

Crossing the Jordan

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers, they will not
sweep over you.—Isaiah 43:2

Moses, the faithful leader of the Israelites, died on Mt. Nebo. Joshua, his friend and follower, became the new leader. The people had wandered in the wilderness forty years because of their unfaithfulness to God. Finally God led them to the Jordan River, beyond which was Canaan, the promised land.

Four hundred and seventy years had gone by from the time God had promised to give Canaan to Abraham before his descendants actually crossed Jordan and began to inherit the land.

The Canaanites no doubt felt secure from attack because the Jordan was a swift river and at that time of year it was overflowing its banks and much wider than usual.

We do not know exactly how God held back the waters of the Jordan but this might be what happened: about twenty miles above the camp of the Hebrews, at a place called Adam, a great amount of earth swept down from a hillside into the river. No longer could the water flow along as it had done before—it could not get through that huge pile of dirt. Soon the river on the other side of this landslide began to dry up. Now the people could walk across the place where the Jordan had so recently been flowing.

The priests, carrying the Ark, led the people. When they reached the center of the river bed, they stood until all the hosts of Israel had passed over.

Twelve large stones (one for each tribe) were taken from the

bed of the Jordan and piled on the shore. Similarly, twelve stones from the shore were placed in the river bed where the priests stood. The two piles of stones were a memorial of the miracle that had taken place (Joshua 3:17; 4:1-10).

The land of Canaan was a picture of the new earth condition in the Millennial age. The Jordan represents the sentence of death against mankind. People will learn God's righteous laws in the kingdom. Some, however, will want to go back to the old ways that brought so much suffering. If they continue to oppose the laws of the kingdom, they will be cut off in second death from which there is no resurrection.



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The people walked across the Jordan River
because God held back its waters.