A photograph of a tall, balanced stack of smooth, reddish-brown stones on a beach. The sun is setting in the background, creating a warm, golden glow. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds. The entire image is framed by a blue geometric overlay consisting of several overlapping shapes, including a large white diamond in the center.

**“What Do
These Stones
Mean?”
Joshua 4:1-9**

Background

- After approximately 430 years of slavery, Israel had left Egypt behind in Egypt's catastrophic defeat at the Red Sea
- Israel was now headed to (bound for) "the Promised Land" except for one distraction:

They Were Infected With Self Doubt!

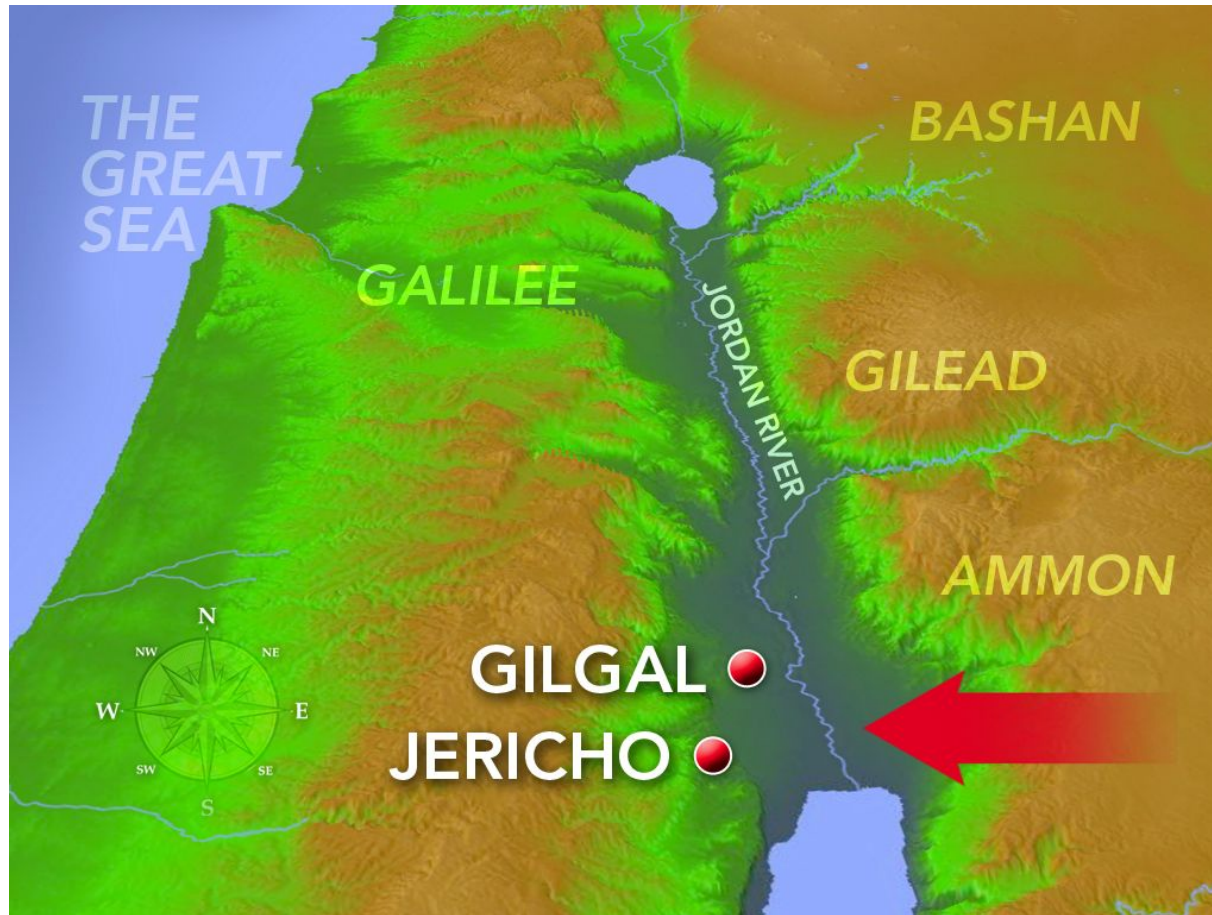
- Remember in Numbers 13, Moses had sent 12 men (one representing each tribe of Israel) to scout the land of Canaan in preparation to conquer the land (Joshua was one of them)
- Ten out of the 12 said, *"it's prosperous, BUT, the cities are huge; their armies are strong, Giants live there; "We shouldn't go!" AND SO THEY DIDN'T GO!*
- So, they remained in the wilderness for 40 years until a new generation came along to meet the challenges of the "God given territory" (remember that YOUR Canaan/Christian life requires work, Phil 2:12-13)(There are giants, fears, trials)

