

### Prayer Requests & Announcements

- Chad will be traveling back from Colorado Tuesday this week
- Tom & Kate plan to travel to Colorado this week
- The Christians in the Philippines.

For prayer requests, call or text  
Chad @ (208) 221-2587 or Ross @ (208) 680-6590

### Assignments

<b>Today</b> <b>Bible Study</b> – Tom Mitchell <b>Song Leader</b> – David Porter <b>Lord's Table</b> – Tom Mitchell <b>Sermon</b> – Ross Ward	<b>Wednesday</b> <b>Bible Study</b> – Ross Ward <b>Song Leader</b> – Chad Mitchell <b>Invitation</b> – Ross Ward
<b>Next Sunday</b> <b>Bible Study</b> – Tom Mitchell <b>Song Leader</b> – Chad Mitchell <b>Lord's Table</b> – David Porter <b>Sermon</b> – Ross Ward	<b>Next Wednesday</b> <b>Bible Study</b> – Ross Ward <b>Song Leader</b> – Chad Mitchell <b>Invitation</b> – Ross Ward

Blackfoot Church of Christ  
370 North Shilling Ave.  
Blackfoot, Idaho 83221

#### Meeting Times:

Sunday Morning Classes 10:00AM  
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00AM  
Wednesday Evening 7:30PM



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# Blackfoot Church of Christ

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## “YOU HAVE NOT PASSED THIS WAY BEFORE”

By Tommy Thornhill

Jos 3:1-5, And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over.<sup>2</sup> And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host;<sup>3</sup> And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it.<sup>4</sup> Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore.<sup>5</sup> And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.

We are now standing at the entrance of a new year. In one sense God will be giving us a chance to make the coming year a great one. It offers a new start, with new dreams and new resolutions to replace the ones which did not come true this year. It will be our opportunity to turn over a new leaf, to write a new story on a clean page. To make new resolutions and determine to keep them, not just make them. We are on the verge of beginning a journey we have not taken before. Notice the text and the heading. Let's notice some things from the text as we prepare to enter the New Year. For truly, we have not passed this way before. It is uncharted, unfamiliar and as yet untraveled by anyone.

People had time to contemplate what was about to occur. In the text we find that the people were camped before the river Jordan for 3 days. During this time they were able to reflect on things as they gazed upon the Promised Land. To

those who took time to think, at least three things came to mind. 1. They were a new generation of people that had grown up in the wilderness. All men over the age of 20 who had departed the land of Egypt were dead, with two exceptions, Joshua and Caleb. 2. This time marked the end of the trials and tribulations of their wilderness wanderings. It is about to come to an end. 3. There was a promise of a new life in a new land on the horizon.

Just as Israel was gathered at the river, ready to take a journey to a place they had “not passed before,” we should realize we are about to take a journey we have not lived before. So, when the New Year came at midnight, God gave us a New Year. This means a new start in a new year that stretches before us. Take time to look back over the year now passing away. Could I have done things better? Did I live for God as I should? Some things I attempted to do failed, while other things I should have done were left undone. There were times of sorrow, sickness and trials to be faced. Thankfully, some things were accomplished. How was it with you? We all need to make a personal examination. How do we stand before God?

2 Cor 13:5, Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Remember, both the good and the bad will be left behind. So it is time to press on. As with the children of Israel, we might ask, what lies ahead? For them, the Promised Land, but it will not be theirs without effort. The same with us. What we accomplish for good during the year will only come with effort.

The Promised Land was a divine gift, but it would be gained only with much effort. Moses had told them in Ex 23:27-30, that the land would be gained “little by little.” As Israel entered into the land, the struggle would not be over. It was only the beginning of conquest. Before the land was truly theirs and the promised rest obtained, the river Jordan had to be crossed, cities captured, battles fought, people conquered. They could only enter into the eternal rest after they had faithfully fought the fight of faith. Note Heb 4:1-3. Those who believed entered into the rest. But some lost out because they were not willing to endure the struggle required. God had promised to give the land to them “little by little.” They rebelled against God and became unbelievers. They tried to go it alone. Their strength alone was insufficient Heb 4:6, 11. Yes, the promise was certain, but not yet received. Why? They would possess it ONLY after they finished the work God gave them to do.

Our promised land is heaven. But to obtain it we have to strive to enter.

Lk 13:24, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

It takes effort.

Jn 6:27, Labor not for the meat which perishes, but for that meat which endures unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

The flesh must be mortified (put away), the devil must be resisted steadfastly, the world must be overcome. But this can be done only by an obedient faith and perseverance. We are promised a crown of life when this life is over, not before. Yes, it is the gift of God Rom 6:23, but it is a crown won by faithfulness Rev 2:10. Christ purchased our inheritance with His blood Rev 1:5; 1 Pet.1:3-4; but the crown will not be obtained without a life of service.

Col 3:24, Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

The Children of Israel were to follow the ark. The ark contained the covenant of God with His people. It contained God’s terms for pleasing Him (the 10 commandments). It would be visible to all. It was no longer carried in the midst of the people, but at 2000 cubits separation (3000 ft – ½ mile) in front. It was to lead them through the uncharted territory. As we enter into the New Year, Christ is the One that is our covenant head. He is the One to keep in view. He offered Himself for us and was lifted up to draw men to Him Jn 3:14; 12:32. As we run the race we must keep Him in view Heb 12:1-2. He is our example 1 Pet 2:21-22. He is the captain of our salvation, having shown us His leadership by His suffering Heb 2:10. In the New Year do you plan to keep Jesus lifted up and in view? Do you plan to follow God’s plan throughout the coming year?

The people were to sanctify themselves (be set apart, made holy, dedicated, devoted to). Just as God sanctified the 7th day, just as the firstborn were to be dedicated, set apart to God, so the people were to be sanctified. This was to make them fit (to be in proper condition) for the journey Ex 19:10-11. Today we prepare for the future by being made fit 2 Tim 2:21, getting rid of moral and spiritual defilements by cleansing ourselves by the blood of Christ Heb 10:10; 12:13. How? By prayer, meditation, recalling God’s gracious help in the past. By continually pondering on His majesty, His holiness, His power, His abundant mercy.