

Standing In The Midst Of The Jordan.

Joshua 4.

Sunday evening, October 18, 2009.

I. "...until everything was finished..." Vs. 10.

"So the priests who bore the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished that the Lord had commanded Joshua to speak to the people."

A. Here we are to see the presence of the Lord Himself under the emblem of the ark. It was the Lord Himself who held back the waters of the Jordan River.

B. In the waters of the Jordan River we are to see a type of the judgment and justice of God which keeps sinners out of the promised land.

The Jordan River was at flood stage, meaning that the river was filled to overflowing and there was an abundance of water in it. So the justice and judgment of God against sinners are at flood stage and might easily sweep away sinners in its mighty current, carrying them to the Dead Sea of God's eternal wrath.

C. Although it was the Lord alone who held back the floodwaters, He chose to do so in a covenantal setting. He has the priests standing with Him, carrying the ark. And so the Lord, accompanied by the priests, and as it were allowing the priests to "help Him," held back the floodwaters which would have meant certain death for anyone and any living thing trying to cross over into the promised land.

Applications:

1. Rich is the imagery here prefiguring the history of the Lord's people crossing over into their true promised land, of which Canaan was only a type.

In the midst of the river of God's judgment and justice, which is at flood stage, stands the Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom, just like the ark, dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and God is present among His people who are crossing over; and He is holding back those floodwaters. Rightfully the apostle Paul says that it is still the day of God's grace, or the acceptable time. 2 Corinthians 6:1,2.

2. But notice that the Lord Jesus does not stand there alone. He is accompanied by His priesthood who carry His presence before His watching people and a watching world. That priesthood in the New Covenant is the entire company of believers.

3. It is our inestimable privilege to stand in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to "help Him" hold back the floodwaters of God's eternal wrath. 2 Corinthians 6:1 uses this terminology: "...workers together with Him..."

4. It is our privilege to hold Him before a multitude of men women and children who by grace have chosen to become "Hebrews," that is "ones who are crossing over."

II. "...And the people hurried and crossed over." Vs. 10.

A. It would seem that the people crossing over the dry riverbed of the Jordan, were possessed by a holy awe as they looked at that wall of water right behind the priests holding the ark. They had a sense of the impending danger should that wall of water collapse and rush down on them.

B. That sense of the impending danger combined with holy awe gave them a sense of urgency. They should not linger in the river; have a picnic there or something along those lines.

C. Instinctively they knew that that wall of water was not going to stand there forever. It was going to come down, and so they hurried and crossed over.

Applications:

1. The attitude of the people is instructive to us.
As professing Christians we are like those Israelites who were crossing over the Jordan while the floodwaters of judgment were being held back.
2. The nature of the world in which we live is like the dry riverbed of the Jordan while the Lord held back the floodwaters of judgment.
3. Are you possessed of that holy awe and that sense of urgency to cross over? Or do you believe deep down inside that the world as we know it will stand forever?
4. Have you made the dry riverbed of this world your home; have you set your affections on it; are you totally in love with the wonders and beauties of this dry streambed and you totally intend to enjoy it as much and as long as possible?
5. The alternative would be to be like these Israelites who hurried and crossed over. They hurried and crossed over for two reasons I believe:
 - They were possessed of that holy sense of awe and urgency, knowing that that wall of water was not going to be held back forever.
 - Their hopes and dreams; the love of their hearts was not set on the beauties of the dry streambed, but on the high ground of Canaan.Similarly the Lord Jesus invites us to lay up our treasures in heaven. Matt. 6:19-21. And the apostle Paul invites us to set our affections on things above. Col. 3:2 AV. The same truth is urged on us by the apostle John in negative language as he urges us not to love the world or the things in it. 1 John 2:15.

III. "Command the priests... to come up from the Jordan." Vs. 16.

- A. The people had made haste in crossing over, and there came a time "when the people had completely crossed over."
- B. The last of the people were the ones that had placed the memorial in the river at the place where the priests stood, and who had taken twelve stones to make the memorial in the midst of the camp of Israel.
- C. They had completely crossed over and come up on the dry land.
- D. At this time the Lord Himself acts and calls His priests, carrying the ark, up from the river, and He returns the river to its course, flood stage and overflowing all its banks.

Applications:

1. There comes a time when the last of God's elect will have made it safely across the dry river. Then the Lord will call His priesthood, carrying the testimony of Jesus, out of this world, and gather them safely on the banks of their promised land.
2. Then the Lord Himself will act and bring the floodwaters of judgment over this world.
 - Not until the Lord had secured Noah did He destroy the earth.
 - Not until He had secured Lot did He destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - Not until the last Israelite climbed out of the Red Sea did He destroy Pharaoh.Not until the last of God's elect has safely crossed over will the Lord come in judgment against the entire earth. Only make haste and make your calling and election sure.