

# GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## The famous Jordan river

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**T**he Jordan River has its origin from cold springs bursting forth from the area around Mount Hermon and reaches its end approximately one hundred twenty miles southward at the Dead Sea. It enters three bodies of water. Approximately forty miles from its source it flows into the triangular Lake Hula. Then after fifteen miles, it enters the Sea of Galilee. Finally, it empties into the Dead Sea about sixty five miles southward. It winds like a snake between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. If you were to straighten it out, the Jordan River would be over two hundred miles long.

Topographically, the Jordan River is unique due to being the lowest river below sea level in the world. From its beginning, some one thousand feet above sea level, it falls at an average of twenty two feet per mile to almost one thousand three hundred feet below sea level at the Dead Sea.

The Jordan River is not famous for its navigational commerce like the Mississippi River. It is not famous because it flows through famous cities like the Seine and Thames Rivers which

respectively flow through Paris and London. It is famous because God's powerful presence has been witnessed there.

The people of Israel were commanded to pass over the Jordan in order to enter the promised land. God commanded such passage at a time when the Jordan River was overflowing its banks (Joshua 3:15). From the human perspective, this would be a most inappropriate time. But from God's perspective, it was a time for His people to learn to trust in His power and leadership. Joshua said, “Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanite, and the Hittite and the Hivite, and the Perizzite, and the Gergashite, and the Amorite and the Jebusite” (Joshua 3:10). It took great faith among the priests to first step into the swift overflowing Jordan River at the command of God, and then it no doubt produced great wonderment to see the waters of the Jordan “cut off” above them and “stand in one heap” (Joshua 3:13).

The waters were miraculously parted again in the days of

the prophets. Elijah crossed the Jordan with Elisha by smiting the waters with his mantle (2 Kings 2:8). After Elijah was caught up into the heavens by a chariot of fire, Elisha took the same mantle and smote the Jordan. He said, “Where is Jehovah, The God of Elijah? And when he also had smitten the waters, they were divided hither and thither; and Elisha went over” (2 Kings 2:14). God was making his powerful presence known and miraculously saying to all that Elisha is truly His prophet in the place of Elijah.

Later, the waters of the Jordan were parted by one who was prophesied to come in the spirit of Elijah. No, John the baptist was not miraculously parting the waters into a heap, but he was parting the waters by baptizing multitudes (Matthew 3:6). John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River (John 3:13). Here again on Jordan's banks, the river witnessed the presence of God. The Father speaks from heaven saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). God has made his presence powerfully known at the Jordan, thus making it a most famous river.