

THE JORDAN RIVER

Int.

1. Aim: To give interesting facts about the river and bring out the association of it with death.
2. Matt. 3:1-6 v. 5-6 "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about **Jordan**, And were baptized of him in **Jordan**, confessing their sins."
3. Jordan river is most famous river on earth. It is not famous because:
 - a. Of its great length - like the Mississippi
 - b. Of its rich commerce like the Mississippi - no boats for commercial purpose
 - c. Of its making land fertile like the Nile
 - d. Of great cities built upon its banks like the Thames-London, or the Seine-Paris
 - e. Of its great width like the Amazon
 - f. Of its beautiful scenery like the Hudson
4. Then why is the Jordan River the Most famous river in the world?

Discussion

I. UNIQUE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

- A. Its's source
 1. Rivers usual pattern - rise from elevated source, flows down gradually and reaches the ocean
 2. Jordan is unlike other rivers except in its source
 3. Source is 3 streams - Hasbani, Leddan, Baniyas - all fed by melting snows of Mt. Hermon

4. All are few hundred feet above sea level
 - a. Come together to form Jordan River
 - b. Makes a lake called Lake Huleh or "water of Merom"
 - c. 3 Miles wide and 4 miles long - 7 feet above level of Mediterranean which is 30 miles to the West.

B. Course

1. Upper Jordan

- a. Flows South 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles to Sea of Galilee
- b. 682 Feet below sea level
- c. Drops 689 feet in 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles

2. Lower Jordan

- a. Below Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea it is called the Lower Jordan
- b. Straight line of 65 miles but river winds about 200 miles
- c. At the Dead sea the level is 1292 feet below sea level

3. Jordan Valley

- a. This valley which follows the river is from 6 to 12 miles wide and is hemmed by mountains several hundred feet in height
- b. River is from 200 yards to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile wide

C. Jordan river and valley is famous because of its unusual characteristics

1. Lowest stream of water in the world
2. Jordan valley is lowest land on the earth
3. Dead Sea is the lowest body of Water on earth.

D. Jordan River means - The Descender

II. HISTORICAL EVENTS

A. Crossing by Israelites

1. Joshua 1:1-18 3:1-17 - at least 2 million people
 - a. Water stopped flowing
 - b. It was at flood season - Spring time - April or May
 - c. About 15 miles distance that the water was stopped - Adam to Dead Sea
2. Crossed on dry land - could have completed it in about ½ day
3. Only river crossed miraculously

B. Elijah and Elisha

1. II Kings 2:1-18
2. Elijah was going to be translated up to Heaven. He and Elisha and 50 sons of the prophets. They all knew what was about to happen and wanted to see it.
3. When Elijah smote the waters with his mantle the Jordan river divided and he and Elisha walked across on dry land.
4. Elijah taken up to heaven in Chariot of fire. Elisha caught his mantle.
5. He came back and smote the Jordan river and it divided and he crossed back.
6. The 50 were waiting and knew that Elisha had now received the spirit of Elijah.

C. Cleansing of Naaman

1. II Kings 5:1-14 Leader with dread disease of Leprosy
2. Prophet Elisha told him to dip in Jordan River 7 times.
3. Dipped 7 times in Jordan and he was cleansed of leprosy.
4. Power was not in the Jordan river.

D. John the Baptizer

1. Mt. 3:1-6 - baptized people in Jordan - Mt. 3:13-17 - Christ baptized by John
2. The most important event in the N.T. in relation to the Jordan River is the baptism of Jesus. Mark 1:9

III. REPRESENTS DEATH

A. Figurative of death and promised land (heaven)

1. Banks of Jordan - Ps. 23:4 "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death..."
2. Song - "On Jordan's Stormy banks I stand." # 886
3. Israelites had traveled for years to get to promised land which they could see. Yet they must cross that dark and swollen river before they can enter!!
4. Suggests to us the long years of Christian living and the hope of heaven as we come near the end of life, yet to enter we must cross the river of death.
5. Heb. 9:27 "And as it is appointed unto men once to die..."

B. Can't cross Jordan Alone

1. Israelites could not cross Jordan by themselves. If they had tried they would all have been drowned and washed into the Dead Sea.
2. When we come to the River of death we can't cross alone. If we try we shall be swept into the bottomless pit.
3. Israelites could cross because God was in their midst
4. We will be able to cross that river only if God and Christ are with us when we cross.

5. David said Ps. 23:4 "yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

C. If Christ crosses with us we must be prepared

1. We must follow him in life

a. Can't wait until we get there and follow him - uncertainty of time

b. Jas. 4:14 "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

c. Mt. 24:44 "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

d. After we plunge into the river its too late.

2. We can follow Him now by doing what he commands

a. Plan of Salvation H.B.R.C.B.- Remission of Sins

b. Live Soberly, Righteously & Godly in this present world Tit. 2:12

IV. LESSON OF THE DEAD SEA

A. Information about Dead Sea

1. Called "Salt Sea in the Bible" Josh. 3:16

2. No Outlet - water evaporates

3. Saltier than ocean [4-6 % in ocean, 25% in Dead Sea]

B. Two lakes on the Jordan River

1. Galilee - Receives and gives

2. Dead Sea - Receives and Keeps

C. Song # 556 "There is a Sea"

1. The Sea of Galilee receives the water from the Jordan river
 - a. It is a body of water filled with fish and other wildlife
 - b. Many people have made their living from fishing the waters of this sea
 - c. It receives the water and then it goes on downstream
2. The dead sea receives the water from the Jordan after it passes through the Sea of Galilee. But it does not go anywhere after that
 - a. It has no fish. There are no birds flying over because there is nothing in the water that they can eat.
 - b. Nothing can live in this water.
3. Application:
 - a. God has given so much to all of us. Let us use it and pass it on to others.
 - b. We will be like the Sea of Galilee or the Dead Sea.
 - c. Acts 20:35 "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, **It is more blessed to give than to receive.**"
 - d. Matt. 10:8 "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give."
 - e. Let us be a channel of blessing to others.

CONCLUSION

1. Jordan river is most important River on Earth because
 - a. Unusual Characteristics
 - b. Historical Events
 - c. Association with death
 - d. Of the lesson about the Dead Sea
2. When we cross the river of death will we be Ready?
3. "Shall we Gather at the River?" # 759
4. Songs Jordan River - 983 Poor Wayfaring Stranger - 979

Sermon by Arthur Pigman -
Evans Church of Christ
515 Gibbs Road
Evans, Ga. 30809
706-855-1249
arthurpigman@cybrtyme.com