The Story

- In Joshua chapter 3 they are camped at the banks of the Jordan River ready to inherit Canaan 40 years later
- This group had weathered the difficulties their fathers' sins: Deuteronomy 5:9 (sin's consequences affected generations)
They had weathered periods of "tribulation" like we do
They had weathered periods of "spiritual dryness" like we do
They had weathered periods of "persecution" like we do
They had weathered periods of "temptation" like we do
- Point: If we use these periods rather than get used by them, they can toughen and discipline us to look more like Jesus, Romans 5:3

"... we glory in tribulation also knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience"

Where God's Children Were



God's Presence Led the Way, Joshua 3:15-17

- When the priests who carried the ark of the covenant walked ahead of the Israelites, and their feet touched the water's edge, the Jordan River stopped flowing and rose up on each side
- The priests stopped on dry ground in the middle of the River and the people walked across it.



God's Presence Led the Way

- Is it unreasonable to believe that God can speak to the inanimate, and it reacts?
- Is it unreasonable to believe that God can work through drugs that He made for our benefit?
- Is it unreasonable to believe that God can shrink tumors?
- Is it unreasonable to believe that God helps His “present day children” too?



- The Priest had a job (carry the Ark, holding the waters back showing courage, strength)
- The 12 leaders had jobs (do the heavy lifting, spiritually represent families)
- The people had a job (follow their leaders, hurriedly, vs 10; don't lay around in the riverbed of sin)
- God doesn't just look at what we do, but how we do it!
Psalms 122:1;
2 Cor 9:6



They Took All Twelve Stones Back to Their Next Camp Site (Gilgal)

“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 parents, ‘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...’”

He did this so that all of 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 4:20-24

What Did These Stones Mean?

- **God didn't want His people to forget His faithfulness to them (life's situations can cause amnesia)**
- **God knew that we often forget what we hear, but rarely do we forget what we see (ex. Hospital bracelet, splint)**
- **One of the criteria for choosing an Apostle to replace Judas was that he had to be, "an eyewitness of Jesus," from His baptism by John through His resurrection, Acts 1:21-22**
- **The stones would cause the present generation to ask questions about the previous generation (hardships, stress, pressure) and DELIVERANCE!**



What Did the Stones Mean?

- These stones would prompt the Israelite's memories of what God had done for them in the past
- These stones would promote "generational stories," of how faithful God was, God is, and God will be (Civil Rights Institute)
- The memories generated from these stones would hopefully deter the Israelites from failure (learn from it)
- When you are tempted, consider the history of your parents and forefathers in the decisions you make
- Your place in history is a continuation of your family's legacy (not just yours)



“Stones” Is a Metaphor in This Lesson (Figure of Speech)

- Who are the key people (Stones) in your life that have influenced your relationship with God in the right direction?

1 Peter 2:5, “Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”



What are the Major Goals (Stones) That Have Urged You On in Life?

- Are they Christ centered goals or man centered?
- Galatians 2:20, *“I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”*



What Are the Critical Events (Stones) That Turned You Toward God?

- In Acts Chapter 9, Paul had a *“Damascus Road Experience”* that *changed his life*
- Did you have a “D.M.E.” that turned your life around? (Gospel Meeting, Bible Study, Hospitalization, Unexpected Triumph)
- Did you know that remembering your responsibility to the Gospel is key to your salvation
1 Cor. 15:1-2



The Plan of Salvation

Hear the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Believe the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Repent of Sins

Acts 17:30

Confess Christ

Acts 8:37

Be Baptized

Acts 8:38

