

Preparation for the Promise

The Israelites prepare to cross into the new land

Invitation to Promise Series – Part 3

Joshua 3:1-5:11

November 1-2, 2025

Introduction

- Announcements
 - Anthology for sale this weekend
 - End of the Year Campaign – Multiply – ½ to our evangelistic efforts; ½ to other churches in our region who are out there doing a great job reaching people for Christ. It's not just about Bridgeway but about the kingdom of God growing, Amen? If you would like to participate in this with tax involvement or not, go to Bridgeway.church/multiply. You can also mark any financial contribution with the word **Multiply** and we will make sure every penny of that goes for what it was intended. Here are some examples of internal efforts:
 - Love Roseville – serve day where we bring tangible help to our community.
 - The Harvest Festival of 2026 - where we give free candy, hot dogs, drinks and chips to our community allowing them to have a safe and joyful night of fun attached to God's house.
 - The Hope Project – reaching out to our immediate neighbors and connecting them with classes and seminars that can bring health, healing and joy to their homes through programs like recovery, divorce care, grief share, parenting classes, etc.
 - Cars & Coffee – thousands of people each month coming on our campus to hang out and enjoy their hobbies with one another – again all attached to the house of God. Amazing conversations are had with our team and those that come about the Lord.
 - More to be announced - including some of the other church efforts we are going to invest in.
 - Apology for **bait and switch** of last week – it's not the Jericho story yet. I told you all to bring friends for that story and I...lied. Not on purpose, I just spoke without looking at my schedule and didn't realize there was a whole step, a key story between the spying of the city and the attack. THAT middle story is what we are covering today and you'll have to come back next week to hear the Jericho story. Sorry about that.
 - The God of More – God always has more for us. It's not because we need more or we deserve more but that **God is so infinite there can ONLY be MORE**.
 - Are you okay where you are at? – **should you be? What if the cost of the more is painful? What if it's risky? What if it's costly? What if it's necessary?**
 - God has more for you – **let me cast a vision for your life for a moment. Imagine...**
 - No dread of the future – you may have nervousness about dying because you've never done it before but you know that God is real, that heaven is real, and that when we cling to Jesus He'll get us there.

- No need to perform for value – Christianity teaches that God gives us inherent value because we are made in His image. There’s nothing we need to do to earn His love.
- Life has meaning and purpose – When we allow God to run our lives, we are constantly walking into divine appointments that matter. All of our talents, abilities, and gifts can carry supernatural and eternal impact.
- Loneliness is shallow – although we will continue to struggle with community and friendships with people perhaps, we will never be alone once we give our lives to Christ because the Holy Spirit indwells us and God is with us forever. We will always have someone who understands us, will hear us, will cry with us and laugh with us.
- We can do Jesus stuff – when Jesus was on the planet as a man, He operated only by the rules that we live by: He received revelation from the Father and power by the Holy Spirit. That means that most all of the stuff that He did, we can do as well.
 - Do we even know what’s missing?

God Wants to Prepare You for Something Greater

- We are in part 3 of a series walking through the book of Joshua, called *Invitation to Promise* series.
- Last Week – **Rahab** story – reconnaissance of Jericho the first major city of the Hebrew incursion into Canaan. The spies were helped by a gentile, female prostitute who confirmed that God was doing something mighty with the Jews.
 - No one is beyond God’s reach nor beyond being used by God for His glory. No matter where you come from or what you’ve done, Jesus knows how to clean you up and get you on the path to walking with Him and becoming the person He designed you to be.

Lesson

- On the Edge of a Miracle
 - Joshua’s team prepares the people
 - Joshua 3:1-5 - *“Then Joshua rose early in the morning and they set out from Shittim. And they came to the Jordan, he and all the people of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. ² At the end of three days the officers went through the camp ³ and commanded the people, “As soon as you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God being carried by the Levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place and follow it. ⁴ Yet there shall be a distance between you and it, about 2,000 cubits in length. Do not come near it, in order that you may know the way you shall go, for you have not passed this way before.” ⁵ Then Joshua said to the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.”*
 - Then Joshua – See the prior lessons to know more about this amazing man. He is the one that took over from Moses to lead Israel. He used to

be the commander of the army but now he's the main leader of all of it. He is roughly 70-80 years old at this time.

- rose early in the morning and they set out from Shittim. – This is the location they were camping in. (see last week for the awkward pronunciation). Shittim means acacia trees. It's technically called Abel-Shittim. It seems to be about 6 miles from the Jordan river.
- And they came to the Jordan, he and all the people of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. – This is the **Jordan river** that seems to (modernly) split the nation of Israel in two. There is the east side which goes toward Asia and there's the west side toward the Mediterranean Ocean. They are crossing from east to west. The Jordan river ebbs and flows in thickness as it travels from **north to south** on the map. Sometimes it's nothing more than a small trickle and in some areas its quite wide. Some seasons are drought-ish and some seasons there are areas that are overflowing its banks (like this season they are in). The river **starts on Mount Hermon (border of Syria and Lebanon)** in the north and flows south **through the Sea of Galilee** in northern Israel. It flows out of the Sea of Galilee and winds down (now separating the West Bank of Israel from the nation of Jordan on the east). It finally **empties into the Dead Sea**. It's more than 223 miles long technically but only stretches **124 miles** south (due to the meandering back and forth). It's most famous to Christians for being the river in which John the Baptist baptized Jesus Christ. The people came from the **camp 6 miles away** to the banks of the river and stopped there on the East side.
- At the end of three days¹ – It's unclear to me why it was a pause for 3 days BEFORE they did what they needed to do. Perhaps it's about trying to move such a massive group of people through the land and needing that much time for the back side of the group to gather in. There's **approximately 2 million** Jews at this time. On the other hand perhaps its due to timing with the Passover (see below).
- the officers went through the camp – Over the last 40 years in the desert Moses and Joshua have brought significant organization to the Hebrew people. They are organized not only in tribes, but in groups each with a leader. They had 'officers' who were the localized leadership and would give commands to move the 2 million people in an organized fashion.
- and commanded the people, "As soon as you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God – The **Ark of the Covenant was a special gold box that represented the presence of the Lord**. God knew that it was strange to not have a direction to look when you are talking to an all-present deity. He had Moses design a portable temple structure that would provide a sacred space. In that would be housed, in the very

