

For we wrestle not
against flesh and blood,
but against principalities,
against powers, against
the rulers of the darkness
of this world, against spiritual
wickedness in high places.



Blessings and Battles

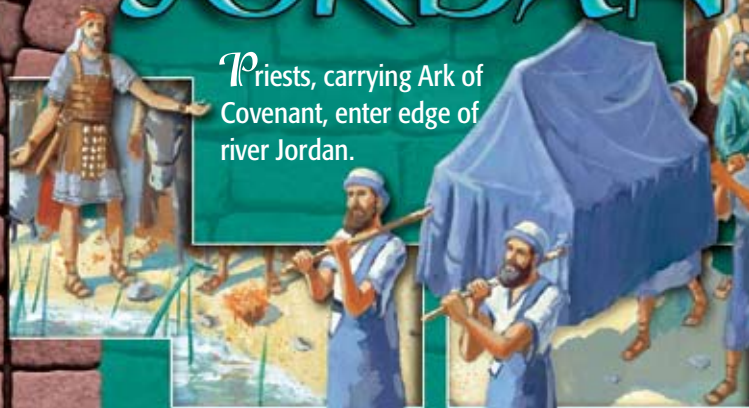
“In front of them lay Jericho and many other places that had to be captured. War is about to begin. Blessings and battles always go together in the Christian life. The greater the blessing, the greater the battle with the powers of darkness, and only the Christian who presses right on in God’s will secures God’s best. But before they engage in war or attack Jericho, Israel must learn vital lessons while they wait at Gilgal. To wait to receive instructions from God is what every Christian finds to be the hardest thing to do.” —Alan Redpath

Scripture to read before next study

Joshua 5 and 6

Crossing JORDAN

Priests, carrying Ark of Covenant, enter edge of river Jordan.



Later, carrying stones out of river Jordan.



—from *Self to Christ*—

Israel crossing the Jordan river, spiritually illustrates a Christian passing from the wilderness (carnal, self-life) into the Promised land (Spirit-filled life). It marks the beginning of faith and obedience and the end of defeat. Between the two, rolls the mighty Jordan—a river of impossibility between the self-life and the Christ-life.

As Israel needed a clear view of God—the Ark of the Covenant, so the Christian needs a clear view of God in His word. We can't look at our difficulties, for only God can help us cross over (overcome) our difficulties.

It is hard to believe that God can take a Christian with all kinds of weakness and problems and give him such victory—he becomes a blessing to others.

John Newton, the African slave-trader, tells of his derelict life and how he came to Christ. Then his life changed drastically, and God used him greatly. He wrote his testimony in the song "*Amazing Grace.*"

Faith causes us to see God in everyday life.

There is power in—"*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith*"—Heb. 12:2.

MEMORIAL STONES

The purpose of a memorial is to perpetuate an idea and provide a future opportunity to instruct young generations about God's power on behalf of His people. "*That this may be a sign...when your children ask their fathers... What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan... these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever*"

—Josh. 4:6, 7. It's good to have **memorials**—to look back and remember God's power and blessing.

Around 1,500 years later, Jesus was baptized near where Israel crossed the Jordan river.



Crossing the river Jordan

Priests, carrying the Ark of the Covenant, came to the brink of the Jordan river and stood in the brim of the water. God then stopped the water flow from the north. As the river stopped flowing, the water backed up on a heap to Adam, a place thought to be about 16 miles north. As water flowed down river, soon there was a wide, dry riverbed for Israel to pass over on dry ground. It reminds us of Israel crossing the Red sea on dry ground.

The priests, carrying the Ark, were the **first** to go in the water and the **last** to come out.