

Trinity Home Teams

Sermon Notes / Oct. 19, 2025

Wonderful Presence / Joshua 3

1. Mysteries surrounding the ark have always fascinated the curious. Why? Does the presence of God in our lives seem mysterious as well? Explain?
2. As they faced the Jordan, the Israelites were compelled to trust Yahweh. What compels you to trust Him?
3. How did God continuously validate the faith of his people in the OT? How has he confirmed yours?
4. Yahweh is a *way-maker*. Can you prove it biblically? Can you give evidence from your own walk with God?

'THE ARK OF THE COVENANT' -- The presence of Yahweh was key for their passage into Canaan, and the most tangible representation of his presence was the ark. This phrase appears 10 times in this chapter.

Reformation. Study Bible: *"The ark signifies not only the presence of the Lord (Num. 10:33-36), but specifically His covenant, which means His commitment to His promises as well as the consequent obligations of Israel."*

The preparation for Yahweh's presence (v1-6)

The Israelites were ready to enter the Promised Land, but how were they going to get across the powerful Jordan? Strong swimmers might, but more than a million people plus kids? *They had to trust Yahweh.*

They were to keep a specific distance from the ark, which was to be revered. Why?

They were to consecrate themselves. The core idea is that of separation from things that are unclean or common, that is, anything that would contaminate one's relationship with a perfect God: rigorous, ritual preparation + abstinence from food, sexual relations. Consider **Exodus 19:10-13** and consecration.

The promise of Yahweh's presence (v7-13)

Yahweh promised to manifest his presence in a mighty, miraculous way.

THE PROMISE TO JOSHUA -- This manifestation of his presence would signal to Israel that Yahweh was with Joshua just as he had been with Moses. This was a wonderful grace to Joshua and further confirmation.

Joshua 4:14 -- *"On that day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they stood in awe of him just as they had stood in awe of Moses, all the days of his life."*

Joshua's claim to power was not based on his accomplishments. It rested entirely on what God had accomplished at the Jordan and on the obedience of Joshua to the words and example of Moses.

THE PROMISE TO THE PEOPLE -- The manifestation of his presence would be another confirmation that Yahweh would go before his people and fight for them. Time after time, Yahweh gives their faith validation; he demonstrates his faithfulness to his glory and to his people. None need ever doubt that the living God.

Numbers 16:28 -- *"And Moses said, 'Hereby you shall know that the Lord has sent me to do all these works, and that it has not been of my own accord.'"*

V10 -- *"he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites."* These are names of peoples dwelling in the land of Canaan varies somewhat, but the use of seven nations' names here represents the completeness with which Yahweh will drive out those in the land -- 'without fail.'

THE PROMISED WONDERS -- Finally, Joshua reveals to the people how they will cross the Jordan, and it is nothing less than miraculous. The ark of the Lord, representing the presence and covenant faithfulness of Yahweh, would be carried into the Jordan, where the waters "shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap." Yahweh's mighty works in the history of redemption always point to his glory, majesty, holiness, and power. This will be no different.

The power of Yahweh's presence (v14-17)

In v14, the promise comes to pass as Yahweh's presence is manifested in power. It should never be lost on us that they were not crossing the Jordan in the dry season. The river was swollen with water from the mountains of the north. If Yahweh's power is no match for the powerful Jordan river, who or what can stand against him?

Compare Psalm 114 to Mark 4:35-41.

Psalm 114 *"When Israel went out from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, ²Judah became his sanctuary, Israel his dominion. ³The sea looked and fled; Jordan turned back. ⁴The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs. ⁵What ails you, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back? ..."*

Mark 4:35-41 ... *And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling... And they woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' ³⁹And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' ... 'Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?' ⁴¹And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'"*