

# Ebenezers

So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites,  
one from each tribe, and said to them,

“Go over before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan.

Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder,  
according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, to serve as a sign among you.

In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’

tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off

before the ark of the covenant of the Lord.

When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off.

These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever.”

Joshua 4:4-7 (NIV)

Perhaps one of the most famous names in the English speaking world is that of Ebenezer Scrooge. That was the name the author Charles Dickens (1812-1870) gave to a miserly old man in his wonderful fictional story, A Christmas Carol.

Some of us love to read the story of Scrooge at the Christmas season. The story line is about how the cruel man Scrooge is transformed into a loving and caring individual one Christmas eve.

The name Ebenezer comes from a story in the Bible. In 1 Samuel 7:12 (NIV), we read, “Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, ‘Thus far the Lord has helped us.’” The term Ebenezer comes from the Hebrew language and means “stone of help”.

From time to time during the history of the Jewish nation we

read of the Lord delivering His people from some disaster or other and the people erecting a stone monument at the site of the deliverance. The Lord wanted His people to have a permanent visible reminder of some historical fact they needed to keep in mind through all their lives.

The purpose of the Ebenezer was to feed the faith of the people of God during subsequent times of trial. As God’s people endured a new trial they could look at the stone monument and recall how the Lord had delivered His people from some previous dangerous situation.

As the people reflected back to the past and recalled the deliverance by the Lord, they would be encouraged to believe that once again the Lord would come to the rescue of His people here and now.

Perhaps today you need to look back to a time when you were in

a frightening situation that was utterly beyond your ability to repair. Consider how fearful you were then. Remember how you doubted that the Lord would come to your rescue. Then think on the powerful way you were taken right through the difficulty and brought out safe on the other side.

Is it not the same today? Once again you wonder why you are in trouble. Again you question the Lord’s ability to save you. Learn the lesson from the past deliverance and take heart and believe that the One Who is the same yesterday, today and forever will soon appear with all the help you need.

Look back at your past Ebenezers and then turn and face your future full of confidence in the God Who never fails.

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