

The God who Lives—

The Witness of the Old Testament  
(Part 2)

God Living “Inside” Israel’s History

# God Living “Inside” Israel’s History (1)

---

## Deuteronomy 5 - Moses and the Israelite leaders

*“And when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders.*

*“You said, ‘Behold, the LORD our God has **shown** us His glory and His greatness, and we have **heard** His voice from the midst of the fire; we have seen today that God speaks with man, yet he lives. ‘Now then why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we **hear** the voice of the LORD our God any longer, then we will **die**. **For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?** Go near and hear all that the LORD our God says; then speak to us all that the LORD our God speaks to you, and we will hear and do it.’*

*“The LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me, ‘I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They have done well in all that they have spoken. Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!’*

## God Living “Inside” Israel’s History (2A)

---

### Joshua 3 – Joshua at the entrance to Canaan

*And Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, “Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over ahead of the people.” So they took up the ark of the covenant and went ahead of the people.*

*Now the LORD said to Joshua, “This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you.*

*“You shall, moreover, command the priests who are carrying the ark of the covenant, saying, ‘When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.’ ”*

*Then Joshua said to the sons of Israel, “Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God.”*

## God Living “Inside” Israel’s History (2B)

---

### Joshua 3 – Joshua at the entrance to Canaan

*Joshua said, “**By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will assuredly dispossess from before you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, and the Jebusite.** Behold, the ark of the covenant of the **Lord of all the earth** is crossing over ahead of you into the Jordan. Now then, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man for each tribe. It shall come about when the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the **LORD, the Lord of all the earth,** rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan will be cut off, and the waters which are flowing down from above will stand in one heap.”*

## God Living “Inside” Israel’s History (3)

---

- The story of the Crossing
- Only a couple of months after the Deuteronomy passage & the Baal of Peor...
- The emphasis is on 'living'

"There is no article in Hebrew in the phrase “the living God” (v.10). Without the article **emphasis is placed on the fact that Israel’s God is living**. Joshua is not simply stating that the living God is with them. He is affirming that the God who marches with Israel is one who is able to act and to perform mighty deeds in contrast to the pagan gods that have eyes but cannot see, etc. (cf. Ps 115:3–7). [EBC]

## God Living “Inside” Israel’s History (4A)

---

A Living and Present God--Better Get Cleaned UP!

"As the day for the crossing approached **Joshua commanded the people to sanctify or consecrate themselves. It would be easier to understand if he had said, “Sharpen your swords and check your shields!”** But spiritual not military preparation was needed at this time because God was about to reveal Himself by performing a great miracle in Israel’s midst. As a person would prepare scrupulously to meet someone of earthly fame so it was appropriate for the Israelites to prepare for a manifestation of the God of all the earth. **The same command was heard at Sinai when the previous generation prepared itself for the majestic revelation of the Lord in the giving of the Law (Ex. 19:10-13).** But that was not all. The people of Israel were **to expect God to work a miracle.** They were to be eager, gripped by a sense of wonder. Israel was not to lose sight of their God who can do the incredible and the humanly impossible.

## God Living “Inside” Israel’s History (4B)

---

### A Living and Present God--Better Get Cleaned UP!

3:6-8. The LORD then told Joshua how they would make the crossing, and explained to Joshua that this miracle would magnify or exalt him as the leader of the people. It was time to establish Joshua’s credentials as God’s representative to guide Israel. What better way to accomplish this than for Joshua to direct their passage through a miraculously parted river? After the crossing the people did in fact revere Joshua (4:14), knowing that God was with him (3:7; cf. 1:5, 9).



## God Living “Inside” Israel’s History (4C)

---

A Living and Present God--Better Get Cleaned UP!

3:9-13. But when Joshua passed on the words of God to the people he did not disclose the special promise that he would be exalted by this miraculous event. **Rather he told them that this miracle would certify that the living God, in contrast with the dead idols worshiped by the heathen, was in their midst.** Further, besides opening a way across the flooded Jordan, the living God would also drive out the seven groups of people inhabiting the land. **The promise, the living God is among you, became the watchword of the Conquest, the key to victory over the enemies in the land. It is a promise that appears on almost every page of this book: “I will be with you!” It is a promise that still sustains the Lord’s people—the assurance of His presence.** Since God is the Lord (’ădôn, “master”) of all the earth (cf. Ps. 97:5), He was certainly capable of getting His people across a river.

## God Living “Inside” Israel’s History (4D)

---

A Living and Present God--Better Get Cleaned UP!

3:14-15a. The day of the crossing of the Jordan, the day when Israel was to enter Canaan, finally arrived. The people folded their tents and followed the ark-bearing priests to the brink of the Jordan. It was the time of the barley harvest, the month of Nisan (March-April), the first month of their year (4:19). **The river was at flood stage—a foreboding sight to the priests and people and a severe test of their faith. Would they hesitate in fear or would they advance in faith, believing that what God had promised (about the water stopping, 3:13) would actually happen? [BKC]**

## God Living “Inside” Israel’s History (5)

---

A contrast to the gods of the land:

"This archaic appellative immediately evokes a **contrast with the annually dying and rising deity of the pagan context.**

[AYBC]

## God Living “Inside” Israel’s History (5)

---

1 Samuel 17:26 & 36 - David and Goliath

*"Then David spoke to the men who were standing by him, saying, “What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies [lit: 'battle lines'] of the living God?”*

*“Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God.”*

- The story of the battle

## God Living “Inside” Israel’s History (6)

---

David already knew about the dead god of Goliath

"The references to a living God in vv 26 and 36 (cf. 2 Kgs 19:4) come in a context where a foreigner has slandered Israel’s God. In Jer 10:6–10, the living God is contrasted with idols. **The giant’s attempt to curse David by his (dead) god is ineffective (v 43). Dagon, the god of the Philistines, had already been shown up as dead in the book of 1 Samuel (chap. 5)!**" [WBC]

- The Story in I Samuel 5 -- when Samuel was a young boy
- David knew the LORD lives--on the **other** end of the relationship with Saul: "*The Lord lives, and blessed be my Rock*" (2 Sam 22.47; = Ps 18)

The God who Lives—

The Witness of the Old Testament  
(Part 2)