

Friday 21st August 2020

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. And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan. He said to the Israelites, "In the future when your descendants ask their fathers, 'What do these stones mean?' tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.' For the Lord your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The Lord your God did to the Jordan just what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. 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."

Joshua 4:19 – 24

Large stones were prevalent in the landscape of the Middle East and were used in many different ways. They were used as building materials for houses, city walls, and fortifications. They were also used for religious purposes, to build sacred pillars and altars. Sometimes the stones were used as a memorial to mark a significant event in the life of a nation. In this case the stones that had been brought up out of the Jordan river were now set up as a permanent memorial at Gilgal for the Israelites and their children reminding them of the miracle crossing not only of the river Jordan but also their crossing of the Red Sea on their escape from Egypt, and their continuing journey to the land of milk and honey that had been promised to them by God. Joshua explained that God did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of God is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.

The memorial of twelve stones representing the twelve tribes of Israel was to be a constant reminder of the day the Israelites crossed the river Jordan on dry ground. Their children would see the stones, hear the story and learn about God. Do you have traditions, special dates or special places to help your children and grandchildren to learn about God's work in your life?

One of the special moments in my life involved finding a stone which came to mean a great deal to me. One morning I was taking a walk by the sea praying as I went. I was asking God for his help. I had been approached to take on a task that I was unsure whether to take or refuse. Was it the right path to take? As I walked I felt an urge to go into the sea which I tried to ignore but the feeling persisted. Finally, I removed my flip-flops and entered the water. As the waves moved back and forth I could see pebbles and larger stones scattered around. As I looked into the water my eyes were drawn to a particular stone about the size of my hand that was sticking out of the sand. I had to dig it out and give it a clean. I could hardly believe my eyes, running through the stone was a crack in the shape of the cross. I had been given a sign and I knew that my prayer for help in my decision had been answered. I knew that I had received God's 'Yes' to go ahead and accept the task that I had been asked to do. I carried the stone back home, and I placed it beside other stones and rocks which were in a plant pot standing on the veranda. It acted as a reminder to me of that special morning when God once again showed his loving presence and all powerful hand at work in my life. This was definitely a story to share.

Do you take time to tell your family and friends about God's work in your life? Forgiving and saving you, answering your prayers, supplying your needs? Repeating your story or the stories of others will help to keep memories of God's faithfulness alive in your family, in the same way as the twelve

stones placed in Gilgal was a special memorial for the Israelites to them and all nations of God's powerful hand at work. He is sovereign in all things, to be worshiped and adored.

Lord, help us to be constantly aware of your power and presence even in the ordinary times of our lives. Let us be willing to share our stories with the next generation about your faithfulness. Thank you, Lord that you died that we might be forgiven and that you have given us a love that will never leave us. Amen.