

Introduction

I. To Ford the Seemingly Impossible Difficulties, We Must See The Ark Of The Covenant

The ark is mentioned by name 17x in chapters 3 & 4

- **6** Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people." So they took it up and went ahead of them.
- **7** And the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. **8** Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: 'When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river.' "

A. Why did Israel follow 1000 yards behind the ark?

1. To form a natural amphitheater so that all 2 ½ million people could see the Ark
2. So that there would be no mistaking the fact that the miracle occurred because of the power of God

B. What does the Ark of the Covenant represent?

1. What was in it?
 - a) A jar of manna from the wilderness wanderings
 - b) The staff of Aaron
 - c) The two tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments
2. What did the ark represent?
 - **9** Joshua said to the Israelites, "Come here and listen to the words of the LORD your God. **10** This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. **11** See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you. **12** Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. **13** And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the LORD -the Lord of all the earth—set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap."
 - a) It represented the presence of God 3:10
 - b) It represented the power of God 1 Samuel 4:7
3. What happened?
 - a) The waters backed up to “Adam” and stopped flowing to the Dead Sea (26 miles!)
 - b) How did it happen?

C. How do we experience the presence of God?

II. To Ford the Seemingly Impossible Difficulties, We Must Set Up Stones

- **4:4** So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, **5** and said to them, "Go over before the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, **6** to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' **7** tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever."
- **8** So the Israelites did as Joshua commanded them. They took twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as the LORD had told Joshua; and they carried them over with them to their camp, where they put them down. **9** Joshua set up the twelve stones that had been ^[a] in the middle of the Jordan at the spot where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant had stood. And they are there to this day.

A. Memorial stones in Joshua.

1. 4:9 the stones in the midst of the Jordan
2. 4:20-24 the stones on the western bank of the Jordan
3. 7:26 the stones in the valley of Anchor
4. 8:29ff stones that mark the grave of the king of Ai
5. 8:30 the altar at Mt. Ebal
6. 8:32 the stones of the law at Mt. Ebal that have the Ten Commandments written on them
7. 10:27 stones that marked the graves of king of Jerusalem and 4 other kings on the day that the sun stood still
8. 22:10ff stone altar that 2 ½ tribes built for a witness t their unity with all Israel near Shiloh at the edge of the Jordan River
9. 24:27 stone that Joshua set as a witness to the covenant that Israel made with Yahweh at Shechem

B. Why do we need memorial stones?

1. There may be long stretches in our lives when we don't see great power displays by God and we need to remind ourselves what God has done.
2. This generation of vipers is always looking for a sign. "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" John 20:29
3. What are our memorial stones?
 - a) Communion
 - b) Baptism
 - c) The cross
 - d) Wedding ring
 - e) Purity rings
 - f) Banners
 - g) Pictures of Last Supper, etc
 - h) Plaques with scripture on them
 - i) Resurrection eggs