

Joshua

Chapter 3

Doing the Impossible

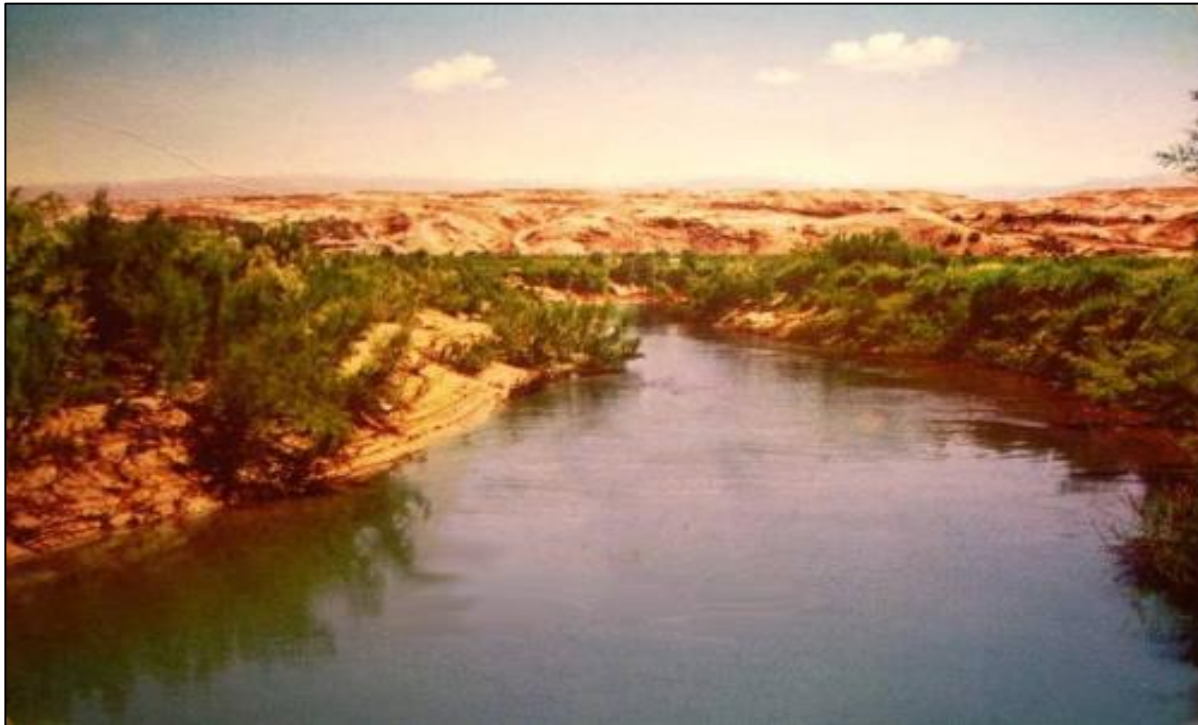


“Anyone can do the possible; add a bit of courage and zeal and some may do the phenomenal; only Christians are obliged to do the impossible.”

A. W. Tozer

Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over.

A seven mile journey to the edge



After three days the officers went throughout the camp, giving orders to the people.. "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, who are Levites, carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it.

3 days to think about how to get across ?
Remember the Red sea !

This time – there is no Moses' rod
The priests carry the covered ark.
Make an orderly move.
Follow it. (sign of God's presence!)
Put your focus on the LORD



Then you will know which way to go,
since you have never been this way before.

God's guidance in unfamiliar territory



Isaiah 42:16 I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.

New challenges ahead – what do you follow?

"But keep a distance of about a thousand yards between you and the ark; do not go near it."

Reverence for God –



It is still needed - but access is now available through Jesus

Joshua told the people,
"Consecrate yourselves,
for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you."

It's a prophecy – the LORD can still amaze us

The necessary condition for God's working is consecration
What did it mean for them and now for us?



Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people." So they took it up and went ahead of them.

The commander gives the order to move
The Lord is leading



And the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses.

Encouragement comes from the Lord

Not for Joshua's pride but to establish his position as
God's appointed man



No longer Moses but the same God!

Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant.. `When you reach the edge of the Jordan`s waters, go and stand in the river.`"

God gives the instructions through Joshua

This is different to the time at the Red Sea

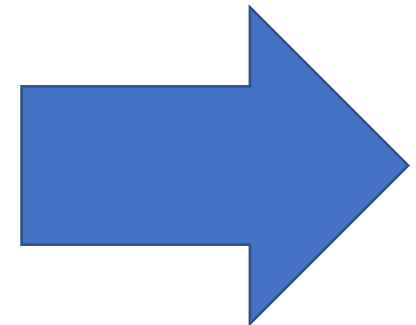
The priests have to get their feet wet first!



Joshua said to the Israelites, "Come here and listen to the words of the LORD your God. This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you.

God gives instructions through Joshua to the people

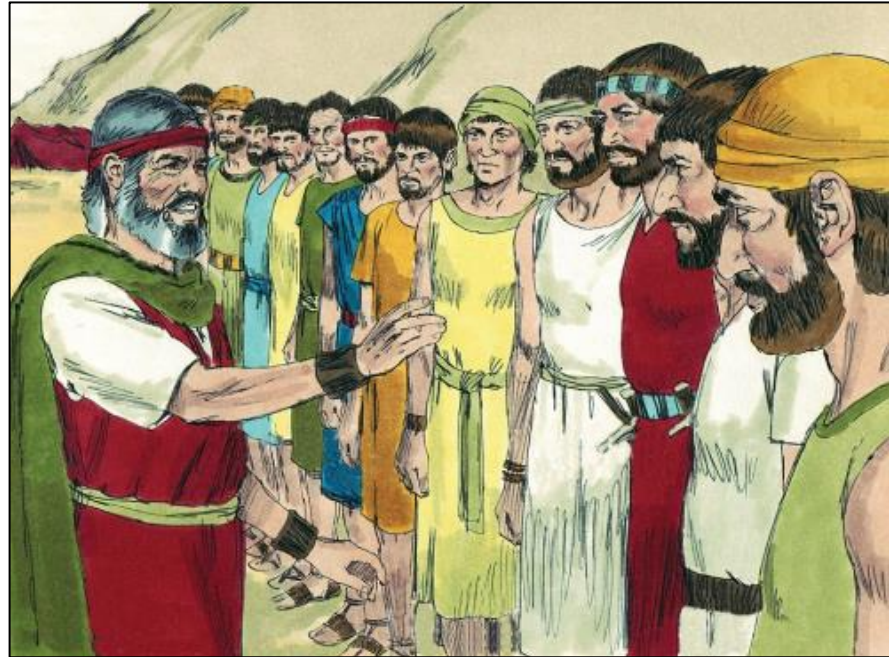
1. You will know God's presence with you
2. He will make room for you
3. Watch the ark of Lord of ALL the earth (and rivers)
4. Follow it.



Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel,
one from each tribe.

Why?

He doesn't appear to tell them just yet (Chapter 4 gives us the detail)
Just choose your representatives.



Do it first, explanations will come later.

And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the LORD--the Lord of all the earth--set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap."

Prophecy – do it – it will work!

