

Joshua 07-02-23a

This is Friday, the 23rd of February, 2007. We continue tonight our study in the book of Joshua. The children of Israel are poised to fulfill a long-awaited promise, a promise that has been over a generation in coming from the time that they were slaves in Egypt.

Let's take a moment at the outset to focus our attention and our concentration and ensure that we are ready for the ministry of God's Holy Spirit as we look together at these things. Shall we pray? Father, we are grateful for the wonderful truths of your word. We recognize that there is much that is offered today that passes for truth or passes for wisdom.

There are many things that are relied upon and may be object of faith, and yet we know that it is the truth of your word, the promises, the principles, and the doctrines that actually sustain us and lift us beyond the mundane and the material and prepare us for eternal life. We thank you for this book and the passage that is before us this evening, and we ask your blessing on us as we study it together. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. We are at the threshold of Joshua chapter 3, having seen the two men delivered through the good offices of Rahab, and they return to give their report to Joshua. They say to Joshua, Joshua, truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are faint-hearted because of us.

And this is a wonderful contrast to the report that was given by the spies that Moses sent into the land. When they returned, and other than Caleb and Joshua, they gave a very dismal report and claimed that the land was populated by giants and that we were like grasshoppers before them and we can't attack them, they are stronger than us, as you find back in Numbers chapter 13. But they find that the promise of God that was given years and years before has been fulfilled.

It's been a long time since we were in the book of Exodus chapter 23, but in 23-27 of Exodus, God promised Israel. He said, I will send my fear before you. I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come.

I will make all your enemies turn their backs on you. So it is very obvious in looking at the contrast between the two reports, the two sets of spies, the two reconnaissance teams, that the first team did not find that promise compelling or true. The second did.

You find a similar thing in Deuteronomy 2.25 where God says, this day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the nations under the whole heaven who shall hear the report of you and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you. I find this interesting in view of our understanding of the angelic conflict. You remember the angelic conflict.

There are creatures mightier and more numerous than us who have preceded us into the

territories that lie beyond this earth and this physical universe. They were there first. They inhabited great portions of it.

They rejected God and were condemned, judged, sentenced by God. And this leaves a lot of territory, as it were, metaphorically speaking, unclaimed in the land of God's dwelling, the land of God's promise. That's where we are going to supersede and in a sense to replace these who left that estate, left that place of opportunity and blessing.

They are our enemies. How many times have we recited the memory verse? Our warfare is not against flesh and blood. It is against principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this age.

And as we move from the basic territory of training in the fundamentals, training in relying on God for provision, training in following God's direction in terms of how we should walk, what should sustain us, and so on. This is what Israel learns over the 40 years in the wilderness, don't they? And you can see this second generation, as we did last time, having learned that lesson, needed a little bit of rebuke, correction, and instruction in righteousness here with the serpents, but they respond very heartily to that message. And within a few paragraphs you find them praising God at the wells of water.

So, they are poised to go into this territory that is inhabited by many nations mightier, greater, more numerous than they. Just as we are seeking to do in the spiritual realm. It's a very profound picture for us to dwell upon.

It is easy to be discouraged. It is easy for people to get focused on the power that resides in the hands of these fallen creatures. And there are people that have just gone berserk in trying to bind Satan, bind the demons, get focused on demon possession, demon influence, getting all spooky and weird about what is really an already defeated enemy.

And that's the main point I want to make from these passages. God says, look, I am sending my fear before you. I am the one that is going to cause confusion among these people.

I will make them turn their backs on you. I have already put the dread and fear of you upon them. All of this is God's work.

God doesn't say, puff yourselves up like a blowfish and try to scare them away. Rattle your swords against your shields and make a lot of noise and fool them into fleeing. God says, look, I am defeating them.

I am scattering them. I am confusing them. I am terrorizing them.

All you are going to see is a defeated enemy running away if you have the faith to cross

over in the face of what look like very formidable odds and formidable enemies. And it's the same thing with us. You look around in the world today as every generation probably has.

All things are relative. I was reading with great interest an article earlier this week talking about our sense of happiness, what makes us feel like we have an achievement. And they've done studies and they offered people a choice.

They said, which would you rather have? Would you rather have a \$100,000 a year income and everybody else around you also has a \$100,000 income? Or would you like to have a \$50,000 income but everybody else around you only has \$25,000? And most of the people chose the latter. I would rather have a relative prosperity compared to those around me than equality even if that equality is at a much higher level. That was the gist of the study.

And it's a reminder that we tend to gauge our happiness and our success by the circumstances that are around us. And every generation tends to look around and things are relative. What is the relative level of degeneracy? What's the relative level of indifference and apathy? And what are the young people like? And every generation that ages into middle age and old age looks around and says, ah, these young whippersnappers, what's the world coming to? And our generation is doing or will do the same.

Things are relative, aren't they? We measure by our own experience. And we tend to gauge by what we have as a standard and a frame of reference. So you look at Israel.

They have been slaves. And one of the reasons that God took them through this intermediate phase, cursing turning to blessing, is to shed by death this slave mentality. The slaves who left Egypt could not shake that sense of being an underling.

I will tell you that if you walk around the campus of a military academy, you can spot the plebes or the first year cadets by their demeanor. They just look hunted. They look like prey.

They look like rabbits among the wolves. There's just something about their bearing. When you look at them, you say, oh, there's a poor first year guy.

And you can spot the upperclassmen because they stride around with confidence and a sense of authority. And having been through both phases of that, I can tell you that that outward bearing and demeanor is a reflection of an inward reality. You know that you are the lowest and the meanest and the least worthy when you're in that phase.

So this is how Israel came out of Egypt. Now, could that first generation have become the victors in the land? Absolutely. They came up.

If those twelve spies had all come back and said what these two men say, the Lord has surely given the whole land into our hands. All the people are melting in fear. They could have gone in.

Could the generation that saw the Lord Jesus walk this earth have accepted Him as the Messiah and gone into the kingdom phase of God's plan? Yes, absolutely. What is the missing element? What is it that can convert and transform someone who is cowed and discouraged and overwhelmed and beaten down by forces larger and greater and in many cases darker than themselves in terms of foreboding and evil and the potential for destruction? What is the transforming agent? It isn't our attitude. It isn't even our faith.

It is the power of God. God turns these enemies around. God instills fear.

God terrorizes them. God causes them to flee. It is the power of God.

So, it seems to me, proceeding along a logical path, that what one would like to do is be in a position for God to do that because He is willing and able and has promised to do so. But there is a condition. This is the victory that overcomes the world.

Even our faith. What does Jesus say seven times in the first couple of chapters of Revelation? The letters to the seven churches. Revelation chapter 2 and 3. What does He say seven times? To Him that overcomes, I will grant.

We make a decision. And this is where the Calvinists get all fouled up. They feel like faith somehow is a good work.

Faith qualifies us for God to do His good work. Ephesians 2, 8 and 9 clearly state that faith is not a work. Salvation by grace through faith is not from us.

Our faith accomplishes nothing. You can trust and believe. You can visualize.

You can imagine world peace. You can visualize. I think Norman Geiser was the first one I saw to say, you could be locked in a room, empty room, completely enclosed, and you can wish and trust and believe and think positively for a chair in that room because you're tired of standing up.

And no matter how hard you think and how vastly and committedly you believe, a chair does not appear. Your positive thinking, self-hypnosis, whatever else, will not produce anything in the room. Now, if someone says, all you have to do is call out to me and I'll bring you a whole suite of furniture, now you've got a power outside yourself to which you can appeal.

And if you meet the condition, call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me. That's Scripture. Call upon me in the day of trouble and you can deliver yourself.

It's not what it says. Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver you. This is what this generation has learned that the previous one did not.

So, it is reflected and it is summed up and it is a sign of that in the last verse of chapter 2. Truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands. The Lord has done this. And we recognize it.

And we are going to march forward in that confidence. So, in chapter 3, Joshua arose early in the morning and they set out from Acacia Grove, or Shittim, and came to the Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they crossed over. So it was, after three days, that the officers went through the camp and they commanded the people saying, and then we've got some more stuff going on.

Now, I find this interesting. Do you see anything that causes a little bit of chronological trouble here? It's all about the three days. This is the third time we've seen a reference to three days in the first three chapters.

