

Remembrance, preparation and a vision of God's ultimate victory

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Date: 12 November 2017

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[0 : 00] A solemn Sunday, which was set up in its first instance by His Majesty King George V in 1919. That on the 11th month and the 11th day and at the 11th hour, we would remember those who fell and never returned from the First World War.

At the beginning of the First World War, the strength of the British Army was one million men. At the end of the First World War, 744,000 of those were dead.

Thinking of it globally, the actual figure for all nations, including Germany, of those dead, injured or counted missing was 41 million people.

The peace was arrived at at a great cost and therefore it was right that we should remember it. And so, in the book of Joshua, there is this idea of remembrance that's in the passage that we read together.

In Joshua 2, he is sent out two spies to Jericho and they spy out the land and return and make a report. In chapter 3, he leads the people across the Jordan.

[1 : 41] This was accomplished when the priests holding the Ark of the Lord and standing in the midst of the Jordan on dry ground. In chapter 4, the chapter that we read a bit of, he placed 12 stones in the midst of the Jordan where the priests had stood.

And these were to act as a memorial to the great thing that God had done by bringing the people across the Jordan. He also commanded one man from each of the tribes of Israel to take a stone from the Jordan.

And these also were to act as a memorial to what God had done. With the intention of conquering the land of Israel, if you take a map, you find that where Joshua crossed the Jordan was actually halfway between the top of the land of Israel and the bottom.

And here there is good tactics being involved. Because if you can split the opposing forces into two, there can be no marshalling of a great army against you.

And that's what's happened here. There's a straight line from the Jordan to Gilgal to Jericho to Ai to Bethel and Gibeon. Think with me first.

[3 : 10] Gilgal, the place of remembrance. The people came up of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month. And they encamped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho.

And here it is that this first act of memorial takes place. And those twelve stones which they took up out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal.

And they are intended to act as an aid to memory. So in chapter 4 we read in verses 21 and 22, There's a similar command that's given in the liturgy, the book that deals with the institution of the Passover in Exodus 12.

And there at verse 25 we read, And when you come into the land which the Lord will give you, as he has promised you, you shall keep this service.

That's the Passover. When your children say to you, what do you mean by this service? You shall say it is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover.

[4 : 41] For he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt when he slew the Egyptians but spared our houses.

There's a principle of memorial being built in the Old Testament. And he gives these stones a theological meaning.

In verse 23, The Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the Lord God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over.

Now there are two great acts of God that these stones are speaking to. They're speaking to the deliverance from Egypt, being set free from Pharaoh.

And they're speaking of the conquering of the land of Canaan by passing over the Jordan. So they act as a great sense of memorial.

[5 : 44] And they speak to two distinct groups of people. So that all peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty.

And the sons of Israel, that you may fear the Lord your God forever. So the principle is there. Gilgal is the place of remembrance.

Now in the Christian church, we haven't got a sacred place to go to. But we do have a place that we can look at. And that place is called Golgotha.

The hill of the skull. Outside the city of Jerusalem. Where Jesus died for us. On the cross.

And the apostle of old says this. Regarding the communion act. Which we are going to take shortly. Do this. Do this. Do this. Do this. Do this. Do this. Do this. Do this. As often as you drink it.

[6 : 49] In remembrance of me. And that act of remembrance. Speaks to all peoples. This. Is my body.

Which is broken for you. This do. In remembrance. Of me. Gilgal. The place of remembrance.

Golgotha. A far greater place. Moving on. The place of preparation. At that time the Lord said to Joshua.

Make flint knives and circumcise the people of Israel again. The second time. This is an act. Of preparation. It has to be carried out.

Before the people can conquer the land of Canaan. Circumcision. Came in with God's covenant with Abraham. In Genesis 17.

[7 : 55] And there we read at the 10th verse. This is my covenant which you'll keep between me and you. And your descendants after you. Every male. Shall be circumcised.

So the right of circumcision. For males. Was a sign. Of in outward. It was an outward act.

That was the point. To an inward act. Of grace. And Jeremiah sees it that way. He says this.

Circumcise yourselves to the Lord.

And remove the foreskins of your heart. O men of Judah. And inhabitants of Jerusalem. In Deuteronomy. The great law book.

We read. Circumcise therefore the foreskins of your heart. And be no longer stubborn. And in chapter 30. There is a prediction.

[8 : 52] That the Lord your God. Will circumcise your heart. And the heart. Of your offspring. So it's an outward act. That points to an inward state.

Of grace. As far as the Old Testament. Is concerned. But chapter 5. Makes clear. That this act. Had not been carried out.

Verse 5. Though all the people who came out. Had been circumcised. Yet all the people that were born in the way. In the wilderness. After they had come out of Egypt. Had not.

Been circumcised. And they hadn't been circumcised. Because of the failure. Of the people of God. So the circumcision of the nation.

