

34: 9). Preparations were immediately made for crossing the Jordan. Spies were sent out who visited Jericho, and after an adventurous escape returned with an exceedingly encouraging report. The people were encamped at Shittim, or the "Acacias", a place near the foot of the mountains of Moab, about five miles from the Jordan, but they now removed to the immediate vicinity of the river. Here they rested for three days before the final advance; during this time the necessary preparations for an orderly march were completed.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Preparation. vs. 5-8. II. The Promise. vs. 9-13. III. The Passing over. vs. 14-17.

I. THE PREPARATION. 5. **Joshua**—His name was originally Hoshea, "salvation," (Num. 13: 8; Deut. 32: 44) but was changed to Jehoshua, contracted Joshua, "salvation of Jehovah" (Num. 13: 16). The Greek form of this name is Jesus (Acts 7: 45; Heb. 4: 8). He was born in Egypt about the time that Moses fled to Midian and was about 84 years of age. He died at the age of 110 (Judg. 2: 8). **Sanctify yourselves**—(Ex. 19: 10-14). The outward rites were only symbolical. The real sanctification consisted in "the spiritual purification, the turning of the heart to God, in faith and trust in His promise, and in willing obedience to His commands, that they might rightly take to heart the wonder of grace which the Lord would the next day perform among them."—(Keil.) A similar command was given on other solemn occasions (Lev. 20: 7-8; Num. 11: 18; 1 Sam. 16: 5; Joel 2: 16). We should always prepare ourselves by private devotion for any serious business or for the public worship of God. Besides maintaining a devout frame of mind at all times, specially grave occasions call for special spiritual preparation. **To-morrow**—The 10th Nisan (4: 19) the fortieth anniversary of the Exodus (Ex. 12: 3) and four days before the Passover itself. **Wonders**—"On the morrow God would be with them and reveal His presence in an extraordinary manner, viz., by miracles, therefore they ought also properly to prepare themselves for such an advent and manifestation of God."—(Schmidt.) Wonders are miraculous proofs of God's presence and power. They had been promised in Ex. 34: 10 and the fulfilment of that promise was now to begin, the waters of the Jordan were to prove as slight a barrier as those of the Red Sea had been.

6. **Joshua spake unto the Priests**—Our lesson gives a summary of the events connected with the crossing over without regarding very carefully the chronological order. Whether this command was given on the evening before the passage, or on the morning of the day of crossing, cannot be decided, but the former seems most probable as the events in the following verses could hardly have taken place after the march had begun. **The Ark of the Covenant**—The symbol of God's presence (see Bible Dictionary for a description of it). It was the visible sign that God was in the midst of his people as their covenant God. **Pass over before the people**—The ark was usually carried in the middle of the host, but now, as on their setting out from Sinai, it is placed in the van of the army. It

takes the place of the cloudy pillar and the rod of Moses. It was to precede at a distance of 1,000 yards, a little over half a mile. This was in order that all might see it. Had those in front crowded closely after the priests the ark would have been invisible to all behind, and the fact of God's special leadership would not have been so vividly set forth. This is the reason given for the arrangement (verse 4).

7. **This day will I begin to magnify thee**—"Make thee great." He had already been highly honored (Ex. 24: 13; Deut. 31: 7), but now he was to stand beyond question in Moses' place and lead them through "the swellings of Jordan as he did through the Red Sea" (Josh. 4: 14; 1 Chr. 29: 25; 2 Chr. 1: 1). There was no such rebellion against Joshua as that of Korah. By this miracle his divine right to the leadership was established beyond question (Ex. 14: 31).

8. **Ye shall stand still in Jordan**—They were to enter the brink of the river and stand there until the river bed was dry. Then they were to advance to the middle of the channel and remain there until all the people had passed over (vs. 15-17). Next after the priests came 40,000 men of the tribes whose portion was already allotted on the east side of Jordan. They marched as the vanguard of their brethren to the conquest of Canaan (Num. 32: 20; Josh. 4: 12). Tradition says that the women and children came next and the rest of the army followed as a rear guard. Josh. 4: 18 implies that the feet of the people sank in the soft mud of the bottom as they crossed. The Israelites manifested their faith and obedience by marching to the river, swollen with spring freshets, without hesitation. God will not remove difficulties out of our way until we come to them, but no obstacle in the path of duty is insurmountable. Our Jordans will roll back when feet consecrated by faith touch their brink.

II. THE PROMISE. 9. **Come hither and hear**—A solemn and impressive invitation. The people were now informed of what was about to take place and anew exhorted to adore Jehovah, their covenant God, as the only living and true God.

10. **The Living God**—In contrast with the gods of the heathen who had no power or life. God is represented as "living" because He is watchful over his people and able to defend them. He is "in the midst of" his people in the sense that they have his continual presence and protection.—(Schmidt); (Deut. 5: 26; 1 Sam. 17: 26; 2 Kings 19: 4; Hos. 1: 10; Matt. 16: 16; 1 Thess. 1: 9;