

*How does God want us to respond to His works? God has done great things in Scripture and God has done great things in our lives. How does He want us to respond to those great works?*

**Theological Theme:** The book of Joshua describes **God's faithfulness to His people**. His faithfulness is not dependent upon our faithfulness. 2 Timothy 2:13 "if we are faithless, he remains faithful ..." Joshua also describes how we can enjoy **a covenant relationship with God**.

**Main Idea:** Joshua 3-4 goes beyond a personal relationship with God. No one has a relationship with God because of other relationships (parents, friends, church membership, etc.). We know God individually. However, our relationship with God is not purely individual. We express it in the church, in our families, and in our work life. Joshua 3-4 teaches that **God's greatness leads us to trust in Him and to tell others about Him**.

## **God's Greatness**

First, Joshua 3 teaches that **God's greatness leads us to trust in Him**.

### **God performs wonders**

**God performs wonders.** Joshua 3:1-5 "1 Then Joshua rose early in the morning and they set out from Shittim. And they came to the Jordan, he and all the people of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. 2 At the end of three days the officers went through the camp 3 and commanded the people, "As soon as you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God being carried by the Levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place and follow it. 4 Yet there shall be a distance between you and it, about 2,000 cubits in length. Do not come near it, in order that you may know the way you shall go, for you have not passed this way before." 5 Then Joshua said to the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you."

(v1) *Where does Joshua 3-4 take place?* In Joshua 3, Israel comes to the Jordan River. This is the boundary and first major barrier of the land.

(v5) *What did Joshua tell Israel God would do among them?* Joshua 3:5 "... tomorrow the Lord will do **wonders** among you." One danger we face in Christian faith is **we tend to overlook God's greatest miracles**. The greatest miracles we see God perform are not healings, parting seas, providing for our needs, etc. The greatest miracles we experience are **God's grace in saving sinners**. This is the only miracle in which **God shared in flesh and blood** (Heb 2:14).

### **Confidence in God**

**God's wonders encourage faith.** Joshua 3:9-13 "9 And Joshua said to the people of Israel, "Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God." 10 And Joshua said, "Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites. 11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is passing over before you into the Jordan. 12 Now therefore take twelve men from the tribes of Israel, from each tribe a man. 13 And when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap."

(v9-13) *How is God described in these verses?* He is the "Lord your God" (3:9). He is the "living God" (3:10). He is the "Lord of all the earth" (3:11, 13). Each of these are significant. (1) He is not a local god; He is God of the whole earth. (2) He is not a created idol; He is the living God. (3) He is not a distant, unknown God; He is your God.

(v10ff.) *How would Israel **know** that God was among them?* God would part Jordan River and they would cross (Josh 3:13). *Of what event does this remind us?* God enabled the previous generation (the Exodus generation) to

cross the Red Sea by parting the waters (Exod 14). God will now enable the Deuteronomy generation to cross the Jordan by parting the waters.

### The blessing of faith

**Faith allows us to witness God's greatest wonders.** Joshua 3:14–17 “14 So when the people set out from their tents to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, 15 and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest), 16 the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho. 17 Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.”

(v15) *When did God part the waters?* God parted the waters when “the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water” (Josh 3:15). **God does wonders whether we see them or not AND God does wonders whether we obey Him or not.** The Red Sea is an example of this. The Exodus generation crossed the Red Sea without faith in God. But the **Exodus generation** never got to cross the Jordan River. This generation had faith and would experience God's rest.

**Summary:** God is great. He performs miracles. **God shows His greatness among His people.**

### Telling Others

Second, Joshua 4 teaches that **God wants people to know of his greatness.**

#### Memorial Stones

**God commanded Israel to set up a memorial.** Joshua 4:1–3 “1 When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, 2 “Take twelve men from the people, from each tribe a man, 3 and command them, saying, ‘Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests’ feet stood firmly, and bring them over with you and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight.’ ””

(v3) *What did God command Israel to take from the Jordan?* He told them to take 12 stones, one from each tribe.

(v3) *Where did God tell Israel to place the stones?* Place them “where you lodge tonight” (Josh 4:3). God wanted Israel to **remember** this event. This event showed **God's greatness** and gave support for **their faith**.

#### Tell others

We will not read most of Joshua 4. Verses 8-18 describes their obedience to cross and to set up the stones.

The final paragraph explains the purpose of the memorial in more detail. **We should tell others about God's greatness.** Joshua 4:19–24 “19 The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they encamped at Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. 20 And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal. 21 And he said to the people of Israel, “When your children ask their fathers in times to come, ‘What do these stones mean?’ 22 then you shall let your children know, ‘Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.’ 23 For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over, 24 so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever.””

(v19) *When did Israel cross the Jordan?* They crossed on the “tenth day of the first month” (Josh 4:19). Some of you may know why this date is significant. For everyone else, that will be your homework.

(v21) *In verses 21-22, whom did God say they should tell about crossing the Jordan?* They were told to tell their children. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 “4 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” **The church** is responsible for children hearing the gospel. **Parents** are responsible for their children hearing the gospel. As a church, we cannot assume that all children will hear the gospel from their parents. As a parent, I cannot contract out to the church my responsibility to share the gospel with my kids. **My kids are responsible for their response to the gospel ... but I am responsible for them hearing and understanding the gospel.**

Notice that verse 21 says “when your children ask” (Josh 4:21). This echoes Deut 6:7-9. We should place the gospel before our kids so prevalently that they cannot help but see it. **Example:** My family often listens to a YouTube channel, *Reformed and Dangerous*, even while brushing teeth at night. Even their silly songs creates opportunities for us to discuss the gospel, infant baptism, and the deity of Jesus. **Example:** Eliana recently explained to me (unprompted) the difference between the **Westminster** (Presbyterian) confession of faith and the **1689** Baptist confession of faith was about infant baptism. **Our children will not hear the gospel unless we fill our lives with Scripture.**

Joshua 24:31 “31 Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had **known all the work** that the Lord did for Israel.” Judges 2:7 “7 And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had **seen all the great work** that the Lord had done for Israel.” Judges 2:10 “10 And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who **did not know the Lord or the work** that he had done for Israel.” The generation that saw God’s work remained faithful, but they did not tell their children ... and the “did not know the Lord” (Judg 2:10). **We are always one generation away from an entire nation who does not know God ... and all it takes is silence.**

(v24) *In verse 24, who did God want to know about His greatness?* God wanted “all the peoples of the earth” to know of His greatness. **There are no limitations on the Great Commission** ... our families, our friends, our community, around the world.

## Conclusion

*How does God want us to respond to His works?* He does done great things in Scripture, like crossing the Jordan River. The greatest miracle I have witnessed is God becoming human, bearing my sin in His death, and giving me eternal life through faith in Jesus with no work of my own. **God’s greatness leads us to trust in Him and to tell others about Him.**