

A DEEPER DIVE

January 25, 2025

Micah 6:8—He has shown you, oh mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. – NIV.

Prayer Focus – Each day this week as you meet with your savior. When you do, lift up in prayer the places in the world where there is war and little hope, also the missionaries that you know of and support. Pray for our nation and our leaders, and also your local church and community. Pray daily for our Pastors and Elders. Finally, follow the instruction in Philippians 4:4-7 make your prayer personal. Remember 1 Peter 5:7.

Monday: Reading– Joshua 4: 8-14; Hebrews 13:17.

Consider this– Obstacles or faith?

The people hurried across the dry ground of the Jordan as God kept the waters at bay. Verse 10 shows the people's obedience to Joshua and the Lord. Were they fearful? Inspired? Shocked? Who knows, but we do know that whatever their emotions at the time, they obeyed, in faith, despite what their eyes were showing them. Do you focus on the water, or on the miracle?

The mantle from Moses has now completely been passed to Joshua, and the people stand in awe of Joshua as they had with Moses. Is this just a bit of a history lesson? We live in an age of questioning, disbelieving, and when an appeal to any authority is suspect. Do you have this attitude? As far as it goes in the fellowship, read Hebrews 13:17.

Tuesday: Reading– Joshua 4:15; Exodus 31:18; Deuteronomy 9:11

Consider this– The ark.

In verse 15 Joshua is told by the Lord to have the priests bring the ark out of the river. So that's what he does. If you read this verse in different versions, you will find some versions (NKJV, ESV, NASB) call the ark, the "ark of the Testimony." The NIV calls it, "the ark of the covenant law." In Exodus, when Moses had the tablets, they are called "two tables of testimony" (NKJV). In Deuteronomy the tablets are called, "the tablets of the covenant." Are these distinctions meaningful to you? The NKJV study notes say that the "Hebrew word for testimony also means reminder." So, thinking about all of Joshua 4, why is this idea of "reminder" so vital?

Wednesday: Reading– Joshua 4:16-18; 3:15-17

Consider this– Miracles?

"The waters of the Jordan returned to their place." Here we get the conclusion of what started in chapter 3. God allows the water to return to its natural flow. I imagine the whole nation of Israel standing on the banks of the river watching as the Priests carry the ark to shore. Then, probably to the amazement of everyone there, the river, which chapter 3 says had "rose in a heap very far away" flowed downstream to return to its flood stage. This would have been an awe-inspiring and scary moment, the river at this time was most likely not placid. This is a section that those who deny the truth of the Bible because they do not believe in miracles would have a problem with. What would you say to a person who questioned this passage, or other miraculous passages?

Thursday: Reading– Joshua 4:19-24

Consider this– Remembrance.

Joshua instructs the Israelites about the reason for the stones. Reread verse 6-7. How do Joshua's statements here parallel and expand on what he said in the previous verses? Why do you think he expanded on the previous verses? In verse 6 he says, "when your children ask you ..." and in verse 19 he says, "In the future when your descendants ask their parents..." How long is the story of the crossing of the Jordan supposed to last? What are the implications for us, as followers of Christ sharing the Gospel these days, a couple of thousand years after the death and resurrection of Christ?

Friday: Reading– Joshua 4:19-24

Consider this– The name of the Lord goes forth.

This chapter closes with Joshua telling the Israelites why God worked the miracle at the Jordan. One was, of course, to allow the Israelites to cross into the promised land. What does he say? How do you think "all the peoples of the earth" are going to know about what happened at the Jordan?

What parts of this part of the story can we apply to our lives?

Saturday: Reading– Joshua 4; Exodus 12:2-3.

Consider this– God beyond measure.

In Joshua 4:19 we are told the date when Israel left the Jordan and went to camp at Gilgal. Compare this with the passage in Exodus. What is happening leading up to and after the Exodus verses? How is what is happening in the Joshua passages connected? Do you think this is just a coincidence or is God doing something here? These passages should make us sit back in awe of the power of the God of the universe. JB Phillips once wrote a book entitled, "Your God is too Small." In a similar vein comes these words from the Henri Nouwen Society–

Just as God cannot be "caught" or "comprehended" in any specific idea, concept, opinion, or conviction, he cannot be defined by any specific feeling or emotion either. God cannot be identified with a good affectionate feeling toward our neighbor, or with a sweet emotion of the heart, or with ecstasies, movements of the body or handling of snakes. God is not just our good inclinations, our fervor, our generosity or our love. All these experiences of the heart may remind us of God's presence, but their absence does not prove God's absence. God is not only greater than our mind, he is also greater than our heart, and just as we have to avoid the temptation of adapting God to our small concepts. We also have to avoid adapting him to our small feelings.

Questions? Comments? Email me, Steve Callaway, at stvc13@gmail.com.