¹ "The chronological connection between the three days in this verse and those of 1:11 has been given more than one interpretation. It appears best not to identify the two. The three days of 1:11 may have been an indefinite period (see commentary), allowing for the mission of the spies to have occurred in the meantime. This mission may have taken as many as four or five days. The three days here begin with Israel's departure from Shittim." NICOT Marten Woudstra

interior, a small room that had this box. It was wood and overlaid with gold. It was sealed with a massive gold lid. It had two gold cherubim figures on top of it with extending wings toward each other. In that box were some special objects that highlighted special interactions (miracles) with God. The **ten commandments** were in there. A **jar of manna** was in there. The **budded staff of Aaron** that designated him and his family as high priests was in there (Heb 9:1-5). And on top of that box between the outstretched wings God would semi-manifest and speak to the priests from that area. It was a way that God was accommodating Himself down to locale for the sake of relationship. **This box was moved by priests only and there were very specific rules on how it should be handled.**

- being carried by the Levitical priests,² - The Levitical priests simply means priests from the tribe of Levi, which is the only tribe with priests so it's kind of redundant.
- then you shall set out from your place and follow it. – The people were told that at the front of the massive line of people traveling would be the ark of the covenant. It would lead them. They would all move in behind it according to their order of tribes.
- Yet there shall be a distance between you and it, about 2,000 cubits in length. Do not come near it,³ - this was a warning that no one is to get within **3,000 feet** of it. Why? Two reasons: **1.) crowding means that people can't see it** and it's a highlight for this particular movement God was doing (the miracle involved needing to see that it was the ark of the covenant involved). **2.) crowding increases that possibility of someone touching it** which is a severe no-no.
- in order that you may know the way you shall go, for you have not passed this way before."⁴ – it's highlighted that they were going to cross at **a place where people don't normally cross**. This is important because the normal crossing areas were the easiest places to cross and were known as the fords of the Jordan. The point is that this is a whole new point to cross that isn't normal and would better suit **a miracle crossing** (no one could say, we always cross there).
- Then Joshua said to the people, "Consecrate⁵ yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you. – **Consecrate means to get**

² "The explanatory adjective "Levitical" (lit. "the priests, the Levites") serves to distinguish these priests from others who were non-Levitical; see Exod. 19:22, 24. The restriction of the priesthood to the tribe of Levi, more particularly to Aaron's family, dates from the desert period; see Exod. 32:26–29; Num. 25:7–13; Deut. 18:5). It was the Levites, especially the sons of Kohath, who had been entrusted with the duty of carrying the ark (Num. 4:4, 15). This custom is observed in Deut. 10:8; 31:25; 1 Sam. 6:15; 2 Sam. 15:24; 2 Chr. 5:4; 35:3. On other occasions, however, the priests were assigned to perform that duty (Deut. 31:9; 1 K. 8:3, 6)." NICOT

³ "To impress upon the Israelites the ark's great sanctity they are instructed that there shall be a distance between you and it of about two thousand cubits. Thus the sacred object is to proceed in full view of the people. There should not be any rash handling or inadvertent touching (cf. 1 Sam. 6:19; 2 Sam. 6:7). The ark was the symbol of the indwelling of the Holy One; cf. Num. 7:89. The distance of 2000 cubits was approximately that of the outer bank of the Jordan to the inner bed, from el-Ghôr to ez-Zôr. Thus the people would still be on the outer bank while the feet of the priests touched the water's edge (see v. 8)" NICOT

⁴ "By seeing the ark descend to the Jordan the people would know the way you are to go. It will be an unusual way, one not previously used as a crossing. Perhaps there is already a hint here of the miracle that is to occur." NICOT

⁵ "To prepare for the coming events the people are to sanctify, or consecrate themselves. What this entailed may be seen from Exod. 19:10, 14–15; Num. 11:18. Outward rites were meant to further inward openness toward God and his acts." NICOT

spiritually and ritually ready (purified) to meet with God. They had a lot of different ways through the years of prepping themselves for holy moments and interactions with God. The priests would be the most dramatic in their preparations, but the general people also had some regulations. A lot of the prep had to do with keeping away from 'unclean' things. It was physical separation to get their head in the game about how important this was spiritually.

- Water Split Part Deux
 - The River Jordan parts miraculously
 - Joshua 3:6-17 - "And Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on before the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people. ⁷ The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. ⁸ And as for you, command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, 'When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.' " ⁹ And Joshua said to the people of Israel, "Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God." ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is passing over before you into the Jordan. ¹² Now therefore take twelve men from the tribes of Israel, from each tribe a man. ¹³ 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." ¹⁴ 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, ¹⁵ 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), ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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."
 - And Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on before the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people. – The priests were told that in this movement of the people, they were going to lead first. So, they got their poles ready that would slide into the ark of the covenant holders, and lifted it up on their shoulders. I would imagine that it wasn't too heavy, and it was

carried by at least four men (one on each corner). However, they were going to have a long day holding it up so perhaps they changed out shifts.