Took place. And when it was done. They remained in their places in the camp. Until they were healed. Now today in the Christian church. We don't circumcise male children anymore.

[9 : 56] Although the practice is still carried on. In orthodox Judaism. And Paul makes it clear. That circumcision. Has been replaced. By baptism.

So the sacrament of baptism. Is an outward act. That if it means anything at all. Speaks to an inward grace.

That we get. Through Christ. So Gilgal. For the Old Testament people. Is a place of preparation. And when we think of Golgotha.

When we think of the sufferings of Christ. On our behalf. Which no one can compute. That place. Is not only a place of remembrance. But a place. Of preparation. In words that we will read shortly. Let a man examine himself.

[10 : 56] And so let him eat. And drink of the cup. What are we doing? Before we come to the Lord's table. We are examining ourselves.

To see if we are in that. State of grace. Whereby we may eat. And drink. Of the cup. So Golgotha. Becomes a place.

Of preparation. Finally. It's a place of vision. In the last portion. That we read. Commencing at verse 13.

In chapter 5. When Joshua was by Jericho. He lifted up his eyes. And looked. And behold. A man stood before him. With his drawn sword.

In his hand. So here we have. Not only a place. Of remembrance. Not only a place. Of preparation. But also. But also.

[11 : 53] A place. A place. Of vision. Behold. A man stood before me. With his drawn sword. In his hands.

And so Joshua. Asks him. Are you for us. Or for our adversaries. And he says.

No. I am the commander. Of the law. Of the army. Of the Lord. And I have now come. God. So. You see. What's happening here.

Is that this is not. An angelic figure. This is an appearance. In Old Testament times. Of God himself. To Joshua.

So he says. What does my Lord command. His servant. Joshua. Identifies. This figure. As God. By calling him.

[12 : 49] My Lord. And in chapter 5. In verse 14. The figure says. I am. The captain. Of the army. Of the Lord. Now you will remember.

Will you not. That in Exodus. Where God. Moses. Asked God. His name. He said. I am. Who I am. Thus you will say.

To the sons of Israel. I am. Has sent me. To you. That. Particular term. I am. Never received. Its fullest explanation. Until we come. To the person. Of Jesus. Jesus. Said. I am. The good shepherd.

I am. The bread of life. So it's full of significance. Comes in and through. The person.

[13 : 47] Of Jesus. But in this. Old Testament text. Of Joshua 5. 14. I am. The captain. Of the army. Of the Lord. Here is one of the.

Real explanations. Of this name. In the Old Testament. So this vision. Is a vision. Of God. Himself. But it's a vision. Of God. In a particular. Fashion. Or in a particular. Figure. Because he appears. To Joshua.

As the victor. God. And so Joshua. Is given this vision. That the battle. Is not his. The battle. Is God's. And given. That he's about. To move in. To conquer. Jericho. I. Bethel. Gibeon. And the rest. This is a very.

[14 : 43] Significant. Vision. To get. The principle. Is laid down. In 2nd Chronicles. 2015. The battle. Is not yours.

But God's. So Gilgal. This rocky. Barren place. Is first of all. A place. Of remembrance. To think. Back. On the mighty. Acts. Of God. It's a place. Of preparation. To get yourself. In a state. Of grace. It's a place. Of vision. What do we see. When we look. At Golgotha's hill. Outside.

The city wall. Do you see. Defeat. And failure. In the crucified. Form. Of the son of God. Or do you see.

[15 : 41] Victory. And triumph. The epistle. To the Hebrews. Answers it. Like this. But we see. Jesus.

Who for little while. Was made lower. Than the angels. Crowned. With glory. And honor. He is. The victor. What does he say. To his disciples. In the world. You will have. You will have. Tribulation. But.

Be of good cheer. I have. Overcome. The world. So this place. Golgotha.

A place. Of remembrance. This do. In memory. Of me. A place. Of preparation. Let a person.

[16 : 41] Examine themselves. A place. Of vision. Christ. Is the victor. So the apostle of old.

When he. Notes all this. In second Corinthians. Two. Verse fourteen. He says. Thanks. Be to God. Who in Christ.

Always. Leads us. In triumph. So we come from. The solemnity. Of this day. And thinking. Of the war dead. And thinking. Of the principles. Are built. Into it. And applying it. In a new way. Which encourages us.

To think of. Remembrance. Preparation. And ultimate victory. We stand and sing.

[17 : 41] The first two verses. Of the hymn. When peace like a river. Into you.

There. It takes a river. And accumul air. Is a blood. Mostly here. To think of. ■■. To think of. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen.

[20 : 46] Amen. Amen.

Amen. It is well with my soul, with my soul.

It is well, it is well with my soul. Gracious and eternal God, we are thankful for your grace, your mercy, and your peace, which has spoken this great hope into our hearts.

And we pray that the blessing of the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit might be our experience now and every day until Jesus comes or calls.

Amen.