

STONES THAT WITNESS

Joshua 4, Internet JOSHUA04__01ser.wpd, March 21, 2001, new

(Josh 4:6), "That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, **WHAT MEAN YE BY THESE STONES?**"

(Josh 4:21), "And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, **WHAT MEAN THESE STONES?**"

(Josh 4:24), "**THAT ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH MIGHT KNOW** the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever."

(Josh 4), "And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying, {2} Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, {3} And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night. {4} Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man: {5} And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel: {6} That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? {7} Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever. {8} And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the LORD spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. {9} And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day. {10} For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until every thing was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua: and the people hastened and passed over. {11} And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over, that the ark of the LORD passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people. {12} And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake

unto them: {13} About forty thousand prepared for war passed over before the LORD unto battle, to the plains of Jericho. {14} On that day the LORD magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life. {15} And the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying, {16} Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan. {17} Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan. {18} And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before. {19} And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho. {20} And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. {21} And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? {22} Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. {23} For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: {24} That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever."



Some months ago we showed the **VIDEO SERIES** by **RAY VANDER LAAN** titled ***THAT THE WORLD MAY KNOW***. It presented the **Land of Israel** in living color. The title of that video series is based on **Joshua 4**:

(Josh 4:24), "THAT ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH MIGHT KNOW the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever."

THE FIRST FAITH LESSON IN THAT SERIES is titled ***STANDING AT THE CROSSROADS***. **RAY VANDER LAAN** explains how God placed Israel in **the crossroads of the world** in order to be a witness to the world. Persons who made journeys of any significance at that time were often forced to pass through the Promised Land. God put His people in that land ***THAT THE WORLD MAY KNOW*** He was God.

THE FIRST FAITH LESSON addressed the subject of **STANDING STONES**. **STANDING STONES** in the Bible served as **A MEMORIAL** pointing back to some **monumental event**.

NOT EVERY STANDING STONE in Bible times was erected to God's honor. Some were erected by the Canaanites and were in honor of their god,

Baal. The Israelites entering the Promised Land were commanded to tear down those monuments when they entered the land (Exo 23:24; Deu 7:5).

The Hebrew word for **STANDING STONE** is "**MATSTSEBAH**" (**mats-tsay-baw'**). That word appears **34X'S** in the O.T. IT IS OFTEN TRANSLATED AS "**PILLAR**" (or as "image"). It literally means "**TO SET UP.**"

Standing stones came in a variety of sizes. Sometimes a "matstsebah" was **JUST ONE STONE** with very little size at all. Some were small enough for one person to carry. On occasion **SEVERAL STONES** were placed together to form standing stones.

The video was shot at the ancient ruins of **TEL GEZER** were today are located **TEN STANDING STONES**. Some of those stones reach **20 FEET IN HEIGHT**. THE REASON for those stones has **long been forgotten**, but are still prominent bearing witness past significant event.

MANY TIMES STONES WERE USED in the Bible to highlight some significant event. Consider **SEVERAL EXAMPLES**.

#1. JACOB ERECTED SEVERAL STANDING STONES

- 1) **IN HIS EARLY YEARS** (GENESIS 28), Jacob was running from his brother concerned that Esau might put him to death. He stopped on his first night's journey for sleep. He had not carried a pillow with him so he used a stone to sleep on. That night he had the vision with a ladder extending from heaven to earth with angels ascending and descending. At the top of the ladder was the LORD Himself. God promised to give that land to Jacob and his descendants. God promised Jacob that He would keep him and bring him safely back into the land again. When Jacob awakened he was **AFRAID** and declared that place was none other than the house of God. The word for house in Hebrew is "**beth.**" One of the names for God in Hebrew is "**EI.**" When you put the two words together, you form the name "**BETHEL,**" meaning "**the house of God.**" **JACOB TOOK THAT SLEEPING STONE** and made a "**MATSTSEBAH,**" i.e., *a standing stone, a pillar*, out of it. He even anointed that standing stone.

(Gen 28:18 nkjv), "Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took **THE STONE** {"eh'-ben"} that he had put at his head, set it up as **A PILLAR** {"mats-tsay-baw'"} and poured oil on top of it."
(V. 22)

- 2) **TWENTY YEARS LATER** (Gen 31:38)

JACOB'S WORK for his father-in-law LABAN had come to an end and he had **RETURNED** to the Promised Land. From that land God gave Jacob instruction to return to *Bethel* where God had first spoken to him (Gen 35:1). God spoke to Jacob a second time at Bethel. Jacob called the place "**ELBETHEL.**" It was not just "HOUSE OF GOD," it was "GOD HOUSE OF GOD." Jacob had **A LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE.** Jacob set up A SECOND "**MATSTSEBAH.**"

(Gen 35:14 nkjv), "So Jacob set up a **PILLAR** {"mats-tsay-baw"} in the place where He talked with him, **A PILLAR** {"mats-tseh'-beth"} **OF STONE** {"eh'-ben"}; and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it."

- 3) **RACHEL DIED SOON THEREAFTER BETWEEN BETHEL and BETHLEHEM.** Jacob set up *a standing stone* at the grave of his departed wife in his wife's honor. We would call it **A TOMBSTONE.**

(Gen 35:20), "And Jacob set a **PILLAR** {"mats-tseh'-beth"} upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave **UNTO THIS DAY.**"

Some of the **PRESENT DAY CONFLICTS** in Israel have taken place at Rachel's tomb. To this day the tomb of Rachel is still marked.

#2. MOSES ERECTED TWELVE STANDING STONES

God led the children of Israel from Egypt to **MT. SINAI.** God gave Moses the 10 commandments while at Mt. Sinai. Moses used *standing stones* to mark that event of great significance.

(Exo 24:4 nkjv), "And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built **AN ALTAR** at the foot of the mountain, and **TWELVE PILLARS** {"mats-tsay-baw"} according to the twelve tribes of Israel."

THE TWELVE PILLARS WERE ERECTED BESIDE THE ALTAR.

Anytime a traveler passed that way, there would be **TWELVE STANDING REMINDERS** of what God had done there. **A TRAVELER** might not have known exactly what had happened there, but he would have known **something of great significance** had taken place. Those twelve pillars testified to that significance.

STONES OFTEN HIGHLIGHTED SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE BIBLE.

#3. JESUS STOOD ON STONES WHILE BEING JUDGED BY PILATE

(John 19:13), “When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in **the judgment seat** (“bema”) in a place that is called the **PAVEMENT** (Greek “**lith-os'-tro-tos**”), but in the Hebrew, **GABBATHA**.”

TWO WORDS (one GREEK and one HEBREW)

- **GAB-BATH-AH'** comes from a Hebrew word meaning “**an elevated place.**”
- **LITHOSTROTOS** comes from a compound Greek word: “**LITHOS**” (lee'-thos) meaning “**stone,**” and “**STRONNUMI**” (strone'-noo-mee) meaning “**to strew**” or “**to spread.**”
- The two words together indicate **A HIGH PLACE THAT WAS SPREAD WITH STONES.** It is called the *pavement*.

ARCHAEOLOGIST L. H. VINCENT uncovered A **Roman stone pavement** when he excavated an area known as **ANTONIA'S FORTRESS** just **northwest** of the temple mount in Jerusalem. Some hold that pavement to be **THE VERY STONES** Jesus stood upon when He was stripped and beaten by the Roman soldiers. While Jesus stood on those stones, Pilate washed his hands and declared Himself innocent of Jesus blood.

It was **A VERY MOVING EXPERIENCE** on our Israel trip to stand upon those very stones and read the Scriptures related to Jesus' abuse while standing upon those stones. **IN A VERY REAL SENSE, THOSE STONES BORE WITNESS** to the mercy of our Lord as He bore mistreatment there two thousand years ago. In that sense those stones were a “**MATSTSEBAH.**”

#4. THE EMPTY TOMB IS ANOTHER MEMORIAL STONE

(Mat 27:60), “And laid it in his {Joseph's} own **NEW TOMB**, which he had **hewn out in the ROCK**: and he rolled **A GREAT STONE** to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.”

THE TOMB in which Jesus was buried **WAS CARVED OUT OF STONE.** It is as if God wanted to leave **A PERMANENT MEMORIAL** in honor of the greatest event in history.

Perhaps the empty tomb does not match the description of a standing stone in every detail. Nonetheless, **it stands and bears witness** to

God even though unbelievers throughout the ages have tried time and again to destroy it.