- **God first** – it's critical that we develop a 'God-first' mentality when we are doing ministry. We need to pray about ministry before we DO ministry. Why? God needs to get in there first. He's like the military air support that clears the space before the ground troops come in.
- The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. – God let's Joshua in on the plan of the day and the big motivation of doing what He was about to do. The Israelites were about to be tested in every way as they had to conquer the land of Canaan. They needed to know that they didn't lose anything critical when Moses died and Joshua took over. God was going to make sure that they knew that so they would obey as things become more difficult in the coming days.
- **Why a culture of honor is important** – human beings are very affected by environment and narratives they live in. God works through mindsets and perspectives (that's what faith is). In a sense, how we view things alters our reality, because not only are we acting different, but it changes the space in our minds and hearts that God can work within. **For example: Jesus was rejected in Nazareth** because He was too familiar to them (they saw Him grow up). That hampered what they were willing to believe about Him, put faith in, and thus God refused to operate there. The other towns and groups had no problem accepting Him as a supernatural healer because they didn't know any better and were willing to buy into the narrative of who He said He was. This allowed their minds to be engaged and God to move. **When we have a low view of our spiritual leadership, it hampers what our mindsets are and the room that God can move in it. Faith is replaced by skepticism, cynicism, and doubt. But if we have a high view of leadership and believe that our pastors are not just regular people doing regular things but are regular people called into an assignment of an office and anointed by God to be His ambassadors, there's a HUGE difference in what God will do.** Not only do we need a culture of honor for accountability reasons (discipline), but we need it for miracles and prayer power and prophecy. We need to engage in what God's doing THROUGH our church leadership.
- And as for you, command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, 'When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.' – God told Joshua some instructions for the ark carrying (priesthood) team. They were supposed to walk right up to the Jordan river, which was swelled at this time and the water was likely moving quickly, and **walk INTO the water with the ark of the covenant. I can guarantee you that there was pushback immediately by the priests.** There's no way they were comfortable with that plan. Not only are they

getting wet, and it all sounded a little weird, but what if one of them lost their balance in the river and dropped the ark? What if the ark began going down stream? I'm sure they could easily catch it but what does that do to the ark if it's submerged for a time? This golden box was precious and they would NEVER do anything to jeopardize it. But nevertheless, Joshua said, 'hey, I didn't come up with this plan, this is a God thing.' Ultimately they relented and agreed.

- The demand for risk – Why would God make them walk into it BEFORE stopping the water? Why not just stop the water and let them walk into it? **Because faith is so important. Remember, faith is what makes an experience relational. It connects the event to a person and creates a dynamic relational component. When they did what God SAID in obedience, there was a trust and bonding. When the miracle happened they realized that they were INTERACTING with God along the way instead of a strange coincidence.**
- And Joshua said to the people of Israel, "Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God." – Joshua gathered the people to him for some instruction about what was about to happen. The funny thing about statements like this is that its impossible to gather 2 million people close to hear what you are saying. So, we need to think through this practically and realize that it would necessitate messaging. Joshua would gather the tribal leaders near him and instruct them. They would get that information to their local leaders who would disperse it to the people in general. So, assume that was happening.
- And Joshua said, "Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you⁶ – Joshua relays a message from God. God wants to be VERY clear on what He's doing, why He's doing it, and that it's a miraculous partnership with them. **The ultimate purpose of the miracles to come were to point out that GOD IS WITH THEM**, just as He promised. God and the Hebrew people (Jews) had a contract, a covenant with one another. God would do His part if they would do their part. **God's part was the miracles of protection and provision and guidance and presence. Their part was strict obedience to His words**, righteous living, care for one another, and a host of other things. So, how would they know that God was upholding His side of the bargain? God would demonstrate from time to time.
- and that he will without fail drive out from before you – God doesn't fail in His endeavors. Endeavors fail because mankind messes up their side. God is perfect in His delivery, we aren't. So, **what is God promising? He's promising that as they go into the land to take it, God will drive out**

⁶ "The coming miracle will make people know that a living God is among them. This will be an experiential knowing (Heb. yāda'). The people will find out in a very practical manner, and will perceive that there is a living God among them. As living God God stands opposed to, and is different from, the gods of the nations who are always portrayed as unable to act or to save (Ps. 96:5; 115:3–7). These other gods are idols (Heb. 'ilīm; Lev. 19:4). They are nothing but breath (Heb. h'balīm; Deut. 32:21; Jer. 8:19). This living God is among Israel, which indicates his active presence with his people (Deut. 6:15)." NICOT

EVERY people group before them. But there's a caveat: God will only do so if the Jews keep their side as well. That's implied.

- the Canaanites,⁷ - Canaanite means 'people living by the sea' and is a general term for all people groups that are in the Promised Land region. 7 groups (likely indicating fullness – but certainly not all the groups in Canaan) will be mentioned.
- the Hittites, - Hittites are a significant Turkish/Mesopotamia people group that were flourishing in their empire during this time (1650-1200 BC – we are currently in the middle of that timeframe - 1400 BC). They were known for military technology (use of iron and chariots). They spoke an Indo-European language (oldest known).
- the Hivites, - little is known about this group but it seems that they are descendent of Ham (Noah's son) and were in the Northern region of Canaan near Lebanon (Mount Hermon), although they seemed also to be present in the more southern cities of Gibeon (although that may be Horites), and Shechem where they interacted with the Jews more commonly.
- the Perizzites, - Again, little is known about them since they were wiped out, but they seem to be more nomadic people of the south. Their name seems to mean 'rural people in the open country.' They most commonly clashed with the southern tribes once settled which would be Judah and Simeon.
- the Girgashites, - Nothing is known about them. Some guess that they were driven south by Israel and ended up in Africa.
- the Amorites,⁸ - The Amorites were a large people group who created city-states and were highly organized. They are most famous for having a leader named Hammurabi, whose stone inscription is world famous as one of the oldest we have. They were a Semitic group but seemed to have come from the Mesopotamia area. Babylon was one of their key cities during their high times. Kings Sihon and Og (mentioned earlier) were some of their kings.
- and the Jebusites⁹ – this was a people group who lived in what we know as Jerusalem. They were descendants of Canaan, son of Ham (Noah's son). They ultimately were expelled finally from their land by King David much later after this story. They disappeared from the face of the earth.

