

March 6, 2011

THE MIRACULOUS ENTRY
INTO CANAAN
Joshua 3: 10-17

Look at Joshua 3: 10, “**And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that {the living God is among you}, and *that* {he will without fail drive out from before you} the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites.”**

Joshua is telling Israel, “You will **know** two things.” **FIRST**, you will **know** that “the living God is [among] you”. **National** Israel must **KNOW** that God had **determined** for them to **POSSESS** this land. **And**, that what God has **determined** is backed by **HIS** power and strength. **Their** **POSSESSION** of this land did not depend upon **THEIR** strength, but God’s.

And, the **SECOND** thing Joshua tells Israel they would **know** is that “the living God will **CERTAINLY** [**“without fail”**] drive out from before you **ALL** your enemies.”

He lists seven nations who now occupied Canaan. **Seven** is the number of completion. **These** seven nations are **ALL** the enemies Israel would face in their conquest of the land of Canaan. **These** are those who would **OPPOSE** National Israel taking **POSSESSION** of what was (already) **THEIR** land.

But, **HOW** were they to know this? “**Hereby you shall know**”. **They** would know “**Hereby**”. “**Hereby**” means “by this” (or “by these”). **It** is a word that indicates **HOW** they would “know”. **Then**, he gives them two (inseparable) things “by which” they would know.

FIRST, they would know by the **ONE** whom God had appointed to bring them into this land. **This** is what we looked at last time. **God** had appointed Joshua. **Joshua** was the **ONE** who had the **WORDS** of God, as well as, the **WORKS** that **confirmed** both his **WORDS** and **WORKS** to be of God.

God told Joshua. **Then**, Joshua told the people. **Then**, God confirmed the **WORDS** He gave to Joshua with **WORKS** that proved both (**WORDS** and **WORKS**) to be of God. **Everything** needful for National Israel to enter in and take **POSSESSION** of the land of Canaan would be provided for them by God through Joshua.

As we have stated so many times in this study, what is written in Joshua is not just a history lesson about the nation Israel. **What** is written is for believers in every generation. **Everything** needful for National Israel to POSSESS Canaan was provided by God through Joshua. **Likewise**, everything needful for Spiritual Israel (God's elect) to enter in and take POSSESSION of the salvation they were given "in Christ before the world began" has been provided for them by God through Christ.

Israel (must) KNOW that "the living God was among them". **They** (must) KNOW that He would "WITHOUT FAIL drive out all their enemies. **And**, the FIRST way they would KNOW is by the ONE God had appointed to bring them into Canaan.

SECOND, they would know by the ("Miraculous") WAY God brought them into this land. **The WAY** would reveal God's PRESENCE "among them". **The WAY** would reveal that "the living God would (without fail) drive out from among them all their enemies". **The WAY** is what we will focus on today.

Here is what we will see. **We will** see that this ("Miraculous") WAY involves:

1. **The** (unmistakable) POWER of God.
2. **The** (unmistakable) PREEMINENCE of Christ.
3. **The** (total) EXCLUSION of human effort.

Let's look at these three things in the remaining verses of Chapter 3.

Look at Joshua 3: 14-15, "**And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people;**

15 And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,)

Apparently, at this time of year the snow on the mountains began to melt and caused the Jordan River to rise to overflowing.

Look at Joshua 3: 16-17, (And it came to pass) "**That the waters which came down from above stood *and* rose up upon an heap very far from the city**

Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, *even* the salt sea, failed, *and* were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.

17 And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.”

(Look back at the outline.) **The FIRST** thing we see in the (“Miraculous”) WAY God brought National Israel into the land of Canaan is: **The** (unmistakable) POWER of God.

Look back at Joshua 3: 16, (And it came to pass) **“That the waters which came down from above stood *and* rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, *even* the salt sea, failed, *and* were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.**

According to some commentaries, these two cities were located on opposite sides of the river. **The distance** between them was 16-18 miles. **So, the** water of the Jordan was backed up stretching from one city to the other, creating a dry riverbed 16-18 miles long. **It doesn’t** take much to see the hand of God here. **It is** not hard to see that this is a great miracle that only God could perform.

National Israel must know that their entry into the land of Canaan was a “Miraculous Entry”. **It was** (totally) by the POWER of God. **And,** therefore, it could NOT be and was NOT by THEIR hand (in ANY way to ANY degree). **The** Sovereign God of this universe had **determined** for Israel to POSSESS this land. **And,** the “Miraculous” WAY He chose to bring them into that POSSESSION reveals that determination.

