

Twelve Stones from the Jordan

Key Verses: *“Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from every tribe, and command them, saying, Take for yourselves twelve stones from here, out of the midst of the Jordan, from the place where the priests’ feet stood firm. You shall carry them over with you and leave them in the lodging place where you lodge tonight.”*
—**Joshua 4:2,3**, *New King James Version*

Selected Scripture:
Joshua 4:1-24

At long last Israel was about to enter into the Land of Promise. Having endured forty years of divinely imposed wandering in the wilderness, the people could see the legendary land of hopes and dreams just beyond the Jordan River. How could they cross the river? No bridge existed. There was no ferry to transport them, but there was a means of crossing the river—supplied by the miraculous working of God!

Joshua was instructed that the priests who bore the Ark of the Covenant on their shoulders must lead the people across the Jordan. The priests would precede the populace by 2,000 cubits. “And when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the

Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters

coming down from above shall stand in one heap. So when the people set out from their tents to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water, ... the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho. Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.”—Josh. 3:13-17, *English Standard Version*

To mark this great event twelve men, one representative from each tribe, would take from the riverbed twelve stones for a memorial. The stones were laid down at the place of Israel’s first encampment. Joshua personally took the stones and built the memorial to commemorate this occasion. It was a lasting, and important reminder of God’s power exercised on behalf of His people. (Josh. 4:4-9) Centuries later, another man of God also set up a stone memorial. “Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, Thus far the LORD has helped us.” (I Sam. 7:12, *NKJV*) We also are given to memorializing those notable events in which God provided and helped us in our lives as “Ebenezers.”

Symbolically speaking, as Christians we may do as Israel had done. In times of personal turbulence or moments when we may feel overwhelmed by waves of trouble, the Lord’s help is there for us. The solid promises of God sustain us. Let us set up our personal memorial stones or “Ebenezers” to remind ourselves of his faithfulness. ■