

Crossing the Runaway River

Joshua 3; 4; 5:1; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 481-486



How do you feel when you wake up on a day when you know something exciting is going to happen? What if it's something you've never done before? Are you a little nervous thinking about it?

Sunlight streamed through the tent flap, waking Heber. He stretched lazily for a moment before he remembered. Joshua had said today was the day. Today the Lord would do something amazing.

And then, not long ago, the Israelite army had defeated those two kings, Sihon and Og.

Yes, God had done some amazing things, Heber decided. But those things had all happened when Moses had been leading. Moses was dead now, and Joshua was their new leader. *Was Joshua as good a leader as Moses?* Heber wondered. *Would God still do amazing things for the Israelites?*

Heber got up and stepped outside. It had rained a lot lately, and the days were getting warmer. The melting snow in the mountains raced toward the river.

The Jordan River was a muddy, angry torrent, high over its banks. Canaan, the Promised Land, was on the other side of it, and they'd been camped here for three days.

His thoughts were interrupted by his father's urgent voice. "Joshua is giving instructions," he said. "Come quickly."

Joshua was already speaking when Heber and his father arrived. "The ark of the covenant will go into the Jordan ahead of you," he was saying. "You are to move out from your positions and follow it.

"As soon as the priests who carry the ark of the Lord set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up



What would it be? Heber wondered. God had done amazing things for the Israelites. He'd heard hundreds of times about how God had parted the Red Sea and led the people out of Egypt. He'd eaten manna every day of his life. It was amazing. Food every day without fail!

The Message

God gives us leaders to help us do great things for Him.

Memory Verse

“The Lord will do amazing things among you”

(Joshua 3:5, NIV).

like a wall,” Joshua continued. “The priests will remain in the middle of the river while the entire Israelite camp crosses. Break camp now and get ready.”

“We have no time to waste,” Heber’s father said. Heber gulped down some manna as he helped to pack. They soon heard the order to line up.

Up ahead he could see the priests carrying the ark of the covenant. Moving forward, they were leading the entire Israelite camp straight toward the rushing, roaring river. The priests didn’t hesitate for a moment as they stepped right into the rapids. As soon as their feet touched the water, it stopped. The water came to a complete halt, piling up, just as Joshua had said it would. The water downstream of the priests kept flowing away from them. In a matter of seconds, the water had disappeared around a bend. The priests moved to the middle of the river. A great shout went up from the Israelites. The line of people moved quickly to the riverbank. They began to pick their way across the rocky riverbed and up the other side.

Heber couldn’t take his eyes off the priests. His own family moved across the riverbed, over and around rocks. They tried to avoid the little puddles the river left behind. The priests still stood in the middle of the riverbed, still holding the ark high. The next thing Heber knew he was scrambling up the bank into Canaan. Then he turned to watch while the last of the Israelites stepped into the Promised Land. Finally the priests crossed.

The instant the last priest cleared the banks, the waters broke loose. With a fear-

some thunder they resumed their mighty journey.

It was over. As easily as that, their long journey was over. Heber sat down on the riverbank. He looked up at the fluffy clouds overhead. *There’s no doubt*, he thought, *God is with Joshua just as He was with Moses. And I believe even more amazing things are still to come.*





S A B B A T H

DO If possible, walk near a river with your family. What would happen if you tried to walk across this river? Sit near the river and read your lesson.

READ Read Joshua 3:5 together. Talk about some amazing things God has done for your family.

SING Sing "Bless His Holy Name" (Sing for Joy, No. 9).

S U N D A Y

READ Together with your family, read Joshua 3.

DO Fill a basin with water. Find five objects and see what floats. What sinks? Try to separate the water by blowing or with your hands.

SING Teach your memory verse to your family. Try to put it to music. Then thank God for His blessings.

M O N D A Y

SHARE Read Joshua 4-5:1 with your family. Who were the leaders in this story? ✓ each one.

___ Joshua ___ God ___ priests
___ the 12 men who carried the rocks

DO What would have happened if the Israelites had not followed their leaders? Thank God for the leaders He has sent into your life. Pray for them today.

SING Sing "Trust and Obey" (Sing for Joy, No. 113).

T U E S D A Y

READ Read Joshua 3:16 for worship. Imagine that you are a spy watching as the Israelites cross the Jordan. Have your family help you write a report for the rulers of Jericho. Draw a picture to go with your report.

DO Teach your memory verse to someone else.

SING Sing "All Nations of the Earth" (Sing for Joy, No. 22).

W E D N E S D A Y

DO With your family name three of your church leaders today. Write their names here:

READ Read Isaiah 8:20 together. How can you tell if leaders are from God?

DO Would you like to be a leader for God? Ask Him to give you the courage, the wisdom, and the faith to do amazing things for Him.

SING Sing your memory verse song with your family.

God made a path for us through the river just as He had made the Red Sea part when Moses was our leader.





T H U R S D A Y

READ With your family, read your lesson story again. Then read Psalm 114:3, 5, 7.

DO Fill a shallow box with some sand. Make the Jordan River with construction paper or foil. Place it in the middle of your scene. Cut the "river" in half and roll each half back a little to look like the Jordan with a dry path through the river. Put green trees, flowers, and other pretty things on the Canaan side of the river. Put four little priests in the middle of the river with a little gold-colored box for the ark. Add people crossing the river. (Use seeds or pebbles to represent them.) Write your memory verse on a little sign and put it near your scene. Save this for tomorrow.

F R I D A Y

DO During family worship, use your Jordan sand scene to tell your family your lesson story.

READ Ask each person to name something amazing God has done for them. Read Psalm 86:10 together.

DO Write a thank-you letter to your pastor or another church leader. Tell why you appreciate his or her leadership.

SING Say your memory verse together. Then sing "I Want to Be" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 124). Pray that God will help you become a leader for Him.

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PUZZLE

Directions: Unscramble the names in the following sentence.

__ __ __ was with __ __ __ __ as
ODG SOJUHA

he was with __ __ __ __.
SOSME