

## Follow the True God

June 12, 2011

Vol. 1 Num. 5

### JOSHUA 3

#### **This Week's Core Competency:**

**Giving Away My Life:** I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

*Therefore, brothers, by the mercy of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. (Rom 12:1)*

#### **Using This Study**

##### **① EXPERIENCE His Word**

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. Ask God to help you focus on the passage and hear from Him as you read His word.

##### **② EXAMINE His Word**

The words God uses to communicate matters. Go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

##### **③ EXPLORE His Word**

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface both the Divine and human author's point in the passage.

##### **④ EXPAND His Word**

How does this FIT? Studying cross references can expand your understanding of a passage and discover the unity in God's word.

##### **⑤ EMBRACE His Word**

We study God's word to hear from Him. Embracing God's word is when we personally RESPOND to Him in obedience.

#### **Introduction**

What do you consider a false god today? All cultures, including ours have idols or false "gods." An idol or false god is anything that man provides for himself that takes the place of the true God. What is our culture's god? An argument could be made that the god of our day is the god of technology.

Thankfully, God sometimes orchestrates circumstances to demonstrate that He is the true God. At the time of this writing, the great Mississippi river overflows its banks to inundate homes, farms, and communities in the Midwest and southern states of the country. Even with our technology –much of which is designed to protect us from nature and its unpredictable effects on our way of life, there is really very little we can do to thwart the power of a swollen river. Hopefully, when sandbags, jetty's, spillways, and other human efforts fail to provide security, protection and relief, people will abandon the false god of technology and turn to the true God.

Ancient cultures did not depend on the god of technology to protect them from rivers. Instead, they trusted in gods like Hapi (Egyptian) and Enki (Sumerian, Canaanite, and Mesopotamian), less sophisticated, but false gods all the same. Their worldview held that a river overflowing its banks was actually caused by a visitation from the god of that river. The silt and sediment deposited by the river provided fertility to the land and thus, abundant crops were attributed to the god. The spent much of their time trying to keep the god pacified so that it made its annual visitation.

This is the worldview into which the true God graciously appears. Just like today, God wants people His people and the Canaanites to know that He is the true God.

#### **This Week**

God understands this worldview about flooded rivers. His timing is not an accident. It is likely the Canaanites even viewed the overflowing river as a divine deterrent to this God named Yahweh. Watch how He demonstrate that He is the true God.

## ① EXPERIENCE His Word

---

Read the passage and experience God's word personally.

### JOSHUA 3

1 Joshua started early the next morning and left the Acacia Grove with all the Israelites. They went as far as the Jordan and stayed there before crossing.

2 After three days the officers went through the camp

3 and commanded the people: "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God carried by the Levitical priests, you must break camp and follow it.

4 But keep a distance of about 1,000 yards between yourselves and the ark. Don't go near it, so that you can see the way to go, for you haven't traveled this way before."

5 Joshua told the people, "Consecrate yourselves, because the LORD will do wonders among you tomorrow."

6 Then he said to the priests, "Take the ark of the covenant and go on ahead of the people." So they carried the ark of the covenant and went ahead of them.

7 The LORD spoke to Joshua: "Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, so they will know that I will be with you just as I was with Moses.

8 Command the priests carrying the ark of the covenant: When you reach the edge of the waters, stand in the Jordan."

9 Then Joshua told the Israelites, "Come closer and listen to the words of the LORD your God."

10 He said: "You will know that the living God is among you and that He will certainly dispossess before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites

11 when the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth goes ahead of you into the Jordan.

12 Now choose 12 men from the tribes of Israel, one man for each tribe.

13 When the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, come to rest in the Jordan's waters, its waters will be cut off. The water flowing downstream will stand up in a mass."

14 When the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carried the ark of the covenant ahead of the people.

15 Now the Jordan overflows its banks throughout the harvest season. But as soon as the priests carrying the ark reached the Jordan, their feet touched the water at its edge

16 and the water flowing downstream stood still, rising up in a mass that extended as far as Adam, a city next to Zarethan. The water flowing downstream into the Sea of the Arabah (the Dead Sea) was completely cut off, and the people crossed opposite Jericho.

17 The priests carrying the ark of the LORD's covenant stood firmly on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, while all Israel crossed on dry ground until the entire nation had finished crossing the Jordan.

**What are your first impressions?**

## ② EXAMINE His Word

---

✎ Place a star next to each occurrence of the phrase "ark of the covenant," or "the ark of the LORD's covenant."

✎ Enumerate (place a number beside) each command given in the passage.

✎ Circle the phrases "so you can see" in v.4, "so they will know" in v. 7 and "so you will know" in v. 10.

✎ Place a cross next to any phrase in chapter three that explains, or gives a reason for an action or command.

### **③ EXPLORE His Word**

---

1. What instructions did the officers give the people in vv. 3-4?
2. Looking at the entire passage, why do you think God gave these instructions (Consider both the practical and the symbolic value)?
3. What instructions did Joshua give to the priests in vv. 6-8?
4. What concerns do you think the priests might have had?
5. The false god Enki mentioned in the introduction is literally translated in Sumerian as “lord of all the earth”. In v. 11, notice how God is addressed (look at 4:24 also), why do you suppose he is addressed this way?
6. When did God cause the Jordan to stop flowing (be as specific as possible)?
7. What was required for the priests to put their feet into the water?
8. How does v. 17 describe the priest’s situation once they stepped into the Jordan?

### **④ EXPAND His Word**

---

9. Read Joshua 4:18. What could you say about how God works?
10. When God calls us to step out in faith, it is tempting to hold back to one degree or another. Read Romans 12:1. How would you relate this to Joshua 3?

## **⑥ EMBRACE His Word**

---

The Bible reveals God's word and the Holy Spirit uses it to instruct, correct, encourage, and mature people into fully-devoted followers of Christ. Responding to Him means living in light of His Word (obedience).

11. How does this event picture God's response to us when we step out in faith?

12. What is the biggest barrier in your life to faith-filled obedience and what can you do about it?

### **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

Write about what God wants you to KNOW...

Write about how God wants you to FEEL...

Write about what God wants you to DO...

### **Sermon Notes:**

# 30 CORE Competencies

---

## 10 Core Beliefs

**Trinity** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Salvation by Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Authority of the Bible** *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

**Personal God** *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

**Identity in Christ** *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

**Church** *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

**Humanity** *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

**Compassion** *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

**Eternity** *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

**Stewardship** *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 Core Practices

**Worship** *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

**Prayer** *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

**Bible Study** *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

**Single-mindedness** *Matthew 6:33* I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

**Spiritual Gifts** *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

**Biblical Community** *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

**Giving Away My Time** *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away My Money** *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away My Faith** *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away My Life** *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 Core Virtues

**Joy** *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

**Peace** *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

**Faithfulness** *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

**Self-Control** *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

**Humility** *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

**Love** *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

**Patience** *Proverbs 14:29*

I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

**Kindness/Goodness** *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

**Gentleness** *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

**Hope** *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.