

Joshua 4:1-24

WHAT MEAN YE BY THESE STONES?

- I. The twelve stones.
 - A. God commanded a memorial of twelve stones be set up on the west side of the Jordan.
 - B. The purpose of the stone pile was to be a memorial, i.e., to be a “sign” (6) and a “memorial” (7).
 1. “Sign” means either “remembrance” or “warning” or “proof,” and “memorial” means “a reminder” or “remembrance.”
 2. It marked where God (the ark of the covenant) stopped the waters of Jordan so Israel might pass over.
- II. The memorial was a reminder.
 - A. When we remember the mighty God and His grace with increased awe, then the memorial serves its purpose.
 1. The greatest cause of apostasy is not false teachers, nor the wicked world, but our forgetting and presuming (Ps. 78:11).
 2. Our stones of memorial are Scripture, the preaching Scripture, the sacraments and confessions, and history.
 - B. Of what is it a reminder?
 1. It is a memorial of the sovereignty of God.
 2. It is a memorial to the undeserved nature of God’s grace.
 3. It is a memorial to the particular nature of God’s grace.
 - C. It is also a reminder to “all the people of the earth” (24a).
- III. The memorial serves two purposes: “fear your God (24b) and the occasion to instruct future generations (6-7, 21-24).
 - A. When children ask for the reason and significance of the pile of stones fathers are to take the time to answer and to explain.
 1. Parents are to make known God’s sovereignty, His grace, His particular grace, His uniting grace.
 2. God is pleased then as today to use this instruction as the means to their conversion, admonition, and warning.
 - B. In only one generation after Joshua and the elders died did parents fail to instruct (Judges 2:8-10).
 - C. We must be faithful to obey God’s commands ourselves and to instruct our children in Jehovah’s mighty, gracious works.