

Crossing Into Promise

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Israel Enters the Promised Land

Joshua 1:1–5 • Joshua 3:1–17 • Joshua 5:1–15 (NIV)

Central Idea

Today's scripture study looks at Israel's historic Jordan River crossing into the Promised Land. God reveals Himself as faithful even when Israel is not. We will also look at New Testament connections showing how Joshua's story points to Christ.

The Jordan crossing is a theological event. God parts the water, gives the land, rolls away the old identity, and leads the battle. Israel's role is to consecrate, follow, and walk in faith.

#	Topic	Scripture
1	The Commission — God calls Joshua	Joshua 1:1–5
2	Consecration — Preparing to cross	Joshua 3:1–6
3	The Miracle at the Jordan — God parts the water	Joshua 3:7–17
4	Covenant Renewal — Circumcision at Gilgal	Joshua 5:1–9
5	The First Passover in Canaan — Manna ceases	Joshua 5:10–12
6	Holy Ground — The Commander appears	Joshua 5:13–15

PART 1 — THE COMMISSION (JOSHUA 1:1–5)

Joshua 1:2–3, 5 *"Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them... I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses... I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

- God chooses Joshua — He does not volunteer; he is called and commissioned (v.1)
- "Moses my servant is dead" — seasons change; God's mission continues without interruption (v.2)
- The promise is unconditional: "I will give" — not "you will earn" (v.3)
- Joshua (Yehoshua) = "The LORD saves" — the same name as Jesus in Hebrew; same mission
- Three pillars: God's Presence ("I will be with you"), God's Provision (already given), God's Promise (Abrahamic Covenant)

NEW TESTAMENT CONNECTION *Joshua 1:1–5 → Hebrews 4:8–9 • Matthew 1:21*

Joshua succeeded Moses (the Law) and led Israel into the Promised Land	<i>Jesus fulfilled the Law and leads His people into eternal rest — "there remains a Sabbath-rest" (Heb. 4:9)</i>
"The LORD saves" — Joshua's name declared his entire mission	<i>Jesus is the Greek form of the same name: "He will save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21)</i>

PART 2 — CONSECRATION: PREPARING TO CROSS (JOSHUA 3:1–6)

Joshua 3:5 *"Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you."*

- Wait — three days at the Jordan; miracles come in God's timing, not ours (v.1–2)
- Follow the Ark — God's presence goes before; keep eyes on Him, not circumstances (v.3–4)
- Consecrate yourselves — holiness and expectation work together; God moves where there is purity of heart (v.5)
- Priests step in first — obedience precedes the miracle; faith moves before circumstances change (v.6)

PART 3 — THE MIRACLE AT THE JORDAN (JOSHUA 3:7-17)

Joshua 3:15-17 *"Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam... the people crossed over opposite Jericho on dry ground."*

- "Today I will begin to exalt you" — God authenticates His chosen leaders through impossible works (v.7)
- The Jordan was at flood stage — God chose the worst possible conditions for His greatest display (v.15)
- Water stopped at Adam (~18 miles north) — God shut off the entire source, not just a local section (v.16)
- The nation crossed on dry ground — not muddy; God does things thoroughly (v.17)
- This mirrors the Red Sea crossing — the God of Moses is the same God of Joshua and of us (Ex. 14)
- God still parts impossible rivers. Our role: consecrate, follow, step in. His role: open the way.

NEW TESTAMENT CONNECTION <i>Joshua 3:15-17 • Joshua 5:2-9 → 1 Cor. 10:1-2 • Col. 2:11-12 • Rom. 6:3-4</i>	
Israel crossed the Jordan — from wilderness to Promised Land	<i>"Baptism into Moses" (1 Cor. 10:1-2) establishes the typological pattern for Christian baptism</i>
Crossing + circumcision at Gilgal = death to old identity, birth into covenant life	<i>"Buried with him in baptism... raised with him" (Col. 2:11-12) — baptism is our Jordan crossing</i>
Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River — identifying with His people (Matt. 3:13-17)	<i>Baptism is our Jordan crossing: old life left behind, covenant identity received, inheritance entered</i>

PART 4 — COVENANT RENEWAL AT GILGAL (JOSHUA 5:1-9)

Joshua 5:9 *"Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you. So the place has been called Gilgal to this day."*

- The wilderness generation had not been circumcised — covenant identity had lapsed for 40 years (v.4-5)
- Circumcision was the Abrahamic covenant sign (Gen. 17) — before conquest, identity must be restored
- "Gilgal" means "rolling" — God rolls away the reproach of Egypt, the old slavery identity (v.9)
- Spiritual identity precedes spiritual victory — who we are in God determines what we can do for God
- In Christ, our old identity is cut away (Col. 2:11-12); we are no longer slaves but covenant children

