

Twelve Stones of Witness (Joshua 4:5-7)

And Joshua said to them, Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God in the midst of the Jordan, and take up every man of you a stone on his shoulder, as in the number of the tribes of the Israelite, that this may be a sign among you when you children ask in time to come, What do these stones mean to you? Then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over the Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the Israelites a **memorial** forever (Josh. 4:5-7).

The meaning of the number twelve is very clear throughout Scriptures. Dr. Ed F. Vallowe, author of the book, Biblical Mathematics, describes the number twelve as the number for government by divine appointment. It is used 187 times in the Bible, which 22 of them is found in the book of Revelation. YAHSHUA chose twelve disciples to be His witnesses to preach the Gospel. In the millennium time these twelve disciples will have the position of governing the nation of Israel. YAHSHUA said, Truly I say to you, in the new age, when the Son of Man shall sit down on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on the twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19: 28).

YAHWEH chose to use twelve stones representing each tribe of Israel to serve as a memorial for their generations to come. They were to be a “memorial forever”. These stones were to serve as witnesses of the power and faithfulness of YAHWEH to future generations. These stones were proof of what was told and witnesses of what happened. In the phrase, “Crossing the Jordan” is the meaning crossing from death to life. Our spiritual life is a journey that takes us from the old life to the new in Christ, when we accepted Him. As a result, we are on a journey through the desert of life in route to the Promised Land. At the end, we must cross the Jordan, looking always to heaven, forsaking, and losing focus of the world until our final destination.

The twelve disciples were the New Testament’s twelve stones witnesses of the resurrection of our Lord, YAHSHUA; they were witnesses to generations to come – Jews and Gentiles. YAHSHUA confirmed by telling them, “You are my witnesses because you have been with Me from the beginning”. You are to be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8b). So the disciples constitute the twelve memorial stones. They were the twelve stones that witnessed YAHSHUA’S works of miracles, His death and resurrection; they experienced His glory and power; they knew Him as the Son of God. They were witnesses to generations to come who had not seen the Lord, neither had heard of Him; they were living stones, coming from diverse personalities, like Thomas the doubter, who repenting when YAHSHUA confronted him for his lack of faith, exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!” Thomas later died as a martyr for Christ. It is said that He traveled the Roman Empire to preach the good news of the Gospel of YAHSHUA as far as India. He was martyred by the wounds of four spears by the local soldiers; like the unfaithful Peter who denied the Lord, however, when YAHSHUA turned and looked at him, after Peter’s denial, he recalled the Lord’s words ... “Before the cock crows today, you will deny Me three times”, he went out and wept

bitterly (Luke 22:61-62); Peter, according to tradition, died a death of crucifixion; upside down; and like Judas who betrayed Him. Judas never repented and died a death of suicide.

We, believers, are YAHWEH'S living stone built into a spiritual house, for holy spiritual sacrifices acceptable and pleasing to YAHWEH through YAHSHUA the Messiah (1 Peter 2:5). As living stones to proclaim the truth to generations to come, we represent the spiritual meaning of a stone: truth; in Genesis 28:22 we read: And this stone which I have set up as a pillar shall be God's house and of all the increase of possessions that You give me I will give the tenth to You. A pillar of stone here is used as a place for the house of YAHWEH and as a witness of all the increase of possessions given Abraham. To the place where YAHWEH had talked to Jacob, a pillar of stone was set up as a witness; there he poured a drink offering and oil on it; and Jacob called the name of the place where YAHWEH had talked with him Bethel (house of God) (Gen. 35:14-15). A pillar of stone was set as a witness of truth, as it was used to mark the exact place where YAHWEH had talked to Jacob. It was chosen as a place for worship. A stone carries the meaning of honesty when used as a boundary, and as a spiritual witness as in the cases of Abraham and Jacob. They are the quiet witnesses of what we say and do as the Prophet Habakkuk, inspired by the Holy Spirit, said to the nation of Israel: For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the woodwork will answer it [agreeing with its charge against you] (2:11). We cannot escape from the eyes and ears of a stone, as it was created to be a witness for or against us. As a warning against the religious Jews, John the Baptist said: bring forth fruit that is consistent with repentance; and do not presume to say to yourselves, we have Abraham for our forefather; for I tell you, God is able to raise up descendants for Abraham from these stones (Matt. 3:8-9)! As the Lord YAHSHUA was riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, and the whole crowd of disciples were rejoicing and celebrating His kingship, crying, Blessed is the King Who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory and in the highest, the Pharisees called YAHSHUA'S attention to reprove them. To that He said, I tell you that if these keep silent, the very stones will cry out (Luke 19:37-40). The stones will reprove their silence and as witnesses, they will in return, proclaim the divinity of YAHSHUA. The stones will not be silent at the silence of a human being concerning YAHSHUA.

There are many varieties of stones: precious, semi-precious and not precious at all. These are the ones we see everywhere we go; they are stepped on, climbed on, built with. But the precious and semi-precious as the diamonds, the gold, the gem stones are for jewelry; they look beautiful on the neck, fingers and arms. But for that to happen, they had to go through a process of being polished to bring out their beauty, so they could be used as jewels.

But the ones found everywhere, those we step on are witnesses of YAHWEH'S faithfulness; they are witnesses of YAHWEH'S past actions. They will cry out the truth when we don't; they will cry out in testimony against our wickedness; even children can be raised out of them for the glory of our Lord. We are stones in the hand of our Lord, being molded and sanctified to shine His love to the world; we are His living stones ministering together toward the building up of YAHSHUA'S body; we are His witnesses everywhere we go!