusting God as they entered the Promised Land. But they still needed to follow Him as they continued their journey. What are some specific areas in your life in which you need to exercise faith and trust God's guidance and wisdom?
- Why is important for Christians to remember the past (i.e. Lord's Supper)?

<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Strong*. "Be" Commentary Series (45, 47). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.