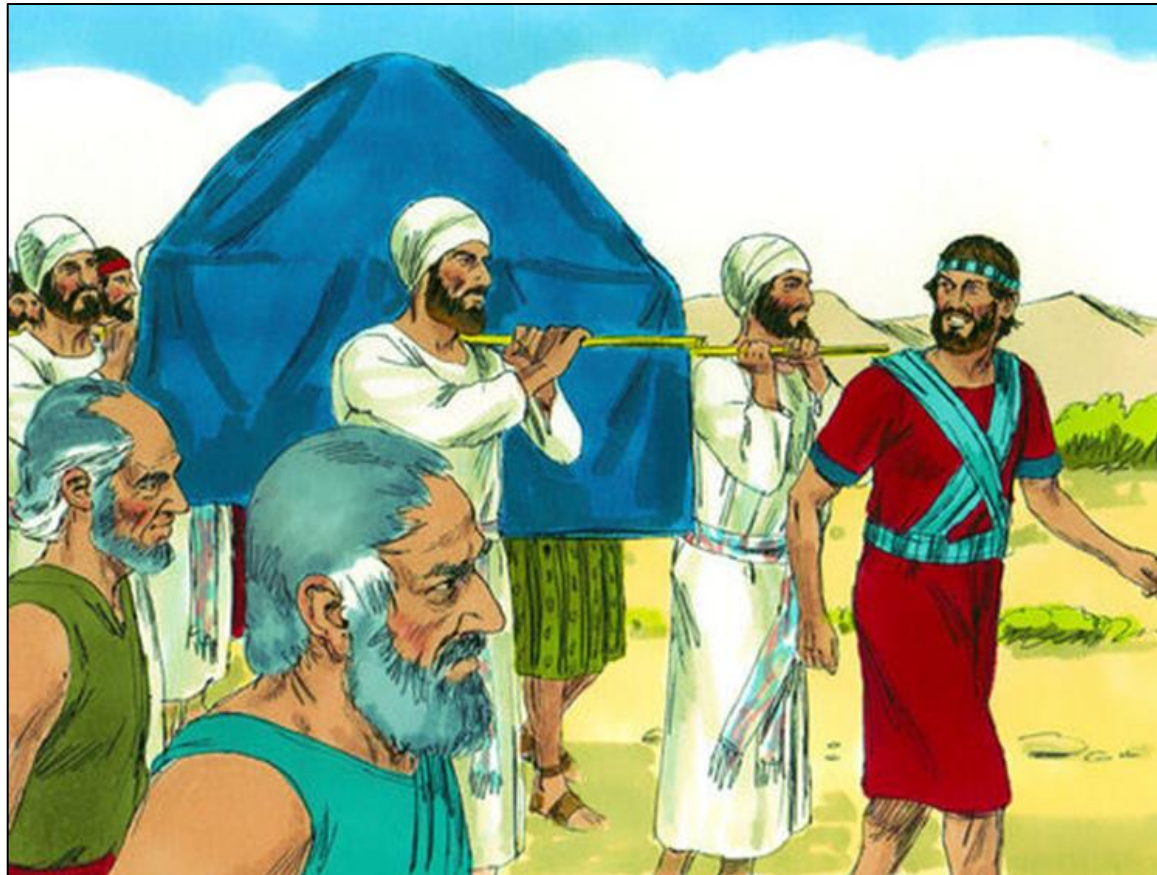
What did the priests think as they approached the edge ?

Faith in what God said is required



So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them.

This is it! The talking is over. Now for action.



Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest.

Why does the Lord seem to make things difficult?



Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water`s edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing.

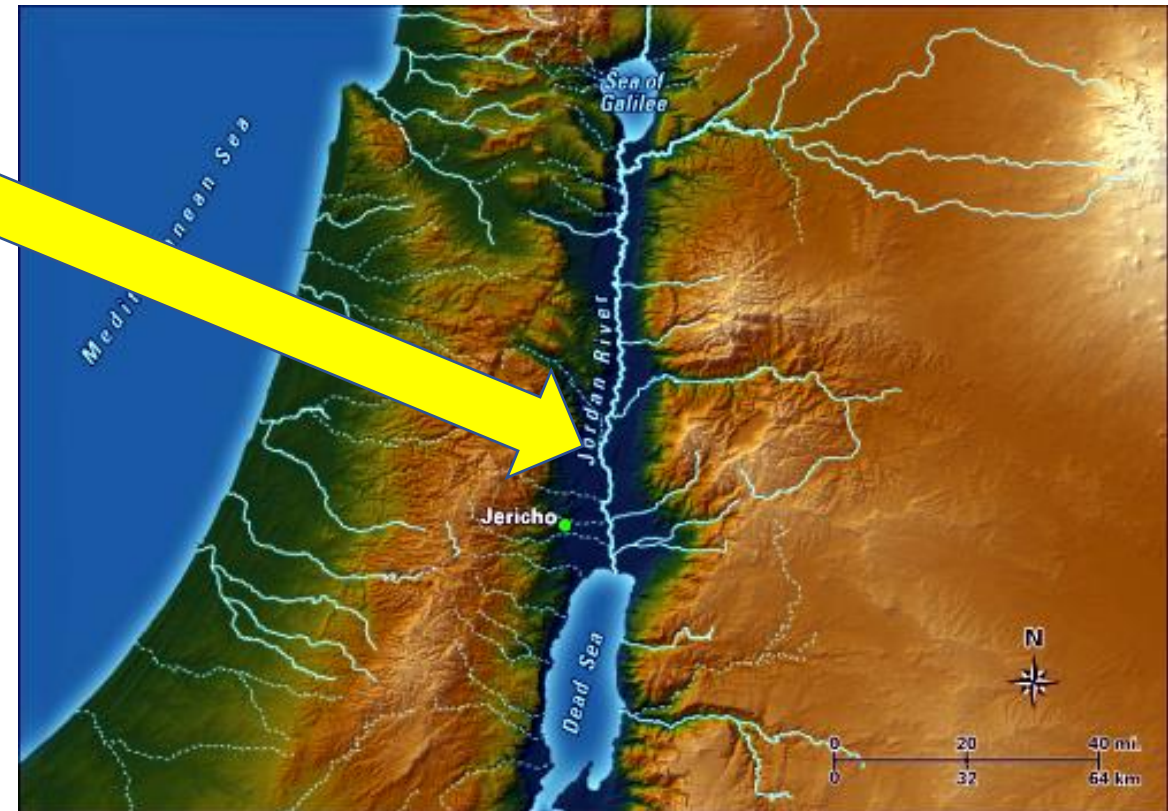
In spite of the rushing waters God did the miracle when they did what they were told.



