

Title: The Seen and Unseen Memorials

Text: Joshua 4:1–9

"After the entire nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the Lord spoke to Joshua: 2 "Choose twelve men from the people, one man for each tribe, 3 and command them: Take twelve stones from this place in the middle of the Jordan where the priests are standing, carry them with you, and set them down at the place where you spend the night."

4 So Joshua summoned the twelve men he had selected from the Israelites, one man for each tribe, 5 and said to them, "Go across to the ark of the Lord your God in the middle of the Jordan. Each of you lift a stone onto his shoulder, one for each of the Israelite tribes, 6 so that this will be a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean to you?' 7 you should tell them, 'The water of the Jordan was cut off in front of the ark of the Lord's covenant. When it crossed the Jordan, the Jordan's water was cut off.' Therefore these stones will always be a memorial for the Israelites."

8 The Israelites did just as Joshua had commanded them. The twelve men took stones from the middle of the Jordan, one for each of the Israelite tribes, just as the Lord had told Joshua. They carried them to the camp and set them down there. 9 Joshua also set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant were standing. The stones are still there today."

Introduction

When Israel crossed the Jordan River, two memorials were built.

- One was visible—twelve stones taken from the riverbed and set up at Gilgal.
- The other was hidden—twelve stones Joshua placed in the middle of the Jordan, where the priests had stood holding the Ark of the Covenant.:

1. The monument at Gilgal

- a. This monument was commanded by God.
- b. The first monument was built 1st by the priest.
- c. This monument was built on the Promised land side, using 12 stones from the river bed.
- d. It's purpose was to be a sign to future generations, a sign of God's faithfulness and power. It was a sign to all people:
 - i. *Verse 24- This is so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord's hand is strong, and so that you may always fear the Lord your God."*

With stones of remembrance, the Israelites built a monument to commemorate their crossing over from the old way of life into the new in the Promised Land. The pile of twelve stones reminded Israel of what God had done for them as a nation. Those stones declare: God is faithful. He goes before us. His promises never fail..

2. The monument in the middle of the river:

- a. There aren't as many details about this monument.
- b. Joshua personally set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan river, in the exact spot where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant were standing.
- c. There is no specific purpose for this monument.
- d. And there is no command from God to build this monument.

God often does His greatest work in hidden, personal places. The most powerful moments of faith are not always public—they happen in the heart, in prayer, in obedience when no one is watching.

These hidden stones represent the unseen work of God—the private victories, the quiet faith, and the moments of surrender that no one else sees but God remembers.

1. The Hidden Stones Represent the Place of God’s Power

The stones were placed in the exact spot where the priests stood holding the Ark—the very center of the miracle. That spot, now covered by the river again, was the place where God’s power was revealed.

Joshua marked it with stones so that even though the waters would return, the memory of God’s power would remain.

I felt like God wanted me to remind you of some spots today where His power showed up in your life. Those spots may be covered in the streams of life, but God says remember that personal moment.

2. The Hidden Stones Represent the Cost of the Miracle

Every victory has a cost. Behind every visible blessing, there are hidden sacrifices—people who prayed, served, and stood firm in faith. The stones in the Jordan remind believers to honor the unseen faithfulness of others that makes God’s work possible.

Before Israel could cross, the priests had to step into the floodwaters and stand there until the entire nation passed over. Their feet were planted in the place of risk and faith. **Joshua’s stones marked the spot where others had stood in obedience and sacrifice.** The miracle of crossing was possible because someone was willing to stand in the middle.

3. The Hidden Stones Represent the Depth of Our Testimony

The most powerful faith is not only what is declared but what is lived in the depths of the heart. The hidden stones remind believers to treasure the private encounters with God that shape their faith.

The stones at Gilgal told the story of what God did for Israel. The stones in the Jordan told the story of what God did in Joshua. One was a public testimony; the other was a personal one.

Conclusion

The stones in the middle of the Jordan may have never been seen again, yet they were never meant to be forgotten. They stood as a hidden memorial to the personal power, faithfulness, and presence of God.

While the stones at Gilgal told the world what God had done, the stones in the Jordan told God that Joshua would remember that very place where God fulfilled a promise to him.

What promise you ask?

In chapter 3, God told Joshua that he would begin to exalt him... Joshua knew what happened in the Jordan was moment for the whole nation, but Joshua knew it was a fulfillment of a personal promise:

Joshua 4:14 On that day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they revered him throughout his life, as they had revered Moses

Joshua had been exalted, he knew it and he wanted to make a personal monument to remember it.