

“STONES”

I. Joshua 3:1-17; Joshua 4:1-24; 1 Peter 2:1-12

A. Three weeks ago I talked about the 12 spies sent into the Promised Land...

- 1) They returned from Canaan with 2 different assessments...
- 2) 2 spies (Joshua & Caleb) returned with gratitude; the other 10 with an attitude... 2 spies saw God's blessings; 10 spies saw God out to get them...
- 3) God smote the 10 and cursed a generation to die in the wilderness...

B. Today we pick up forty years later. The doubting generation has died away in the wilderness... Moses' saw the Promised Land but couldn't cross over. Joshua was God's new chosen leader and he's about to lead them across the Jordan...

C. Joshua 3:1-17 The story of crossing over Jordan into the Promised Land...

- 1) The priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant go first... As soon as their feet touch the river, it stops flowing. All 12 tribes of Israel start crossing over... 2 million!
- 2) The dry river crossing has a two-fold purpose: Remind Israel of their Red Sea crossing 40 years earlier; and a sign that the God who is with them on this day is the same God who will deliver them from all the "Ites" in Canaan. Their trust in God is well placed! (*Interesting that God had them cross during the flood season...*)

D. Joshua 4:1-24 The story continues...

- 1) One man from each tribe is selected to pick up a stone from the river bed and carried to the other side of Jordan as a memorial of God's faithfulness on this special day... What a privileged task this must have been!
- 2) Meanwhile, Joshua had 40,000 warriors from the tribes Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh cross over first to provide security... (*If the stoppage of the flowing Jordan didn't scare their Baal worshiping enemies, 40,000 armed warriors leading 2 million Israelites across a dry riverbed at flood season, just may have done the trick...*)
- 3) Once across, the priests carrying the Ark came on across and just as their feet came up out of the riverbed, the Jordan started flowing again. (*"No turning back, no turning back!"*)
- 4) The stones from the river were built into a Memorial at Gilgal so that all Israel would never forget this day. Next up: The Battle of Jericho...

E. On February 20, 2000, we met for the last time in the basement of the old Methodist Church... We had met there for 11 years... That day, each family took a stone home from the foot of the wooden cross that was there. These stones had been under water more than once due to floods. :-) My challenge 13 years ago was to keep your stone until we had our own place someday... It appears that day is coming... (*If you still have your stone, please get it ready for its new home...*)

F. But let's talk about some famous stones from Scripture... (The Rolling Stones and Sly and the Family Stone and the Flintstones are excluded...)

- 1) David slew Goliath with a sling and a stone... (1 Samuel 17)
- 2) Ecc. 3:5a: *"There's a time to throw stones and a time to gather stones."* 3) A couple times they picked up stones to kill Jesus. (Jn 8:48-59; 10:22-39)
- 4) Jesus told His disciples marveling at the temple's massive stones: *"Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."* (Mark 13:1-2)
- 5) Stephen was stoned to death after one very awesome sermon... (*Jesus gave Stephen a standing ovation as he breathed his last...*) (Acts 7)
- 6) Paul was stoned in Timothy's hometown of Lystra, drug out of the city, thought to be dead. Paul recovered, reentered the city and preached many more years.
- 7) When Jesus rode into Jerusalem to waving palm branches and cries of *Hosanna*, the Jewish leaders told Jesus to make the people stop. Jesus replied, *"If these be silent, even the stones will cry out!"* (Luke 19:28-40)
- 8) When Jesus was buried, they rolled a very large stone in front of His tomb. They said it was to keep the thieves out but it was to keep Jesus in. Didn't work!
- 9) Jesus became the Stone which the builders rejected but He became our Chief Cornerstone, the Foundation Stone upon which His church is built...
- 10) And we the church are referred to by Peter as *'living stones.'* (Song lyrics: *"Precious stones which Jesus owns, fashioned by His wondrous grace; as we love and trust each other, so the building grows and grows..."*)

* Close with 1 Peter 2:1-12 and Prayer...

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Joshua 3:1-17 (NIV)

1 Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over. **2** After three days the officers went throughout the camp, **3** giving orders to the people: "When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. **4** Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep a distance of about two thousand cubits between you and the ark; do not go near it." **5** Joshua told the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you." **6** Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people." So they took it up and went ahead of them. **7** And the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. **8** Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: 'When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river.'" **9** Joshua said to the Israelites, "Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God. **10** This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. **11** See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you. **12** Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. **13** And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the Lord—the Lord of all the earth—set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap." **14** So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them. **15** Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, **16** 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 (that is, the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. So the people crossed over opposite Jericho. **17** The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.

