**Research: Joshua 2 and 3**

**Joshua crossing the Jordan River**

Josh 1:1, 2, 7-9

1Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ minister, saying,

**“**Joshua’s commission was the first of its kind, but not the last. No man before Joshua had received orders to regulate his conduct by the words of a written book. Abraham and his household had kept God’s laws. Moses had acted by Divine commission. But Abraham and Moses received their orders from the mouth of Jehovah. Joshua and all his successors must fulfil the orders of “this book of the law.” Thus, Joshua was Moses’ *minister*in more than one sense. He was Moses’ confidential agent and personal attendant while he lived, and afterwards the executor of that which Moses had written. But the position of Joshua, though at first unique and without precedent, was the position designed for all his successors, more especially for that great Personage whose name Joshua was the first to bear” (Ellicott’s Commentary).

“The closest connection exists between Deuteronomy and Joshua. The narrative may be read as running on without a break. It turns away from the lonely grave up on the mountain to the bustling camp and the new leader. No man is indispensable. God’s work goes on uninterrupted. The instruments are changed, but the Master-hand is the same, and lays one tool aside and takes another out of the tool-chest as He will” (MacLaren’s Expositions).

2Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, *even* to the children of Israel.

“*his Jordan*] one of the most singular rivers in the world, which “has never been navigable, and flows into a sea that has never known a port.” (Cambridge Bible);

“now therefore arise, go over this Jordan—Joshua's mission was that of a military leader. This passage records his call to begin the work, and the address contains a literal repetition of the promise made to Moses (De 11:24, 25; 31:6-8, 23)” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown).

“thou, and all this people: which were very numerous, six hundred thousand men or more, besides a great number of women and children, and no boats to carry them over, or pontoons to put across the river” (Gill’s Exposition).

7Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it *to* the right hand or *to* the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

“Joshua was a very small man in comparison with his predecessor. He was no prophet nor constructive genius; he was not capable of the heights of communion and revelation which the lofty spirit of Moses was able to mount. He was only a plain, fiery soldier, with energy, swift decision, promptitude, self-command, and all the military virtues in the highest degree. The one thing that he needed was to be ‘strong and courageous’; and over and over again in this chapter you will find that injunction pealed into his ears. He is the type of the militant servant of the Lord, and the charge to him embodies the duties of all such” (MacLaren’s Exposition).

8This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

“*This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth —*That is, thou shalt constantly read it, and upon occasion discourse of it, and the sentence which shall come out of thy month, shall in all things be given according to this rule. *Day and night —*That is, diligently study, and upon all occasions consider what is God’s will and thy duty. The greatness of thy place and employments shall not hinder thee from this work, because this is the only rule of thy private actions and public administrations. *I command thee —*I whom thou art obliged to obey: I who can carry thee through everything I put thee upon: I of whose faithfulness and almighty power thou hast had great experience!” (Benson Commentary).

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, . . . He was often to read it, frequently repeat it, and speak of it, to refresh his own memory with it, and the memory of those about him.

“but thou shalt meditate therein day and night; whenever he had any leisure from the important business of his office, whether by day or night” (Gill’s Exposition).

9Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God *is* with thee whithersoever thou goest.

“*Have not I commanded thee*?] Observe the repetition of the words of exhortation. The Hebrew leader is reminded again and again that it was not his work but God’s work, which he had been raised up to carry out” (Cambridge Bible).

Josh 3:5, 7, 8, 14-17

5And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.

“*And Joshua said —*He himself also, as well as the officers, by his direction, spake to the people the day before their passage; and as the matter was very important, he probably went himself from tribe to tribe, to give the orders here mentioned. *Sanctify yourselves —*Not only wash your clothes, and shun all kinds of bodily impurities, but purify your minds and hearts, by repentance, and faith, and new obedience, without which the external purifications of your bodies and garments will be of little avail. In other words, prepare yourselves by seriousness, recollection, and prayer, that you may behold with proper regard, reverence, and gratitude, and may fix in your hearts, the wonderful display which is about to be made of the divine power in your behalf, and that you may be meet to receive so great a favor as is now about to be conferred upon you” (Benson Commentary).

7¶ And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, *so* I will be with thee.

“This day will I begin to magnify thee - One cause why the miracle now to be narrated was performed is here suggested. As Moses was declared to he sent immediately from God with an extraordinary commission by the miracles which he worked, more especially that of dividing the Red Sea in two parts, so was Joshua both sent and accredited in a like manner” (Barnes’ Notes).

