

Joshua 3-5:12 - Preparation



Before your meet...

Read through Joshua 3-5:12 doing the following: (You can go on to biblegateway.com to get a print out)

- Highlight any ideas or phrases that are repeated throughout.
- Lookup from cross-references names and places.
- Were there any references that you noticed of events from Israel's history?
- Have a read about the ark of the covenant in Exodus 25.

1. History, ritual and miraculous events were vitally important for the nation of Israel. Start off by having a discussion about what place you think ritual, remembrance and history have to play in our lives and culture (religious or secular).

Read Joshua 3:1-5:12

2. What's already happened in the first two chapters of Joshua?

3. From your preparation before you came:

- What were the ideas that reoccurred in this weeks passage?
- What did you learn about the Ark of the Covenant?

Entry into the promised land is imminent. After all these years, the manna from heaven is going to stop, and they're going to eat of the fruit of the promised land (Joshua 5:12). What we want to investigate in this section of Joshua is what God does to prepare Israel for entrance into His land that He's giving them - and why.

4. There are four events listed in these chapters - talk about them! (What happens, why and what effect it's supposed to have on the nation of Israel both now and in the future.)

- The crossing of the Jordan (Ch. 3)³
- The memorial stones (Ch. 4)

³ See Exodus 13:17-14:31

- Circumcision (Ch 5:1-9)⁴

- The Passover (Ch 5:10-12)⁵

5. In all these things, what would you say God's reasons are for symbolism and miracles?

For Israel, symbolism, ritual and miracles were supposed to be a reminder of what God had done for them, and a reminder to be faithful to God. And why our there is a tendency these days to either shy away from formalised 'ritual' (or to pretend that we don't have any), we can still fall into the trap of 'going through the motions' in our Christian life. We do what we're 'supposed' to do as Christians, but our hearts aren't in it and our lives don't really reflect it.

Read Hebrews 13:11-14

6. Discuss what event we are supposed to look back at to remind us of what God has done for us, and how we are supposed to live.

7. Is there a place for 'ritual' in the life of people today? What should it look like and how should it be carried out?⁶

8. Do you see a danger amongst Christians of just going through the motions? What effect does that have on them, their relationship with God, and those around them?

⁴ See Genesis 17:9-14

⁵ See Exodus 12

⁶ Think of baptism, communion, saying grace...anything else?