



Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus A Discipleship Journey

The OLD TESTAMENT- Their Story is Our Story
Joshua and the Crossing into the Promised Land - Week 13
Joshua, Chapters 1-5

Last week we left the Israelites wandering in the desert. They spent 38 years wandering, acquiring the law which God gave Moses, and developing their relationship with God and cohesiveness as a people. They learned some difficult lessons about obedience to God and what would happen if they forgot God. The Book of Joshua begins at the end of the desert journey. The generation of people who left Egypt, including Moses, has died. Before he died, Moses had instructed the people to follow God's law and not fall into the habits of worshiping the gods of the peoples around them. At this point the Israelites are in a good place with God. They are listening to God and following His commands. Joshua has been chosen by God to lead the people into the Promised Land. The Israelites have won a few battles along the way and their reputation of winning, because their great God is with them, is well known by the pagan nations around them.

The story of the crossing of the Jordan into the Promised Land is not as familiar as the crossing of the Red Sea, but it is just as miraculous. God instructs Joshua to lead the people to the banks of the Jordan, which is overflowing and deep. Joshua instructs the Levitical priests to carry the Arc of the Covenant down to the water. As soon as they reach the bank, the water flowing from upstream stops and backs up upriver and the water downstream continues, providing a dry river bottom for the Israelites to cross over. The priests continue to stand in the riverbank until all of the Israelites have crossed. When they do, 12 stones are taken from the riverbed to mark the spot where they crossed, and the priests are allowed to continue up the opposite bank. The water immediately begins to flow again as normal. Can you imagine what the pagan kingdoms upstream and downstream must have thought when they witnessed this miracle?

The Israelites have finally reached the Promised Land. They made a camp and renewed their covenant with God by circumcising all of the males born in the desert. They celebrated Passover eating foods provided by the Land of Milk and Honey. The manna which had sustained them in the desert immediately stopped coming. What a celebration that must have been! Now they were ready to continue into the Promised Land, engaging in battle the pagan nations around them. God had put fear of the Israelites into the hearts of the pagan nations and was with the Israelites as they headed into battle.

The lesson in this story is how faithful God is. Even when the Israelites struggled to be faithful to God, God kept His promise of staying with them and giving them what they needed to reach the Promised Land. God does this for us as well. We struggle to be faithful to God, to trust God, yet God is always with us and, when we trust God, He will bring us also to a place of peace and rest.

Think of a time when God allowed a miracle to happen in your life or a time God had to sustain you, even when you may have been less than faithful to Him.