Remember, there is another “Miraculous Entry” pictured here. **It is** the picture of a multitude of sinners being GIVEN what they do NOT deserve and have done NOTHING to earn. **It is** a picture of God’s elect entering into POSSESSION of the eternal salvation they have already been given IN CHRIST “before the world began”. **And,** HOW do they enter this great salvation? **Is it** by THEIR power or God’s?

Look at John 1:10-13, “**He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.**

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Have you ever stopped to think how AMAZING it is that ANY sinner looks to Christ ALONE for all of his/her salvation? **It is** nothing short of a MIRACLE. **But**, when it happens, it is the (unmistakable) POWER of God at work in the world.

Now, MOST will “say” that salvation is the gift of God. **They** will “say” it is God’s doing and not theirs. **And**, those who name the name of Christ will “say” that salvation is by Christ ALONE. **They** will “say” it is by “grace” and not “works”.

I.e. Most will give God and Christ the “credit” in salvation. **The problem** comes when men learn that God’s salvation is conditioned on and accomplished by Christ and Christ ALONE; a **salvation** where Christ gets ALL the glory; **where** CHRIST has the PREEMINENCE. **That** brings us to our next point.

(**Look** back at the outline.) **The SECOND** thing we see in the (“Miraculous”) WAY God brought National Israel into the land of Canaan is: **The** (unmistakable) PREEMINENCE of Christ.

Look back at Joshua 3: 14-15, “**And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people;**

15 And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,)

And, it goes on to say: when the priests brought the Ark of the Covenant to the brink of the Jordan, the river stopped its flow. **It was** the Ark providing Israel this “Miraculous Entry”. **And**, (from a previous lesson), for the first time “the priests” who attended the Tabernacle (not the Kohathites) bore the Ark. Explain!

The Ark represents Christ. **The priests** bearing the Ark represent Christ being set forth before Israel in picture and type.

The Ark is where the tables of stone (10 commandments) were kept. (Explain!)

These Ten Commandments were kept (continually) before Israel under this economy. **These** commandments declared the strictness and inflexibility of God's Standard. **They** were placed in the Ark to remind Israel that God **demand**s perfection. **He** demands perfect, continual obedience to His law. **He can** command **nothing** less.

The Ark, also, represented the Justice of God. Over the Ark was the Mercy Seat. **Where** God's law has been broken, He demands the punishment of eternal death. God's Justice **cannot** demand **less**. "The soul that sins shall surely die." "The wages of sin is death." **And**, God's Justice will not be satisfied without that punishment being carried out.

It was on the Mercy Seat that the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled. **And, it** was BY THE BLOOD that atonement for sin was made (in that economy). **The High** Priest entered the Holy of Holies, NOT without blood!

The Ark of the Covenant pictured the ONLY place on earth where God (who is ever holy), and man (who is ever sinful) could meet together. **How? Because** the mercy seat pictured the law and justice of God and the mercy of God coming together in harmony.

The Ark pictured the law of God honored ONLY by the obedience of Christ. It pictured the Justice of God satisfied ONLY by Christ's obedience unto death. **The mercy** seat pictured God being just to justify the ungodly based on the penalty bearing/righteousness establishing death of Christ ALONE.

David, the Psalmist declared all this in Psalm 85.

Look at Psalm 85: 8-10, "I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.

9 Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.

10 Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*."

Mercy and truth have come together (they have met). **Righteousness** and peace have embraced (they have kissed each other). **And**, they have done that **ONLY** in the Person and work of Christ in the salvation of His people.

National Israel **understood** that their “Miraculous Entry” into Canaan was to be attributed to the Ark of the Covenant.

Look ahead at Joshua 4: 6-7, “**That this may be a sign among you, *that* when your children ask *their fathers* in time to come, saying, What *mean* ye by these stones?**

7 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, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel forever.”

The priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth were setting Christ forth in picture and type. **By God’s** design and plan, they were giving Christ His (rightful) place. **They** were giving Christ the **PREEMINENCE** in this monumental event.

National Israel entered into the Land of Promise because Christ (represented in the Ark) was given the **PREEMINENCE** in their “Miraculous Entry”. **The scriptures** are clear that God has given Christ the **PREEMINENCE** in all things.

