

MARKING THE PLACE ISRAEL CROSSED OVER

Josh. 4:5 *and Joshua said to them, “Cross again to the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Israel.*



The stones were placed in a heap as a memorial to the later generations, marking the place where Israel crossed over. But, there is a spiritual meaning to this as well. The Jordan symbolizes death, both physical and spiritual. The stones symbolize believers (1Pet. 2:5) and raising them out of the Jordan symbolizes our being raised out of death. Now, Gilgal was where they crossed and where these stones were set up. Gilgal eventually was seen as a place of rest to Israel based on Joshua 10:43. It was where the kingdom would be renewed in the time of Saul and David (1Sam. 11:14). Galilee is an allusion to the same concept because of the “gal” in the name but also it was located in the north, which is where God’s throne is located in the Universe (Isa. 14:13; Ps. 48:2). Gilgal also played a role in the lives of Elijah and Elisha (2Kgs. 2:1, 4:38). So Gilgal became a concept associated with Heaven and the eternal kingdom. As a side note, these stones were possibly referred to in Matt. 3:9 where John was preaching along the Jordan. It would make sense for John, who came in the spirit of Elijah, to start preaching and preparing the people for the coming Kingdom of God (Matt. 3:2) there because it had become the place to “renew the kingdom.” (Also refer to 1Pet. 2:4-8 for the details about living stones.)

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