

# Living Memorial Stones

- It was customary to set up some type of stone monument at the site of God's miraculous intervention.
- The monuments would serve several purposes, but the primary purpose was to remind future generations about God's ability to save and deliver.
- The stones would remind future generations that in time of need they could look to God.
- Joshua tells the people to let the future generations know about how God dried up the Jordan River so that they could pass over on dry ground. Sharing testimony is one of the most powerful things we can do.
- A testimony:
  - Braggs on what God has done.
  - Reminds us of what God has done and can do.
  - Encourages the faith of others to what God is able to do.
  - Takes our attention off of our issues and puts it on God.

## 1. These Stones Show that God Has Been Faithful

- a. God is always faithful.
- b. God did not bring the children of Israel only so far and then leave them to die and miss out on their inheritance.
- c. What God began, He was willing and able to complete (Philippians 1:6).
- d. We need not ever assume that God will get us to a certain point and then stop what He is doing.
- e. In June 1984, God launched Calvary Assembly of God. In 2009, God has not forgotten who or where we are. He is still the same faithful God now as He was then.
- f. Hebrews 13:8 – He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

## 2. These Stones Put God's Power on Display

- a. Any monument that is set up to display man's ability will fall.
- b. God on display is power.
- c. Every time that the children of Israel looked at or spoke about this stone memorial, they were reminded that there is absolutely nothing that God cannot do.
- d. Every time that you pull into this parking lot, I want you to remember that this was a field of nothing just over 20 years ago. Now, it holds a debt free church where God's power is constantly on display.
- e. So long as we continue to make this monument about God and His power, we will continue to see His power manifest.
- f. Read Psalm 44:1-8

## 3. These Stones Remind God's People to Always Fear Him

- a. This does not mean to be afraid of Him, but rather to be in awe of Him or to respect Him.
- b. "When we receive a true revelation of God's majesty and his judgment against sin, we will follow him in faith while growing in the fear of the Lord" (FLSB).
- c. A healthy fear of the Lord will keep us in a place where we enter into His presence and look to Him in our time of need.
- d. When you are afraid of someone, you run from them, but when there is a fear/respect, you get as close to them as you possibly can.

- This 12 stone memorial was set up following the crossing of the Jordan River and just before the children of Israel took possession of their land of promise.
- This monument was a long time coming reminder that God had not forgotten the promises He had delivered to the children of Israel concerning their inheritance.
- God was once again making it clear that He had all things in control.
- This monument was set up in Gilgal (a rolling), and afterwards, the children of Israel consecrated themselves unto the Lord and the Lord spoke clearly to them that on that day He had rolled away the reproach of Egypt (the world) off of them (Joshua 5:9).
- From that time forward, the children of Israel began to enjoy the fruit of the land of promise.

Sermon: The Lesson of the Stones - Joshua 4

by [Lloyd Stille](#) on Thursday, August 10, 2006

[Scriptures: Joshua 4](#)

**Writer's note:** This sermon was delivered on the Sunday we consecrated the ground upon which new educational and fellowship facilities were to be constructed. We followed the example set in this passage by gathering 12 stones from the property, presented by charter members and other key leaders to be stacked together for the duration of the project.

## **Introduction**

It is one of the climactic events in all of biblical history. The Israelites had waited forty years, but now the time had come. It is a poignant moment as they stride across the riverbed of the Jordan, opened for them by the miraculous power of God. Behind them, they leave the wearying decades of meandering around in a barren wilderness and the tragic memories of countless funerals for an entire generation of people who would not trust God's promises. Slavery in Egypt and the bare survival of nomadic life are bygone experiences now.

A new and welcome chapter opens before them! Before them lay a land richer than their dreams, more fruitful than their hopes, and more beautiful than their imagination. Now it is theirs by God's steadfast promise.

It must have felt surreal to finally stand in Canaan, kind of like when you unlock the door to your first home. You've envisioned it, planned for it, imagined what you will do with it...but when you step in that front door, your emotions soar! To be the fulfillment of an ancient promise to Father Abraham must have been overwhelming.

Their joy had been magnified by recent events. When they arrived at the Jordan, they found it is flood stage, menacing in its speed and dangerous for what it concealed. The jungle-like growth covered by the rapid current left Israel flatfooted. The river was impassible, its crossing impossible.

But God intervened, performing a miracle that paralleled the miracle of the Exodus from Egypt. God rolled back the waters of the Jordan River, just as He had done with the Red Sea. God meant what He had said through Moses years before. Here was His signature again, in the same way, to assure His people that He was good to His word.