#5. OUR TEXT SPEAKS OF TWO SETS OF STANDING STONES

(V. 1-3), “And it came to pass, when all the people were clean **PASSED OVER** Jordan, that **THE LORD SPAKE** unto Joshua, saying, {2} Take you **TWELVE MEN** out of the people, out of every tribe a man, {3} And **COMMAND** ye **THEM**, saying, ‘**TAKE** you hence **out of** the **midst** of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, **TWELVE STONES**, and ye shall **CARRY THEM OVER WITH YOU**, and leave them in **THE LODGING PLACE**, where ye shall lodge this night.”

S **TWELVE MEN** passed **back into the dry river bed** and each one picked up a rock that would be carried from that river to their next lodging place that coming night.

S **THE SIZE** of the twelve stones is not recorded. Each stone had to be **small enough** that an individual man could carry it. It had to be **large enough** to make a difference. In other words, they did not pick up pebbles. I would venture to guess those men were big and strong enough to carry very large stones. It was **an honor** in the camp to have been chosen to carry the stone that represented their tribe. They would have hoisted that rock upon their shoulder and carried it with deep thanksgiving in their hearts.

(V. 9), “And **JOSHUA SET UP TWELVE STONES IN THE MIDST OF JORDAN**, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are **THERE UNTO THIS DAY.**”

THERE WERE TWO SETS OF STONES.

- 1) **ONE SET** of twelve was located **IN THE RIVER BOTTOM** where the feet of the priests had stood. Those stones were fashioned in such a manner that they were observable above the water. Those stones were **STILL IN PLACE** on the day that the Book of Joshua was written, “they are there unto this day.”
- 2) **THE OTHER SET** of twelve stones **WAS** carried and placed in **“THE LODGING PLACE”** (v 3). Verse 19 reveals the name of that lodging place as **GILGAL**.

- GILGAL WAS A PLACE OF MANY SIGNIFICANT O.T. EVENTS:
 - 1) It was Israel's **FIRST LODGING PLACE** after crossing the Jordan River.
 - 2) It became **JOSHUA'S MILITARY HEADQUARTERS** while conquering the Promised Land.
 - 3) It would become THE PLACE where **SAMUEL** would perform his duties as a judge of Israel (1 Sam 7:15-16).
 - 4) **SAUL** would be proclaimed King of Israel at Gilgal (1 Sam 11:14-15). Gilgal was the place where **Saul launched** his military attacks against the Philistines (1 Sam 13:2-15).
 - 5) It was at Gilgal that **DAVID** was reunited with the Israelites after Absalom's revolt was crushed (2 Sam 19:15,40).

- THE NAME GILGAL literally meant *CIRCLE OF STONES*. Perhaps it received its name from those twelve stones taken from the Jordan River and placed there as A MEMORIAL, A "MATSTSEBAH."

 THE PURPOSE OF THIS MESSAGE IS TO ANSWER THE TWICE-REPEATED QUESTION FROM OUR TEXT:
 (V. 21), "... 'WHAT MEAN THESE STONES?'" (also in V. 6)

- GOD'S STANDING STONES
- I. REMIND US OF THE PAST
 - II. ENCOURAGE US IN THE PRESENT
 - III. WITNESS FOR US IN THE FUTURE

GOD'S STANDING STONES
I. REMIND US OF THE PAST

EVERY TIME A KNOWLEDGEABLE PERSON was asked the meaning of the stones at GILGAL, or the meaning of the stones in the JORDAN RIVER, they would be forced to **REFLECT ON THE PAST**. They would have to **REVIEW PAST HISTORY**. That is precisely what those stones are causing us to do in **THIS MESSAGE**. We are reviewing past history.

REGARDING THE PAST:

- The children of Israel had **wandered** in the **wilderness** FOR **40 YEARS**. They wandered because they had refused to obey God and take the land.

- **AT THE CONCLUSION** of those 40 YEARS they had arrived at the **east side** of the Jordan River in a place called **SHITTIM**. **IT WAS LOCATED** approximately **8 MILES EAST** of the JORDAN RIVER and about **5 MILES NORTH** of the DEAD SEA. Israel was lodging at Shittim when **BALAAM** was hired to place a curse on them. You may recall that Balaam ended up blessing them instead.
- **THE CLOUD OF GOD'S PRESENCE** had led Israel there. They were **THERE BY DESIGN**, not by coincidence. With the passing of time, Israel was directed by God to head down to the Jordan River and cross it.

