

## Joshua – Lesson 4

Joshua Chapter 4

*Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies*

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**Introduction:** In our study last week Joshua lead the people out to cross over Jordan. The priests and the Ark went before the people, signifying the presence of God going before and protecting them. We discussed how that Jesus Christ has went before us in death, and has gone on the Heaven today to prepare for us a place. The lesson this week begins as they cross on to the banks of Canaan.

This is the second time we see Israel crossing over bodies of water on dry ground. In their Exodus from Egypt, the Lord God Jehovah showed Himself strong on the behalf of that people who had found shelter under the “Blood of the Lamb”.

*Exo 12:21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover.  
Exo 12:22 And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.  
Exo 12:23 For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.*

All those that had the blood on the doorposts and lintel were passed over by the death angel that night. You and I will also be passed over when it comes to payment for our sins if we have accepted Christ as Savior, the sinless lamb that paid the debt for our sins with His own blood shed on Mount Calvary almost 2,000 years ago. At the Jordan, these chosen of God were shown their own passage through death and resurrection by the figure of the stones placed in the Jordan and the 12 stones taken out of Jordan.

Today, we see this like figure in baptism.

*Rom 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?  
Rom 6:2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?  
Rom 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?  
Rom 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.  
Rom 6:5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we*

*shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*

*Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

## **I. The Two Memorials**

*Josh 4:1 And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying,*

*Josh 4:2 Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man,*

*Josh 4:3 And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night.*

At the river Jordan was where the Lord's forerunner (John the Baptist) started his ministry.

*Mat 3:1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,*

*Mat 3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

*Mat 3:3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

*Mat 3:4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.*

*Mat 3:5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,*

*Mat 3:6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.*

Many were baptized in Jordan by John the Baptist.

*Mat 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*

*Mat 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:*

## **II. Joshua Calls the 12 Men**

*Josh 4:4 Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man:*

Joshua was a type of Christ. We see so many similarities that point to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus called 12 to follow him.

*Mark 6:7 And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits*

The people looked to Joshua for leadership, just like we do to our Lord and Savior. Jesus was unafraid, and Joshua led the people with confidence and courage.

We see the 12 that Joshua called commanded to carry the stones.

*Josh 4:5 And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel:*

You would assume that since they were to carry these stones on their shoulder, these were large and heavy stones. We see in Joshua Chapter 3 in verse 12 that the men who were to carry the stones had been selected earlier.

*Josh 3:12 Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man.*

*Josh 3:13 And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap.*

They were selected earlier to not delay the work that lay before the nation. They were to go in and conquer the land, and Joshua was ready. Just as these 12 were prepared, John the Baptist had prepared the Lord's apostles.

*Luke 1:17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*

### **III. The Placing of the Stones**

*Josh 4:5 And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel:*

*Josh 4:6 That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones?*

*Josh 4:7 Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.*

The stones were not placed flat on the ground but orderly formed into a monument. Note in verse 20, the word "Pitch was used". This meant that they caused something to stand or raise.

*Josh 4:20 And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal.*

The monument of stones was designed first as a “Sign” unto Israel. It was an enduring sermon in stone that would not go away. Remember when Job wished that his words were written into a rock.

They were, and they will never fade away.

*Job 19:23 Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!*

*Job 19:24 That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!*

*Job 19:25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:*

*Job 19:26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:*

These rocks preached a message without a single word being written upon them.

J. Vernon McGee in his study on Joshua said “My friend, may I say to you that Christ went unto death for you and me, and that is set before us here in the Book of Joshua. Twelve stones were put into the water of death. Those twelve stones were placed in Jordan to speak of the death of Christ. And the twelve stones taken out of Jordan and put on the west bank represent the resurrection of Christ.”

This memorial spoke of the goodness of God and His power exercised on their behalf at Jordan.

The heap of stones signified that Israel had not crossed the Jordan by their own power, but by the power of God. In verse 6, we see that they were for a sign.

*John 20:30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:*

*John 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

*Acts 2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:*

We see that Jesus’ miracles were termed signs.

The wonders which Moses was empowered to perform were termed Signs.

*Exo 4:1 And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee.*

*Exo 4:2 And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said,*

*A rod.*

*Exo 4:3 And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it.*

*Exo 4:4 And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand:*

*Exo 4:5 That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.*

*Exo 4:6 And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow.*

*Exo 4:7 And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh.*

*Exo 4:8 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.*

*Exo 4:9 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land.*

Signs are put there to warn us, sometimes of great danger that lurks ahead. We need to look at the signs of the times and see that Jesus is coming soon. Our redemption draweth nigh, so we need to be watching and waiting.

#### **IV. The Stones Were For a Memorial**

*Josh 4:7 Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.*

These stones were a memorial, just like the passover is a memorial.

*Exo 12:21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover.*

*Exo 12:22 And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.*

*Exo 12:23 For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.*

*Exo 12:24 And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever.*

*Exo 12:25 And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this*

*service.*

*Exo 12:26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?*

*Exo 12:27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.*

As the Jews remembered the Passover, you and I remember how God passed over our sins by allowing Christ to come and die for us when we partake of the Lord's Supper.