⁷ "This living God, the Lord of history, will certainly drive out from before you the present inhabitants of Canaan. The inhabitants of Canaan are frequently enumerated in lists of various length in the books of the Pentateuch (Gen. 15:19–21; Exod. 3:17; 23:28; Deut. 7:1, etc.). Without being directly aware of it, they are awaiting the time when their iniquity will be full (Gen. 15:16; Deut. 32:8). The order in which they are listed differs. Here the order is: the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Hivite, and the Perizzite, and the Girgashite, and the Amorite, and the Jebusite. They are viewed here as seven in number (cf. Deut. 7:1), possibly a number symbolic of fullness (Josh. 9:1; Exod. 3:17 list only six; Gen. 15:19–21 ten). The term Canaanite is frequently used as a collective for all the inhabitants of Canaan regardless of racial origin. Here it stands for those living "by the sea" (5:1; Num. 13:29; cf. 11:3). This name most frequently heads the list of the nations to be dispossessed." NICOT

⁸ "As for the Amorites, the Bible uses this term in both a wider and a narrower sense. In the wider sense it denotes the entire population of Canaan (24:15; Gen. 15:16; Judg. 1:34–35), but it also stands for the inhabitants of Canaan's mountain regions (Num. 13:29; Deut. 1:7)." NICOT

⁹ "In all but one instance in Joshua (11:3) the Jebusites are placed at the end of the list. Like the Amorites they appear to have lived in Canaan's mountain regions (11:3; Num. 13:29). In 15:8, 63 they are connected with the region of Jerusalem (cf. Judg. 1:21; 19:10–11; 2 Sam. 5:6)." NICOT

- Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is passing over before you into the Jordan. – they people are reminded that God's presence, represented by the ark of the covenant, was going to go BEFORE them and go into the river (so no one freaks out when it happens).
- Now therefore take twelve men from the tribes of Israel, from each tribe a man. – This is going to be an ALL-ISRAEL advancement so they need a tribal represented of all 12 tribes to step forward and be ready to be a part of this.
 - The power and importance of unity – what would it say if only 6 tribes decided to enter the promised land? What would that say about God and His plans and purposes? It's not just about the people and what they are willing to give up or compromise, it's about what God is saying THROUGH our activities. That's true of us today. We are so willing to divide because we don't want to deal with the drama of people or do the hard things that a spiritual family dynamic demands, but what does that say to the world around us?
- 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, - it was clear that the priests were going to wade into the river (remember, it's swollen and moving current at this time) with the ark. And when that happens...
- the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap."¹⁰ – the waters will stop flowing upstream. Something or someone(s) (angels) will dam up the river and it will stop flowing and as it rushes downriver past the priests it will dry out. It will be a miracle.
- 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, 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), the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, - Sure enough it happened just as God and Joshua had said. They priests with the ark walked into the water and once they were in place in the middle, the water was cut off upstream and it started to empty out. The blockage spot was a considerable distance upstream.
 - Assessing miracles – I don't know why you struggle to believe miracles stories but I can tell you why I do. I hate feeling stupid and falling for something that isn't legit, or is something else than what I thought it was. The problem with that is I might not only miss miracles all around me, but I may be stealing glory from God that He rightfully deserves.

¹⁰ "Joshua's role with respect to the impending miracle of the parting of Jordan's water is less direct than that of Moses at the Red Sea. Moses was himself instrumental in the miracle (Exod. 14:16, 21), but Joshua merely is to give orders. It may be that the Lord's presence in the ark also plays a role in this difference. The ark had not been made when Israel left Egypt." NICOT

So, let me share with you an important truth about assessing miracles. Although it's true that some miracles are miracles of otherworldliness and cannot be explained, many miracles are miracles of timing. It's possible that this miracle of the Jordan was one of timing. Here's what I mean: there are stories in history of the Jordan river getting dammed up by a landslide and eventually breaking through later due to the pressure of the water beating against the newly formed dam. That would allow a block and a release. That's not miraculous, it's just natural due to perhaps the weight of erosion on the river bank. But what IS the miracle is the timing of it. Getting 2 million people to the edge of the river, having the priests walk in and stand there, gives a very tiny window in history, perhaps 30 minutes for it to go down. And it happens exactly within that timeframe. Likely? No. Possible? Clearly. Probable? No. Miraculous? Yes.

- Other timings of miracles – like I said, there are some miracles, like walking on water maybe (although people walk on ice lakes all the time) that are otherworldly and not based in natural means. But some miracles in the Bible are miracles of timing or at least in form (like ice and water). C.S. Lewis talked about multiplying of loaves and fishes as being one of these. God has always historically made more fish (fish having baby fish), and always made more bread (wheat producing wheat), but the miracle was in the timing (immediate) and through the means (formed bread and torn fish pieces). The straightening of the man's withered arm in the synagogue in Mark 3 and Luke 6. Perhaps with doctors care and the right medicine and means that arm could have been rehabbed and straightened and come alive over years, but the miracle was the instantaneous aspect without medical intervention (maybe the same goes for all paralysis healing). It seems that God prefers to do miracles WITHIN the confines of our universal laws, even though He doesn't have to. Maybe it's a demonstration of Him being the master of all creation.
- Why it matters – the reason this all matters is that some of our personalities and analytical minds are always looking for how to explain away miracles. We look into it and say, 'ya, but this could have happened.' And you are right, that COULD have happened, but what are the chances that it DID happen right after prayer when it hadn't happened in a long time? Isn't the timing miraculous? When we assess miracles we need to not get lost in the weeds of whether or not God sent an angel to block the water upstream or whether He had an angel shove down a landslide. We need to look at the bigger picture of miraculous provision and presence with His people.

- at Adam, the city¹¹ – If scholars have the right city, it's 19 miles upstream that the water was dammed. Why there? I don't know. How did God do it? Was it a landslide? Was it simply angels holding the water back? The whole point of the miracle was the timing of it.
- that is beside Zarethan,¹² - nothing is known about this location.
- and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. – all downstream water would begin to empty out if it's not flowing from the north, right? So it would affect everything all the way to the dead sea at the end. Everyone downstream would know something weird is going on. It's not like they hadn't had stoppages before, but this time it was very specific timing.
- And the people passed over opposite Jericho. – This gap and drying up of the river, gave the people a way to cross over right there. They all began to move (organization was key).
- Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, - the whole time the priests remained holding the ark in the middle. They held it up on their shoulders. Everyone would pass by it and see that God was there. They were the intercessors for their people standing in the gap for them.
- and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan – Just as the Hebrew slaves did coming out of Egypt in the Red Sea crossing, their kids did it again with the Jordan river (passing on dry ground).
 - God's presence in the middle of the difficulty crossing – when we bring God into the middle of our challenge, His presence changes the possibilities.
- Ebenezers Everywhere
 - Israel sets up memorial stones to remember God's power
 - Joshua 4:1-24 - "When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, ² "Take twelve men from the people, from each tribe a man, ³ and command them, saying, 'Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests' feet stood firmly, and bring them over with you and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight.' " ⁴ Then Joshua called the twelve men from the people of Israel, whom he had appointed, a man from each tribe. ⁵ And Joshua said to them, "Pass on before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the