“the Lord said to Joshua, This day will I … magnify thee in the sight of all Israel—Joshua had already received distinguished honors (Ex 24:13; De 31:7). But a higher token of the divine favor was now to be publicly bestowed on him, and evidence given in the same unmistakable manner that his mission and authority were from God as was that of Moses (Ex 14:31)” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown).

8And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan.

“T**o the brink,**Heb. *to the extremity*; so far as the river then spread itself, which was now more than ordinary.   
  
**In Jordan;**within the waters of Jordan, in the first entrance into the river; where they stood for a season, till the river was divided, and then they went into the midst of it, as it is implied, [Joshua 3:17](http://biblehub.com/joshua/3-17.htm), and there abode till all the people were passed over, as it follows in the history” (Matthew Poole’s Commentary).

14¶ And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people;

“To understand the scene described we must imagine the band of priests with the ark on their shoulders, standing on the depressed edge of the river, while the mass of the people were at a mile's distance. Suddenly the whole bed of the river was dried up; a spectacle the more extraordinary in that it took place in the time of harvest, corresponding to our April or May—when "the Jordan overfloweth all its banks." The original words may be more properly rendered "fills all its banks." Its channel, snow-fed from Lebanon, was at its greatest height—brimful; a translation which gives the only true description of the state of Jordan in harvest as observed by modern travelers. The river about Jericho is, in ordinary appearance, about fifty or sixty yards in breadth. But as seen in harvest, it is twice as broad; and in ancient times, when the hills on the right and left were much more drenched with rain and snow than since the forests have disappeared, the river must, from a greater accession of water, have been broader still than at harvest-time in the present day” (Jamiesn-Fausset-Brown)l

15And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,)

“The Jordan River flows at the bottom of a deep valley, which descends to the water's edge on either side in two, occasionally in three, terraces. Within the lowest of these the stream, ordinarily less than 100 feet wide in this lower part of its course, is confined. The margin is overgrown with a jungle of tamarisks and willows, which in the spring is reached by the rising waters and the river, occasionally at least, fills the ravine which forms its proper bed to the brim. Its highest rise takes place about the time when Joshua had to cross it. By the middle of April, the river cannot be forded; and, if passed at all, can only be so by swimming” (Barnes’ Notes).

16That the waters which came down from above stood *and* rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that *is* beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, *even* the salt sea, failed, *and* were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.

“very far from the city of Adam, that is, beside Zaretan; this city was in Perea, on the other side Jordan, that side on which the Israelites were before their passage” (Till’s Exposition).

“those that came down toward the sea of the desert—the Dead Sea—were cut off (Ps 114:2, 3). The river was thus dried up as far as the eye could reach. This was a stupendous miracle; Jordan takes its name, "the Descender," from the force of its current, which, after passing the Sea of Galilee, becomes greatly increased as it plunges through twenty-seven "horrible rapids and cascades," besides a great many lesser through a fall of a thousand feet, averaging from four to five miles an hour [Lynch]. When swollen "in time of harvest," it flows with a vastly accelerated current” (Barnes’ Notes).

17And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

“**Stood firm,**i.e. in one and the same place and posture; their feet neither moved by any waters flowing in upon them, nor sinking into any mire, which one might think was at the bottom of the river. And this may be opposed unto their other *standing in the brink of the water* when they came to it, commanded [Joshua 3:8](http://biblehub.com/joshua/3-8.htm), which was but for a while, till the waters were divided and gone away; and then they were to go farther.  
  
**into the midst of Jordan,**as is here said, where they are to stand *constantly and fixedly*, as this Hebrew word signifies, until *all were passed over*” (Matthew Poole’s Commentary).

“*The midst of Jordan —*In the middle and deepest part of the river. This manifests how firmly the priests believed the word of the Lord, and confided in his power, otherwise they would not have dared to stand so long in the midst of the channel of a river, whose rapid waters stood suspended above them in mountainous heaps, ready every moment to overwhelm them unless miraculously withheld by the power of God” (Benson Commentary).

“The miraculous passage to the holy land through Jordan is not less pregnant with typical meaning than that through the Red Sea. The solemn inauguration of Joshua to his office, and his miraculous attestation, by the same waters with which Jesus was baptized on entering on the public exercise of His ministry, I the choice of twelve men, one from each tribe to be the bearers of the twelve stones, and the builders of the monument erected therewith. These were divinely-ordered occurrences, not without a further bearing than their more immediate one upon Israel.

Nor must in this point of view the name "Adam," the place where the stream flowed to the people which cut them off from the promises, and the failure for the time under the rule of Joshua of the full and rapid flood which supplies the Dead Sea, be overlooked” (Barnes’ Notes).