

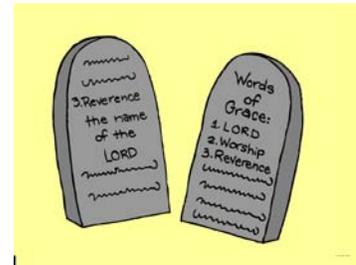
Dead End?

Moses and all the Israelites had been wandering in the desert for a long time. Moses was now an old man and the time came for him to die. Alone, he left to be with the LORD on the mountain. Joshua became the new leader of God's people, the Israelites. The LORD told Joshua, "I was with Moses. I will also be with you, and I will never leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous. Be careful to obey the laws I gave to Moses. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for I will be with you wherever you go. The time has come for my people to enter the land I have promised them."



There was just one problem...a big problem...a river flooded with rain was blocking their way to the Promised Land. What would the people do? How would the people ever get across the Jordan River and reach the land God had promised to give them? Was this a dead end in their path to the Promised Land?

The LORD told Joshua what to do. It seemed like a crazy idea, but Joshua decided to listen to the LORD...to obey His word. After all, this same God helped Moses lead the people out of Egypt. He sent ten plagues to the land of Egypt, and all the while kept His people safe. He parted the Red Sea for them to cross on dry ground to safety. Joshua trusted God. He revered God, so Joshua just had to listen to the LORD and do what He said to do. The third Word of Grace is Reverence, which teaches us to *revere* the LORD. This means we want to honor and respect God so much that we just *have* to listen to Him.



Joshua and all the Israelites went to the Jordan River and camped out there for three days, waiting to cross it. It was time to put that crazy plan into action. Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people." The priests did as they were told...they took it up and went ahead of the people. All the Israelites were told to follow the ark. They had never traveled this way before. They did not know the way to go. The ark was going to lead them. (Read Joshua 3:1-6)



Joshua said to the people, "Watch and see what the LORD will do. Today you will know the One True God is with you and He will certainly give you the land He has promised." Then, obeying the LORD's command, he told the priests to go down to the edge of the water and stand in the river. The Jordan River was at flood stage at this time...its waters were full and fast-flowing. But as soon as the priests reached the edge of the river and their feet touched it, the water upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great

distance away. The priests who carried the ark of the covenant stood on dry ground, in the middle of the Jordan River, until the whole nation of Israel had crossed to the other side of the river. (Read Joshua 3:7-11, 14-17)



How great is the One True God! Only He could make the river stop flowing. At the LORD's command, twelve men, one from each tribe of Israel, went back into the middle of the dry river bed. The men each



picked up one stone from the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites. Then they carried the stones over to the people and put them down. Joshua took the twelve stones, built an altar to the LORD and said, "The LORD stopped the flow of the Jordan River. These stones are to serve as a sign among you...they are to remind His people forever what He has done." The river was not a dead end in the path to the Promised Land. (Read Joshua

4:1-9)

While all the people watched, the priests came up out of the river carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD. As soon as they set their feet on the bank, the waters of the Jordan River returned to their place and began to flow at flood stage again. The Israelites were overjoyed, but they were not surprised. They listened as Joshua said, "The LORD your God dried up this river before you until you had crossed over. The LORD your God did to the Jordan just what He had done to the Red Sea when He dried it up before us until we had crossed over. He did this so that all the people of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God." (Read Joshua 4:10-11, 18, 21-24)