You remember the second time, how long did the spies hide? Three days, right? They went to the hills after Rahab led them down on the rope and they waited three days. So, early in the morning, in chapter 3, verse 1, this would be early in the morning after three days had passed waiting on the spies, right? Well, if you go back, back, back, to chapter 1, verse 10, Joshua commanded the officers of the people saying, this is before the spies went out, pass through the camp and command the people saying, prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you to possess. So, that happens in chapter 1, verse 10.

Chapter 2 is the whole Rahab and the spies story, right? So we have two options here. Either when the officers go through the camp and they say, prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over to go in and possess the land and now we're getting a retrospective in chapter 2. Three days earlier, Joshua had sent the spies and then we're picking this thread back up in chapter 3. Do you see how that would work? Because Joshua says, tell the people we are going over the Jordan in three days. Now the spies have been gone three days and now in chapter 3 it says we're going to spend another three days.

Sitting here before we go over, which is a total of six days. You see the difficulty here? Either Joshua screwed up back in 1.11 and it was actually six days instead of three or the story has backed up in chapter 2 and you don't have this kind of nuance. You don't even have a possibility of creating this structure in Hebrew.

Hebrew just has the kal stem and you've got the imperfect and the perfect and it is a multi-purpose construction. It can mean he went or he had gone. With a waw conversive, it can mean things in the future.

There's all kinds of flexibility in Hebrew. So chapter 2, verse 1 might be translated, Joshua the son of Nun had sent out two men from Shittim to spy secretly and this would have been three days earlier and now in chapter 3, verse 1, we're back to where we were in Joshua 1.10. This is a very common way of telling a story in Hebrew. People cannot figure this out.

They'll tell you that in Genesis chapter 2 where it says God created man in his own image. In his own image created he him, male and female created he them and God blessed them and said be fruitful. And then you go in chapter 3 and you have a whole other creation story.

Here's Adam walking around, naming the animals. There's no help meat for him. He's a deep sleep, rib, etc.

Rib, quote unquote. So obviously we know of other cases where sort of a big picture will be presented and then you back up and get some detail and this is one of those cases. What I find interesting about this is that we can actually affix a date to these proceedings.

Return now to chapter 3. So it was after three days that the officers went through the camp and they commanded the people saying, so what is chapter 3 verse 2 telling us? After the three days that the spies had been gone, and now we're back at 1.10, Joshua commanded the officers and the people go through and tell them to get ready. We backed up and said here's what happened last time. Have you seen these two part TV episodes where at the beginning they'll show you a little teaser and then previously on L.A. Law or whatever it is, I've never seen L.A. Law, but previously on Mannix or whatever.

Well, if you're old enough to remember Mannix, you're hurt in shape. So it was after three days, and this would be after the three days, the officers went through the camp and they commanded the people saying, okay, here we are, we're all caught up now with the background. When you see the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God and the priests, the Levites bearing it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it.

Yet there shall be a space between you and it about 2,000 cubits. Now a standard cubit is 18 inches. So this is about 3,000 feet.

A little over half a mile. Half a mile. Think of half a big city block here in Dallas.

Our major streets are a mile apart. It's a pretty good distance. So the Ark is going to go, and they're going to keep a giant buffer.

Now why would this be, I ask myself. Some of the commentary suggested, well, this was to remind the Israelites of the holiness of the Ark. Listen, this Ark has been traveling around with them for 40 years.

If they haven't figured out the holiness of the Ark by now, this is a little bit late. I don't find that really compelling. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed this way before.

Mary seals the cross, we shall never pass this way again. Well, they would have to say, we have never passed this way before. What does this mean? You think about it.

There's only so much wilderness, and over 40 years, the Israelites had sort of a regular rotation. In the spring of one year, they would head into one area. The summer, they would spend some time.

Maybe they would go into the higher elevations to find some cooler climbs and some pastures for their animals. And then in the wintertime, maybe they would go down and harbor in other places. And evidently, over the course of 40 years, they had some pretty well-known places.

And any time they would pick up and move, what do you normally do before you move a huge group of people? You've seen this on wagon trains and so on. You send the scouts ahead. Is there anybody occupying the springs? We're going to go down there by the springs.

We're going to go to the 29 palms, or whatever it might be. Let's go see if anybody's there. See if any Bedouin have moved in, or if the Amalekites or the Egyptians or somebody have got an army there.

