

# The Israelites Cross the Jordan River

Joshua 3:1–4:24

Parts of this story seem like a rerun of the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea 40 years earlier. Remember, however, that apart from Joshua and Caleb, all of the people crossing the Jordan River were no older than children when Israel crossed the Red Sea. This totally new experience must have reminded them of the stories their parents had told them about the miracle of crossing the Red Sea.

Notice that the Jordan River was not just a trickling stream—it was at “flood stage.” In the area of Jericho, it would have been 10 to 12 feet deep, and the current quite strong.

The Israelites built a stone memorial with the rocks taken from the center of the Jordan River. The memorial would remind people of the wonders God had done for the Israelites as they entered the Promised Land, and the 12 stones together would remind them of the 12 tribes joined together as one nation.

The last verse of today's passage, Joshua 4:24, tells us why God dried up the Jordan for the people to cross: “so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.” God wanted his people to fear him—to give him the worship and service he deserved.

Remembering what God had done would give them encouragement and faith when they faced the difficulties of conquering this new land.

## **Devotion for Leaders**

**The One Thing:** As we grow in our relationship with Christ, we become more Christlike. We can testify that we have been renewed and delivered from our different lives of the past.

**Weaving Faith Into Your Life:** Reread Joshua 4:24. Note the public display of power that God left as a reminder of his love and power. In times of darkness, it is often helpful to rest in the truth of what we have experienced in the past. Encounters with our Savior remind us that he is with us. Sharing these experiences with others can give hope to the hopeless and bring glory to the work God has done in you. Identify five people to whom you will testify of God's power in your life this week. After you share, watch how God's power in you affects the people you share with.