Look at Col 1: 12-18, “**Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:**

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins:

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

For any sinner to imagine the (miracle) of salvation without the PREEMINENCE of Christ is (perhaps) fallen man’s greatest deception. **Yet**, that is what all of us do by nature. **That is** what all of us do until God stops us.

It is on THIS issue (the PREEMINENCE of Christ in salvation) that the scriptures declare the heart of fallen man the most “deceitful” thing on earth.

Look at Jeremiah 17: 9, “**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?**”

This verse is talking about our ðhearts being deceived and desperately wickedö on the issue of salvation (God’s salvation). **That is** where the hearts of fallen men are deceived the MOST. **We (all)** imagine a salvation without the PREEMINENCE of Christ UNTIL God stops us.

The scribes and Pharisees of Christ’s day pretty well summarize the mind of fallen, yet, religious men on this matter.

Look at John 5: 37-40, “ **And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.**

38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”

What does it mean that Christ has the PREEMINENCE? It means that salvation is by Christ ALONE. **It means** that salvation is ABSOLUTELY/EXCLUSIVELY/ONE HUNDRED PERCENT by the work of Christ. **It was** Christ who was charged with the sins of His people. **It was** Christ whose death put away that sin (all of it) by a Just satisfaction. **It was** Christ whose obedience unto death established the ONE Righteousness by which God declares every sinner He died for Righteous in His sight.

Christ did NOT die, (like many believe), to make a WAY for sinners. **He did NOT** die to make salvation POSSIBLE if sinners will just do “their part”. **On the contrary**, Christ’s death bought salvation for EVERY sinner He died for.

Christ having the PREEMINENCE in salvation means that man has NO PART in either “gaining” or in “maintaining” salvation. **It means** that sinners do NOTHING to “get” themselves saved or to “keep” themselves saved. **They** are saved because Christ has done EVERYTHING required for them to stand holy, unblamable, and unreprouvable in God’s sight. **Sinners** ENTER INTO a salvation worked out for them in the doing and dying of Christ ALONE.

Christ does NOT have the PREEMINENCE where sinners think that Christ has died BUT that any sinner He died for might perish anyway. **That** attributes FAILURE TO Christ. **He does NOT** have the PREEMINENCE where sinners think they DO something to “gain” or “maintain” their salvation. **That** is self-righteous thinking. **And**, self-righteous thinking is what God MUST overcome BEFORE any sinner can COUNT himself or herself “saved”.

Let’s think about this river for a moment. **The** Jordan River was the first OBSTACLE standing in the way of National Israel’s entrance into the land they had been given. **This** river was blocking their path. **It was** standing in the way of them entering in. **It was** keeping them from what God had DETERMINED for them to have.

The Jordan River was an OBSTACLE. But, it was not an OBVIOUS obstacle. **It was**, rather, a SUTTLE obstacle. **I doubt** that Israel had given much thought as to HOW they would get their millions of people across that river without (at least) SOME not making it safely. **Likewise**, most think they are “saved” w/o regard to HOW. (**God** is Just AND Justifier. **It is** ALL of Christ and NO PART man.)

The WAY into God’s salvation is where God proves it is HIS salvation, and NOT man’s. **The WAY** is where God proves that salvation is by CHRIST’S work, and NOT man’s. **The WAY** is where God proves salvation to be by His MERCY and GRACE; NOT by the will and efforts of sinful man. **The WAY** is what gives Christ the PREEMINENCE in salvation. **“I am the WAY...”** **The WAY** is what proves you to be in God’s salvation or in a “presumptuous” salvation.

How did you get where you THINK you are? **You** THINK you are saved! **You** THINK you are headed for heaven! **You** think you are free from the wrath of God! You think you are in the favor of God. **That** is (indeed) an enviable position to be in. **HOW** did you get there? **This** is WITHOUT DOUBT the MOST important question any sinner will answer concerning salvation. **REMEMBER** the math class!

If your answer to “How are you saved?” is (any) WAY but Christ crucified; **if it** is (any) WAY but Christ doing **everything**; **if it** has ANYTHING to do with you doing ANYTHING to “get” saved or to “stay” saved, it is a presumptuous WAY. **It is** a self-righteous WAY. **It fails** to give Christ the PREEMINENCE.

