

## “What mean these stones?”

“What mean these stones?” This question is asked often of visitors to the historic rock formation called “Stonehenge.” Many historians have guessed at its purpose. Possible functions include its use as a guide to the celestial bodies, its use as a calendar, or even as a location for pagan religious ceremonies. The truth is we may never know the real purpose of Stonehenge.

This same question is also asked in Joshua 4:21. “What mean these stones?” As God leads the children of Israel across the Jordan River to take the land of Canaan, He commands Joshua to take one man from each tribe. Each man is to gather one stone from the side of the river and collectively they are to build a monument of stones for all the children of Israel to see. But this was no ordinary altar. No sacrifices were given. No animal was slain. So the question in verse 21 seems appropriate. “What mean these stones?” Joshua explains it clearly to the children of Israel in verses 21 through 24. “And he (Joshua) spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, **What mean these stones?** Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: **That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.**

The purpose of the stones was as a reminder of the strength, might, and power of God. It was a visual reference to the providence of God in the lives of the Israelites as they escaped Egypt, were led to Canaan, and finally began claiming the Promised Land by crossing the Jordan River. The answer to our question, however, cannot exclude for whom the stones were erected. Read the passage clearly. They were erected to stimulate children to seek God and for parents to tell their children of God’s might.

We are responsible to build monuments in our lives that point our children to God. We as parents are given the charge to teach our children about the strength, might, and power of God. When it is not done it isn’t the church’s fault. It isn’t Sunday School’s fault. The responsibility sits squarely on the shoulders of us, parents. Are you building monuments to God’s goodness in your life? Do your children look at you and want to know more about your God? When your kids look at you, do they ask “What mean these stones?”