

### "Crossing the line being on the right side of Jordan."

The Bible study committee had a difficult time coming up with a theme for the lessons this year. After 5 or 6 meetings Brother Hayes came up with crossing the line. What does our theme have to do with our Christian journey?

Three things came to my mind when crossing the line was chosen as the theme for winter bible study. **First**, God has drawn lines that we are supposed to cross and there may be obstacles in our way but the Lord still wants us to move forward.

**Second**, God will draw a line that we are to stay behind and our footsteps are not to cross.

And the **third** line is one that God has drawn that we are not to cross or stay behind but a path we are to follow.

Let's take a look at **the 1<sup>st</sup> line** and give an example of crossing a line that God has drawn. During the spring of the year the Jordan River was at flood stage. The Jordan was a tremendous barrier to the nation of Israel and it blocked their way to the promised land.

But none the less Israel was to look to the Lord to overcome this obstacle so they could enter the land of Canaan. We will take a closer look at this event a little later.

**The second line** is one God has painted that our footsteps are not to cross but we are to stay behind. Moses looked with anticipation to crossing the Jordan

**In Deut 3:25** Moses says to God "I pray the, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.

But God didn't let Moses cross the Jordan. Why? In Numbers 20:8 God says to Moses "Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together. Thou, and Aaron thy brother and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes;

**Numbers 20:11** says "And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

**Numbers 20:12** " And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

Moses crossed a line that he was to stay behind. He was supposed to speak to the rock and God penalized him for his disobeying.

**And the third line** is one we are not to cross or stay behind but it's a Path we are to follow.

**Joshua 24:15** “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Joshua chose a path for him and his family and that path is to follow the Lord. In the very next verse Israel says they will follow the same path but it doesn't take Israel long to get off track.

**Joshua 24:33** “And Eleazar the son of Aaron died: and they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim.

So the question is what was Phinehas doing owning land? We see here that Israel has already strayed of course because priest were not to own land.

The Psalmist said in **Psalms 17:5** “Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.”

**Proverbs 4:26** Ponder the path of thy feet, and let thy ways be established. We need to pay attention to where our path will lead us.

What does being on the right side of Jordan mean?

By crossing the line or the Jordan River Israel would be doing the will of the Lord and be on the right side of Jordan. When we are out of Gods will we are on the wrong side of Jordan and were not where the Lord wants us to be.

As members of the human family we have a free will to do as we please. Just because God allows us to make our own choices it does not mean God will always put his stamp of approval on what we do.

Let's look at some examples that will point this out.

We are told in **I Samuel 8:4-5** Israel wanted a King “Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all nations”.

**I Samuel 8:7** “And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto thy voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

Samuel even warned Israel what it will be like with a King and they still want one. God wanted a theocracy where Israel looked to him **but he still allowed them to have a King.**

Israel crossed a line that God allowed them to cross but they should have stayed behind it.

Moses was supposed to speak to the rock and he disobeyed God and smote it. **Yet water still flowed abundantly.** This shows us how gracious God is.

Abraham, David, Solomon and other men of God had multiple wives. God allowed this to happen but he didn't approve of it. God is for the family and you can't give me one example in the Bible of a man with multiple wives and show me where his family prospered under this arrangement.

The tribes of Reuben, Gad and ½ tribe of Manasseh asked Moses for land on the East side of the Jordan River. (The grass is not always greener on the other side).

**Joshua 1:12** “and to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying

**Joshua 1:13-15** “Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, The Lord your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land.

“Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan: but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them:”

“Until the Lord have given your brethren rest, as he hath given you, and they also have possessed the land which the Lord your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses the Lord's servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sun rising.”

God allowed the 2½ tribes to have land on the East side of Jordan but did God really want them there. Were they on the right side of Jordan? Well we will examine this question later on as we continue our study.

But before we continue and we look at the crossing of the Jordan we need to study a little geography. This will help us understand and have a greater appreciation for the miracle of crossing the Jordan.

Remember, God told his people to cross the Jordan River and they would inhabit a land flowing with milk and honey. Ex 3:8.

Four rivers in Syria are the beginning of the Jordan and they join and feed into Lake Huleh. Lake Huleh is 20 miles long and 5 miles wide. The Jordan comes out of Lake Huleh and goes for 10 miles and flows into the Sea of Galilee.

