

Three Generations
A Study of the Crossing of the Jordan River
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Introduction: It is not uncommon to find one generation that is very different from the preceding generation.

- A. Often the difference is for the worst!
 - 1. Sadly it is the norm for one generation to fail to instill values in the next one.
 - 2. The book of Judges often made this point. **(Judges 2:7-12)**
 - 3. We do not have to follow in the paths of our generation, for good or bad!
- B. The key to what a generation becomes is what the first generation does in the home.
 - 1. Moses knew well that only diligent parents could instill faith in their children. **(Deut 6:7-10)**
 - 2. Casual teaching with little emphasis rarely will build a strong faith.
 - 3. Moses knew that the efforts made by this generation would mean everything for the nation of Israel after they possessed the land.
- C. Moses commonly pointed to the crossing of the Jordan as a huge step in the development of this young nation.
 - 1. This was to be a decision that like the generation before would have great significance.
 - 2. Once this decision was made there was no going back.

I. Lessons from a failed generation

- A. One generation will always look at and point to the faults of the previous one.
 - 1. Many times they get it wrong and pay a great price! (Ex. Discipline) **(Prov 22:15; 29:15)**
 - 2. However when good teaching is present and a generation has to fight where the previous did not, there often are good lessons learned.
- B. The previous generation had their crossing and failed to take advantage of it.
 - 1. They crossed the Red Sea in a great miracle. **(1 Cor 10:1-6)**
 - 2. Rather than build their own faith in God they followed the flesh and became a cowardly generation of complainers. They forgot very quickly! **(Num 11:4-5)**
 - 3. When the time came to fight by faith they reacted in a predicable manner.
 - 4. Moses later numbers the next generation and makes a strong point on them! **(Num 26:63-65; 32:7-13)**

“Everyone is good for something. If for no other reason than to serve as a bad example!”

II. The Crossing of the next generation

- A. They would be going to a new place by faith. **(Josh 3:3-4)**
 - 1. Unlike the previous generation that looked back and became fearful, they were moving forward. Too many are cursed by the familiar.
 - 2. Jesus warned us not to look back. **(Lk 9:62)**
 - 3. While we hold onto the old paths we will go to places new to us!
- B. They witnessed a great miracle. **(Josh 3:10-17)**
 - 1. The knowledge of the miracle would give them courage in the future battles they would fight!

2. God also gave them a leader in whom the people could trust to do God's will. **(Josh 3:7)**
3. It would be easy for this generation to remember!
- C. They were also prepared for this event by Moses.
 1. They were reminded of the certainty of the promises of God. **(Num 33:50-53)**
 2. They were reminded that their strength and righteousness was not the reason for their success! **(Deut 9:1-6)**
 3. They were warned of the consequences of disobedience. **(Deut 4:21-26)**
 4. What kind of heart would all of these things produce in these people? For us today, would this not also be included in "positive Christianity?" **(Heb 12:28-29)**
 5. Even the fall and repentance of a great man can have a good effect upon others.
- D. They crossed over to fight.
 1. They would not be discouraged as the previous generation.
 2. Moses made sure to eliminate things that might bring discouragement. **(Num 32:6-13)**
 3. There is a strength in fighting a battle that builds faith unlike anything else.

III. The challenge to prepare another generation

- A. No sooner had they crossed the Jordan were they instructed concerning an even greater battle they would fight.
 1. The battle against the people of the land was certain, they had God's promises.
 2. The greater battle was to be found in teaching their children!
 3. They were to make a memorial. **(Josh 4:1-5)**
 4. They later were to take advantage of this memorial. **(Josh 4:6-9)**
- B. How did this generation succeed? **(Judges 2:7-10)**
 1. They failed! Why?
 2. They taught but did not do so with fervor and repetition!
 3. Consider two men who may have passed by the memorial with their children.
 4. The next generation did not fight their battles! They also suffered from the unfinished battles of the previous.

"Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them." - James Baldwin

III. We too must cross the Jordan

- A. Every generation must face the battle of making faith their own. **(2 Tim 4:2-4)**
 1. There will be the pull of the culture to compromise.
 2. There likely will be the defection of many.
- B. We must be diligent in teaching our children. **(Eph 6:4)**
 1. What is the quality of our teaching?
 2. It will be obvious to all when we accept a lesser standard! How many here are interested in becoming better teachers? (Ex. Our teaching program)
- C. What battles are we teaching our children about?
 1. The battle of denominationalism? The battle over institutionalism?
 2. The battle over worldliness?

Conclusion: Are you ready to cross the Jordan?