

## GULP!!!

"I'm swamped! I'm in over my head!" – Ever feel that way? I took a job once (OK, or maybe twice...) in which I felt overwhelmed – just wearied and worn out by the circumstances. Know what I mean? No peace, no solitude, no time for devotion, for just sitting at the Lord's feet.

Instead, it was all running, all doing, tumbling from action to action – a busy, busy man – just too busy, man!

And it's in these kind of situations that we can get carried away by the descending current of this world's priorities. Here, the sand castles of our good intentions are swept away.

So, that's why I love these wonderful reflective moments which for me are becoming increasingly more important and refreshing. Today, I'm reading in the book of Joshua, preparing to teach out of the book of Mark, chapter one.

In Mark 1, we find Jesus being baptized by John in the Jordan river at the same place, many scholars think, where Joshua led the children of Israel across into the promised land. Now, John's baptism was radical – the Jewish

people had never used it before as John was doing. They did baptize converting gentiles, but never was it used as a demonstration of repentance on the part of a Jew.

So when Christ showed up, having no need for repentance, John said, "I should be baptized by You!" Nevertheless, Jesus



was submerged by John to, in His own words, "...fulfill all righteousness."

Now this passage in Joshua 3 is awesome – I think it's plainly prophetic, pointing forward not only to Christ in the gospels but also to the days in which we are living, and it speaks of life!

Here's what happened – after some 40 years in the wilderness of Sinai, Joshua and the children of Israel were camped on the east side of the Jordan river; it was a time when the river over flowed its banks.

The heavenly message was then given – after three days, the captains were to go throughout the camp and tell all of Israel to follow the Ark of God. Now, you may already know that *three days* in the scriptures points to the resurrection of Christ and the *Ark* is itself a fascinating picture of Jesus (more on that in another study, perhaps).

Anyway, Joshua then told the priests to carry the Ark into the Jordan river. Now, this gets interesting because the name Jordan means "descender" and it descends into the Dead Sea. As such, it is a picture of death or sin leading to death. Recall, Jesus was immersed here Himself foretelling His own death and His taking on the sins of the whole world.

But here in Joshua, as the priests who are carrying the Ark, the type or picture of Christ, entered the river, something supernatural happened – the river was immediately 'swallowed up' – the water stopped far upstream, all the way up at a place called **Adam!**

Can you see it? The picture is perfect. When Christ died for us on Calvary (as the Ark entered the river) sin and death (the Jordan) was "swallowed up" in victory (1Cor 15:54) all the way back to Adam! All the way back to the time when mankind first sinned and died.

As a consequence, all the people crossed over on dry ground – death lost its sting (1Cor 15:55) – and they entered the promised land of God's Kingdom. Isn't this beautiful?!

But there's more. Just as Jesus told His disciples to follow Him, Joshua told the Israelites to follow the Ark (see Mat 16:24-26 for example). But they were to follow it specifically from a distance of "about 2000 cubits". Now, I will suggest that this could be a prophetic illustration of the Jews following Christ in fulfillment of Romans 11:25-27 about 2000 years after Christ's death and resurrection. If that is the case, and I believe it is, we are living in exciting times!

Next, Joshua instructed 12 men to retrieve 12 stones from the dry river bed and to build with them an altar to the Lord so that Israel would always remember. In like manner, we also need to be reminded:

- Of what Christ has done for us
- That the descending current of sin has been stopped for those who believe
- That death has been swallowed up by Life
- That we should follow Jesus and, as a consequence, walk in newness of life

*"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk **in newness of life.**" Romans 6:3,4*