¹¹ "The words rendered from Adam may also be read "at Adam." The city of Adam is probably to be identified with Dāmiyeh, 19 miles upstream from Jericho. If "from Adam" is indeed the correct understanding, then the account says that the Jordan waters were piled up over the entire distance from Adam to the point where the crossing took place. Taking the alternate reading, the waters stood and rose up at a point not visible to the Israelites. This would have resulted in a very wide stretch of river bottom suitable for crossing.... Most commentaries call attention to certain natural causes which may have contributed to the occurrence of the miracle at this time. An Arab historian reports that in a. d. 1267 landslides dammed the river for several hours. A similar occurrence took place in 1927." NICOT

¹² "The city of Zarethan, beside which Adam is said to be situated, is mentioned in 1 K. 7:46. There is no agreement as to its precise location." NICOT

number of the tribes of the people of Israel, ⁶ that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, 'What do those stones mean to you?' ⁷ then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever." ⁸ And the people of Israel did just as Joshua commanded and took up twelve stones out of the midst of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, just as the Lord told Joshua. And they carried them over with them to the place where they lodged and laid them down there. ⁹ And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood; and they are there to this day. ¹⁰ For the priests bearing the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to tell the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua. The people passed over in haste. ¹¹ And when all the people had finished passing over, the ark of the Lord and the priests passed over before the people. ¹² The sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh passed over armed before the people of Israel, as Moses had told them. ¹³ About 40,000 ready for war passed over before the Lord for battle, to the plains of Jericho. ¹⁴ On that day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they stood in awe of him just as they had stood in awe of Moses, all the days of his life. ¹⁵ And the Lord said to Joshua, ¹⁶ "Command the priests bearing the ark of the testimony to come up out of the Jordan." ¹⁷ So Joshua commanded the priests, "Come up out of the Jordan." ¹⁸ And when the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord came up from the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up on dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before. ¹⁹ The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they encamped at Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. ²⁰ And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal. ²¹ And he said to the people of Israel, "When your children ask their fathers in times to come, 'What do these stones mean?' ²² then you shall let your children know, 'Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.'" ²³ For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over, ²⁴ so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever. ^{5:1} As soon as all the kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the people of Israel until they had crossed over, their hearts melted and there was no longer any spirit in them because of the people of Israel."

- When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, "Take twelve men from the people, from each tribe a man,

and command them, saying, 'Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests' feet stood firmly, and bring them over with you and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight.' " – God instructs Joshua to do something to mark out the significance of this day. This was not going to be a forgotten miracle when everyone's memory failed them. They were going to get big stones (and I mean big stones – like for an altar), one for each tribe (12), and take them from the river to the place of where they were going to camp that night on the West side (technically in the Promised Land). What were they going to do with them? Set up a memorial altar.

- Then Joshua called the twelve men from the people of Israel, whom he had appointed, a man from each tribe. And Joshua said to them, "Pass on before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, that this may be a sign among you. – Joshua got all the representatives their instructions to make sure to get their own stone for their tribe.
- When your children ask in time to come, 'What do those stones mean to you?' – Why make a tangible, physical pile of stones for a memorial? So that anyone walking by would say, 'hey, what are these stones for?' It was **a constant reminder and something that would jog conversation between people and end up talking about God and His power and provision.** It was so simple of an erection that kids would ask about it.
 - **Why we need help remembering God's miracles – because our memories are spotty and we live so distracted. When we don't remember God's miracles we doubt Him to do them again. We live with less faith and God gets less glory and we get more stressed.**
 - **What will help you remember? –** Not everyone needs to utilize the same methods of jogging our memory. For some of us we are notes on the mirror people. Others are objects we carry around in our pockets. Some of us are pictures on our phones. **The whole point is so that it's recorded and in a location that's accessible to remind us of what God has done for us.**
- then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever."¹³ – then the responsibility is on the parents and the leaders to tell the story of God's goodness. They were supposed to tell the kids the miracle stories and not let them be forgotten. They would explain the whole account and how God did the impossible by

¹³ "Its primary purpose is for the future, when later your children ask you. The language is reminiscent of Exod. 12:26–27; Deut. 6:20–25. God's acts of salvation on his people's behalf must be perpetuated in the memory of coming generations. The immediate scope of the injunction seems to be that of the current generation; yet it is clear that more is meant than the immediate future (v. 7b). The explanation parents are to give their children regarding the significance of the memorial stones recalls briefly the great miracle of damming the waters before the ark."

shutting off the water so they could cross over. That memorial was supposed to be a forever memorial. I assume that through the thousands of years it's been toppled and lost, but the point was to have a longstanding monument.

- **The mandate to minister to the next generation** – God is very, very clear that we have a responsibility to make sure the next generation is equipped, reminded, taught, and trained to flourish with Him. **One of the saddest transitions is Joshua to Judges (see below). One generation had extreme faith and the next one didn't. Why? Failure to hand off well. What are we doing personally to invest in the next generation?**
 - Jdg 2:7–10 – *"And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work that the LORD had done for Israel. ⁸ And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of 110 years. ⁹ And they buried him within the boundaries of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash. ¹⁰ And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel."*
- And the people of Israel did just as Joshua commanded and took up twelve stones out of the midst of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, just as the Lord told Joshua. And they carried them over with them to the place where they lodged and laid them down there. – I love the obedience and everyone getting in line. There was no argument. There was total unity in the task. Beautiful.
- And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood; and they are there to this day.¹⁴ – An additional monument was set up INSIDE THE RIVER. While it was dry, Joshua had 12 stones (tribal representation) put in the middle of the river bed to indicate that it was once totally dry by a miracle of God as a means of welcoming the Jews into the Promised Land. I love that it says, 'it's still there'. They would know that because on low water seasons they could see it and it had remained by the time that this story was not only told and written down but when it was organized into an account later. I assume it's gone now.
- For the priests bearing the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to tell the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua. The people passed over in haste. – The people hurried over, because there were so many of them, the priests can't stand there the whole time. The priests were, however, faithful to remain as that intercession and not move. They provided the space for the people to walk in the miracle.