This is the first time in 40 years that they are going someplace, and they can't send the scouts ahead. You know why? Scouts can't swim a flooded, swollen river. You can't send people across to Gilgal or Jericho or any place on the western side of the Jordan.

You can't. So for this trip, the ark is going to lead the way, and it's got to be far enough out. If you think of a column of 2 million people, which is estimated what the population is at this point, there's those fighting men of the 2 1/2 tribes that were going to keep the land on the eastern side.

If you go over the numbers, the number of those guys alone is over 40,000. And that's just about a third of their able-bodied soldiers. It's around one out of every three that existed in those days.

So there's a lot of people. Do you really want 2 million people wavering back and forth trying to follow the ark up close? No. Put it out and see where it's going, and you can follow it in an orderly fashion.

Everybody will be able to see. And it is going to take up a station. Look at how this goes.

Joshua said to the people, Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders

among you. Then Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and cross over before the people. So they took up the ark of the covenant, and they went before the people.

And the Lord said to Joshua, This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that as I was with Moses, so I will be with you." How did the people know that Moses was the guy? They'd been in slavery for centuries. Moses shows up and says, Hey, God spoke to me, and we're all going to Canaan land. How did they know he was the real deal? I saw God at the burning bush.

Oh, okay. Well, if you saw God, you must be the guy. How did they know that he was the guy? That he was God's man to lead them.

Remember the hand of leprosy? Remember the rod that turned to a snake and back again? Remember the water that turned to blood? And so on. There were miraculous signs, right? That's how they knew. Same way with Joshua.

God has not done anything by way of an exceptional miracle. Now, the manna every day is a miracle. Water from the rock is a miracle.

But Moses did that. Moses did the rock thing. Moses and Aaron.

Joshua has not been associated with any sort of supernatural authority. So God says, I'm going to do that today. I'm going to begin to exalt you.

I'm going to show that my authority rests on you. Why is this important? Why is it important? What is the purpose of supernatural manifestation? This pertains to the whole question of do signed gifts persist today? What's the purpose of them? What have they historically done? Validated Joshua. Validated Moses as God's man.

Validated the prophets who could make axe heads float and blind armies and raise the dead and shut up the heavens and take the tops off of mountains and so on. What did it do in the New Testament? Validated the apostles. That's their ID card.

I'm from God. Watch this. The lame walk, the blind see.

Jesus said, you'll do greater things than I've done. You'll raise the dead just like I did. The supernatural things are designed to advertise and to manifest the authority of God.

Either for God's own words or for God's messenger. In whose mouth he puts his words. That's what God is about to do for Joshua.

It's very important. It's huge. Why is God going to do this thing? It's not just a practical matter.

God could have let the Israelites walk on water. But this is a huge teaching point. It's an

object lesson.

I will exalt you in the sight of all Israel so that they may know that just as I was with Moses, I will be with you. You shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, saying, when you've come to the edge of the water of the Jordan, you shall stand in the Jordan. Now, what does this sound like to you? Okay, I'm one of the guys on the poles.

There's an honor guard, a priest, and here's the guys actually on the long poles going through the rings, bearing the ark, covered with the multicolored curtains and so on. It wasn't visible. It was covered with the roof of the Holy of Holies and so on.

So they're carrying this thing, right? Joshua says, okay men, you're going to march toward the Jordan. And when you get to the Jordan, you just keep on going. You're going to stand in the middle of it.

Now, skip down just for a moment to verse 15. The end of it. See the little parenthetical remark there? The Jordan overflows all of its banks during the whole time of harvest.

This is a flood stage river. The river is out of its banks. If you've ever seen rivers and creeks after a huge rain, and they're turbulent and they're dangerous.

Cars get washed away. People sitting on top of their automobile waiting for the helicopter or the policeman to come out on a cable and so on. That's the kind of river that the Jordan is at this moment.

Joshua tells the priests, Okay, I want you to march toward this flood stage, overflowing, turbulent, snow melt river. This water is probably 32.1 degrees. It's all melt from Mount Hermon and that whole range up north.

This water has traveled dozens of miles and has swollen the Jordan all out of its banks. So Joshua says, look men, march in there and when you get to the river, you just keep going. When you've come to the edge of the water, you shall stand in the Jordan.

