

Entering Canaan

(Joshua 3-5)

- A. At the border of Canaan, Israel had to go through a virtual burial in water as was their “baptism” through the Red Sea years earlier. **JOS 4:23 c/w 1CO 10:1-2.**
1. This generation would again have to overcome fear of death by faith. c/w **HEB 11:29.**
 2. A notable miracle would animate their bold obedience and this is the basis of Christian faith and life. **JOS 3:9-13 c/w 1CO 15:1-4.**
 3. Until Christ comes again, all believers will face one more river (death) and can do so without fear. **PHIL 1:21-23.**
- B. Israel had left Egypt forty years *before* they actually entered Canaan. **JOS 5:6.**
1. Yet the Holy Spirit declares that God brought them out of Egypt *after* the forty years. **ACT 7:36.**
 2. After having entered Canaan, God rolled away the reproach of Egypt from them. **JOS 5:9.**
 3. They were not considered *out* of Egypt until they were *in* Canaan.
 - a. This lesson may apply to all who, knowing the truth of Christ, plod on under the assumption that God’s blessing is upon them before they actually submit and commit to Christ and baptism unto a new life. **MAT 21:31-32 c/w LUK 7:29-30.**
 - b. Hearers who are not doers, though they profess faith, are still in spiritual Egypt, in bondage, and self-deceived. **JAM 1:22.**
- C. **JOS 4:1-9.** Having experienced their miraculous baptismal passage into Canaan, the Lord then established for His church a memorial of His great deliverance.
1. One heap of stones was to be carried to their post-Jordan lodging place and another was left in the midst of Jordan. **JOS 4:3, 8-9.**
 - a. The heap in Canaan would be a visible token of memorial for future generations.
 - b. The stones in Jordan would be visible since they were only in the brim of Jordan at its highest flood season. **JOS 3:15; 4:9.**
 - c. It is interesting that there were two heaps of stone.
 - (1) One was set up in their lodging place in Gilgal and associated with the passover. **JOS 4:19-20; 5:10**
 - (2) The other was set up in a place of occasional wet feet in the brim of Jordan.
 - (3) We similarly honor our Lord’s salvation in the Lord’s Supper (Christ our passover, **1CO 5:7-8**) and occasional feetwashing by dipping.
 - (4) The stones in Jordan may have been the ones John the Baptist referred to in **MAT 3:9.**
 2. Mark that no instruction was given to artfully hew and erect the stones into an awe-inspiring edifice. c/w **DEU 27:5-6.**
 - a. The best memorials are of a simple nature, so the honor is more properly directed to the God Whose work is being remembered than to the wit and craft of sinners.
 - b. God does use base things to dissuade us from stealing His glory. **1CO 1:27-29.**
 - c. Having conquered death in His resurrection, our Joshua left His church with simple memorials of His saving work like water baptism which inducts one into His kingdom (**ACT 2:41**), the Lord's Supper for converts to honor His saving death (**1CO 11:26**) and feetwashing to testify of ongoing sanctification and service. **JOH 13:8-17.**
 3. The stone memorial which Joshua established at Gilgal was by the command of God.
 - a. Joshua did not just decide that he would do this thing, which is never wise. **LEV 10:1-3; 1KI 12:33.**
 - b. The stones he set up in Jordan were not a substitute for the ones in Gilgal nor

necessarily a rival sign.

- (1) Only the ones in Gilgal were called a sign. **JOS 4:6.**
- (2) The ones in Jordan may have been only a geographical marker.
- (3) Sometimes a distant reminder of where we once were can be helpful.
1CO 15:9; 1TI 1:12-13.

c. Joshua did not look to the way the Canaanites honored their gods and on that basis dreamed up a heartwarming memorial. **DEU 12:30-31.**

d. Joshua did not exceed the naked simplicity of the memorial that God did ordain to make it more aesthetically and commercially pleasing. c/w **1CO 11:20-23.**

4. The memorial was to be a sign unto subsequent generations of what God had done.
vs. 6-7.

a. It was taken for granted that the children would inquire. Parents should encourage children to inquire of the things of God and children do well to be thus inquisitive.
LUK 2:46.

b. Parents should train up their children in the things of God with verbal and visual initiators. **DEU 6:4-9, 20; EPH 6:4.**

D. **JOS 4:10-18.** God's priests were to remain in the midst of Jordan "...until every thing was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to speak..." (v. 10).

1. Christ's ministers are expected to be in this world until the very end. No evidence of pre-mil rapture here. **MAT 13:30, 39; 28:20; JOH 17:15.**

2. Those who remained bearing the testimony of God were the last that Joshua called into Canaan. **vs. 15-17 c/w 1TH 4:15-17.**

3. The tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh went before the others into Canaan. **v. 12.**

a. These were such as had left their loved ones behind and would not return from Canaan until all was accomplished. **JOS 1:12-15.**

b. Our loved ones in Christ who have preceded us to glory will come again.
1TH 4:13-14.

4. The priests barely were out of Jordan when the certain death they had come through resumed. **v. 18.**

a. This should remind us that reverting to our past sin is destruction. **HEB 10:38-39.**

b. When we by death enter the heavenly Canaan, another barrier blocks our way back to earth or the torment from which we have been delivered. **LUK 16:26-31.**

E. **JOS 4:19-24.**

1. Israel came out of Jordan on the 10th day of the first month.

2. They left Egypt on the 15th day of the first month. **EXO 12:6.**

3. They were supposed to fulfil 40 years of punishment in the wilderness, but this was close and God is willing to shorten the days of trouble. c/w **MAT 24:22.**