

Trinity Home Teams

Sermon Notes / Oct. 26, 2025

A Memorial Forever / Joshua 4

1. Joshua created a memorial from stones. What other memorials are in scripture? Read Exodus 12:14. What memorials would you build?
2. What is being memorialized?
3. All 12 tribes are involved in collecting the stones to build the memorial. Why?
4. Can you describe (or are you building a list) of God's covenant faithfulness to you?

Chapter 4 is presented in an unusual manner: divided into two main sections. "The events in 4:1-14 *are narrated from a vantage point outside of the promised land, whereas [those in 4:15-5:1] are narrated from a vantage point inside of the promised land.*" The same events are recorded from both sides of the Jordan and in reverse order, forming a rough chiasmic structure, with v14 as the turning point.

The miracle is ended (v10-13, 15-19)

Note the emphasis on the word of the Lord and obedience to it. The history of Israel is one of rebellion and disobedience, but in this chapter, Joshua obeyed the word of the Lord, and when he proclaimed the Lord's commands to the people, they obeyed.

After the waters were cut off and piled in a heap at the presence of the Lord, 3:17 says that *"the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan."*

The language of 'passing over' continues in ch4 and gives the sense that it is being relayed from the far banks of the Jordan.

The focus shifts to the near side of the Jordan in v15; the priests are not told to 'go up' but to 'come up.' All Israel is in the promised land.

The miracle ends just as it began (3:15-16). V18: *"And when the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord came up from the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up on dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before."*

Psalm 139:5 -- *"You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me."*

This miracle was for Yahweh's glory among the nations and for Israel's deliverance into the promised land. V24: *"so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever."*

YAHWEH ACCOMPLISHES HIS PURPOSES. He does not falter; he does not fail. He is faithful to his word and to his covenant promises. His presence is power, protection, provision, and promise.

Philippians 1:6 -- *"And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."*

The man is exalted (v14)

"On that day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they stood in awe of him just as they had stood in awe of Moses, all the days of his life."

Yahweh declared that a part of his purpose in the miracle of the crossing was to exalt Joshua: "Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you" (3:7).

We should not seek to exalt ourselves but wait on the Lord to exalt us.

1 Peter 5:6 -- *"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you."*

James 4:10 -- *"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you."*

The memorial is erected (v1-9, 19-24)

In 3:12, Joshua commanded the people to take one man from each tribe; in v2, the Lord tells Joshua that these men are to *"Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests' feet stood firmly, and bring them over with you and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight."* These stones taken from the dry bed of the Jordan and erected by Joshua were to be "to the people of Israel a memorial forever." (7)

V21-22: The memorial was to be a sign among them of Yahweh's covenant faithfulness.

Does your mind lay 'stones' of remembrance?

Do we need to ask the Lord to surgery on our memories? May the Lord give us resilient memory where his covenant faithfulness is concerned. Let us remember the cross and the empty tomb ... the indwelling Holy Spirit given to carry out his purposes and to comfort and correct as we need it ... his promises regarding our past, present, and future. Second, may He greatly reduce our capacity to remember wrongs committed against us. If love keeps no record of wrongs, why do we reserve the right to bring up past offenses that we claim to have forgiven? A vivid memory of past wrongs against us means a vanishing memory of God's faithfulness to us.