

Proclaiming the Gospel

Message
of
Jesus Christ

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;
But unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1.18).

Edifying the Body of Christ (Eph. 4.10-16)

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The Wise Still Seek Him

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Be Careful What You Take with You!

Have you had a glorious, victorious experience with the Lord only to be attacked immediately by the enemy – an attack severe enough to make you forget the miracle of God's presence, His strength, and to plunge you into discouragement and despair? Or, have you encountered a difficult situation which you could not face, and you do not know how you made it through? But, you did! Did Satan tell you afterwards that you failed? Did he also tell you that God was not with you, and there is no need to go on?

All through the forty years of wandering in the wilderness, the children of Israel had such experiences and faced such attacks by the enemy. After God supernaturally protected and cared for them and delivered them from Egypt, they soon became discouraged when faced with difficulties such as hunger and thirst, not remembering that God could and would provide for them. God was longsuffering, performing one miracle after another, while the Israelites were alternately ecstatic and grumbling in anger and despair – so like us, the people of God today (Ex 16.1-3, 15-31).

Now it was time for them to conquer and inherit their promised land. It was time for another miraculous crossing of a body of water – the Jordan River in flood condition! (Jos 4.18) God gave Joshua and the Israelites instructions that **we would do well to remember today**. They were to take with them something, a memorial, which would remind them of the mighty power of God working on their behalf and would be strength and encouragement to the Israelites throughout their generations.

Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man,
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.

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

And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder,...

In those wonderful experiences when God works powerfully in your life and in the lives of others, and perhaps uses you to bless someone, Satan might try to plant **pride** in your heart or cause **you to take the glory which belongs to God**. You can be sure Satan will try somehow to negate in you what God has done. Achan took something belonging to God: gold and silver. **Be careful what you take with you!**

Choose prayerfully and carefully what you take into your "camp" as a memorial. When discouragement comes and Satan brings feelings of defeat and despair, draw on your store of memorials that Jesus has provided you. It is never wrong to remember the wonderful works of the Lord and to praise Jesus, to exalt Him, and, in so doing, build up ourselves in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving Him the praise and the glory for what He has done.

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Co-laborers together for Jesus Christ

Come apart and rest (Mark 6.31).

.... and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever (Jos 4.2-5a, 7b).

And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan... and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there (Jos 4.8)

And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal (Jos 4.20).

Notice that God's instructions were that the twelve men each pick up a stone at the place where the priests' feet stood firm in the river. God specified the exact location – with good reason.

The Israelites took something lasting from this experience; they took stones, **not** from just any part of the river, but stones taken from that part which was touched by the presence of God. The priests held the Ark of the Covenant (God's presence) as they stood in the dry riverbed; where they stood was where the presence of God rested while the Israelites went through the experience which they faced (Jos 4.3).

God told Joshua to set up the twelve stones in their camp in Gilgal as a memorial – something that would continually remind them that God was with them to deliver them (see scripture above). The memorial must be that which was touched by God; nothing else was worthy of remembrance. Nothing else would speak to them of the heart of God but that which was touched by God.

Crossing the Jordan River was a task the Israelites themselves could not accomplish. They saw God's power manifested in a way that this generation (with the exception of Caleb and Joshua) had not seen before. They saw God perform an unbelievable miracle in an impossible and, no doubt, frightful situation. Their faith was strengthened, no doubt; but God knew that the "Battle of Jericho" lay before them as they crossed the Jordan River. They had arrived at the site of their first battle – with many more to follow. They would need the memorial to stay their discouragement in times to come, to fortify their faith in God, and to hold in their hearts the glorious work of the Lord that they might always see God's mighty power with them.

Saints, let us be determined and careful to take from each experience, **not** that which is of our own making, but that which was touched by the hand of God – in the glorious experiences with the Lord as well as in those which try our faith. And, let us set it up in our minds and hearts – not to be forgotten when Satan attacks us with his lies and accusations.

Many times God instructed the Israelites always to remember certain events or certain miracles of God on their behalf. We also need to remember God's mighty work in our lives: His deliverances, His healings, His protection, His supernatural guidance . . . When we are under attack by Satan and our minds are filled with

doubts and fear, we have the Word of God as well as personal experiences from which to draw strength. We can remind ourselves, "Look what God did in this situation, and in that one, and that . . ." God is still the same today; He is faithful.

Joshua and the Israelites were obedient to God's command to take the right thing, the stones, from the experience of crossing the Jordan River. The memorial became a blessing to them as they remembered the mighty work of the Lord God Almighty in their lives – as He continued leading them in the Promised Land.

It was time now to conquer Jericho. Their faith was strong; they went forth to march around the city in obedience to God's command. The victory was complete. They obeyed God's command to destroy all except Rehab and her household and **to touch not** that which was accursed or consecrated unto the Lord for His treasury.

And the city shall be accursed, *[even]* it, and all that *[are]* therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that *[are]* with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

And ye, in any wise keep *[yourselves]* from the accursed thing, lest ye make *[yourselves]* accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, *[are]* consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD (Jos 6.17-19).

They all obeyed – except one. Achan yielded to covetousness and took of that which was forbidden (Jos 7). He succeeded in hiding it. No one knew, he thought; but it brought death and defeat for the children of Israel in their next battle – at Ai.

When God exposed Achan's sin, he confessed. He not only brought death to himself but also to his family and animals, in addition to the thirty-six Israelites killed in the battle at Ai.

We will take something with us from each battle, each experience. Let us be careful to take only that which is of the Lord Jesus – not that which is accursed (Jos 6.18; II Cor 6.17, 18). It is not easy to see anything from the Lord in some battles/ experiences, but we can ask God, "What do You want me to retain, to learn, to keep in my mind and heart as a memorial? What are You teaching me? What do You want to change in me as a result of this experience?" No matter how difficult the situation, if the Lord teaches us or changes us, it gives life.

Be always aware of Satan's ploys. He will magnify our failures – or anything that might deter us from walking with the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan might also instill hurts, anger, jealousy, disappointments...