Then from the Sea of Galilee it travels in a line as the crow flies for 70 miles to the Dead Sea. But because of all the rivers curves and turns it covers 200 miles.

The main river is approximately 90 to 100 feet wide and anywhere from 3 to 10 feet deep. Because there are 27 rapids between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea the river was never a major route of transportation.

During biblical times no large city was ever built on the banks of the Jordan because of the swampy conditions, extreme heat and wild animals. In Amos 6:14 it is called the river of wilderness

In the NT about the only time you hear of the River Jordan with any significance is with John the Baptist and the Baptism of Jesus.

**Josh 3:1** “And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over.

**Gen 22:3** Wasn't it early in the morning when Abraham rose up with Isaac and God tested Abraham's faith?

**Ex 8:20** David left early in the morning to fight Goliath.

Moses was told to rise early in the morning one time before he faced Pharaoh. **Ex 9:13**

In the **16<sup>th</sup> chapter of Mark** and **verse 2** we are told it was very early in the morning when the two women went to Jesus tomb and found him risen from the grave.

God does great things in the morning and the best way to start your day is with the Lord

**Josh 3:2** “And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host:”

**Josh 3:3** “And they commanded the people. Saying, when ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place and go after it.”

**Josh 3:4** “Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore.”

The ark was a chest made of shittim wood and covered with gold on the inside and outside. The Gold pictured Christ's deity and the wood was a picture of his humanity. Jesus was both God and man.

The ark represented God's presence and is a picture of Christ. When Israel crossed Jordan it was a picture of Christ leading the Way and Israel was on the right path when they followed the Lord's lead.

We know we are on the wrong side of Jordan when God is not leading in our lives. It is good for us to remember that God has the lead and he is in front. If we are not following God we are going in the wrong direction.

**Josh 3:5** “And Joshua said unto the people, sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the Lord will do wonders among you. The sanctification mentioned here is spiritual.”

God has promised Israel they will see a miracle.

**Read Joshua 3:6-7** as with the crossing of the Red Sea and now the crossing of Jordan, Joshua’s position as the Lord’s servant will be comparable to Moses.

**Read Joshua 3:8-10** By holding the Jordan back God is showing Israel and the Canaanites he is in control over the waters (Red Sea & Great Flood).

In Biblical times it was common to obtain a judicial verdict of the gods by having the accused submit to a trial by water.

They would throw a person into the river and if he drowned the gods had found him guilty. If a person survived the gods had found him innocent.

By passing safely through the water God is showing his rightful claim to the land.

**Read Joshua 1:9-11**

These verses prove God’s rightful claim to the land.

**Josh 3:15** “And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priest that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,)

**Read Josh 3:16-17** they passed over on dry ground.

**Josh 4: 1-3** God speaks here to Joshua and tells him to choose one man from each tribe. The men were to go into the Jordan where the priest stood with the ark and pick up a stone. They were to take the stones out of the Jordan and to their place of lodging that night.

**Josh 4:4-5** Joshua calls the 12 men and gives them their instructions.

**Josh 4:6-7** When, a new generation of children asked the meaning of the stone memorial this was an opportunity for their parents to teach them about the Lord and the great work he had done.

**Josh 4:8** Israel obeys Joshua’s instruction.

**Josh 4:9** Interesting, Joshua sets up 12 stones in the mist of the Jordan where the Priest is standing.

**Josh 4:10** The Jordan River is at flood stage and God has removed this barrier and allowed all the people to cross the Jordan. However they haven't reached the finish line.

**Josh 4:11** The Ark of the Covenant finishes crossing the Jordan with the Priest. More detail of this is given in verse 18.

**Josh 4:12** "The tribes of Ruben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh pass over the Jordan armed and ready for battle."

**Josh 4:15-17** The Priest bring the Ark of the Covenant out of the Jordan and remember the Ark contained the tablets of the Covenant. Deut 10:1-5

**Joshua 4:17-18.** The waters of the Jordan returned as they were over their banks.

**Joshua 4:19** It was the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month that Israel chose the Passover lamb.

**Joshua 4:21-22** Israel was to teach their children what happened.

**Proverbs 22:6** "Train up a child in the way he should go: And when he is old he will not depart from it."

**Deuteronomy 6:7-8** "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up.

They were to teach their children that the 12 stones Joshua set up in the Jordan was a picture of the death of Jesus Christ and that the 12 stones taken out of the Jordan were a picture Christ's resurrection.