This is in the midst. You would think, well, he just means stand there at the edge with the water rushing over your feet. This is in the Jordan.

And the priests apparently say, well, okay. Interesting to see how that works because I think us and the Ark are going to be way down there in the Gulf of Aqaba at some point or floating, bobbing around in the Dead Sea, I guess. But Joshua said to the children of Israel, verse 9, Come here and hear the words of the Lord your God.

Joshua said, By this you shall know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites. Look, the Ark of

the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan. Now therefore, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man from every tribe.

This shall come to pass as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the Ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan. The waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they will stand up in a heap. Joshua tells them what's going to happen before it happens.

As soon as these priests start walking in. Now this is literally a step of faith, isn't it? These men are going to march. It reminds me of a platoon under the command of a green lieutenant.

And he says, you know, call them right, march. And everybody's under arms. And if the lieutenant gets distracted or forgets his commands or whatever, you can march your platoon right off a cliff or over an embankment or down a drainage ditch or something.

And I've seen it happen. I've seen guys march their platoon right into a fence because they just went blank and couldn't remember the command. Or they said, call them left, march, when they meant by the right flank, march.

And the whole platoon turned in the wrong direction. So, it was in verse 14, when the people set out from the camp to cross over the Jordan with the priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant before the people. And as those who bore the Ark came to the Jordan and the feet of the priests who bore the Ark dipped in the edge of the water, the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest, the waters which came down from upstream stood still and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is by Zaretan.

The waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, the Dead Sea we call it, failed and were cut off. And the people crossed over opposite Jericho. The priests who bore the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan.

All Israel crossed over on dry ground until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan. Now, let's visualize this. Big swollen river hurtling north to south.

All the people were on the eastern side. The priests who had the Ark of the Covenant are 3,000 feet in front of the rest of the Israelites. Joshua says, Forward! Forward! And away go the priests.

Everybody else is marking time, waiting. Here go the priests. 1,000 feet, 2,000 feet, 3,000 feet.

All the people are looking saying, I'm glad I'm not a priest. These guys are marching into

that freezing cold water. There's no bridge.

There's no ford. There's no launch. There's no ferry.

And so, you can bet that there wasn't an eye in Israel that wasn't riveted on that Ark and those priests. And I would love to have seen the faces of the priests, especially the guys in the front, marching manfully toward this river. It's intimidating.

Scary. But here they go. And as they get closer and closer, here's the edge of this rushing, turbulent, muddy water.

You know, they talk about the muddy Jordan and chilly Jordan. Well, it wasn't any muddier and any chillier at any time of the year than this. What is the time of year? I said we can figure out the date.

We know that this is the first month, right? And we know that they are going to arrive on the other side on the tenth day of the first month. Which means that the three days that they have spent getting ready went back to the seventh day. Which means three days before that, which was the fourth day of the month, that's when Joshua sent out the spies.

They went out on the fourth day, they were gone on the fifth and the sixth day, and then on the seventh day early in the morning, Joshua got up and said, all you officers go out, get these people ready. And so they get ready on the seventh, the eighth, and the ninth day. And now on the tenth day, they're crossing over.

What month is this? It's a little bit confusing because it says the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest. When do we typically think of the harvest happening? It's in the fall, right? Well, this is not the fall harvest. This is the barley harvest.

This is what was celebrated by the feast of first fruits. What's the first harvest that you can bring in? First fruits comes right after the week of Passover, or right after the Passover itself, right? First Sabbath after Passover is first fruits. It's the day the Lord Jesus was resurrected.

And that is Nisan, which is the Babylonian name for the month Abib, which we call generally April, late March, early April. So this is the spring. And every spring, the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of the barley harvest because this is the spring melt from the whole Hermon range.

All that water runs down the often dry wadis and comes rushing down at great force. It says that as soon as their sandals touched the edge of that water, the water stood up in a heap very far away at Adam. Now this is interesting because this is a place that is known today.

We know where this is. This is Tel Edema, and it's about 15 miles upstream from where they are. So how would they know that the water was stacking up 15 miles away? Well, this is going to be something that was actually discovered later.

