

**QUESTIONS TO USE IN GROUP
OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY**

LAUNCHING¹ [5-10 minutes]

1. What's the most stressful "testing" experience you've ever had? For example, a driving exam, end-of-grade test, GRE, GED, college comprehensives, entrance exam, etc. How did you make out, once it was over? How do you feel now?
2. Which of the following best describes you, as you think about your life to this point? Check (a) one; if you wish share with the group and tell why.
 A. Mainly lost at sea, but headed toward the lighthouse and safe harbor.
 B. A rollicking roller coaster.
 C. A placid pond with lily pads.
 D. Blurry; out of focus; lots of uncertainty.
 E. A space craft in orbit.
 F. Exploring unknown frontiers in geography, in ocean depths, outer space, physics, linguistics, etc.
 G. A piece of driftwood on the sea.
 H. Mostly "under a rock."
 I. Other: _____

UNDERSTANDING² [15-25 minutes]

1. Read the narrative from Joshua 4, possibly the whole chapter. Consult a map to show the locale.
2. Identify the chief characters. Discuss any questions participants may have about the Israeli nation crossing of the Jordan River.
3. What was Joshua trying to accomplish by collecting two sets of rocks? What deeper levels of meaning, under Divine Providence, do we observe?
4. As the Israelis looked back on their forty years in the desert, what might be some of their negative memories? What would be positive?
5. If you were a parent back then, what part(s) of the story would you emphasize in retelling the story to your children?

REFLECTING³ [10-15 minutes]

¹Choose a question to guide thinking into the passage.

²Possible questions to discover the meaning of Exodus 20:17.

1. If you were choose a symbolic memorial for a time in your life when God worked some deliverance on your behalf, what would it be? For example, a driver's license (remembering the horrific auto accident you survived); your medical ID (in memory of a serious illness from which you recovered); etc.
2. As you reflect on your experiences as part of the Glenstone Chapel congregation, what's one blessing you want to remember?
3. What opportunities (or possible problems) do you see in the future for yourself? For Glenstone Chapel? To what extent do you have "hope" based on the Joshua 4 story?
4. "What one life-changing encounter with God will you be sure to tell your kids"?⁴

FURTHER REFLECTION (on your own)

"Shall we not raise a pillar to our God, Who has brought us through dangers and distresses in so wonderful a way? For hitherto the Lord hath helped us, as much as He did His saints of old. How great the stupidity and ingratitude of men, who perceive not His hand, and will not acknowledge His goodness, in their frequent deliverances!" (Matthew Henry)⁵

Feedback? E-mail NananDrDan@AOL.com
Thank you, in advance. DCJ

FOR PERSONAL PREPARATION

Passage: Joshua 4:1-7, 19-24

³Questions to make use of truths from Exodus 20:17 in daily life.

⁴*Serendipity Bible for Groups*, page 294.

⁵*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, by Matthew Henry.

1. To think about: These verses describe THE culmination of all the events occurring between Jacob's arrival in Egypt (Gen. 46) and this day of God's Promise being fulfilled, some 400 years later.⁶

2. The Twelve Stone Tradition.

- Having one stone for each of the twelve tribes reinforced the unity between the tribes who were to be settled on both sides of the Jordan.
- "The placing of the twelve stones as memorial is . . . reminiscent of the twelve pillars representing the tribes of Israel⁷. . . . The placing of large stones was a commemorative act."⁸

3. Josh. 4:6 " . . . to serve as a sign among you.

In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?'"

- ". . . a reminder of what the Lord had done by means of His ark in bringing about the miracle of the crossing."⁹
- "Its primary purpose is for the future. . . . The miracle is to be viewed as an expression of covenant fidelity."¹⁰

4. "And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan." (vs. 20)

- ". . . set them in rows, or one upon another, and made a pillar of them commemorative of their passage over Jordan into the land of Canaan."¹¹

5. "He said to the Israelites, 'In the future when your descendants ask their fathers, 'What do these stones mean?' tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.'" (vss. 21-22)

- ". . . acquaint them with the whole history, the meaning of which they are designed to perpetuate. . . ."¹²
- "The exodus analogy is stated directly in this passage, which contains a large number of echoes of the exodus tradition."¹³

6. "For the LORD your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The LORD your God did to the Jordan just what he

had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over." (vs. 23)

- ". . . myself [Joshua] and Caleb, and all of us here present; for this benefit, though done to their fathers, is justly said to be done to themselves, because they were then in their parent's loins . . . for hereby it appears, that God is the same yesterday, today and forever."¹⁴

7. "He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God." (vs. 24)

- God's love for ALL peoples in the world is clearly shown, even in this specific act of deliverance for the Israelis.¹⁵
- ". . . extends the focus from one people Israel to the non-Israelite world; Israel's crossing gives to other people knowledge of the Lord's power."¹⁶
- The ". . . Almighty . . . can do that which is marvelous . . . and above the power of nature to effect . . . this the very Heathens would . . . acknowledge when they should see these stones, and be told the meaning of them, or should hear of this amazing event. . . ."¹⁷
- "God's benefits serve as a further condemnation to the wicked, and stir up his own to reverence and obey him."¹⁸
- "May be a parallel to the Song of Moses (Ex. 15:14-16¹⁹),"²⁰
- "The *strong hand of the Lord* was also evident in the wonders of Exodus (3:19; 6:1; 13:9; Deut. 6:21; 7:8; 9:26)."²¹

Information for community group leaders:

- **Genesis 2 to be studied, Aug. 31-Sept. 6; sermon on Sept. 7.**
- **Genesis 2, Sept. 7-13; sermon on Sept. 14.**

¹⁴An Exposition of the Old and New Testament, by John Gill.

¹⁵Zech. 8:20-22 This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come, and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, 'Let us go at once to entreat the LORD and seek the LORD Almighty. I myself am going.' And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD Almighty and to entreat him."

¹⁶1 Kings 8:59-61 And may these words of mine, which I have prayed before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, that he may uphold the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel according to each day's need, so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God and that there is no other. But your hearts must be fully committed to the LORD our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time."

¹⁷The Jewish Study Bible, page 471.

¹⁸An Exposition of the Old and New Testament, by John Gill.

¹⁹Geneva Bible.

²⁰Ex. 15:14-16 The nations will hear and tremble; anguish will grip the people of Philistia. The chiefs of Edom will be terrified, the leaders of Moab will be seized with trembling, the people of Canaan will melt away; terror and dread will fall upon them. By the power of your arm they will be as still as a stone-- until your people pass by, O LORD, until the people you bought pass by.

²¹The Book of Joshua, by Marten Woudstra, page 96.

²²The Book of Joshua, by Marten Woudstra, page 96.

⁶Gen. 15:13 Then the LORD said to him [Abram], "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years."

⁷Ex. 24:4 Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said. He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel.

⁸The Jewish Study Bible, page 470.

⁹The Book of Joshua, by Marten Woudstra, page 91.

¹⁰The Book of Joshua, by Marten Woudstra, page 91.

¹¹An Exposition of the Old and New Testament, by John Gill.

¹²An Exposition of the Old and New Testament, by John Gill.

¹³The Jewish Study Bible, page 471.