

## CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER



(Deuteronomy 11:31)

When the Lord called Israel out of Egypt, He used Moses and Aaron his brother to lead the people. That was a multitude of people, that over 430 years grew from seventy in all to over a million. A famine in the land was the cause why Jacob's family had to go to Egypt. Earlier, when God confirmed His covenant with Abraham, He revealed to him what was going to happen to his descendants in the future's frame of time. He said, know positively that your descendants will be strangers dwelling as temporary residents in a land that is not theirs, and they will be slaves there and will be afflicted and oppressed for 400 years... On the fourth generation, they shall come back here [to Canaan] again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full and complete (Gen. 15:13,16). That happened exactly as God had said. The span of time of 400 years was the time of Israel's suffering as

slaves in the land of Egypt. God's promise to Abraham stood through all these years in spite of the length of time He took to fulfill it. Canaan was to be Israel's land when all was right for them to take possession of it. God, in His mercy, was giving a chance to repent to those nations that occupied the land of Canaan. God's plan of deliverance for His people was unique. Although it is hard to understand it, one should not question Him. Israel had been spiritually brain-washed for all those years while living under the influence of that nation's beliefs. They had followed their ways and forgotten their God. Now, not only Egypt was going to experience the greatness of the One and only true God, but Israel, also. Through the hardening of Pharaoh and God's judgments against Egypt, God showed His mighty power in the sight of the Egyptians and Israel. "Let My people go" was the cry. But Pharaoh would not. So, for the deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian's power to happen, God did what He saw fit to bring about His purpose in the life of His people. His purpose was not only the deliverance of Israel from the physical bondage from Egypt but for their spiritual freedom also. However, Pharaoh held on to Israel's bondage and made impossible their exodus from Egypt. His heart was hardened to the point of God bringing judgment against him and his nation. Finally, after the last judgment, which was the death of all the Egyptian's first-born, he let them go.

That was going to be a long journey for Israel. An eleven-day journey took forty years for them to reach the Promised Land.

Meanwhile, Pharaoh had a change of heart and after Israel was a distance from Egypt, there comes the Egyptian army to attack them. They came prepared to fight. They pursued them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the Red Sea... When Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked up, and Behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and the Israelites were exceedingly frightened and cried to the Lord (Exodus 14:9-10). There was the Red Sea in front and the Egyptians behind, and mountains on each side. Moses however, encouraged them saying, Fear not; stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which He will work for you today. For the Egyptians you have seen today you shall never see again; the Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace and remain at rest. The Lord told Moses to go forth and to stretch out his hand over the sea and divide it, for the Israelites to go on the dry ground in the midst of the sea (Exodus 14: 13-14-16).

God continued showing Israel His power when He opened the waters of the Red Sea for them to travel through dry land. Israel might have thought that they were traveling alone, but the Bible says that the Angel of God, Who was YAHSHUA, went before them. But while that was happening, He moved and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before them and stood behind them (Exodus 14: 19). Israel could not see their Messiah- the Only Triune God taking part on their deliverance from Egypt. That was prophetic of the time when Israel will be delivered and saved. That was the most powerful Aleah that ever existed. No weapon formed against Israel prospered. The Egyptians were left in the midst of the sea when God closed the waters upon them. That must have been a sight to see; a very successful beginning of their journey to the Promised Land.

The Bible says that when Pharaoh let the people go, God led them not by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was nearer; for God said, Lest the people change their purpose when they see war and return to Egypt. God led the people around by way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea, and the Israelites went up marshaled out of the land of Egypt (Exodus 13: 17-18). Israel's heart was not in agreement with God's. Their desire was to continue in Egypt, in spite of being slaves and having lost their identity as God's chosen people. They either forgot, or did not know, or did not care. They became conformed to the things and lifestyles the land offered. They also had adopted their gods and saw no need to follow the God of their forefathers. In other words, they were spiritually dead. This was quite a tragedy and irony. Who wouldn't want to be free to receive the blessing of going to the land of the promise? This is why God gave them a wilderness instead of the short way. After going to spy the land, obviously they were close to it, they brought back a bad report. It caused great fear and dread on the people. Some of them even tried to go the other way against Moses' order. The Lord then said, How long will this evil congregation murmur against Me? ...As I live, what you have said in My hearing I will do to you; your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness- of all who were numbered of you, from twenty years old and upward, who have murmured against me.... Except for Caleb and Joshua. After the number of the days in which you spied out to a land of Canaan, even forty days, for each day a year shall you bear and suffer for your iniquities, even for forty years, and you shall know My displeasure (Numbers 14:27-34).

On their journey to the Promised Land they were to cross the Jordan river, the same way they crossed the Red Sea. Interesting that their journey started with

crossing the sea and finished crossing a river- the Jordan River. That was the final crossing, which would bring them into the land of Canaan. Moses described the journey through the wilderness as challenging when he described it to be terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents, and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water. But he also said, God brought you forth water out of the flinty rock, fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that **He might humble you and test you, to do your good in the end** (Deut. 8: 15-16). The psalmist also relates the journey as some wandered in the wilderness in a solitary desert track; they found no city for habitation. Hungry and thirsty, they fainted; their lives were near to being extinguished. **Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distress** (Psa. 107:4-6). The wilderness was long and dangerous, But the Lord Who delivered them from bondage never forsook them. He was there with them always providing for their needs. In fact, in forty years of their journey, neither their clothes nor their shoes were worn out.

There are two worlds in this earthly life we will face: The Egypt from where we originate- the world, and the wilderness we must travel through on our way to heaven, or our Promised Land. When a person accepts the Lord YAHSHUA, he/she is given an access to the Promised Land by being able to cross the Red Sea. Going through it is a symbol of baptism. The wilderness is a means of sanctification. Many of us will give up the faith and return to Egypt, where life seemed easier; but some will overcome the scorpions- demons, serpent- the devil and all the temptations symbolized by hunger and thirst. The warfare will be real in the desert of life. There is no easy way to sanctification but through the wilderness. But the Holy Spirit will ever be present with us all the way. The denial of oneself can only happen in the wilderness of life, where there is no comfort or worldly pleasures. The wilderness is the place where we will not lose focus of where we are going. At last, when we reach the "Jordan River," we will be glorified, for whoever is born of God is victorious over the world; and this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith (I John 5:4). And we will be as He is, for we shall see Him just as He is (I John 3: 2). When we ponder on God's promises beyond the blue skies we understand how all our sufferings are insignificant in the light of the blessings waiting for us, and it will be worth it all when we see YAHSHUA!

**THINK ABOUT IT!**