Joshua 4:1-24 (NIV)

1 When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, **2** "Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, **3** and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, from right where the priests are standing, and carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight." **4** So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, **5** and said to them, "Go over before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, **6** to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' **7** tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever." **8** So the Israelites did as Joshua commanded them. They took twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as the Lord had told Joshua; and they carried them over with them to their camp, where they put them down. **9** Joshua set up the twelve stones that had been in the middle of the Jordan at the spot where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant had stood. And they are there to this day. **10** Now the priests who carried the ark remained standing in the middle of the Jordan until everything the Lord had commanded Joshua was done by the people, just as Moses had directed Joshua. The people hurried over, **11** and as soon as all of them had crossed, the ark of the Lord and the priests came to the other side while the people watched. **12** The men of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over, ready for battle, in front of the Israelites, as Moses had directed them. **13** About forty thousand armed for battle crossed over before the Lord to the plains of Jericho for war. **14** That day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him all the days of his life, just as they had stood in awe of Moses. **15** Then the Lord said to Joshua, **16** "Command the priests carrying the ark of the covenant law to come up out of the Jordan." **17** So Joshua commanded the priests, "Come up out of the Jordan." **18** And the priests came up out of the river carrying the ark of the covenant of the Lord. No sooner had they set their feet on the dry ground than the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and ran at flood stage as before. **19** On the tenth day of the first month the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho. **20** And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan. **21** He said to the Israelites, "In the future when your descendants ask their parents, 'What do these stones mean?' **22** tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.' **23** For the Lord your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The Lord your God did to the Jordan what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. **24** He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God."

1 Peter 2:1-12 (NIV)

1 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. **2** Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, **3** now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. **4** As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— **5**

you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. **6** For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." **7** Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," **8** and, "A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. **9** But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. **10** Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. **11** Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. **12** Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Some Excellent Video Clips

"The Big Story" Joshua/God Provides - Ray Vander Laan

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wILc-lfNXik>

Another Crossing - Joe Battiston

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KuvkoTL2IfA>

"Take Up Your Spade" by Sara Watkins (Thanks Doug Price!)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skE-Y8c3VtE&list=FLT5G7VFUynZMcoVHVDqIQfA>

"Shades of Green" by Phil Keaggy (Thanks Doug Price!)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wp4wbcuKRn8&list=FLT5G7VFUynZMcoVHVDqIQfA&feature=mh_lolz

"Don't Try So Hard" Amy Grant with James Taylor (Thanks Doug Price!)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OfGvXfe9LK8&list=FLT5G7VFUynZMcoVHVDqIQfA>

Bad Theology vs Division in the Church-Which is Worse? John Piper

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7T_UL46s1E

Bonus Stuff

We Are Being Built Into a Temple

By Ian Traynar

We are being built into a temple,
Fit for God's own dwelling place,
Into the house of God which is the church,
The pillar and the ground of truth.
As precious stones that Jesus owns,
Fashioned by His wondrous grace,
And as we love and trust each other, (*Hallelujah*)
So the building grows and grows.

- © 1977 Kingsways Thankyou Music

Why A Pastor Quit Sports

Author Unknown

Football in the fall. Basketball in the winter. Baseball in the spring and summer.
This pastor has been an avid sports fan all his life.
But I've had it! I quit this sports business once and for all.
You can't get me near one of those places again. Want to know why...

- * Every time I went, they asked me for money.
- * The people with whom I had to sit didn't seem very friendly.
- * The seats were too hard and not at all comfortable.
- * I went to many games, but the coach never came to call on me.

- * The referee made a decision with which I could not agree.
- * I suspected that I was sitting with some hypocrites -- they came to see their friends and what others were wearing rather than to see the game.
- * Some games went into overtime, and I was late getting home.
- * The band played some numbers that I had never heard before.
- * It seems that the games are scheduled when I want to do other things.
- * I was taken to too many games by my parents when I was growing up.
- * I don't want to take my children to any games, because I want them to choose for themselves what sport they like best.

If You Want to Kill the Church
Author Unknown

Never go to your church or meetings held there,
 If you do go, be late, it's no one's affair.
 If the weather is bad, either too hot or snowing,
 Just stay home and rest, for there'll be others going.

But should you attend, be sure and remember
 To find fault with the work, each official and member.
 Be sure to hold back on your offerings and tithes,
 The bills will be paid by the rest of the guys.

And never take office if offered the post,
 But eagerly criticize work of the host.
 If not on a committee you're placed, be sore!
 If you find that you are, don't attend any more.

When asked your opinion on this thing or that,
 Have nothing to say, just turn 'em down flat.
 Then after the meeting, shine out like the sun
 By telling the folks how it should have been done.

Don't do any more than you possibly can,
 Leave the work for some other woman or man.
 And when you see faithful ones work themselves sick,
 Then stand up and holler, "It's run by a clique!"