

THE EDIFIER

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CHURCH OF GOD 7TH DAY

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Crossing the Jordan in Our Lives

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8:31, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” In looking at the what, the who, the where, the when, the why, and the how of the Jordan crossing, the truth of Paul’s statement will be illustrated. I pray you will also be strengthened to overcome great obstacles in your life.

What?

Firstly, WHAT – what is the Jordan, and what does it represent to us? The Jordan is a mighty river in Israel, being more than 200 miles long. The word “Jordan” means *descender*, and it’s no wonder the river was given this name, as it descends from the foot of Mt. Hermon (more than 9,000 feet above sea level) to the Dead Sea (1300 feet below sea level).

The Israelites crossed the Jordan on the flat plains of Jericho near the Dead Sea, so the river would not have been particularly fast flowing at their point of crossing. Yet, as we will see, this mighty

river was a great obstacle standing between the Israelites and the Promised Land.

To us, the Jordan is much more than a mighty river. Our personal Jordan is whatever stands in the way of us laying hold of God’s promises, or whatever obstructs us from enjoying the blessings of the Christian life that are rightfully ours. Consider what mighty obstacle seems to be blocking your path right now. It doesn’t matter what it is – if God be for you, who can be against you?

Who?

Secondly, WHO – who were crossing the Jordan? A people with a negative history were crossing the Jordan. This was a people who many years before would have entered the Promised Land had it not been for their doubting and disobeying God. Because they doubted, they were doomed to wander in the wilderness for forty years. Their faithlessness and wickedness during this period have brought them reproach throughout the ages. Their deviant ways have become an object lesson for us.

Also, a great number of people were crossing the Jordan. Some

commentators have speculated that over one million people crossed. If the army of 40,000 men who crossed armed for war is any indication, indeed, it was a very significant number who crossed (Joshua 4:12-13). This crossing was a great undertaking and a daunting task.

Maybe we have a negative past too. Maybe it’s hindering us from succeeding in great undertakings or even attempting them. There could be many things about us, besides a negative past, which we allow to hinder us. However, it doesn’t matter who we are, what our past is, or what our weaknesses are – if God be for us, who can be against us?

Where?

Thirdly, WHERE – where were the Israelites crossing the Jordan? They crossed near the city of Jericho (Joshua 3:16). Jericho was a mighty walled city about six miles away. Jericho was a very fertile area where a great many people lived. Do you think for one minute these people were ignorant of the presence of Israel and happy for them to march right through? Of course they weren’t! So why did God have them cross so close to the city of Jericho?

Remember, God is with us and for **How?**

us wherever we are, and no matter how dangerous or desperate our situation is. His grace and strength are sufficient for us to overcome anything.

When?

Fourthly, WHEN – when were the Israelites crossing? They were crossing at the time of harvest when the waters of the Jordan continually overflowed its banks (Joshua 3:14-15). This was also the time of the Passover (Joshua 5:10). World Book Encyclopedia says that the part of the river where they crossed is usually not more than about 4.5 feet deep except during – can you guess when? You guessed it – except during the harvest season when they crossed. At this time, the melting snow from Mount Hermon often floods the river valley, which is from 0.5 to 2 miles wide and lies in the centre of the larger valley. It was therefore very possible that the Israelites crossed the Jordan when it was a good mile wide and much deeper than 4.5 feet deep. What a mighty obstacle! However, it did not matter how wide or how deep it was, because God was with them, just as He is with all who put their faith in Him whilst facing great obstacles.

Why?

Fifthly, WHY – why were they crossing? Were they crossing just to receive some simple blessing or to enjoy a relaxing time? No! They were crossing to undertake the giant-sized task of taking the Promised Land where giants lived. They were crossing for war (Joshua 1:2-6, 4:13).

Finally, HOW – how were they crossing? Let me tell you that the what, the who, the where, the when and the why mattered not at all for the Israelites in light of the how. Consider how they crossed:

So Joshua said to the children of Israel, "Come here, and hear the words of the Lord your God." And 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: Behold, 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. And it 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, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap." So it was, when the people set out from their 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 (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, and

were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan. Joshua 3:9-17



Only by God's mighty power did the Israelites cross the Jordan. The "what" did not matter because of the "how." The "when" did not matter because of the "how." All obstacles bowed down to the "HOW." If God is for us, and if we trust and rely on His strength, the river of impossibility can divide in our lives too.

God with us

God's parting of the Jordan surely would have been enough to encourage the Israelites and to assure them He was with them. I am amazed though at what He did next. Immediately following the crossing He required the Israelite males to be circumcised. Surely He remembered what happened to the men of Shechem in Genesis 34. After having just been circumcised, they were in no fit state for battle and they were slaughtered by the Israelites. Why then did God through Joshua command circumcision on the Jericho side of the Jordan? Joshua 5:4-7 says they were circumcised because none of

the Israelites born in the wilderness had been circumcised on the way. God had not forgotten circumcision. I believe He wanted to remind the Israelites of the importance of the covenant he made with their forefather Abraham. Circumcision was a sign of this covenant (Genesis 17:8-14). It was a reminder that God was with them from everlasting to everlasting. The Lord also said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you" (Joshua 5:9).