¹⁴ "it comes as no surprise that the very spot where the priests' feet had rested during the crossing should also receive a memorial, even though the account has not prepared the reader for this development. The author reports that these stones have been there to this day. This phrase, often considered a typical expression of an etiological tale, is in reality meant as a confirmation of the veracity of the account. The stones described here were probably visible when the Jordan ran low." NICOT

- **Leadership's job to prep God encounters** – Joshua, the leaders, and the priests did all the Lord asked to prepare this amazing miraculous moment. The people just experienced it but they were changed forever by it. This is the role of church leadership (or all mature Christians for others). **We are to set up, according to the word of the Lord, experiential times and settings for people to interact with God. If people interact with God they are likely to be transformed.** We can't manipulate or fake the experience, it has to be legit. It has to be led by God. But it's our job to carry that torch got lights and get people near Him.
- And when all the people had finished passing over, the ark of the Lord and the priests passed over before the people. – Finally they got everyone out of the river and moving to the other side (West).
- The sons of Reuben – 2 ½ tribes were highlighted here for a special reason. When Moses doled out the allotments of the territory, there were **two and a half tribes that were given land on the EAST side of the Jordan.** At this point it was the SAFER side and that was a benefit. But lest those tribes say that fighting for the West wasn't a big deal and bail out, there was **a contract made** about it and everyone agreed that **they would help to conquer the land even though they already had their territory.** One of those tribes was the tribe of Reuben. Reuben was the firstborn son of Jacob/Israel. They were known to be warriors and one of their jobs was to guard the tabernacle holy instruments and furniture in travel. Ironically they would eventually become the first tribe to lose it's territory through disobedience.
- and the sons of Gad – Gad was Jacob/Israel's 7th son of the 12. They too were known for being warriors.
- and the half-tribe of Manasseh – Manasseh was not one of Jacob's sons but one of Joseph's sons (who was a son of Jacob/Israel). They were a big tribe so half of them got territory on the East of the river and half on the West. Gideon and Jephthah were Manassehites.
- passed over armed before the people of Israel, as Moses had told them. – these were the representative warriors of the 2 ½ tribes that were supposed to go fight with their brothers to get them some land to settle in.
- About 40,000 ready for war passed over before the Lord for battle, to the plains of Jericho.¹⁵ – it was not nearly the whole tribes, but only an army portion of each tribe that in the end totaled 40K soldiers from their crew.
- On that day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they stood in awe of him just as they had stood in awe of Moses, all the days of his life. – Everyone was blown away by this miracle. It became clear

¹⁵ "Again the writer is concerned to link this participation of the Transjordanian tribes with that which Moses had commanded Joshua (v. 10; cf. 1:17). While from 1:14 the impression might be gained that all the men of the Transjordanian tribes were to go along, this account indicates that their number is confined to 40,000. See Num. 26 for the total number of Reuben and Gad, each of which numbered in excess of that." NICOT

that God was backing up Joshua just like He had with Moses. It set Joshua up with the leadership backing he needed to lead the nation.

- And the Lord said to Joshua, "Command the priests bearing the ark of the testimony to come up out of the Jordan." So Joshua commanded the priests, "Come up out of the Jordan." And when the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord came up from the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up on dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before. – This is kind of going back in time, but it was highlighting the miraculous timing. When the priests finally came out of the water, the river instantly started flowing again. Again, it didn't matter how God dammed it up or released it, but that it was the perfect timing for this event both in its beginning and ending.
- The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month,¹⁶ - this is only important for historical timing and to tie to the next story of the Passover.
- and they encamped at Gilgal on the east border of Jericho.¹⁷ – They settled down into their new camp on the West side now.
- And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal. – Joshua fulfilled the plan by setting up the river rocks they brought, into a memorial altar, just as God said.
- And he said to the people of Israel, "When your children ask their fathers in times to come, 'What do these stones mean?' then you shall let your children know, 'Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.' For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over, so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever. – Joshua reiterates that the whole point of this memorial is to talk about God and how wonder He was/is. The point isn't to just have a pile of rocks, but what they point to and indicate.
- As soon as all the kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan to the west, - Amorites were the next group for them to challenge (they had already defeated Sihon and Og, both Amorite kings) and they were a tough group. BUT after this miracle things were shifting...
- and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, - this means not just the Amorites but all the groups...

¹⁶ "The people came up from the Jordan on the tenth of the first month. This information ties in the event of the crossing with the selecting of the passover lamb (Exod. 12:3), which took place prior to the Red Sea crossing explicitly recalled in v. 23. It also prepares the reader for the events depicted in 5:10. Henceforth the commemoration of the first passover will therefore coincide with the commemoration of the entry into the promised land. God's calendar has different dates (cf. Jer. 23:7–8), but the dates belong to the same time frame, and that calendar shows the dates of God's redemption of his people." NICOT

¹⁷ "The town of Gilgal, where Joshua set up camp, has not been identified with certainty. Its general location is sought to the east of Jericho, between the former city and the Jordan. Much has been made, and continues to be made, of Gilgal as a supposed seat of a shrine, probably antedating the arrival of Israel at that spot, and hence of Canaanite origin. But the sober information which the OT itself provides hardly leaves room for such an elaborate theory.¹⁵ What does appear is that in the days of Saul and Samuel a town by this name served as a center for sacrifice and worship (1 Sam. 10:8; 11:15), but it is not entirely certain that this was the same Gilgal (see also Hos. 4:15; Amos 4:4)." NICOT

- heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the people of Israel until they had crossed over, their hearts melted and there was no longer any spirit in them because of the people of Israel. – They freaked out. They were so scared because they, like Rahab had mentioned prior, saw the miracle and realized they were not just dealing with a marauding group of warriors, they were being threatened by a people group with the Almighty God on their team who could do anything! How are they going to defeat that?
 - Why duplicate the water parting miracle?¹⁸** – they had their toughest job to do so far. They needed to know that God was with them, and with Joshua just as he was with Moses. The duplication demonstrates that God is the same.
- A Cut Above
 - Joshua circumcises the new generation
 - Joshua 5:2-9 - "At that time the Lord said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the sons of Israel a second time." ³ So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth. ⁴ And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males of the people who came out of Egypt, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way after they had come out of Egypt. ⁵ Though all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people who were born on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised. ⁶ For the people of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, the men of war who came out of Egypt, perished, because they did not obey the voice of the Lord; the Lord swore to them that he would not let them see the land that the Lord had sworn to their fathers to give to us, a land flowing with milk and honey. ⁷ So it was their children, whom he raised up in their place, that Joshua circumcised. For they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way. ⁸ When the circumcising of the whole nation was finished, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed. ⁹ And the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." And so the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day."
 - At that time¹⁹ – Some time seems to have passed, but due to the Passover coming up it was likely all running together in order to hit the exact date of the Passover celebration.

¹⁸ "The link between Moses and Joshua, already made in the preceding verse, is made even stronger at this point. The miracle of the crossing is the occasion for the Lord to make Joshua a great man in the sight of all Israel, and they feared him as they feared Moses. The parallel with Moses' position after the Red Sea crossing is striking (cf. Exod. 14:31b). Joshua, like Moses, is accepted as God's accredited spokesman. The fear and the respect the people had felt for Moses is transferred to Joshua." NICOT

¹⁹ "We take at that time, though a rather broad chronological term, to refer to the time just described in chs. 3–4 (esp. 4:19). Therefore the time lapse between this mass circumcision and the Passover, held on the fourteenth of the month (v. 10), was no more than three days. The painful effects of circumcision were still felt at that time (cf. Gen. 34:25), but this need not have precluded participation in the Passover." NICOT

- the Lord said to Joshua, “Make flint knives and circumcise the sons of Israel a second time.”²⁰ – flint knives were crude ancient tools that could cut very sharply and were used commonly. God told Joshua to have a big circumcision event.
 - Explain circumcision – the removal of the penis foreskin (spiritually an additional meaning would be =) as a symbol and sign of being one of God’s chosen people. Although other groups utilized it too (especially Egyptians), it had special meaning to the Jews and was part of the covenant, contract that they had with God.
- So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth.²¹ – “the Hill of Foreskins” – Of course Joshua obeyed and they had a massive circumcision ritual where all the males of the Jews (out of the 2 million) were circumcised. The place where it happened gained the name, ‘hill of foreskins’. Whether that’s because it was on a hill or there was a huge pile of foreskins, I’m not sure. Obviously Joshua did not personally circumcise 1 million dudes. He gave the order and all of the tribal leaders handled their section. Worst party ever.
- And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males of the people who came out of Egypt, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way after they had come out of Egypt.²² – This was a new generation and they hadn’t been circumcised during the 40 year journey in the desert prior. It was a wandering time and they never had a place to settle. They never had peace from danger in their minds. They never had an opportunity or calling from God to rise up as a nation due to their sin. But this new generation was ready to do something fresh and they needed to be covenantally prepared.
- Though all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people who were born on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised. – the author explains that they did circumcision when they were in Egypt so all those men were already cut. It was the ones born during the wandering that could be as old as 40 years old by now, that weren’t.
- For the people of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, the men of war who came out of Egypt, perished, because they did not obey the voice of the Lord; - Why did they wander for 40 years?

²⁰ “The rite of circumcision, referred to metaphorically in Deut. 10:16; 30:6, was instituted as a sign of Israel’s covenant relationship with the Lord (Gen. 17:11). It consisted in the cutting-away of the foreskin of an eight-day-old Israelite male. Its religious import is grasped clearly already in OT times (see Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4; 6:10 (RSV “closed”); Jer. 9:24–25 (Eng. 25–26).” NICOT

²¹ “Carrying out the divine command, Joshua made stone knives and circumcised the Israelites at¹³ the Hill of the Foreskins. The narrator may have used this name proleptically, indicating that the hill received this name upon this occasion.” NICOT

²² “The word “covenant” is not mentioned explicitly, but when this section is read in the larger context of Gen. 17 and Exod. 12 (see Exod. 12:48b), the connection is obvious. Though circumcision was essential to the celebration of the Passover (Exod. 12:48), the signal manifestation of God’s goodness as shown in the Jordan crossing was not as such dependent on the nation’s circumcised or uncircumcised state. Insistence upon the observance of law under the Old Covenant, though in a very real sense a condition of the covenant, was not to be construed along the lines of righteousness by works. For after all, the very code of the covenant had been given to Israel after the people had been redeemed from Egyptian bondage.... The account now adds reasons for this mass circumcision. It reminds the reader that all the people leaving Egypt, that is, all the men of military age, had died in the desert. This already anticipates what will be explained more fully in subsequent verses. It recalls the sad result of rebellion and disobedience (Num. 14:28–32).” NICOT

Penalty for lack of faith and disobedience to not go into the promised land the first time when God brought them to the edge. The people who made that decision people 20 years old and older, were penalized and God made the nation wander until they all died.