(Jos 3:1), “. . . **THEY . . . CAME TO JORDAN . . . AND LODGED THERE BEFORE THEY PASSED OVER.**”

(V. 2), “. . . **AFTER THREE DAYS**, that the officers went through the host; {3} and **THEY COMMANDED THE PEOPLE**, saying, ‘**WHEN YE SEE THE ARK OF THE COVENANT** of the LORD your God, and **the priests the Levites** bearing it, then ye shall **REMOVE FROM YOUR PLACE**, and **GO AFTER IT.**”

(V. 6), “And Joshua **SPAKE UNTO THE PRIESTS**, saying, ‘**TAKE UP THE ARK** of the covenant, and **PASS OVER BEFORE THE PEOPLE.**’ . . .”

(V. 8), “And thou shalt **COMMAND THE PRIESTS THAT BEAR THE ARK** of the covenant, saying, ‘**WHEN YE ARE COME TO THE BRINK** of the water of Jordan, **YE SHALL STAND STILL IN JORDAN.**”

S WHY THE PRIESTS? I could not get away from that question as I prepared this message? Why didn't God use the **EXPERIENCED SOLDIERS?** Why didn't God use **STRONGEST MEN IN THE CAMP** to carry the ark into the flooding river? **WHY PRIESTS?**

S GOD HAD DESIGNATED CERTAIN PRIESTS as THE ONLY QUALIFIED PERSONS to carry the ark. It was God's choice. Those priests stood as God's chosen representatives to carry the ark for the Israelite community. If unauthorized persons carried the ark, they could die (1 Chron 13:10). Only the designated priests were authorized by God to carry the ark.

S **NOW, IF THE PRIESTS HAD FAILED, ALL ISRAEL WOULD HAVE FAILED**, because only the designated priests could carry the ark. If the priests **refused** to go, Israel could not go. **Had** those priests been **COWARDS**, all Israel would have been left standing.

S DO YOU **WONDER IF SOME OF THOSE PRIESTS** became a **BIT FEARFUL** as they thought about their responsibilities? Perhaps one or two of them **HAD TO FIGHT THEIR THOUGHT-LIFE** the night before they carried the ark down into the Jordan.

- **FIRST**, THE FOLKS ON THE FRONT LINE on a battle field are subject to the first arrows from the enemy. On D-Day, many of the first soldiers never made it to the shore because they were first to be shot at. What if armed Canaanites were waiting on the western shore of the Jordan as the priests carried the ark into the river?
- **SECOND**, the Jordan river was overflowing its banks because it was flood season. If they stepped into that water and God didn't come through, they would look like **a bunch of fools**. If they stepped into that raging water and God did not come through, they might be **swept away**. Perhaps they wondered why God had picked them instead of someone else.

S **IT TOOK COURAGE TO STEP IN THE FLOOD SWOLLEN JORDAN RIVER. IT TAKES COURAGE TO SERVE GOD TODAY, TOO!**

S **GOD WANTS THOSE HE HAS CALLED TO SPECIAL SERVICE** to be **FAITHFUL AND COURAGEOUS**. Many of **THE PROBLEMS** in society today fall squarely on the shoulders of preachers who are afraid to walk into raging rivers when God commands them to do so. Sometimes God cannot accomplish His plans for the congregation **BECAUSE HIS LEADERS WILL NOT OBEY**.

S OUR PRAYER SHOULD BE, "GOD GIVE US MEN IN THE **MINISTRY** who are **FEARLESS** and **WHO BURN WITH FIRE** from above. There is great need for **MEN WHO** will serve without **DOUBT** and without **FEAR**."

PHILLIPS BROOKS (1835-1893) WROTE:

Do not pray for easy lives,
Pray to be stronger men.

Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers,
Pray for powers equal to your task.

S **IT IS INTERESTING** WHAT GOD HAS **PROVIDED** TO HELP US **DISPEL *UNGODLY FEAR***. GOD HAS PROVIDED ***GODLY FEAR*** AS A SOURCE TO CONQUER **UNGODLY FEAR**.

S THERE ARE **TWO KINDS OF FEAR** depicted in Scripture: **UNGODLY FEAR** and **GODLY FEAR**. WITH ***UNGODLY FEAR*** IN MIND the Bible states **63X'S, "FEAR NOT."** The Bible tells us much more often that we should have godly fear for God, than it tells us not to have ungodly fear. **GODLY FEAR MEANS** to reverence God in love and obedience.

S **GODLY FEAR GIVES A PERSON COURAGE. COURAGE HAS BEEN DEFINED AS,** "Wisdom to fear what ought to be feared, but wisdom enough not to fear what ought not to be feared."

S **GODLY FEAR** is often referred to as "**the fear of the Lord.**"

- **(Prov 9:10)**, "**THE FEAR OF THE LORD** is the beginning of wisdom: . . . "
- **(Psa 2:11)**, "**Serve the LORD WITH FEAR . . .** "
- **(Eccl 12:13)**, "**. . . FEAR GOD**, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."
- **(Isa 8:13)**, "**. . . LET HIM BE YOUR FEAR, . . .** "
- **(Luke 12:5)**, "**. . . I will forewarn you WHOM YE SHALL FEAR: FEAR HIM**, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, **FEAR HIM.**"
- **(Heb 5:7)**, "**Who in the days of his flesh, when HE {Jesus} had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that HE FEARED;**"
- **(Rev 14:7)**, "**. . . FEAR GOD**, and give glory to him . . . "

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- **THANK THE LORD** THOSE PRIESTS in Joshua's day had enough courage to step into the raging river in spite of all their fears.

- OBSERVE **WHAT HAPPENED** WHEN THOSE PRIESTS OBEYED:

CHAPTER 3

(V. 15), “And **AS THEY** that bare the ark **WERE COME UNTO JORDAN**, and **THE FEET** of the priests that bare the ark were **DIPPED IN THE BRIM OF THE WATER**, (for Jordan **OVERFLOWETH** all his banks all **the time of harvest**.)”

(V. 16 niv), “The water from upstream **STOPPED FLOWING**. It **PILED UP IN A HEAP** a great distance away, at **A TOWN CALLED ADAM** in the vicinity of **Zarethan**, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea) **WAS COMPLETELY CUT OFF**. So **the people crossed over** opposite Jericho.”

(V. 17), “And **THE PRIESTS** that bare the ark of the covenant of the **LORD STOOD FIRM ON DRY GROUND** IN THE MIDST OF **JORDAN**, and **all the Israelites passed over on dry ground**, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.”

S WOW! God performed **A MIRACLE**.

S Whatever God used to stop the Jordan from flowing took place at **THE TOWN OF ADAM**. This is the only place in Scripture where **THE TOWN OF ADAM** is mentioned. The exact location is uncertain, though it is often identified with **TEL ED-DAMIYEH** some **16 MILES** north of Jericho.

S **DON'T YOU WONDER WHAT METHOD** used to cause the river to stop flowing? Did He use **AN EARTHQUAKE**?

- **ON DEC 8, 1267** an earthquake caused the high banks of the Jordan to collapse near **TEL ED-DAMIYEH** and the river was cut off and ceased to flow for **10 HOURS**.
- **ON JULY 11, 1927**, **ANOTHER EARTHQUAKE** in that same vicinity blocked the river for **21 HOURS**.
- **THERE IS A DIFFERENCE** between **THOSE BLOCKAGES** and the one presented in **OUR TEXT**. In our text the Jordan was at flood stage and was **A RAGING TORRENT**. That was not the two previous accounts. **EVERYTHING ABOUT OUR TEXT**

SPEAKS OF GOD'S SUPERNATURAL INTERVENTION.

- 1) The miracle was **FORETOLD**.
- 2) The river stopped flowing while at **FLOOD STAGE**.
- 3) It ceased flowing at **THE EXACT TIME NEEDED**.
- 4) It was held back **LONG ENOUGH** for Israel to pass over.
- 5) They walked across on **DRY GROUND**
- 6) Once they had crossed, the waters **BEGAN TO FLOW AGAIN**.

- **THE WHOLE EVENT MUST HAVE STRICKEN FEAR** into the hearts of the inhabitants of **JERICHO**. Can you imagine what they thought when they discovered the River Jordan had stopped flowing and the massive army from the other side of Jordan had crossed over? They had hoped the river would stand as their shield against the approaching army.

GOD'S STANDING STONES

I. REMIND US OF THE PAST

GOD'S STANDING STONES

II. ENCOURAGE US IN THE PRESENT

- S **ISRAEL CAMPED AT GILGAL** their first night after crossing the river. Their next major objective was to conquer **THE WALLED CITY OF JERICHO** located about **2 1/4** miles from Gilgal.
- S **THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SOME FOREBODING THOUGHTS** their first night at **GILGAL**. **THINK ABOUT IT** — **PERHAPS** as the **sun** set and the **moon** began to shine, the fears began knocking on their heart's door.
- S **I CAN ENVISION A SOLDIER** trying to go to sleep that first night wondering what tomorrow held. They would soon do **BATTLE** in taking the Promised Land. There would be **conflict** and **loss** of life. **THE WALLED CITY OF JERICHO** could be seen in the moonlight. How were they going to get inside those fortified city walls? What if the inhabitants of Jericho snuck into their camp at night and tried to kill some of them while they slept? Some **APPREHENSION** would have been **NORMAL**. Might he have **WONDERED** what he was doing there?
- S **AS THE FEARS BEGAN TO MOUNT**, that sleepless soldier glances over in the moonlight and not fifty feet from his resting place

he could faintly see **12 STANDING STONES**. They stood as **A TESTIMONY THAT GOD HAD TAKEN CARE OF THEM IN THE PAST, THEREFORE, GOD WOULD TAKE CARE OF THEM IN THE PRESENT**.

S THE NEXT MORNING that soldier got up and could say with confidence: **GOD TOOK CARE OF US YESTERDAY** at the Jordan, therefore, God will take care of us **TODAY** at Jericho.

S WAS IT CHARLES SPURGEON WHO SAID . . .
“He who has brought you through six trials will not fail you in the seventh?”

- **(Eph 6:16)**, “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”
- **(Heb 11:6)**, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

LEARNING TO TRUST GOD MAY BE LIFE'S MOST REWARDING LESSON.

- **(Psa 37:3)**, “**TRUST** in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.”
- **(Psa 37:5)**, “Commit thy way unto the LORD; **TRUST** also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.”
- **(Prov 3:5-6)**, “**TRUST** in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. {6} In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

NOAH trusted God and God took care of **him** in a **flood**

JOSEPH trusted God and God took care of **him** in **prison**

MOSES trusted God and God took care of **him** in a **wilderness**

ELIJAH trusted God and God took care of **him** in **drought**

DAVID trusted God and God took care of **him** before a **giant**

JOHN trusted God and God took care of **him** on an **island**

PAUL trusted God and God took care of **him** on **missions**

- **(Heb 13:5)**, “. . . For he hath said, **I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.**”

- **(Mat 28:20)**, “. . . Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world . . . ”

GOD'S STANDING STONES

- I. **REMINDE US OF THE PAST**
- II. **ENCOURAGE US IN THE PRESENT**

GOD'S STANDING STONES

III. WITNESS FOR US IN THE FUTURE

- S **CONSIDER ANOTHER POSSIBLE SCENARIO.** With the passing of time **THE PROMISED LAND WAS EVENTUALLY CONQUERED.** Families claimed their allotted land and built their **homes, farmed** their land and raised their **animals.** They began to experience **PEACE IN THE PROMISED LAND.**

One particular day a Jewish father and mother had all their work caught up and decided to take **A LITTLE FAMILY VACATION.** They assembled the whole family together and told the kids they had set two days aside in order to relax and praise the Lord. The parents asked the kids, “Where would you like for us all to go?” Without hesitation they all said, “We have heard you tell the story many times about **GRANDPA** crossing the Jordan. We want to go see the exact place where they crossed.”

With a few hours journey by foot the family arrived at Gilgal. With a sense of awe and reverence the whole family approached the standing stones that had been set up a few years earlier. They were still there in their original place. Little **Ben Judah** leans over to his dad and says rather quietly, “**DAD, TELL US, WHAT DO THESE STONES MEAN?**”

(Josh 4:6-7), “. . . When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, **WHAT MEAN YE BY THESE STONES? {7} THEN YE SHALL ANSWER THEM, . . . ”**

(V. 21-22), “. . . **WHEN YOUR CHILDREN SHALL ASK** their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? {22} Then ye shall **LET YOUR CHILDREN KNOW,** saying . . . ”

SON, HERE IS WHAT THOSE STONES MEAN:

#1. GOD IS FAITHFUL

S **OUR HOME IS IN THIS LAND BECAUSE** God kept His promises to **Grandpa**.

