On May 31st (Monday) the country will celebrate Memorial Day. Memorial Day is to celebrate the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military.  Memorial Day was originally known as decoration day.  It began right after the end of the Civil War (1865) and became a federal holiday in 1971.   At 3:00 p.m. (local time) on Memorial Day a national moment of remembrance takes place.

Memorial Day as observed in America may be unique, but the fact of memorials is in no way unique.  There is ample biblical and historical examples.

Think about what it takes to remind you of historical biblical events.  What is it you remember?  What in any particular memorial is the thing that causes you to reflect?  To help you think of spiritual memorials, consider the account of the memorial in Joshua 3-4.  I encourage you to read both chapters but here is a basic synopsis:

After the death of Moses, Joshua is now leading the people who had recently left Egypt. In Joshua 3 the people find themselves on the bank of the Jordan river.  The priests of the tribe of Levi were carrying the ark of the covenant.  The priests were to carry it 2000 cubits ahead of the people.  When they set out the Lord promised the people He would do “wonders among you.”

The Lord also promised to exalt Joshua in the eyes of the people, a clear effort to establish him as the leader.  God also showed wanted to demonstrate that he was with Joshua as He had been for Moses. The priests carrying the ark were to approach the river Jordan and actually go into it.  When they did, the waters of the river were stopped. The priests found themselves standing firmly on dry ground in the middle of the river bank.  And then all the people – 400,000 in all - were able to pass through the Jordan river and walk on dry ground toward Jericho. (Joshua 3; 4:10-14).

God wanted to create a memorial of this event. He commanded Joshua to identify twelve men who would each take a stone from the river and from the place where the priests had stood on dry ground.  The stones would be a sign that the “waters of the Jordan were cut off.”  The stones would be a memorial to the people “forever.” (Joshua 4:7).   The point of this memorial was simple:

**18 “**And when the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord came up from the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up on dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before.

**19**The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they encamped at Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. **20**And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal. **21**And he said to the people of Israel, “When your children ask their fathers in times to come, ‘What do these stones mean?’ **22**then you shall let your children know, ‘Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.’ **23**For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over, **24**so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever.”

As it was with the Israelites, the point of the memorial was remind people of God’s might.  The memory was to last forever.

Think about memorials today, including the Lord’s Supper.  What do you learn from these memorials?  What benefit do you receive?  And what can you do to better remind you of spiritual things?