

## **Crossing the Jordan**

*The Present Truth* – December 12, 1901

E. J. Waggoner

Before the death of Moses, God had chosen Joshua, and told him that he was to lead the Children of Israel into Canaan. So when Moses was dead Joshua took his place as the [leader] of the host.

The Israelites were now about to go over into Promised Land. All the years of their pilgrimage God had led them and borne with them, and at last they believed in Him, so that they were ready to follow wherever He should lead the way.

When they first came out of Egypt, God had divided the Red Sea, and made a path for them through the mighty waters. All the nations round about had heard of this wonderful work, and how Pharaoh and his host had been swallowed up in the sea. And they were all afraid, and trembled, they knew that they could do nothing against the God of Israel.

It would have been an easy matter for the Children of Israel to go right into Canaan at that time, for the nations would not have been able to fight against them. After they had crossed the sea, and the Egyptians had all been drowned, Moses sang a song in which were these words:—

“The peoples have heard, they tremble; . . .  
Terror and dread falleth upon them;  
By the greatness of Thine arm they are as still  
as a stone;  
Till Thy people pass over, O Lord,  
Till the people pass over which Thou hast  
purchased.”

But the Israelites wandered so long in the wilderness because of their unbelief, that the nations had time to lose the fear they had, and to prepare to fight against Israel.

But God worked for His people again, as He did when they first left Egypt. They were encamped by the river Jordan, and God told Joshua to make ready to pass over it, for He would divide its waters before them, as He did the Red Sea.

Joshua commanded the priests to go first, bearing the ark of God. As soon as their feet touched the water, it was divided, and there was a clear path before them. The ark was the symbol of God's presence with them, and this showed that it was He who separated the

waters and held them apart. For the priests stood still in the middle of the river bed “until all the people were passed over.”

Then God told Joshua to take one man from each of the twelve tribes, and let each of them take a stone out of the water of Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet stood. These twelve stones were to be carried to the place where they should lodge that night, and be laid down there.

Joshua told the people that the stones were for a sign. He said: “When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean those stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.”

And when all the nations “heard how that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the Children of Israel, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more.”

As soon as the Israelites began to eat the corn of the Promised Land, into which they had now come, the manna ceased. For forty years God had fed them with this corn of heaven, and now they did not need it any more, for they could gather what God had provided for them in the usual way.

And now the wilderness wandering, the weary pilgrimage of the Israelites, was ended. God had brought them into the land that He promised them before they left Egypt. Their unbelief had kept them forty years in the wilderness, but as soon as they believed, they entered in.

We have now followed these pilgrims in all their journeyings in the wilderness, we have seen the tender love and care of God for His people, we have shared with them the object lessons that He gave them to teach them to believe and trust Him. Have we not learned many precious lessons that will help us in our own pilgrimage through the wilderness of this world, to the Promised Land to which God is leading us? May we all by faith enter that heavenly country.