



WEEKLY CHRISTIAN FOCUS



CROSSING RIVERS

CROSSING THE JORDAN

Welcome to this edition about 'Crossing Rivers!' Somehow or another, I believe the Lord just popped this phrase into my mind a few days ago. I know there are thousands of rivers in the world, perhaps millions, one tiny island, Dominica, in the Caribbean has 365 rivers!

Rivers have been created by God to offer sustenance and fresh water to us. They are somehow in ways we possibly dimly understand, hugely important to our survival.

They also appear to have an effect on our minds and spirits, and minister to us in some way. Now that may sound odd to a few, but it is clear that from Psalm 8, the creation of God has a message and declares the glory of God, so to then do Rivers! Praise the Lord.

Today we are going to talk about the River Jordan in a spiritual way. Humans have long equated the moment of death to crossing a river.

There is an enormous amount of evidence for this in human history, from the River Styx of Greek Mythology, with its ferryman called



Charon, to the crossing of the river of death in John Bunyan's truly moving book 'Pilgrim's Progress'. The Mayans also believed the crossing of the Death River or 'river of blood'. Even the very pagan Chinese believed this in a slightly different way.

(In Chinese culture, crossing the River of Oblivion (忘川 Wàng Chuān), or Naihe Bridge (奈何桥), is the final step for a soul to proceed to reincarnation.)

But whatever culture it was, the river was the end of life, and the entrance to another world, dimly understood.

For many people in the Christian world, we have somehow taken this concept in regards to the River Jordan. There seems to be NO scripture to confirm that the Jordan was the gate to eternal life, but we have taken this beautiful river and the crossing of it as extremely important.

The Jordan in scripture

- Joshua and his army crossed Jordan to make it into the 'Promised Land' and perhaps that is the symbolism we have, that we leave the desert and wilderness and enter into God's

promises of a new life! Joshua chapter 3.

- John the Baptist was at the Jordan baptising thousands of people for repentance and he also baptised Jesus.

- Elijah was carried to heaven on the chariots of fire near the Jordan River. Both he and Elisha parted the waters of the Jordan using his mantle, a symbol of God's power and anointing!

- In fact there are 179 Bible verses that talk about the River Jordan. Looking through some of these today, it dawned on me that the Jordan River was to the Jews the prime geographical marker of their country; that is everything they referenced in the Bible was connected to its position vis-a-vis the Jordan. Here are two simple examples;

Genesis 50:10

- And they came to the threshingfloor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days.

Deuteronomy 3:8

- And we took at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites the land that was on this side Jordan, from the river of Arnon unto mount Hermon;

The Israelites had the expressions 'beyond Jordan', and 'on this side Jordan' "Beyond Jordan" refers to the land east of the Jordan River, often used in a biblical context to denote the region of Transjordan. "This side of the Jordan" generally means the western side of the Jordan River, the "Promised Land" for the Israelites,

So the information continues over these 179 bible verses, which would be a good study for those who wish.

So, the Jordan became the symbol for many of those who love Jesus to leave this earthly life and enter the Promised Land, the real promised land of Heaven, by the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

Having a river like this, I find is a comfort, we all have to come to that point when we breathe our last breath. We enter the promised land of Eternal life with Jesus, not because of any righteousness of our own, but entirely due to his sacrifice on the cross of Calvary.

I have found the symbolism of crossing the Jordan to be very strong in African-American culture and the Caribbean. Those guys know plenty about the hardships of the earthly life, and tired bones and struggles, so they embrace the crossing of the Jordan River fully, God bless them.

Here are two songs

1. At the crossing over Jordan written by Charles Bentley 1917

1 When we near the river Jordan,
With its rushing, swelling tide,
Let us put our trust in Jesus as we go;
We shall hear his gentle whisper,
"Fear not, I am by thy side,"
At the crossing over Jordan he'll be there.

Refrain:

At the crossing over Jordan,
At the crossing he'll be there;

There'll be music, there'll be shouting
Just beyond the swelling tide,
At the crossing over Jordan he'll be there.

2 As we cross the river Jordan,
With its flood that none can check,
Then the Saviour's guiding hand will lead us o'er;
Tho' the billow's roar be mighty,
There is nothing we need fear,
At the crossing over Jordan he'll be there. [Refrain]

3 We are nearing that dark river
Which we all must cross some day;
But the faithful of the Father need not fear,
For the Saviour there is waiting,
He will safely take us o'er,
At the crossing over Jordan he'll be there. [Refrain]

2. **Wayfaring stranger**
(Unknown author USA? First published 1858!)

I'm just a poor wayfaring stranger,
I'm trav'ling through this world below;
There is no sickness, toil, nor danger,
In that bright world to which I go.
I'm going there to see my father,
I'm going there no more to roam;
I'm just a going over Jordan, I'm just a going over home.

I know dark clouds will gather o'er me,
I know my pathway's rough and steep;
But golden fields lie out before me,
Where weary eyes no more shall weep.
I'm going there to see my mother,
She said she'd meet me when I come;
I'm just a going over Jordan, I'm just a going over home.

I want to sing salvations story, In concert with the blood-washed band;
I want to wear a crown of glory,
When I get home to that good land.
I'm going there to see my brothers,
They passed before me one

by one;
I'm just a going over Jordan, I'm just a going over home.

I'll soon be free from every trial,
This form will rest beneath the sod;
I'll drop the cross of self-denial,
And enter in my home with God.
I'm going there to see my Saviour,
Who shed for me His precious blood;
I'm just a going over Jordan, I'm just a going over home.
The lyrics to 'Wayfaring Stranger' vary a lot in the USA, as so many artists have sung this song. So you may not hear all these original verses above, but you will be deeply moved by this song, if you go in the spirit and let the lyrics and violin and let this dear man's voice take you there in spirit!
[Johnny Cash - Wayfaring Stranger - YouTube](#)

At the crossing of the Jordan, Jesus will be there for us! How wonderful. Death has no more sting, all fear has gone and as we get ready to draw our last breath in whatever situation, Jesus will guide us safely through to the other side.
It's true, we may not see an actual 'River' when we die, most people do not know how the moment of death will be, but we can cross into the next world in full confidence, as Christ has said: 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'
So, Next time you see a river, beloved, stop for a moment and ask God to show you something wonderful. They are all created by Him, and they all bring life and power to the earth.
God bless you.
Until next week, God willing.
Please enjoy the many links below.
Love in Christ
Jerry for the WCF Team

[which island has 365 rivers - Google Search](#)
[Crossing the River of Death, c1910 by Unbekannt](#)

[The Mara River Crossing: Life and Death Following the Pattern - My Kenya Travel](#)
[did the mayans believe you had to cross a river at death - Google Search](#)
[did the chinese believe you had to cross a river at death - Google Search](#)

[beyond Jordan meaning - Google Search](#)
[NuBeat Music: Song Lyrics for "CROSSING THE JORDAN"](#)



ISAIAH 41:18

18 I WILL OPEN RIVERS IN HIGH PLACES, AND
FOUNTAINS IN THE MIDST OF THE VALLEYS: I WILL
MAKE THE WILDERNESS A POOL OF WATER, AND
THE DRY LAND SPRINGS OF WATER.

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