I imagine there were songs and shouts as God's people worshiped and exulted in Him. But there was also one important act that calls for our attention this morning. After Israel crossed, God gave Joshua some very specific instructions, recorded in Joshua 4:1-3: After the entire nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the Lord spoke to Joshua, "Choose 12 men from the people, one man for each tribe, and command them, 'Take 12 stones from this place in the middle of the Jordan where the priests' feet are standing, carry them with you, and set them down at the place where you spend the night.' "

Joshua did exactly what he was told, sending these select 12 men back to the riverbed of the Jordan where they were to bring back 12 stones—stones that at one point were buried, unreachable, covered by a challenge to the faith of God's people, but were now divinely accessible.

Twelve men hoisted heavy stones to their shoulders from Jordan's floor and then piled them together in the Promised Land, by God's command. They were stacked there as a sign, an unmistakable marker at the very place where God had demonstrated His power to overcome any obstacle to His will.

Because stones don't naturally stack, there would come a day when Israel's children would ask for an explanation for this phenomenon. Here's the answer God wants the next generation to know: "Tell them the story," says God in v. 7, "of how the waters of the Jordan were cut off in front of the ark of the Lord's covenant. When it crossed the Jordan, the Jordan's waters were cut off."

Verses 23-24 add, For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, just as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over. This is so that all the people of the earth may know that the Lord's hand is mighty, and so that you may always fear the Lord your God."

This is what happens when the impossible meets the promises of God. This is the outcome when the implausible comes up against the glorious riches of God in Christ Jesus.

So now come with me, congregation, to our point of crossing. Today we will gaze at a much-hoped-for dream, which has been planted in our hearts by the mutual leading of the Lord and our growing needs as a body of Christ. Today, we shall consecrate the very ground on which shall be constructed to God's glory, buildings that will expand the reach of the gospel and serve God's church. Today, we will build a consecrated memorial, a preemptive marker of our confidence in God. Let me make some statements about the stones Israel placed and the stones we will place.

What do these stones mean?

## **I. It's all about God**

Seeing that rock pile and hearing the story, the people of Israel would know clearly that they had not crossed Jordan on their own. Those stones cried out, "God did this! By His hand we have forded this river. By His power and faithfulness we have accomplished this!"

So may this memorial stand to speak to us all. Let it remind us that Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor over it in vain (Ps. 127:1). Let the hallowed act of our devotion come back to strengthen us that it truly is "Not by strength or by might, but by My Spirit," says the LORD of hosts. (Zech. 4:6). From start to finish, from every dollar given to every brick laid, let God be all in this place!

## **II. We have a missionary purpose**

Joshua told Israel that the stones would serve as a reminder that all the people of the earth may know that the Lord's hand is mighty, and so that you may always fear the Lord your God." (v. 24) Let no one be confused. We have no mission here but the Great Commission. These buildings aren't memorials to us, but to Him! We exist to know God and make Him known. Our buildings exist, not to make us comfortable or proud, but for God's glory and the gospel's advance.

## **III. We must change if we want to go with God**

The stones out of the Jordan marked the movements of God among His people. They testified of the willingness of a people to leave what they had known in order to go with God, to face challenges to their faith, to step into the water, to believe in what they could not see.

Here me, people of God: Between the realization of this dream God has planted in our hearts and where we are now, there stands some daunting boundaries. We cannot yet see how God will do it, but we believe He is faithful. It's time to venture with God into His future for us.

Look to this memorial in the days ahead and hear the message they preach: This is all about God and His glory; it is about the missionary purpose for which we exist; it is about the challenge to change so that God can manifest His glory more fully through us.

Josh 4

12 Spiritual Stones we must relay to our spouse, to our children, and to all mankind:

1.Christ: is the Chief Cornerstone, therefore we must relate the biblical truths of who Christ is, was, and will forever be. [Matthew 7:24](#); [Ephesians 2:20](#).

2.Salvation: we must share our salvation experience with others, especially our family. [Acts 4:12](#); [Luke 2:30](#); [Jude 1:3](#) Do you know the Salvation story of your wife, your children, your church leaders, your friends? Woe to us if we do not! We can talk about the weather, our week, and everything else under the sun, but we do not make an effort to speak of the things of God.

3.Sanctification: The ongoing process of being set apart for God's righteous service. [Romans 6:19-22](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:4](#); [1 Corinthians 1:30](#) Why are we are afraid to share our sanctification process with each other?

4.Scriptures: From OT to NT we are commanded to relate the Holy Word of God to all. It is NOT ONLY the pastors role to share the Scriptures! Listen to these passages.

[Genesis 18:19](#) For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him."