S GOD IS A PROMISE KEEPER

- **(1 Cor 1:9)**, "GOD IS FAITHFUL, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."
- **(Phil 1:6)**, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:"

#2. GOD IS POWERFUL

(V. 7), "... **THE WATERS** of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan **WERE CUT OFF: . . .** "

(V. 22-23), "... **Israel came over** this Jordan **on dry land**. {23} For the LORD your God **dried up** the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over:"

(V. 24), "That all the people of the earth might know **THE HAND OF THE LORD, THAT IT IS MIGHTY: . . .** "

S Remember how **INSPIRED** you were as a child when your parents told the stories from the Bible about our mighty God?

S I remember in particular when my Grandmother read to me the story of Daniel in the **LIONS' DEN**.

#3. GOD IS TO BE REVERENCED

(V. 24), "That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: **THAT YE MIGHT FEAR THE LORD YOUR GOD FOR EVER.**"

S **R. T. KENDALL**,
"If you ask what is the surest way to win your children, I answer: a father moving **with godly fear**." (R. T. Kendall, BELIEVING GOD, pg. 47)

- **(Prov 16:6)**, "... **BY THE FEAR** of the LORD men depart from evil."

- (**Prov 14:26**), “In the **FEAR** of the LORD is **STRONG CONFIDENCE**: and his children shall have a place of refuge.”

S EITHER WE LEARN THE FEAR GOD, or we OPEN THE DOOR TO A THOUSAND OTHER UNHOLY FEARS. We are creatures who have the capacity to fear, and either we fear God, or we will begin to fear things God never intended us to fear. We will fear **RAGING RIVERS** even when God has told us to cross those rivers. We will fear **CANAANITES**. We will fear **WITNESSING**. We will fear **MISSIONS** overseas. We must fear God above all other things.

#4. **GOD BEARS WITNESS**

(**V. 24**), “**THAT ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH MIGHT KNOW** the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.”

S That father could have said, “**SON, GOD** had those stones **PUT THERE** because **HE WANTED YOU** to stand here one day and ask me the meaning of those stones. God wanted me to teach you about **HIM** when you asked the question. Now God wants **you to tell others**. God wants us **to be witnesses** to all the world regarding **WHO HE IS.**” “**SON, GOD IS faithful, powerful and to be revered.**”

S In a very real sense, **THAT FATHER WAS TO HIS CHILDREN WHAT THOSE STONES WERE TO ISRAEL**. He was a standing stone.

GOD'S STANDING STONES

- I. **REMIND US OF THE PAST**
- II. **ENCOURAGE US IN THE PRESENT**
- III. **WITNESS FOR US IN THE FUTURE**

WHAT STANDING STONES HAS GOD PLACED IN YOUR LIFE TO BEAR WITNESS TO FUTURE GENERATIONS TO?

- Share some of God's *standing stones* in your **life**.
- Share some of God's *standing stones* in the life of your **family**.
- Share some of God's *standing stones* in the life of your **church**.
- **REHEARSE** how God has blessed you. *Standing stones* are wonderful tools to encourage future generations.

A WORD TO PARENTS REGARDING WITNESS TO THEIR CHILDREN:

(Deu 6:5-9), “And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with ALL thine **HEART**, and with ALL thy **SOUL**, and with ALL thy **MIGHT**. {6} And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: {7} And thou shalt **TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY UNTO THY CHILDREN**, and shalt **TALK** of them when thou **SITTEST** in thine house, and when thou **WALKEST** by the way, and when thou **LIEST DOWN**, and when thou **RISEST UP**. {8} And thou shalt **BIND THEM** for **A SIGN** upon thine **HAND**, and they shall be as frontlets **BETWEEN THINE EYES**. {9} And thou shalt **WRITE THEM** upon **THE POSTS** of thy **house**, and on thy **gates**.”

- S **THOSE VERSES** speak of the importance of **VISUAL AIDS** in teaching children. **YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID “A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS.”**

- S **STANDING STONES ARE IMPORTANT VISUAL AIDS** in teaching children the ways of the Lord.