The priests bearing the Ark entering the Jordan stopped its flow. **In like** manner the revelation of Christ in the Gospel MUST and SHALL “stop the flow” of (self-righteous) thinking in the minds of His people (Spiritual Israel).

Jordan means “descending” or “the descender”. **When** the Ark of the Covenant (typifying Christ) entered the Jordan, the river, (which was “descending”), was stopped in its flow. **And**, the WAY was provided for National Israel to enter into the land of Canaan. **Christ** (typified by the Ark), provided the WAY.

Under the Gospel, **Christ** (by the Spirit) enters into the mind of a sinner with the revelation of what He has done for every sinner He lived and died for. **When** that happens, the flood of self-righteousness in THAT sinner’s mind is stopped.

It is not ELIMINATED; but STOPPED. **And**, that allows the sinner to see the salvation Christ has already accomplished for EVERY sinner He was given. **It allows** the sinner to enter in and **possess** the salvation already worked out by Christ and given that sinner in Him “before the world began”.

That is when a regenerated/converted sinner attributes salvation to God ALONE, through Christ ALONE. **That is** when a sinner gives Christ the PREEMINENCE He has earned in salvation. **That is** when Christ is not a PART of Salvation, but ALL of salvation. **That is** when a sinner has **experienced** the (unmistakable) PREEMINENCE of Christ in his/her salvation. **Until** then, there is no **evidence** that a sinner has taken POSSESSION of God’s salvation.

(**Look** back at the outline.) **The** THIRD (and final) thing we see in the (“Miraculous”) WAY God brought National Israel into the land of Canaan is: **The** (total) EXCLUSION of human effort.

Look back at Joshua 3: 17, “**And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.**”

The priests stood firm **on dry ground** and the Israelites passed over **on dry ground**. **Ground** that was (moments before) overflowing with water was NOW “dry ground”. **God** removed EVERY obstruction (every obstacle) keeping National Israel from entering this land.

And, what part did those entering in have in that miracle? **No part**; none whatsoever! **They** didn’t build a dam. **They** didn’t build a bridge. **They** didn’t build a boat. **They** walked over on “**dry ground**”.

Of all the generations of Israelites, what had THIS generation done to DESERVE to be the ones to POSSESS this Promised Land? **What** would they need to do to OBTAIN (i.e. make this POSSESSION a reality)? NOTHING! **The** fact that THEY are the generation that God had determined to POSSESS this land is TOTALLY the Sovereign goodness and purpose of God. **It had** NOTHING to do with WHO they were or WHAT they had done.

Israel MUST know (without question) that it was GOD who gave them entrance into this land. **They** MUST know that it was **the Ark (Christ)** providing them this “Miraculous” entry. **They** MUST know that **their efforts** were TOTALLY excluded.

Why? **Why** is this so important? **It is** important because if their efforts were not excluded, they would glory in **their efforts** and NOT in God’s “Miraculous Entry”. **If their efforts** were not EXCLUDED, they would glory in **their work** and not in Christ’s work ALONE.

God has to overcome the natural thinking of all of us concerning salvation. **He** MUST drive from our minds any notion that WE have anything to do with being delivered from the wrath of God. **He** MUST eliminate from our minds any idea

that WE have any part in our being in the eternal favor of God. **He** MUST exclude all boasting by US in this matter.

What do sinners do to deserve or obtain the salvation found in Christ ALONE? **They** do NOTHING. **They** enter into a salvation found in God's mercy ALONE and provided in Christ's work ALONE. **The very** nature of mercy is that it is something GIVEN. **It is** (not) DESERVED by its recipient. **Nor** can it be EARNED or OBTAINED by its recipient. **It was** given BEFORE the recipient knew or did anything about it.

Look at Rom 9: 10-16, "**...when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;**

11 (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

14 ¶ What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."

God had DETERMINED TO and DID bring a generation of National Israelites into POSSESSION of a land they had already been given. **Likewise,** He has DETERMINED TO and DOES show eternal mercy to a multitude of His choosing.

In time in each generation He "saves" them. **He brings** them into POSSESSION of the salvation they were each given IN CHRIST "before the world began". **He gives** them POSSESSION of the salvation worked out (for them) by Christ through His obedience unto death. **He shows** them mercy at the EXCLUSION of all their efforts.

He saves and blesses THOSE sinners by the work of Christ ALONE. **In time** THOSE sinners each experience, God's salvation which involves:

By Mark Pannell