*1 Cor 11:23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:*

*1 Cor 11:24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

*1 Cor 11:25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*

*1 Cor 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.*

## **V. The Placing of the Stones**

*Josh 4:8 And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the LORD spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there.*

In addition to the monument erected on the Canaan side of the river, we are told that Joshua set up 12 stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the ark stood. (These 12 stones represent Israel)

*Josh 4:9 And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day.*

*Josh 4:10 For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until every thing was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua: and the people hastened and passed over.*

In verse 10, we find that the priests showed patience and obedience. They were the ones who occupied the place of honor and danger. They were the ones who bore the ark, before whose presence the waters stood up like a heap. It was a test of their reliance on God and to see if they had faith. Being a leader of the people can be hard, but there are great rewards to those who do it with obedience, faith, and patience.

It is important all through this study to note that Joshua always followed the orders he had received from Moses.

He waited for God's command, and did not get ahead of God. We have to fight that tendency today. We see that the people hastened and passed over. I figure you and I would have hastened too if we had been there with that water standing straight up like a large building. This may also have been done for the consideration of the priests who had to stay there until these thousands of people passed over on dry land.

Matthew Henry said this about the 12 stones.

According to these orders the thing was done. 1. Twelve stones were taken up out of the midst of Jordan, and carried in the sight of the people to the place where they had their head-quarters that night, v. 8. It is probable that the stones they took were as big as they could well carry, and as near as might be of a size and shape. But whether they went away with them immediately to the place, or whether they staid to attend the ark, and kept pace with the solemn procession of that, to grace its triumphant entry in to Canaan, is not certain. By these stones which they were ordered to take up God did, as it were, give them livery and seisin of this good land; it is all their own, let them enter and take possession; therefore what these twelve did the children of Israel are said to do (v. 8), because they were the representatives of their respective tribes. In allusion to this, we may observe that when the Lord Jesus, our Joshua, having overcome the sharpness of death and dried up that Jordan, had opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, he appointed his twelve apostles according to the number of the tribes of Israel, by the memorial of the gospel to transmit the knowledge of this to remote places and future ages.

2. Other twelve stones (probably much larger than the other, for we read not that they were each of them one man's load) were set up *in the midst of Jordan* (v. 9), piled up so high in a heap or pillar as that the top of it might be seen above the water when the river was low, or seen in the water when it was clear, or at least the noise of commotion of the water passing over it would be observable, and the bargemen would avoid it, as they do a rock. Some way or other, it is likely, it was discernible, so as to notify the very place where the ark stood, and to serve for a duplicate to the other monument, which was to set up on dry land in Gilgal, for the confirming of its testimony and the preserving of its tradition. The sign being doubled, no doubt the thing was certain.

## **VI. The Lord Makes Good the Promise Made to Joshua**

*Josh 4:11 And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over, that the ark of the LORD passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people.*

*Josh 4:12 And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them:*

*Josh 4:13 About forty thousand prepared for war passed over before the LORD unto battle, to the plains of Jericho.*

*Josh 4:14 On that day the LORD magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.*

What was the promise that God had made to Joshua. Look over in verse 7 of chapter 3.

*Josh 3:7 And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.*

We see that the Lord magnified Joshua in their eyes. If a person wants true praise and honor, let it come from God, not the lips of men.

*1 Th 5:24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.*

What we learn from this is that God does what He says and promises. I or some other man may promise to do great things for you, and we may fail. But what God promises, He will do it.

*Isa 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

God has promised that His Word will not return void. This is a great promise that should encourage all of us when we preach or teach the Bible.

## **VII. The Priest are Obedient to Instructions**

*Josh 4:15 And the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying,*

*Josh 4:16 Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan.*

*Josh 4:17 Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan.*

The priest did not take a step until they were Divinely authorized. Many today in religious circles should look and see if what they are doing is authorized of God. If the Bible does not authorize things to be done, then we should not be doing it.

*Josh 4:18 And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before.*

*Josh 4:19 And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho.*

We see that on the 10<sup>th</sup> day they encamped at Gilgal. On the 10<sup>th</sup> day, the passover lamb was selected.

*Exo 12:3 Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house:*

*Exo 12:4 And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.*

*Exo 12:5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:*

*Exo 12:6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.*

The Lord ordered things here so that Israel entered Canaan four days before the passover, and on the very day that the preparation for it began.

*Josh 4:20 And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal.*

*Josh 4:21 And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones?*

*Josh 4:22 Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.*

*Josh 4:23 For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over:*

The stones were very significant.

*Mat 3:9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*

It may have been possible that the very stones the Lord spoke of here were the stones there in the Jordan.

*Josh 4:24 That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.*

Note that the message in verse 24. The world was to know that the hand of the Lord was mighty, and that they should fear the Lord your God forever. Not many fear God today, but a proper fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

*Psa 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for*

*ever.*

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*Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

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