

Souvenirs

We accumulate souvenirs to help us remember where we have been and what we have accomplished. They assist remembrance as time dims, and often removes them from our memories. There are memorial feasts, ordered by God and used to remind His people of events in their salvation. Passover in the first month and Tabernacles in the seventh month of their calendar reminded Israel of the deliverance from Egypt and the wilderness wanderings. Scripture records many instances where items and events cause lasting memories of important events and places. We can consider a few.

Rainbow - Although misused today, the rainbow is the first, continuous sign between God and creation. It is a "souvenir" to both God and all living creatures that waters would never again cover the earth to destroy. *"I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud, and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh"* (Genesis 9:11-17).

Tablets of Stone - When Moses was on the mountain to receive the law, God gave him two tablets that contained the words spoken by God in Exodus 20:1-18. Moses understood the stone tablets were a "Testimony" that would travel with, and belong to, Israel as a reminder of the covenant between God and the nation. The tablets were a "souvenir" placed in the Ark of the Covenant to remind Israel of that covenant. Moses said, *"I turned and came down from the mountain and put the tablets in the ark which I had made; and there they are, as the LORD commanded me"* (Deuteronomy 10:1-5).

Aaron's rod - Numbers 17 relates the time when leaders of the other tribes wanted to be priests and High Priest. God had 12 rods prepared, each with the name of a man from each tribe written on it. Rods with no root and no life, just dead pieces of wood. God caused Aaron's rod to produce living fruit. It *"had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds"* (Numbers 17:8). The rod was placed in the Ark as a "souvenir" of God's choice of the tribe of Levi as priest and the family of Aaron for High Priest. *"The LORD said to Moses, 'Put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put an end to their grumblings against Me, so that they will not die'"* (Numbers 17:10).

River stones - Joshua 4 tells about Israel crossing the Jordan River. God told Joshua, *"Take up for yourselves twelve stones from here out of the middle of the Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet are standing firm, and carry them over with you and lay them down in the lodging place where you will lodge tonight."* (Joshua 4:2-3). *"That all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, so that you may fear the LORD your God forever"* (Joshua 4:20-24)

The Ebenezer - At one of the battles between the Israel and Philistines, Israel pleaded with Samuel, *"Do not cease to cry to the LORD our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines"* (1 Samuel 7:8-12). Samuel offered a sacrifice and prayed to the LORD, and the men of Israel were able to defeat the Philistines. *"Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and named it Ebenezer, saying, 'Thus far the LORD has helped us.'"* (1 Samuel 7:12).

Day of Atonement – Of the many special days in the year, one stood out. Leviticus 16 describes the “Day of Atonement” when the high priest took the blood of the sacrifices before God into the presence of Mercy Seat, which was on top of the Ark of the Covenant. There, he alone offered the blood to cover up the sins of the people for the next year. *“Now you shall have this as a permanent statute, to make atonement for the sons of Israel for all their sins once every year”* (Leviticus 16:34). A “souvenir” of the peoples’ sins and God’s willingness to forgive.

The Death of Christ -The Day of Atonement, along with all other sacrifices and memorials given by the Law of Moses, ended with the death of Jesus Christ. His sacrifice removed rather than cover sins. With sin gone, yearly atonement is not necessary. We have been given a weekly feast to remember His sacrifice (Luke 22:14-20); (Acts 20:7). Jesus said the bread is His body, and the fruit of the vine is His blood given in place of our death for sin. He commanded us to *“do this in remembrance”* of Him. We commune with Him in this feast each first day of the week. We remember the covenant He made with us to obey His commandments and to eagerly watch for His return as He promised (John 14:2-3).

Do you have favorite scriptures that you use to remember God, His Son, and the salvation they provide?