Tel Edemea, 15 or 16 miles north of the area of Jericho. Now, what's interesting is back in 1267 A.D., there was a big earthquake right there at Tel Edemea and the banks of the Jordan, which are kind of cliff-like and high at that location, the earthquake collapsed them and they fell in and dammed up the river and it went dry just like this. As recently as July 11th of 1927, another earthquake near the same location blocked the river for 21 hours.

Neither of these in December and in July was at the time of year that the Israelites were crossing, but if God chose to use natural forces or natural phenomena to bring this about, there could well have been an earthquake up there that would collapse and what would happen? If it's dammed up by collapsing banks, this rushing water is going to quickly pile up behind it for hours and hours and hours and it's going to eventually top whatever that dam is and come rushing back down and resume the flow. But only God could time it so that just as the priests arrive, the water suddenly not only ceases to flow, but the ground becomes dry. Because it doesn't say that they stood in the middle of the mud in the Jordan River.

It says the priests stood on dry ground. Now back to that 3,000 feet distance. You can guess that the Jordan at flood time would be a mile wide at this point opposite Jericho.

So what does that do? The Israelites who are following the ark cannot get to the edge where the bank was, where the water was, until the priests have arrived in the middle. The priests are going to stop. Joshua said, you stop and take a stand in the midst of the riverbed at the deepest point.

And they are standing there and they stop before any Israelites get into where the water was. It maintains that distance. Why would this be? Everybody is going to be standing on what has always been dry ground.

And they are going to see that the thing that is stopping that water is the presence of God. It is God's ark held up by God's priests before any of them ever take the first step. God has gone before them.

And this is hugely symbolic. That's what Joshua was trying to explain to them. God is going to show you today that He is with you and He is going to drive these people out before you.

And look, what does rushing, raging, uncontrollable, mired water always represent in Scripture? It's the chaotic, powerful, uncontrollable forces of evil, right? God goes in. God stops the water. God's ark is on dry ground.

And it's a demonstration. All of the people are on the edge looking in. So how does this transfer in spiritual terms? National Israel in the Old Testament.

Individual believer in the New Testament. What do we conclude from this? Well, first of all, we have to recognize what part of the journey is this. This is not coming out of Egypt.

This isn't new believer time. These people have been wandering for 40 years. They've been learning some basic things.

They've been learning to trust God for provision. They've been learning to trust God for water and for bread and for military victory. They've already had some skirmishes on the east bank there.

All the way up almost to Bashan. Now they get a strong reminder. You're about to actually get into the serious conflict.

You're about to really move in where it's going to make a difference. Where the glory of God is going to be reflected. Don't forget how you got here.

Don't forget whose power is making these victories happen. That's the big emphasis, isn't it? God is showing you today two things. That it's by His grace and by His power, and that Joshua is His man.

All of this takes place at Joshua's behest. Joshua's verbal command. Why is that important? What is the analog in our spiritual life? No matter how far along we get as believers, there is always a God-given, God-ordained authority structure that you have to honor, that you have to look to.

God is going to work in and through that authority structure. Joshua is the designated authority. And it is no less a responsibility for these people to follow Joshua than it was to follow Moses.

And God says, look, I am with him. He is my designated man. You pay attention to him just as you did to Moses.

And God uses this graphic demonstration. So the people crossed over the river opposite Jericho. The priest carrying the Ark of the Covenant stood firmly on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan.

All Israel crossed over on dry ground until the entire nation was on the other side. When the entire nation was on the other side, the Lord told Joshua, select for yourselves twelve men from the people, one per tribe. And you remember, he had already chosen twelve men earlier on.

So those twelve men from the people, one man from every tribe, take them and command them, saying, take for yourselves twelve stones from here out of the midst of

the Jordan, from the place where the priest's feet stood firm. Carry them over with you. Leave them in the lodging place where you lodged tonight.

So Joshua called those twelve men, one man from every tribe, gave them the command. Each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. Sign among you.

What is this idea? I'll give you something to think about over the break. Joshua is instructed to create a memorial of this occasion. Don't forget this is the idea.

What is the analog to that in our individual spiritual journey across the Jordan today? I'll leave you to puzzle on it while we take our break. When we come back I'll offer a thought or two on that as we move forward in Joshua chapter 4. But let's pause here and take our break.