- the Lord swore to them that he would not let them see the land that the Lord had sworn to their fathers to give to us, a land flowing with milk and honey. – God refused to let them say they were sorry and get the opportunity back. They blew it and they were going to die before they would see the fulfillment of the promises of God. God had promised them that they would see a beautiful land with so many resources (flowing with milk and honey – necessary things and sweet things) originally, but when they disobeyed they lost that right and it shifted to their kids.
- So it was their children, whom he raised up in their place, that Joshua circumcised. For they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way. – this is like the third time the author said this...to be clear.
 - **Always prepare for new wine** – if we want to remain in the will of God and active in His kingdom building efforts we must remain prepared for new wine at all times. **If we dry out we can't expand with the new thing that God is doing and He will have to use the new generation to do it and will have to leave us behind. I never want to miss out on movements of God.**
 - Mt 9:16–17 – “No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made.”¹⁷ Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.”
- When the circumcising of the whole nation was finished, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed. – it takes a while to heal up from a major surgery with a flint knife (not that I've had one...with a flint knife...).
- And the Lord said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.”²³ And so the name of that place is called Gilgal²⁴ to this day. – The Lord explained that it was a new beginning. They were getting rid of the old. They were shaking off the disobedience. They were releasing the old ways, customs and people. It was time to start anew. Gilgal seems to mean, ‘to roll’, so perhaps it's related to new start or perhaps it's related to circumcision.
 - **Fresh starts cost getting rid of the old** – And here's the big challenge, right? God wants to do something new with us but many times it means that we have to let go of the old ways. Sometimes that means habits, sometimes people, sometimes hopes, sometimes goals,

²³ “The Lord declares: “Today I have rolled away the shame of Egypt from you,” Israel's bondage, which at the Exodus had been broken in principle, was finally and definitively removed now that the people were safely on Canaan's side, no longer subject to the words of shame of which Num. 14:13–16; Deut. 9:28 speak hypothetically.” NICOT

²⁴ “Hebrew gālāl, “to roll,” is connected here with the place name Gilgal.” NICOT

sometimes our kingdom we've built our lives on. But it's the trade off that should be worth doing it for. So, let's take a moment and talk about what God may be wanting you to let go of so you can walk into the new...

- **Pride** – perhaps the most common thing that God demands that we leave behind is pride. It means that **we have to acknowledge that we aren't God, but only He is. Salvation through Christ demands that we acknowledge and own our failures to live for Him as we were designed up to this point. It demands that we surrender and rely on Him to save us.**
- **A deeply built reputation** – it's been said that there ends up being two levels of salvation when coming to the Lord. The first is surrender to Jesus and falling at the foot of the cross. The other is trying to enter into Christian culture and community. **For many the idea of losing who they have built them to be through reputation is extremely difficult.** They don't want to be a Jesus-freak. They don't want to be a worshiper. They don't want to be a bible reader. Because they don't have values for that yet. **They want to continue to be the tough guy, the gangster, the rumor queen, the sexy temptation, the partier, etc. Right? But many of us can't move forward until we lay that down.**
- **Habits** – some of us have **addictions that are holding us back from God's best. It could be alcohol, drugs, sex, power, fame, whatever. We cannot imagine living life without the things that pacify us and make us feel important.** The idea of trying to live life without a numbing agent doesn't seem possible and we aren't sure we want to do that. **Unfortunately, freedom and a new way of living is on the other side of letting go.**
- **Relationships** – it could be a toxic boyfriend or girlfriend that's dragging you down. It could be a group of friends that you know are not healthy and continue to lead you astray. It could be the fear of **pressure from your family unit (nuclear family) who says that Christians are fools. But if we don't get out from under those power structures and walk with God freely, then our ceiling has already been reached.** God is not going to struggle to work within our tiny dysfunctional boxes we've created for ourselves. He built us to live outside that box and won't be content until we do.
- **New Beginnings**
 - **Passover begins again and manna stops**
 - **Joshua 5:10-12 - "While the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal, they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹² And the manna ceased the day after they ate of the produce of the land. And there**

was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.”

- While the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal, they kept the Passover²⁵ – this is a HUGE deal to the Jews. The Passover is one of the holiest days of the year. It was a symbolic holiday to celebrate God’s ferocious protection of His people and the grace that He extended to the Jews. **To celebrate that IN the Promised Land was momentous.**
- on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho. – this was during the first month of Nisan/Abib, and the 14th day as it was supposed to be but they were able to celebrate in the Promised Land (which happened to be on the plains of Jericho).
- And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. – the very next day they had the fulfillment of God’s promises: eating the fruit of the land (the land flowing with milk and honey). **It was an indicator that they were home. It was an indicator that God got them there after all. It was indicator that they were going to be able to be self-sustaining and blessed after 40 rough years in the desert.**
- And the manna ceased the day after they ate of the produce of the land. And there was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year. – and it was in that moment that **manna was no longer necessary and it shut off.** Remember, the manna was God’s miraculous provision (heavenly bread) to sustain them during the wandering years. But now they were home and able to get their own food from the Promised Land. It was a whole new life.
- **When baby Christian stuff stops** – manna was a supernatural, extra help item. It was necessary at the time because they never had a place to call their own and grow crops over time. They were always on the move. But **once they got in the new place it was time to work hard to get what they used to collect on the ground without work. This principle seems to happen to a lot of us as we grow with the Lord.** When we are first saved we are fired up and just so joyful about our newfound faith and forgiveness. But at some point that **hype slows down and we need to develop new ways of staying fired up.** Sometimes during early years or difficult years, God’s voice comes quickly and easily and we get used to that. But then along the way **He goes quiet on us and we have to find a way to grow deeper roots to stay plugged in because it’s like a drought time.** Some of us are totally content with our newfound best friend Jesus but then **loneliness comes in and we are forced to build Christian community around us.**

²⁵ “Circumcision was a necessary precondition for participation in the Passover festival (Exod. 12:48b). Although the account does not explicitly link the two at this point, the connection between vv. 2–7 and v. 10 is obvious... The biblical significance of the Passover is explained in Exod. 12:13, 23, 27. It commemorated the passing over of the angel of destruction which had come to slay the firstborn of the land of Egypt. This Passover was kept on the evening of the fourteenth of the month. This was the first month of the year, called Abib, also known as Nisan (4:19; Exod. 13:4; Neh. 2:1)” NICOT

Conclusion

- To walk into the new we must walk away from the old – are you ready?
- Prayer for new life