

## THE SWELLING OF THE JORDAN

Text: Jeremiah 12:5

INTRO: In our text, God asks of the prophet two rhetorical questions. The KJV uses the phrase, "the swelling of the Jordan." In this lesson we will look more closely at these interesting questions, and seek to make an application of the principles involved to our own lives.

### I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE JORDAN RIVER.

Beginning with the merger of 4 small streams near Caesarea Philippi, 1700 feet above sea level, the Jordan River winds its way down to the Sea of Galilee, 682 feet below sea level, then out the south end of the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, 1,292 feet below sea level. A straight line from the beginning to the end of the Jordan River would be only 70 miles in length, but so winding & twisting is the river that the Jordan itself is fully 200 miles long.

- A. After 40 years wandering in the wilderness, the Israelites under Joshua's leadership finally crossed the Jordan River & entered the promised land.
- B. It was at the crossing of the Jordan that Jephthah & his army put the Ephraimites to the test by asking them to pronounce the word shibboleth, Judges 12:5-6.
- C. After the death of Absalom, King David & his faithful servants crossed the Jordan on a ferry to return to his rightful place as King, 2 Sam. 19:18.
- D. It was in the Jordan River that the Syrian captain Naaman was instructed to dip 7 times in order that his leprosy might be cured, 2 Kings 5.
- E. Perhaps most significant of all, Jesus journeyed from Nazareth in Galilee to be baptized by John in the Jordan River east of Jerusalem.

### II. JEREMIAH'S COMPLAINT, vs. 1-4.

- A. Have you ever complained that the righteous sometimes

suffer, even as the wicked often prosper? Take heart. You are in good company. That was a significant part of Jeremiah's complaint.

- B. Centuries before, Job had taken note of the same perplexing fact.

The tents of robbers prosper, & those who provoke God are secure--in what God provides by His hand. (Job 12:6).

- C. Asaph the psalmist had almost lost his footing by this same perplexity.

READ PSALM 73:1-16.

- D. The hymn-writer noted this problem, as we all have done. "Tempted and tried..."

### III. GOD RESPONDS TO JEREMIAH WITH A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS.

- A. He had responded to Job with a multitude of questions designed to humble the patriarch & make him realize the utter futility of calling God's wisdom in question. READ JOB 38:1-7; 40:6-8; 42:1-6.
- B. Asaph learned, as Yogi Berra so articulately observed, "It's not over till it's over." READ PSALM 73:16-17.
- C. God was, in effect, telling Jeremiah: It's going to get worse before it gets better. Accept the small challenges, learn to conquer the small perplexities, so that you may be properly prepared for the more difficult problems & challenges, Jeremiah 12:5.
  1. If you haven't learned to battle successfully against the infantry, what will you do when you have to fight the cavalry?
  2. If you are defeated by ordinary problems of every day living, what will you do when the flood

waters rise around you?

3. With God's help, we must learn to conquer the day to day problems & trials of life, so that we will not be overwhelmed when the major trials come--and they will.

#### IV. RIVERS WE MUST CROSS.

- A. Temptation. Temptation comes in many different forms and degrees. We must daily conquer the small temptations to enable ourselves to deal with the more difficult temptations.

He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; & he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. (Luke 16:10).

- B. Sickness. We must learn to accept the small aches & pains with a minimum of complaint or else, we condition ourselves to be overwhelmed and destroyed when serious illness overtakes us. 2 Cor. 12:9.

- C. Sorrow, disappointment. Financial setbacks, lost friendships, unaccomplished dreams. We must learn to take these things in stride. Else how can we learn to handle the more difficult problems that will inevitably come our way? Loss of husband/wife. Children not obey the gospel. Or stray away from the faith.

- D. Death.

1. Israel's crossing of the Red Sea symbolizes N.T. baptism, 1 Cor.10:2. Their period in the wilderness symbolizes our service to God in the church, Acts 7:38. Though the symbolism is not spelled out specifically, by natural extension, Israel's crossing of the Jordan into the promised land has frequently been used to symbolize our crossing the "river of death" to await our final heavenly reward.

"There's a land beyond the river..." "On

Jordan's stormy banks I stand..."

2. You may be fortunate enough to have "a peaceful hour in which to die."
3. But the Jordan was at flood stage when Israel crossed over, Josh. 3:15. Most folks are not fortunate enough to die in their sleep without sickness or pain. We must avail ourselves of the grace of God, sufficient for all our needs. He will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to endure. With each temptation, He will provide a way of escape, 1 Cor. 10:13. But we must exercise ourselves & condition ourselves in the lesser problems & difficulties, that we may be able to face the more difficult ones, some of which, are certain to come.

READ TEXT AGAIN, JEREMIAH 12:5.

When you pass thru the waters, I will be with you thru the rivers, they shall not overflow you... (Isa 43:2).

Exton, PA, July 1, 1990

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, October 9, 1994

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, March 11, 2001