After being circumcised, the Israelites were given another powerful reminder of God's presence with them. They celebrated Passover and recalled from the days of Moses how God provided manna for them in the wilderness for forty years. However, just as God had promised, the manna ceased once they ate of the harvest of the Promised Land (Joshua 5:10-12).

If reminding them of how He was with them through Abraham and Moses wasn't enough, then the Lord Himself appears to Joshua in a very special way assuring him He is with them:

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot,

for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.

God reminds us today yet again that He is with us. Romans 8:31-37 says:

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died,



and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Is God for you? If you are not sure, it's time to be sure. Psalms 51:17 says the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit and a contrite heart. God will respect our humility and repentance before Him. We can be sure today God is with us. If we have a spirit truly yielded to God that wholeheartedly says, "not my will, but yours O God,"

and which is like the broken spirit of the publican who prayed, "have mercy on me a sinner" (Luke 18), God is for us. We will be able to overcome any obstacles standing in our way and hindering us from enjoying the fullest spiritual blessings of this life and the next. We will cross our Jordans.

Written by David Kidd

MessageWeek



Ministries

www.message7.org

Please take the time to listen to the sermon entitled,

"The Name of Jesus"

Presented by John Klassek

GOODNESS VS NICENESS

One of the most important lessons our Savior came to teach us was to stay focused on the straight and narrow path. He knew very well how easy it was, and is, for mankind to be deceived and led astray by Satan and his minions. Since Satan is a master of deception, our Lord's example, advice, and admonition were always to be watchful and not be deceived. While on earth our Master was adamant concerning knowledge and wisdom and the roles they play in a true believer's life. Unfortunately, in these latter days, Satan has managed to put a very dangerous spin on a very important part of righteous living. The fruit of the Spirit incorporates God's virtues, defines what we are, and advises how we should behave. In the last few decades, Satan has, very cunningly, tricked many Christians into replacing God's primary virtue with its exact opposite.

I believe the primary virtue for every Christian is goodness, and that the Bible clearly teaches that goodness, at its highest level, is the result of true love for God, faith in His word, and the manifestation of the fruit of His Spirit in our lives. It is easily understood to be the essence of Christian living and, at this level, the primary result of faith, hope and love. Goodness radiated from our Savior and is clearly seen at the cross. The definition for good is: *Morally*

excellent, pious, having value, high quality. More importantly, if we look to the Old and Middle English root definition for good, we see that it is: *to understand properly, to have knowledge.*

These days, it is more commonly believed that this virtue is no longer "goodness" but "niceness", or to be nice. Being nice has replaced being good. Most people believe that nice and good are synonymous but they are not, in fact, they are quite the opposite. The definition for nice is: *conforming, pleasing, agreeable, the ability to placate and appease.* Christians have become very agreeable and appeasing in these latter days, focusing on placating, conforming and compromising with the world and each other. When we look at the true definition of niceness or nice, we begin to see how different it is from goodness or good.



The Old and Middle English definition for nice is: *simple, silly, foolish.* Looking farther back to its Latin origin, we see that the word nice comes from the Latin word "Nescius" which means: *ignorant, incapable.* The root word for "Nescius" is "Nescire" which means: *lacking knowledge.* Ne: a

negative prefix meaning *no or none,* and Scire: meaning, *knowledge.* Scire is where we get the English word *Science.*

With a little research, we can see how the word good is knowledge and the word nice is the lack of knowledge. Goodness is the righteous knowledge that gives Christians the courage, strength and authority to speak boldly and fight against the powers and principalities under Satan's control. Niceness, on the other hand, is what keeps Christians stifled, subdued, and of no threat to Satan and his followers. It is vital for Church of God Christians and all true lovers of God to rise up with courage and truth, to turn the tide on Satan, and ensure that the words of the prophet Hosea never apply to us:

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children" (Hosea4:6)

Our heavenly Father is faithful to give His children knowledge, wisdom and strength. May we be united in our efforts to seize the opportunity for true knowledge and righteousness in order to battle against the enemies of God's Kingdom.

Pastor Anthony Mellado, Church of God 7th Day, Willis, Texas.

(Article taken from "Afterglow")

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What We Want and What They Need

Why worry about things we don't have,
Things that we're unable to get,
Is not life more than earthly treasures
And our faith more than mounting debt?

God has given us something more precious
Of more value than priceless stone,
Nothing that the world can produce
Compares to worshipping at His throne

We can't take earthly treasures with us
What we have now, will remain,
So why struggle so hard to possess
What is temporal and subject to change

The kingdom of God is what matters
And the souls left to die alone,
The lost and the lonely living in despair,
Those that have no place to call home

Just look around at the hopelessness,
The state our society is in
A world untouched by God's generous love,
Drowning in the darkness of sin

It gives us something to focus on
As we open our eyes and see,
For God is screaming out for the lost
With tears saying, 'come unto me'

And we, His messengers, must go to them
And show them His love and grace,
For nothing will ever change in our world
If we don't put action to our faith.

