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The Crossing Of The Jordan

Introduction

- 1) The crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. 14:13-31) and the Jordan (Josh. 3:8-4:24) are two momentous events in the lives of the ancient Israelites. In these events there are both similarities and contrasts as the following table shows.
 - a) The crossing of the Jordan meant leaving the wilderness journey and going to the land their eyes had never seen, and to possess it as their inheritance from God.

- 2) As with virtually all miracles, there was actually at least three, and possibly four inter-related miracles at the crossing of the Red Sea:
 - a) The parting of the sea (Ex. 14:21; Josh. 3:13, 16; 4:7)
 - b) The drying of the sea bed (Ex. 14:22, 29; Josh. 3:17)
 - c) The returning of the sea after the Egyptians were in the water or the Israelites had crossed (Ex. 14:26-28; Josh. 4:18)

- 3) There are distinct similarities between the crossing of the Red Sea and that of Jordan:
 - a) After the crossing of the Red Sea there was the song of redemption, but after the crossing of the Jordan there was a memorial set up.

The crossing of the Red Sea in Exodus	Reference	The crossing of the Jordan in Judges	Reference
The song celebrating God's mighty delivering power from the Egyptian armies	ch. 15:1-21 Rev. 15:3	The setting up of Stones for a memorial	ch. 4:3, 6-9
The full deliverance from Egypt by the death of the enemy	ch. 14:24-31	The pledge of entrance and inheriting the inheritance	ch. 3:10-11
The sea was forced back by a strong east wind	ch. 14:21	The river was made to stand up in a heap	ch. 3:13
They crossed during the night	ch. 14:21, cp. v. 27	They crossed during the day	ch. 4:3, 6-9
They were led by the pillar of the cloud	ch. 14:19	They were led by the priests carrying the Ark	ch. 3:3
Because of rebellion against the purpose of God the enemies died	ch. 14:23--30	Because of rebellion against the mind of God the enemies died	ch. 6:21; 24:11
This event was followed by the law and construction of God's dwelling place	ch. 20:1-17; 25:1-27:21; 30:1-8	This event was followed by the promise of the inheritance and right of circumcision	ch. 5:2-9
The adamancy of the enemies saying, "I will pursue"	ch. 15:9	The inhabitants of the land, their hearts melted	ch. 5:1
After the crossing the children of Israel saw the dead lying and saw them no more	ch. 14:30-31	After the crossing the children and grandchildren saw a heap of stones memorializing the event	ch. 4:20-24

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References in Exodus	Similarity	References in Joshua
ch. 14:9, 16	Both are related to water - a formidable barrier	ch. 3:15
ch. 14:31	Both authenticated the man who was God's appointed leader	ch. 3:7
ch. 14:22, 29	Both cases they passed over on dry ground	ch. 3:17; 4:1, 10, 11, 12, 13, 23
ch. 15:2-21	Both were celebrated with songs of praise	Psa. 114:1-8

These contrasts and similarities are not just a matter of observation. As the inspired Word of God, they are for our instruction. For instance:

- a) The contrasts between the Egyptians and those of Jericho show the results of the unsaved being aware of God's presence with His people. In the case of the Egyptians, they rose in rebellion (Ex. 14:5-10) but the citizens of Jericho etc., they were afraid for that which lay ahead (Josh. 2:9-11).

The Significance of Crossing The Jordan

There are at least three delightful truths relating to the children crossing the Jordan:

- a) The obstacles we all face when a loved one who is close to us by the ties of nature and is a believer dies, or an obstacle seems to terminate a hope in life.
- b) The truth of the stones and ark together in the Jordan and ultimately the uniting of Christ with His own in death and in resurrection.
- c) That of eternal security

The obstacles we all face when a loved one who is close to us by the ties of nature and is a believer dies, or an obstacle seems to terminate a hope in life.

