

Joshua 4:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones?

Analysis

The memorial stones' purpose—"That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones?"—creates teaching opportunities for future generations. Physical memorials prompt questions enabling gospel transmission. The anticipation that children will ask demonstrates intentional catechesis structure. Faith transmission requires not merely information download but dialogue responding to curiosity. Visible reminders of God's works spark conversations passing faith to the next generation.

Historical Context

The twelve stones (one per tribe) erected at Gilgal created permanent memorial of Jordan crossing. Joshua also placed twelve stones in Jordan's riverbed (verse 9), creating dual witness. Gilgal became Israel's base camp during conquest, making the memorial strategically located. Similar memorials appear throughout Scripture (Genesis 28:18-22, 35:14; 1 Samuel 7:12), showing physical reminders help maintain spiritual memory. Modern church architecture and liturgy similarly incorporate memorial elements.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What physical reminders help your family remember and discuss God's faithfulness?
2. How can you create opportunities for children to ask questions about faith rather than merely receiving lectures?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵת תְּהֵי הָ לָמַעַן	אֹת	בְּקֶרֶבְךָ	כִּי	וְשָׁאַל וְנֹא
H4616	H1961	H2063		
	That this may be a sign	among	H3588	ask
	H226	H7130		H7592
וְנִיכְךָ	מָחָר	לֵאמֹר	מָה	
you that when your children	their fathers in time to come	saying	H4100	
H1121	H4279	H559		
הָאֲבָנִים	לָכֶם:	הֵא לָהֶם		
What mean ye by these stones	H428	H0		
H68				

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 13:14 (Parallel theme): And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage:

Joshua 4:21 (Parallel theme): And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones?

Psalms 44:1 (Parallel theme): We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.

Deuteronomy 11:19 (Parallel theme): And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

Joshua 22:27 (Parallel theme): But that it may be a witness between us, and you, and our generations after us, that we might do the service of the LORD before him with our burnt offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in the LORD.

Isaiah 38:19 (Parallel theme): The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.

Isaiah 55:13 (Parallel theme): Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Psalms 71:18 (Parallel theme): Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.