God was showing not only did he have the power to heap up the Jordan River but he was showing he had the power to raise Christ from the grave.

When Israel taught their children about the Lord they were on the right side of Jordan.

**Joshua 4:23-24** "For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over:"

"That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: **that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever.**"

God wanted every man and women to have an experience like Rahab.

**Joshua 1:11** Rahab says: “for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in the earth below.

Rahab was on the right side of Jordan.

**Now let's examine the 2 1/2 tribes a little closer and see if we can determine if they are on the right side of Jordan.**

**Joshua 22:1-4** “Then Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh.”

“and said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I command you:”

“Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord your God.”

“And now the Lord your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return ye, and get ye unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you on the other side Jordan.”

Joshua gathers the 2 1/2 tribes together and tells them they have done a good thing in helping their brethren and tells them they can return to their land on the eastside of Jordan.

**Joshua 22:5** “But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and serve him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Joshua is warning the 2 1/2 tribes that even though they will live on the eastside of the Jordan River that they are still to follow the Mosaic Law.

**Joshua 22:10** “And when they came unto the borders of the Jordan , that are in the land of Canaan , the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an alter by Jordan, a great alter to see.”

The Two and one half tribes have built a large alter on the Westside that can be seen for a long distance.

**Joshua 22:16-17** “Thus saith the whole congregation of the Lord, What trespass is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the Lord, in that ye have builded you an alter, that ye might rebel this day against the Lord?”



“Is this the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the Lord.”

The 9 1/2 tribes accuse the 2 1/2 tribes of building an alter to the Canaanite god Baal. They remembered what happened to them in **Num 25:1-5 & Num 31:16**. Balaam caused Israel to sin by marrying Moabite women and worshiping Baal.

**Joshua 22:21-23** “Then the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh answered, and said unto the heads of the thousands of Israel,”

“The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if it be rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord, (save us not this day,)”

“That we have built us an alter to turn from following the Lord: or if to offer thereon burnt offerings or meat offerings, or if to offer peace offerings thereon, let the Lord himself require it.”

Now the 2 1/2 tribes explain that they did not build an alter for sacrifices but as a reminder that they still belonged to the nation Israel.

**Joshua 22:24** “And if we have not rather done it for fear of this thing, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have you to do with the Lord God of Israel

The 2 1/2 tribes wanted to remain connected to Israel.

**Read Joshua 22:31**

The children of Israel realized they made a mistake in coming against their brethren and were a little hasty.

Can you remember another time when 11 of the tribes came against one tribe and acted a little hasty? In the book of Judge’s Israel almost wiped out the tribe of Benjamin.

**Read Joshua 22:26-28**

**Joshua 22:34** “And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the alter ED: for it shall be a witness between us that the Lord is God.”

**Ex 34:13** “But ye shall destroy their alters, break their images, and cut down their groves.”

**Deut 12:27** “And thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, the flesh and blood, upon the alter of the Lord: and the blood of thy sacrifices shall be poured out upon the alter of the Lord thy God, and thou shalt eat the flesh.”



**Deut 27:4-8** was the one exception and Israel is told to take twelve stones out of the Jordan River and set up a memorial.

The Brazen alter in the tabernacle speaks of Christ's redemptive work and was a place of unity. It was a place where they were to make their sacrifices.

The alter speaks of the death of Jesus as a sacrifice.

The two and a Half tribes have built a bloodless alter. In my opinion they have strayed from the truth.

**Matt 7:16** "Ye shall not get them from their fruits.

God wanted centralized worship and the 21/2 tribes were not under a divine command to do this.

I Thess "Abstain from all appearance of evil"

Let's see if we can find some more evidence.

**Luke 8:26** "And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee."

**Luke 8:27** "And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and wore no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in tombs."

**Luke 8:28** "When he saw Jesus he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not."

**Luke 8:31** "And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep."

**Luke 8:32** "And there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them, and he suffered them.

**Luke 8:33** "Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked."

**Luke 8:37** "Then the whole country of the Gadarenes round besought him to depart from them: for they were taken with great fear: and he went back up into the ship and returned back again."

**The people blamed Jesus for the loss of the pigs. When in fact, Jesus only had the devils go into the pigs and it was the devils that caused the pigs to drown in the sea.**