

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 to the future generations of the power and faithfulness of YAHWEH shown by the drying of the Jordan River to bring Israel out of their journey of forty years to the Promised Land. These stones were proof of what was told and witnesses of the truth. In the phrase, “Crossing the Jordan” we have the meaning crossing from death to life, that is for the believer in YAHSHUA. Our spiritual life is a journey through the desert of life in route to our Promised Land. We are not to get distracted and attached to the things of this world, for we are just passing through. In the short span of life here when we are called home, we must cross that last river – the Jordan River. Every stone we see is a witness of our home going.

The twelve disciples were the New Testament witnesses of the resurrection of our Lord, YAHSHUA, to the generations to come, as were the twelve stones of the drying of the Jordan River. YAHSHUA told to the disciples, “You are my witnesses because you have been with Me from the beginning”. Before His ascension, He affirmed to the disciples that they were to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8b). So the disciples constituted the twelve memorial stones. They were the twelve stones that witnessed and testified YAHSHUA’S works of miracles, His death and resurrection. They knew Who He was the Son of YAHWEH; they experienced His glory and power. They were witnesses to generations who had not seen the Lord, neither heard of Him; they were the living stones, coming from diverse group, like the doubter Thomas, like Peter who denied Him and Judas who betrayed Him and lastly Paul, who persecuted the believers in Him. But all, with the exception of Judas, came to repentance, believed and accepted Him; they became living stones for the Kingdom of YAHWEH. When YAHSHUA confronted Thomas for his lack of faith in Him, he 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. When YAHSHUA turned and looked at Peter, after he had denied Him, 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. When YAHSHUA came to Saul in a light, as he was on his way to kill His disciples and falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? He answered, Who are You Lord? YAHSHUA answered him, I am YAHSHUA, Whom you are persecuting; get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do. So Saul did as the Lord commanded and he became a faithful servant of the Lord and was beheaded in Rome for His faith. These living stones lived to proclaim the truth and to bear witness of the love of YAHWEH without compromise until death.

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 the world and to generations to come, we represent the spiritual meaning of a stone. Used to mark boundaries, it symbolizes the 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, for which he will give a tenth of his increase to the Lord. 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 the truth, as it was used to mark the exact place where YAHWEH had talked ... to Jacob and was chosen as a place for worship. A stone carries the meaning of honesty when used as a boundary, and as a witness in a spiritual experience, as in the case 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 us 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).

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. Although they are useful for jewelry, first they must go through a process of being polished to bring out their shining, so they could be used as

jewels. However, the ones found everywhere we go, 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 precious 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!

THINK ABOUT IT!