

Miracles Are Just as Spectacular the Second Time Around

One of my favorite things to do is to sit quietly at an event like a wedding, an anniversary, or a graduation and listen to parents talking about their children—especially if the parents have more than one child. Inevitably, the conversations turn to a discussion about the difference between the first child and the child, or children, that followed.

The first one always seems to be spoken of with just a touch more of the miraculous. After all, the first child to be born is the first time the miracle of birth is experienced. So, all the “feels” are being felt for the first time, and because it is the first time, those feelings sometimes can seem stronger and more powerful.

Just before a recent wedding that I was officiating, as I was waiting in my hotel, I was passing the time reading my Bible when I read the section of text where the Children of Israel were crossing the Jordan River and entering the Promised Land (Joshua 3). As I read the narrative of the crossing, I realized that when I speak about the miracles that G-D performed for the Israelites during the redemption from Egypt and their wilderness journey, I rarely mention the crossing of the Jordan.

I speak about the plagues. I talk about the parting of the Reed Sea and the destruction of the Egyptian army. I talk about the manna and the cloud and pillar that led them as they journeyed. I even mention the bitter water becoming sweet and the water flowing from the rock.

But, I rarely mention the parting of the Jordan and the crossing of Israel into the Promised Land.

I realized that I was treating this miracle like a parent sometimes treats the birth of their second child. Yes, it was amazing and miraculous...but G-D did this once before already.

However, G-D having done something once before doesn't make it any less of a miracle. The truth is that just like having a first and second baby, the crossing of the Reed Sea and the Crossing of the Jordan are both separate and different miracles.

Take a minute to think about the differences. When we have our first baby, we are inexperienced and have no idea what to expect. Everything we know is based upon other peoples experiences and stories that have been shared with us.

However, when we have our second child, we have our own experiences and stories. In reality, it isn't that the birth is less of a miracle, it is just less of a surprise.

This is the same with the crossing of the Reed Sea and the Jordan. When G-D parted the waters of the Reed Sea, the Israelites had never experienced such a miracle before. They had spent 400 years in Egypt and everything they knew about the miracles of their G-D was based upon other people's experiences and the stories that had been shared with them.

But, when G-D brought them to the Jordan River, they had just spent 40 years literally living on the miracles of G-D. They saw the cloud and pillar of fire. They ate manna daily. They arrived at the Jordan River like parents having a second child.

Unlike the Israelites at the Reed Sea, they weren't fearful of what was going to happen. They walked toward the Jordan River with the confidence of someone who had full expectation that a miracle was going to take place. Like the parents of a second child, while they knew that what was going to happen was out of their control, they also knew it wasn't unknown because it wasn't their first time.

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The first time G-D parted the waters for Israel, He was the G-D of their fathers only. As they prepared to cross the Jordan, He was their G-D.

They crossed the Reed Sea carrying the bones of Joseph. As they crossed the Jordan, they were not only carrying Joseph's bones, they were also carrying the Ark of the Covenant.

The second miracle was no less miraculous than the first. The difference is that when the Israelites experienced the parting of the Jordan, they entered the miracle with their own personal experiences and not just the memories of those who had long been dead. Like parents of a second child, the miracle is just as powerful and miraculous.

It just isn't as surprising because they have already experienced the miracle once.

As I write these words, I am thinking about all of the second miracles in my life. The many times when G-D miraculously does something in my life that He had already done once before for me.



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As I write these words, I am also asking G-D to help me to never again treat a second miracle as if it was less miraculous than a first miracle.

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