

"The Importance of Remembrance"

Joshua 3-4

Introduction: The Bible is very clear that as we go through life, we are to be careful not to forget certain things, namely the times of God's hand at work in our lives. This morning I want to look at one of the greatest miracles of the Old Testament and see how placed great emphasis upon Israel's remembrance of the miracle.

Before we get to the text today, I need to just point out that as humans we have a terrible habit of forgetting the things which need to be remembered and we remember things that are of little value. We see the need to be reminded in Peter's second letter.

2 Peter 1:12-15

¹² *Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.*

¹³ *Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance:*

¹⁴ *Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.*

¹⁵ *Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.*

Let us now get to our text for today.

As we step into Joshua chapter 3, we are stepping into the end of the 40 years of wilderness wanderings. The number 40 in the Bible is very significant. We see it over and over and it is almost always used to mark a time of transition.

- It rained in Noah's day for 40 days and night.
- Moses was in the Mount for 40 days.
- The spies that were sent out searched the land for 40 days.
- Goliath presented himself to Israel for 40 days.
- Ezekiel had to lay on his side for 40 days as he prophesied.
- Jonah warned Nineveh that judgment was coming in 40 days.
- Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days with no food.
- Jesus was seen of His disciples 40 days after His resurrection.
- Then in our text, Israel was in the wilderness 40 years.

The number 40 is very important. Here in our context it will mark the transition from the wilderness wanderings to the entrance into the land.

I. The Miracle

Notice Joshua 3:1-2

God had brought Israel to the edge of the Jordan River where they camped for 3 days. Why did they remain there looking at the flood waters of the Jordan 3 days? It was to help them to see their helplessness. It was to help them to see their need of God.

The number 3 is also very important. It speaks of the resurrection. The fact that they would cross the Jordan River after 3 days is a picture of the NEW LIFE which we experience in Jesus Christ. Crossing the Jordan would mark a new beginning for Israel. They were going from the wilderness into the promise land where they were promised great victories if they would walk by faith.

Notice Joshua 3:3-4

The people were to follow the ark as they approached the Jordan River, but they were not to get too close. Why the distance between them and the ark? Let us keep in mind there were some 2 million people here. If those in the front gathered around it would block the view of those in the back.

Application:

This is a reminder to each of us that as we live our Christian lives here on this earth, we must be very careful not to block the view of others.

Philippians 1:20-21

²⁰ *According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.*

²¹ *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

We must be sure to live in such a way that others can clearly see Jesus in us. There are many believers who live in such a way that Jesus cannot be seen in their lives. We are here to glorify God and to magnify Jesus Christ in the way that we live our lives.

Notice Joshua 3:5-15

I want to draw your attention to verse 15 because we need to see that this river was at flood stage. The Jordan would be as wide as 14 miles at this time of year. This is the most

dangerous time to cross the Jordan. If ever there was a danger of drowning it was when the Jordan was at flood stage.

Application:

Have you ever been at this place in life? It is when it has been pouring on you as the problems have been raining down and you feel like you are going to drown at any moment. Let me just remind you that this is when God often steps in and shows His mighty hand. He brings you to this place in life where you are faced with a flood of problems and where you must realize that He is God, and you are not.

If you are in "FLOOD SEASON" today and the problems have been raining down just be reminded that your situation may not be as dark as it looks. God may be setting the stage to step in and show His mighty hand in your life.

Notice Joshua 3:13 again.

Here is a valuable lesson for our lives. Before God would stop the flood waters the priests carrying the ark would have to put their feet in the flood waters then the waters would stop.

Application:

Let us learn that when it is flood season that God expects us to walk by faith before we will ever see His mighty hand at work. We are not to talk about faith, but we are to live by faith. Before God would stop the waters of the Jordan, He demanded to see that the priests/representatives of the entire nation were going to trust Him as well as all others.

Hebrews 10:35-39

³⁵ *Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.*

³⁶ *For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.*

³⁷ *For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*

³⁸ *Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

³⁹ *But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*

Notice Joshua 3:15-17

Here we see the extent of the miracle. God stopped the waters, and they formed a wall and He also completely dried up the river bottom so that the people passed over on dry ground. This was a miracle that allowed some 2 million people to cross on dry land.

II. The Memorials

Notice Joshua 4:1-8

After Isarel had passed through Jordan God gave a command to Joshua to chose 12 men to gather 12 stones to build a memorial in the camp. This was a memorial to remind the people of how God had brought them to the land of Canaan. They were to never forget this event.

Application:

There are many things that we forget in life. We forget dates, names, places, directions and so on. But One thing we had better never forget and that is God. We must be sure to remember that it **is He who has brought us through and out of the flood waters.**

Isaiah 43:1-3

But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

² *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*

³ *For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour:*

God knew of the danger of forgetting and He reminded Isarel over and over about the danger.

Deuteronomy 4:9

⁹ *Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;*

Deuteronomy 6:10-14

¹⁰ *And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not,*

¹¹ *And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full;*

¹² *Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.*

¹³ *Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.*

¹⁴ *Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you;*

Deuteronomy 8:11-20

¹¹ *Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:*

¹² *Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein;*

¹³ *And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied;*

¹⁴ *Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;*

¹⁵ *Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;*

¹⁶ *Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;*

¹⁷ *And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.*

¹⁸ *But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers, as it is this day.*

¹⁹ *And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.*

²⁰ *As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.*

The entire point in all of these verses is “Do not forget that God is your source!”

Notice Joshua 4:6-7 again.

We need to notice this very closely. The purpose of the memorial was to use as a teaching the tool to instruct the children in the years to come what happened here on this day.

Notice Joshua 4:9

Here Joshua set up a memorial in the middle of the river. Why? Because he knew there would come a day when another generation would deny what had happened. They would deny the rocks in the camp came from the river. But the memorial in the middle would prove Isarel had passed through.

Application:

In all of this we can clearly see the need to pass on/transfer to the younger people the Truth of how God has worked in our lives. It is vitally important that our faith is memorialized. Let me show you what happens when faith is not memorialized.

Judges 2:8, 10-12, 18-19

⁸ *And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old.*

¹⁰ *And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.*

¹¹ *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim:*

¹² *And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger.*

¹⁸ *And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.*

¹⁹ *And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, **that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers**, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.*

Conclusion:

This is exactly what we are seeing in our world today. There is now a generation that does not know the Lord. They have heard very little about God and for that reason they are wicked and evil.

We have a great responsibility to be sure that our faith is memorialized so that our children and grandchildren will grow up knowing God who so mightily worked in our lives.