It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea) was completely cut off.

Quite a distance upstream
(it's a miracle)
For the downward flow to the
Dead Sea no miracle was needed ?
Water flows downhill !

Perfect timing! Downward flow from
the town of Adam stopped just in time
as they step in.



The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan,

Another miracle ? – no slippery mud or was it a stony river bed?

They stand in the middle !
The gate keepers!



while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.

It was a wide gap for the people crossing.

God did it – again!



What effect would that have on the inhabitants?

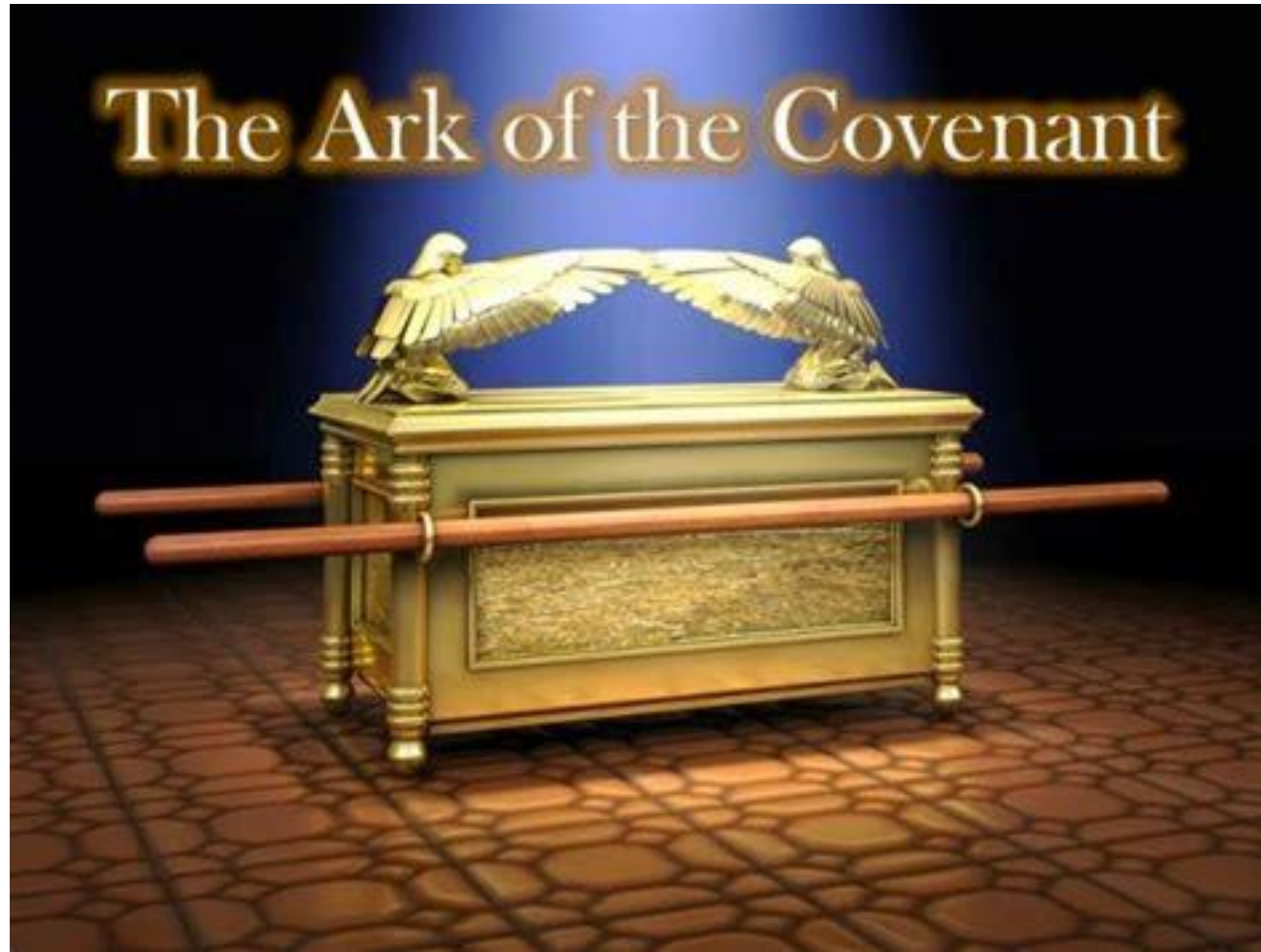
The ark was the centre piece of the miracle
It is referred to 14 times in the chapter