- a) When the children of Israel came to the Jordan they faced that which was much worse than anything they had ever faced before. There is no doubt the Red Sea was a situation which caused anxiety and apparent hopelessness and loss of all hopes and dreams. However, the Red Sea was not overflowing its banks, it was in the wet season, so the situation seemed totally hopeless. This was an obstacle that was seemingly the terminus of all their hopes and dreams and the promises of God to Abraham and them.
 - i) The Scriptures record a number of individuals who, in a crisis of life, felt that all hopes were dashed and nothing was left but despondency and broken hearts. For instance:
 1. It was a dark day to the sisters when Lazarus died and was buried (Jn. 11:17, 19), but the Lord came and Lazarus rose from the dead (Jn. 11:34-44).
 2. Or what sorrow filled the heart of Jairus when he heard that his little daughter had died (Mk. 5:23, 35), but Jesus came and the child rose from the dead (Mk. 5:40-42).
 3. What of the heart of Mary as she stood by the tomb of the Lord (Jn. 20:11, 13, 15), or the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13, 20-21); or Peter when he waited to see the end (Matt. 26:58). However, when the Lord was brought into the situations, gladness filled the hearts.
- b) When considering that the one who has died is a believer, dark as the hour is, God can be thanked that not even death is the end for the journey. (See <http://www.scripturaltruths.org/Articles/Writings%20by%20Rowan%20Jennings/DOCTRINES%20OF%20SCRIPTURE%20-%20LISTINGS.htm> on the death of a believer, Part 1 and 2).

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The Miracle

- 1) The avenues by which to consider the miracle. There is, to my understanding, four avenues by which to consider this wonder. They are:
 - a) Historically:
 - i) At what juncture in Israel's history did this occur?
 - ii) The feelings of depression when first seeing the overflowing river, yet there is no murmuring here about being brought into the wilderness to die as the earlier generation had done (Ex. 14:11). These people believed the message of God (Josh. 3:9-13).
 - b) By Application
 - i) Our approaching physical death, our wilderness journey is past, the overflowing flood of death has placed us beyond all medical help, but Christ has gone there first (as prefigured in the Ark) functioning in priestly activity. He offered Himself without spot to God and the effect of His being there assures us of our safe passage through death and entrance into our inheritance.
 - c) As a foreshadow
 - i) What is the inheritance we have? I am aware that some teach that we have two inheritances, one now and one later. Such see the inheritances of 1 Peter 1:4 and Ephesians 1:18 as different. However, it is my understanding that the references to our inheritance in Ephesians and the Epistle of Peter both are related to the future. That being said, I also believe that we can enjoy the blessedness of the future inheritance even now. When Paul wrote, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9), he is referring to the blessings of our eternal state. HOWEVER, seldom do we hear the next clause quoted which says, "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10), and that refers to the present time.
 - ii) An inheritance is that which is bestowed upon us normally due to a death, and our inheritance in Heaven (1 Pet. 1:4) of which the Holy Spirit is the earnest (Eph. 1:14); or our place among the saints (Col. 1:12). In Ephesians 1:18 there is presented a deeper truth, which is His inheritance in the saints.
 - iii) What are some aspects of our inheritance which we can enter into now? I suggest some of them are the following:
 1. It is a sphere of rest, not from the concerns of having ceased from our own works (Heb. 4:10). It is also the place of rest from all our labours (Rev. 14:13). In that sphere there is no anxiety, all is perfect peace.
 2. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, but it is only to the extent that we face the enemy and defeat the world, flesh and Satan that we can enter into the fulness of the blessings of our inheritance.
 - d) Practical encouragement.
 - i) As the children of Israel approached the Jordan, and perhaps before they discovered that it was not just the usual river, but was overflowing its banks! It was now more than an obstacle, but an obstacle of stupendous proportions that definitely hindered their way to the promised land. Perhaps some might have said that it was a pity they had not been there earlier, or if only God had moved them a bit quicker, but this sort of discussion would not help their present situation. There are times in life when we also are faced with obstacles, not only in life but in our enjoyment of our spiritual inheritance and our entering into its fulness. However, God was and is and ever will be greater than any obstacle, and knows all about the

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enormity of them long before we are aware of them. The only thing that can hinder our full entrance into our inheritance is the same as that which hindered Israel, disobedience or unbelief (Heb. 4:1).

- 2) The contrast between the titles of Christ at the Red Sea and the Jordan:
 - a) At the Red Sea it is the LORD (Ex. 14:14, 21, 24, 25, 26, 30, 31); the angel of God (Ex. 14:19).
 - b) At the Jordan the Lord is referred to as: the "LORD" (Josh. 3:7); "LORD your God" (Josh. 3:3); "living God" (Josh. 3:10); "The LORD, the LORD of all the earth" (Josh. 3:13).

. . . Rowan Jennings