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Crucial Questions

R. C. SPROUL

Can I Lose My Salvation?

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LIGONIER MINISTRIES

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Chapter One

Stones of Remembrance

Soon after I became a Christian in college, a friend of mine took me to meet an elderly lady who lived alone in a small trailer. This woman was one of the most radiant Christian women I have ever met. She was an authentic prayer warrior; she would pray eight hours every day for all kinds of concerns. My friend explained to this lady that I had just recently become a Christian. Delighted, she looked at me and said, “Young man, what you need to do is drive a spiritual stake in the ground right now.” I had no

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idea what she was talking about, but she explained to me that I needed to make sure that my conversion was forever. I was to remember this time in my life, the moment of my conversion, so that when I would come to struggles in the future, I would look back to that moment.

Her advice was reminiscent of an event in the book of Joshua, which tells the story of the Israelites' entering the Promised Land. The Israelites had gone through the exodus, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Now, finally, they were preparing to enter Canaan. But this final leg of the journey wouldn't be easy, either.

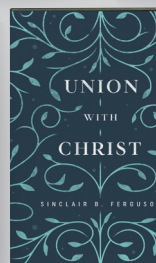
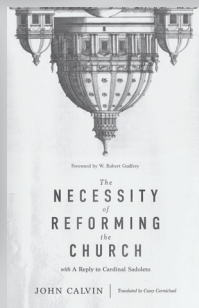
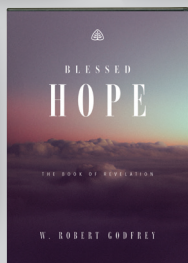
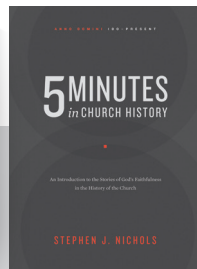
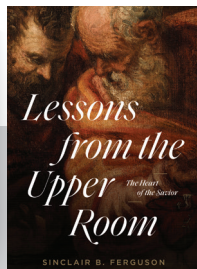
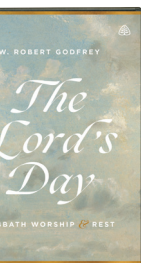
Between them and the Promised Land was the Jordan River. It was at flood stage; it had overflowed its banks and was about a mile wide. And of course, on the other side were the Canaanites, who had heard of Israel's approach and were preparing to meet them.

As the people of Israel stood by the river, God gave Joshua their marching orders: the priests were to advance to the water carrying the ark of the covenant. As they stepped into the water, the river rolled back twenty miles and the riverbed was dry. And so this whole body of people crossed over the Jordan into the Promised Land.

Then Joshua gave the people an assignment:

When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, “Take twelve men from the people, from each tribe a man, and command them, saying, ‘Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests’ feet stood firmly, and bring them over with you and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight.’” Then Joshua called the twelve men from the people of Israel, whom he had appointed, a man from each tribe. And Joshua said to them, “Pass on before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and take up each of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, ‘What do those stones mean to you?’ then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel a memorial forever.” (Josh. 4:1–7)

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