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# **Joshua | BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS Series**

*Text: Joshua 3-5*

# *For the week of Sunday, March 19, 2017*

# **Opening the Conversation**

Over 40 years had passed since the nation of Israel had left Egypt and the day to enter the Promised Land had finally arrived! There was only one problem – they had to cross the Jordan River – at flood season no less. The Lord provides a miracle for His people and teaches them the importance of remembering all He has done for them.

**For Starters**

Group Question: Do you collect items when you take a trip or vacation? What’s your favorite item?

Everyone: Take a moment; open your photos on your smart phone and share a memorable photo. Everyone pass their phones around the group and BRIEFLY share why it is memorable to you.

**The Text**

Joshua 3-5

**Life Group Discussion Questions**

1. (Joshua 3:5) What is the meaning of the word “consecrate”? Why was it important for the Israelites to consecrate themselves prior to this miraculous event? Is consecration essential today? Why, or why not?
2. (vs. 14-17) Why do you think God timed the Jordan crossing during flood stage?
3. (4:1-9) What was the significance of 12 stones and why was this important for all 12 tribes to be represented? What values, or stories, have you heard your family elders share over and over. Why are they important to your family?

**ABOUT THE ARK OF THE COVENANT**

The ark was a gold-covered acacia wood box measuring 2.5 x 1.5 x 1.5 cubits that for the Israelite people symbolized the presence of God. It is first mentioned in Exodus 25:10-22 among the furnishings of the tabernacle. The ark's top cover supported two winged creatures called cherubim. They faced each other across the top of the ark and their outstretched wings touched at the tips. The mobility of the ark was insured by two permanently attached carrying poles, reflecting the fact that the people of Israel and their God had no fixed dwelling place. Even when the ark was permanently located in the Holy of Holies, the poles remained (1 Kings 8), a visible reminder that God was "tenting" among his people, but that his presence could be withdrawn.

The practical function of the ark was to protect and preserve various sacred objects. In the early accounts of the ark only the Mount Sinai covenant tablets are so protected, giving rise to the common epithet, the "ark of the covenant"(Exodus 25:16; 1 Kings 8:9), or a variant, "ark of the Lord's covenant"(Numbers 14:44). Later traditions also mentioned a portion of preserved manna and Aaron's rod as being in the ark (Hebrews 9:4). The ark also had a military role, leading the march of the people of Israel in the wilderness (Numbers 10:33), circling the walls of Jericho (Joshua 4:6), and going forth to battle against the Philistines 1 Samuel 4:5).

Scripture associates God's physical presence with the ark. Moses addressed the ark as "the Lord" in the wilderness (Numbers 10:35). The ark was sacred, indeed, dangerous to friends and foes alike. The Philistines recognized its holiness, and to neutralize its power they placed it in the temple of Dagon, to Dagon's distress (1 Samuel 5:8). The awesome holiness of the ark was demonstrated when Uzzah was killed for touching the ark when he tried to prevent it from falling (1 Chronicles 13:10).

1. (5.1) What was the impact of this miraculous river crossing on the neighboring kings?
2. (5:2) Why did the children of Israel wander in the wilderness for 40 years? (See Numbers 14:34) And, why did the Lord command Joshua to circumcise them “again”?

WHY DID GOD COMMAND THEM TO BE CIRCUMCISED AGAIN?

The symbolic meaning of this act therefore would seem to be . . . "Restore the children of Israel a second time to the position they formerly held, as visibly bound to me, and placed under my protection, by the rite of circumcision."

1. (vs. 10-12) The Israelites celebrated Passover and ate “produce of the land.” In verse 12, it says the manna God had provided STOPPED! What is the significance of 1) God stopping the flow of heaven’s manna and 2) Israel eating food they had cultivated by their own hands? Was this God’s way of saying “It’s time to grow up”?
2. What are some significant ways God has stimulated your own personal growth (or, helped you grow up)?