



From Where I Sit . . .

“What Do These Stones Mean To You?” **(Joshua 4:6)**

Just a few minutes drive up the road – and on the very same highway as the place of my birth in the small Northwest Georgia town of LaFayette – one passes right through the middle of a famous battlefield of one of the major battles fought during the American Civil War – the Battle of Chickamauga. Over 125,000 soldiers fought gallantly there on September 19 and 20, 1863. It was the last significant battle the Confederate Army would win.

I can remember riding through what is now Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park on U. S. Highway 27 as a very small boy and daydreaming about all the soldiers hiding behind trees fighting desperately for their cause. Dad would stop the car and I’d get out and read the inscriptions on concrete monuments set to remind us of the names of the many fighting units, both North and South, during a battle in which over 34,000 Union and Confederate Soldiers died.

These stones caused me to ask all sorts of questions as a child, and they still do when I chance to go back there for a visit. The typical questions I asked of the various stones: “I wonder what happened here.” “How do you suppose it felt that day?” “What was the smell in the air with all that gunpowder?” “Were the soldiers afraid?” “What does this stone mean?” “Was it worth it?”

Israel had a tremendous challenge set before her after completing the forty-years of wandering in the wilderness under Moses. So much of their future success in conquering the nations of Canaan, and the continued faithfulness of succeeding generations to serve Jehovah would depend on these generations remembering what happened that day. God gave them a visual teaching tool that would remind boys and girls for centuries to come how He had delivered their ancestors through the wilderness, through the Jordan River on dry ground, and into the land of promise. They must never forget that God gave them a land for which they did not labor, and cities which they did not build. They in turn were to *“fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord”* (Joshua 24:14).

In Joshua, Chapter Four, Joshua was instructed to set up twelve stones taken from the river bed of the dry Jordan River through which Israel had just passed. These stones would form a memorial for generations to come: **Joshua 4:5-6**, *“that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, ‘What do these stones mean to you?’ ⁷Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever.”*

It’s sad to note that after years of following Joshua and walking with the Lord faithfully (**Joshua 24:31**) it was not always so. As the book of Judges begins, we learn that Joshua has died at the age of 110 years old, with this sad footnote: **Judges 2:10-12**, *¹⁰When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel. ¹¹Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals; ¹²and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the Lord to anger.*

Somebody forgot to tell their children the meaning of the stones!!! We too must see the importance of memory of what God has done for us, and we simply must teach it to our children so that generations to come will know the Lord, and learn of His faithfulness to those who will obey Him. The next time your child asks you about the Lord’s Supper, baptism, or dozens of other questions about the Lord, use the opportunity to instill abiding faith in their hearts.

. . . . Terry Broome