PART 5 — THE FIRST PASSOVER IN CANAAN (JOSHUA 5:10–12)

Joshua 5:10–12 *"On the evening of the fourteenth day... the Israelites celebrated the Passover... The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate the produce of Canaan."*

- Passover observed — worship before warfare; they remembered redemption before the first battle
- Manna ceased — 40 years of miraculous provision ended the moment they ate the land's produce
- God's provision changes form with the season; His faithfulness never does
- Trusting God often means releasing the old way of receiving in order to receive the new

NEW TESTAMENT CONNECTION <i>Joshua 5:10–12 → 1 Cor. 5:7 • John 6:35 • Luke 22:19–20</i>	
The Passover lamb was slain; its blood covered Israel; judgment passed over	<i>"Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Cor. 5:7) — every detail pointed to Him</i>
Manna = miraculous daily bread sustaining Israel through the wilderness	<i>"I am the bread of life... whoever feeds on this bread will live forever" (John 6:35, 58)</i>
Israel celebrated Passover before Jericho — worship anchored them before battle	<i>"Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19) — the Lord's Supper is our Passover before every battle</i>

PART 6 — THE COMMANDER OF THE LORD'S ARMY (JOSHUA 5:13–15)

Joshua 5:13–15 *"Joshua looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword... 'Are you for us or for our enemies?' 'Neither,' he replied, 'but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.' Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence... 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.'"*

- A Christophany — a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ (compare Ex. 3:5 and Rev. 19:11–16)
- "Neither" — God does not take our side; we take His. This corrects every form of presumption
- Commander, not Co-pilot — this is God's campaign; Joshua serves under His command
- "Remove your sandals" echoes the burning bush (Ex. 3:5) — worship precedes every conquest
- Joshua fell facedown in worship — the leader on his face is the leader God can use

NEW TESTAMENT CONNECTION <i>Joshua 5:13–15 → Revelation 19:11–16 • 1 John 3:8</i>	
The Commander appeared with a drawn sword, answering to no human agenda	<i>"His eyes are like blazing fire... He wages war... King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (Rev. 19:11–16)</i>
"Neither" — He came on His own mission; Joshua was invited to align with it	<i>"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work" (1 John 3:8)</i>

SIX CONSISTENT THEMES

These themes run through all three chapters and connect directly to Christian life and faith today.

1. God Is Faithful to His Word

What God promised Abraham, He fulfilled through Joshua centuries later without alteration. The God who remembered His covenant across 400 years of Egyptian slavery and 40 years of wilderness wandering keeps His Word to us today. His promises do not expire. We can stake our lives on what He has said.

2. Consecration Enables Miracles

"Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things." This is not about earning God's favor — it is about removing obstacles to His work. Holiness and expectation belong together. God moves where there is purity of heart and bold faith.

3. Faith Takes the First Step

The priests stepped into a flooded river before the water parted. The miracle followed the obedience. Faith is not passive waiting for circumstances to change — it is active movement toward the promise before anything confirms it.

4. Identity Before Conquest

Circumcision at Gilgal preceded the battle of Jericho. God required covenant identity to be restored before the campaign began. Knowing who you are in Christ is not preliminary to spiritual battle — it is its very foundation.

5. Worship Before Warfare

Israel celebrated the Passover before Jericho's walls fell. They ate, they remembered, they worshiped — then they fought. Praise is a weapon. The army that worships first fights from a place of victory, not toward it.

6. We Serve Under His Command

"Neither" (Josh. 5:14). The Commander came on His own mission, and Joshua aligned with it. The Spirit-filled life is led by the Holy Spirit, not managed by human strategy. The question is never "Is God with me?" but always "Am I with God?"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you." (Joshua 3:5) — What does personal consecration look like practically in your life? Is there anything between you and the breakthrough God has for you?

2. The priests stepped into the flooded Jordan before they saw any change in the water. What is the most difficult first step of faith God has asked you to take — where you had to obey before circumstances confirmed anything?

3. When Joshua asked the Commander, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" the answer was "Neither." How does this challenge the way we sometimes assume God is automatically on our side? What does it look like to align with God's mission rather than asking Him to bless yours?

4. The manna stopped the day Israel began eating the produce of the land. Is there something from a previous season — a way God used to provide or lead — that He may be calling you to release in order to receive what He has for you now?

5. Israel celebrated the Passover before the battle of Jericho. How does worship shape your readiness for the spiritual battles you face?

6. "There remains a Sabbath-rest for the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9). What is your Jordan River — and what is your next step of faith toward crossing over into what God has promised?

NOTES

*"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." — **Joshua 1:9***