The people had to trust in the God they couldn't see,
whose presence was represented by the ark that they couldn't see.

But they weren't walking in the dark

So how do we know what the ark looked like?



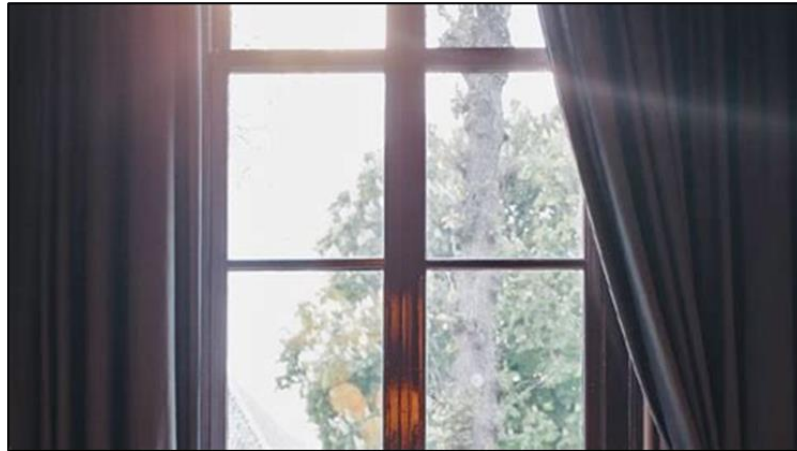
Exodus 25:10-22

God's word is a window on the invisible.

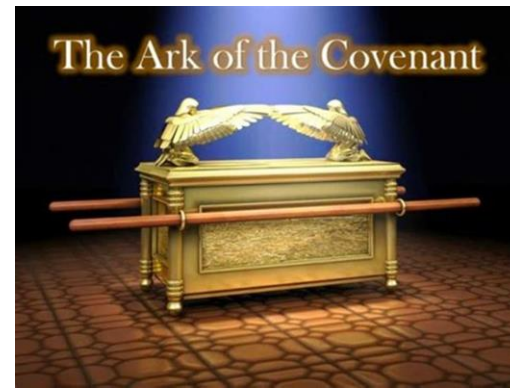


1 Corinthians 2:9-10 However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived"-- the things God has prepared for those who love him-- these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

John 14:15-17 "If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever-- the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.



2 Corinthians 4:18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.



Jesus is our 'ark of the covenant'

Isaiah 42:6-8 "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. "I am the LORD; that is my name!"

Jesus is God's presence with us

Matthew 1:23 "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").



He promises to guide us by his word and Spirit

John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

He leads us into the promised land.

Hebrews 4:8-11 if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest,

We will see Him one day. Until then we should love Him and trust Him.

1 John 3:2-3 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.



He still can do amazing things