© By M.S.Lowndes

Joyful Together

God has our best interests at heart. He also understands our humanity. Indeed, Jesus experienced life in human flesh and He appreciates the heightened joy we experience in sharing happy and momentous events with others, especially those we love and respect. That's why I believe God has planned for the greatest event of all for His people to be experienced *together*. As the united people of God of all ages, we will receive our immortal spiritual bodies and eternal inheritance *together* at Christ's coming. This day will also be a perfect day.

A popular misconception

A popular understanding would have it that when we die we go immediately to heaven. If this were true, then people would be entering heaven every day "at all hours of the day." If you died today you would not share the greatest day of your life with your children or brothers and sisters who remained alive and subject to the trials of tumultuous planet earth. Only those loved ones who had reached heaven before you would celebrate your entrance into heaven with you. We might also question whether all the saints of old, such as Abraham and Moses, would be expected to engage in these celebrations each and every time a Christian passed from earth to heaven?

God has a better plan

I certainly would not be complaining if this popular view turned out to be correct, but I am so thankful that the scriptures reveal a better plan that appeals to one of our greatest human joys – sharing the fulfilment of our greatest hopes together with our loved ones.

Suppose there were 20 people marooned on a desert island who had battled together for many months to survive. All of them had been hoping to be rescued together by a great ship. They had pictured the exuberant



celebrations of their great day of rescue. However, their rescue "ship" turned out to be a small boat and it could only take five people off the island at a time, and only once a month. The first five rescued by boat would attain their hope of deliverance, but you can appreciate how it would not be as joyous as they anticipated, knowing their companions on the island were still enduring great hardship.

God knows our good times become great times when we experience them with our family and friends. He has made provision for this in His plans. Notice how the following words of the apostle Pauls illustrate this:

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be

caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

That the Old Testament Saints were still waiting unconsciously for their resurrection at the time of the New Testament is confirmed by John 3:13 which stated that no one had ascended to heaven except Jesus. Acts 2:29 & 34, written about 30-40 years after the resurrection of Christ, also talk of beloved king David still being "dead and buried" and as not having ascended into the heavens. Acts 26:23 likewise confirms that *Jesus was the first to rise from the dead*.

We all understand sleep very well, and should be able to understand why the metaphor of "sleep" is used by Paul for "death." Whether we are "sleeping" in the grave for two minutes, two years, or two thousand years, it will be as peaceful and quick as an uninterrupted night's sleep. The time from our dying breath to our joyous and triumphant resurrection will seem as an instant.

One further scripture which clearly illustrates the joy of togetherness in God's plans for our glorification is Hebrews 11:39-40:

And all these [Noah, Abraham, Moses etc] having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

God has planned for us a most special day that will be *perfect*. The day will be perfect, because God is perfect, and we will be perfected at the same time as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob etc.

Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless. 2 Peter 3:14

Written by David Kidd



Youth Vibe

Understanding Faith

The Bible says that without faith we can't please God.

It is an essential part of our conversion, salvation and relationship with God and His Son.

How does the Bible describe faith?

Hebrews 11:1 NKJV

"Now faith is the of things hoped for, the of things not seen."

Who is the source of faith?

Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJV

"For byyou have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the of God,"

What can we do if we don't have enough faith?

Mark 9:23-24 NKJV

"Jesus said to him, "If you can, all things are to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; my unbelief!"

How do you grow in faith?

Rom 10:17 NKJV

"So then faith comes by, and by the word of God."

Faith



MAN AND MORTALITY

Most mentioned humans in the Bible

An interesting Bible fact regarding humans mentioned in the Bible is that David is mentioned more times than Jesus!

David is mentioned 1118 times
 Moses is mentioned 740 times**
 Aaron is mentioned 339 times
 Saul is mentioned 338 times
 Abraham is mentioned 306 times
 Solomon is mentioned 295 times
 Jacob is mentioned 270 times
 Joseph is mentioned 208 times
 Joshua is mentioned 197 times
 Paul is mentioned 185 times
 Peter is mentioned 166 times
 Joab is mentioned 137 times
 Jeremiah is mentioned 136 times
 Samuel is mentioned 135 times
 Isaac is mentioned 127 times



****Note:** The second most commonly occurring name in the Bible is "Jesus", which occurs 973 times.

The ten most frequently mentioned women in the Bible

Sarah, Abraham's wife, 57 times
 Rachel, Jacob's second wife, 47 times
 Leah, Jacob's first wife, 34 times
 Rebekah, Isaac's wife, 31 times
 Jezebel, wicked queen, 23 times
 Mary, Jesus' mother, 19 times
 Abigail, 15 times
 Miriam, 15 times
 Mary Magdalene, 14 times
 Hagar, Abraham's concubine 14 times
 Eve, is mentioned only 4 times



Reincarnation?

Oblivion?

Immortal Soul?

Resurrection?

In the schools of religion and philosophy, teachers can be found to endorse each of these concepts. Which one of these concepts does the Bible truly teach?

Please send for the free booklet

"Man and Mortality"

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