

# VICTORY!

WEEK 3

## A STUDY OF JOSHUA

### THE RIGHT WAY

“Wrong Way” Marshall earned his nickname on a scoop and score fumble recovery. He ran 50+ yards, untouched, to score a safety for the other team. Only when he was thanked by a 49er, did he realize his mistake.

Holiness means to be “set apart.” In Joshua 3, Israel was told to stay at least a half-mile away from God’s ark. By doing so, not only did they maintain its “set-aparthood,” but it also provided protection and direction by keeping it on one side.

Today, as we see Israel cross the Jordan in the Promised Land, they enter new territory. When the people didn’t know where to go, they simply had to look at the ark. Not only did God use the ark to hold back a raging, frigid river, but he also used it to keep a multitude of people all moving the correct direction. Holiness is always the right way.

#### JOSHUA 3:10–17

<sup>10</sup> And Joshua said, “Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites. <sup>11</sup> Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is passing over before you into the Jordan. <sup>12</sup> Now therefore take twelve men from the tribes of Israel, from each tribe a man. <sup>13</sup> And when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing 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 from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap.”

<sup>14</sup> So when the people set out from their tents to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, <sup>15</sup> and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest), <sup>16</sup> the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho. <sup>17</sup> Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

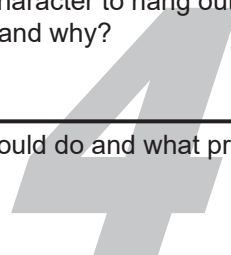
Isn't the ark a huge boat filled with animals? Well, yes, that's *Noah's Ark*. However, in Exodus 25, we read the building instructions for the Ark of the Covenant—a *much* smaller box.

The Ark of the Covenant was covered with gold and had two statues of cherubs. Inside, it contained the 10 Commandments, a pot of manna, and Aaron's rod. Like Noah's Ark, it was a vessel for temporary deliverance, pointing to the ultimate fulfillment in Christ. For more, scan the QR code.



### DISCUSSION

If you could pick one fictional character to hang out with for a day, who would it be and why?



1. What did Joshua say God would do and what proof did he offer? (10–11, 13)

2. What people or groups do we see mentioned in this passage and what was their experience? (10, 12, 13, 14, 16)

3. In your own words, what do the actions of those mentioned here say about their faith? (14–17)

4. Which group do you most identify with? What about that group do you see in yourself?

ICEBREAKER  
OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Do you agree with the statement, "Every person has faith?" Maybe you're struggling with faith and feel like you have none at all. Maybe your faith is misplaced. Talk to your coach today.

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## STUDY NOTES THE CROSSING

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1944 Operation Overlord—later called “D-Day”—involved 156,000 American, British, and Canadian forces landing on 5 heavily fortified beaches across a 50-mile stretch of Northwestern France. By June 11<sup>th</sup>, over 326,000 troops, more than 50,000 vehicles, and about 100,000 tons of equipment had landed at Normandy. Before the month ended, the Allies had transported over 850,000 men and 150,000 vehicles into France, all poised against the Nazis.

Remarkably, these stats were achieved by crossing 100 miles of water. To overcome the frigid waters of the English Channel, the Allies used over 5,000 ships and landing craft as well as over 11,000 aircraft. There were advance paratroopers, a tremendous fake-out using one of America’s most famous generals called “Operation Fortitude,” and a host of other things that allowed D-Day to give the Allies a foothold in Europe.

Over 3000 years before D-Day, Joshua had to overcome a similar situation. He had no paratroopers, no boats or aircraft, and no ploys to fake out the enemy. All he had was a nation needing to cross a river in order to fight. The Jordan river was ½ mile wide and 150 feet deep—an impossible obstacle. However, to take the Promised Land, they had to trust the Promise-Maker. Faith isn’t focusing on what you *don’t* have, it’s trust in the One you *do* have.

## VICTORY REQUIRES FAITH

As we said in Week 1, God didn’t give Joshua a road-map showing him where and how he would arrive at his destination. God gave turn-by-turn navigation and, like a malfunctioning GPS, God told him to “turn left” into a huge river. Instead of “Recalculating,” the Lord said through Joshua, ***“Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites”*** (aka the “7-ites”)

Leaders were selected to lead each tribe across the river—***twelve men from the tribes of Israel, from each tribe a man***. The Lord continued his promise, ***“and when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing 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 from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap.”***

The people got to work without grumbling and with all haste. Then, ***as soon as those bearing***

***the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water, the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away.*** Not only did the water stop flowing, but it was the time of year that it typically overflowed.

The first generation that fled Egypt crossed the Red Sea on dry ground. So also, while ***the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.***

## FAITH CONQUERS THE IMPOSSIBLE

Several examples of faith jump off the page. *First*, Joshua had the faith to proclaim what the Lord had told him. God’s GPS seemed to have malfunctioned. Yet, Joshua stood firm in his conviction that God never commanded wrong turns or detours.

*Second*, the priests had the faith to go first. The flooding of the Jordan came from melting snow from Mt. Hermon. They dipped their tootsies into the frigid water, standing in the gap for those who would follow.

*Third*, the nation and the twelve selected men had to have the faith to cross a riverbed that, moments before, would have sent them into a hypothermic watery grave. They didn’t have the luxury of believing God for a moment. Every step of their half-mile journey meant trusting God to restrain the torrent.

*Finally*, we see the faith of the “7-ites.” We might say that these nations had no faith at all. However, that’s inaccurate. Every person has faith. The “7-ites” heard what God did to Egypt. They saw him provide for Israel 40 years in the wilderness. They had already heard of other nations getting crushed. Now, the people of **Adam** bore witness to heaps of water, while **Jericho** prayed that it might flow freely to prevent the Israelites heading their way.

Israel crossing the Jordan gave one more opportunity for the “7-ites” to turn to Israel’s God. Instead, their faith remained in themselves. That faith cannot stop God. However, faith in God conquers the impossible. Hasn’t God done enough to get our attention?

Do we have faith in God’s Word like Joshua? Do we have faith to go first like the priests or to stand in the gap for others? Do we realize that every step is an act of faith—expressing either our faith in God or our faith in ourselves? Holiness provides protection and direction, but faith is what moves us forward to conquer the impossible.