

Joshua 3:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap.

Analysis

This verse predicts the specific miracle God will perform—waters piling up upstream when priests' feet touch the Jordan. The title 'the Lord of all the earth' (adon kol-haarets, אֲדוֹן כָּל־הָאָרֶץ) emphasizes Yahweh's universal sovereignty over all creation, not merely Israel's tribal deity but the cosmic King. This title appears rarely in Scripture (Micah 4:13; Zechariah 4:14; 6:5), highlighting the magnitude of the coming miracle. The ark represents God's throne and presence, and 'the Lord of all the earth' dwelling in the ark demonstrates that heaven's King has come to fight for Israel. The phrase 'shall be cut off' (yikarethun, יִכָּרְתוּן) uses a passive verb indicating divine action—God Himself will cut off the waters. The waters 'shall stand upon an heap' (yaamdu ned echad, יַעֲמְדוּ נֵד אֶחָד) describes waters rising vertically like a wall or mound, defying natural gravity and flow. This echoes the Red Sea miracle (Exodus 15:8) where waters 'stood upright as an heap,' establishing typological parallel between the two redemptive events.

Historical Context

The Jordan River during spring flood season (verse 15) overflowed its banks, making crossing humanly impossible. The river, though only 80-100 feet wide normally, swelled to perhaps 200 feet wide and much deeper during this season.

God's timing ensured the miracle would be undeniable—not merely finding a fordable spot but supernatural water stoppage. Ancient Near Eastern peoples believed territorial deities controlled only limited regions, but Israel's God demonstrating power over the Jordan announced His universal sovereignty. The ark of the covenant, containing the tablets of the law, Aaron's rod, and manna, represented God's covenant presence. Priests bearing the ark led the crossing, showing that God Himself went before Israel into the promised land. Archaeological and geological evidence suggests possible earthquake-caused landslides occasionally blocked the Jordan at Adam (verse 16), but the timing precisely when priests' feet touched water demonstrates divine providence controlling natural phenomena for redemptive purposes.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing God as 'Lord of all the earth' (not merely your personal deity) expand your understanding of His sovereignty?
2. What 'Jordan River' obstacles in your life seem impossible to cross, requiring God to defy natural laws to provide passage?
3. How does the ark leading Israel through Jordan illustrate Christ going before His people through death into resurrection life?

Interlinear Text

וְהָיָה	כֵּן וְחָ	כִּפּוֹת	וְהָיָה	כָּל	רַגְלֵי י
H1961	shall rest	And it shall come to pass as soon as the soles			of the feet
	H5117		H3709		H7272
הַכֹּהֲנִים	וְנָשָׂאֵי	אֶרֶץ	יְהוָה	אֵלֶּיךָ	הָאֵרֶץ
of the priests	that bear	the ark	of the LORD	the Lord	of all the earth
H3548	H5375	H727	H3068	H113	H776

הַמַּיִם	הַיַּרְדֵּן	הַמַּיִם	הַיַּרְדֵּן	יִכָּרֵת	
from the waters	of Jordan	from the waters	of Jordan	shall be cut off	
H4325	H3383	H4325	H3383	H3772	
הַמַּיִם	הַיַּרְדֵּן	מִלְּמַעְלָה	וַיִּשְׁמְדוּ	נִדְּ	אֶחָד:
from the waters	that come down	from above	and they shall stand	heap	upon an
H4325	H3381	H4605	H5975	H5067	H259

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 15:8 (Parallel theme): And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.

Psalms 78:13 (Parallel theme): He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap.