

## Joshua Chapter 23 and 24

### Joshua's Farewell to the Leaders of Israel

**23:1-5** Joshua spoke of God's Fame among them...

- a) what He did in the past...
- b) what He **will** do in the future...
- c) He gave all the glory to God...

**(NB)** 3 VIP geographic locations in Israel at this stage.

(1) **Gilgal:** (Ring Fort): this was the military headquarters at the time of Israel's invasion of the land...



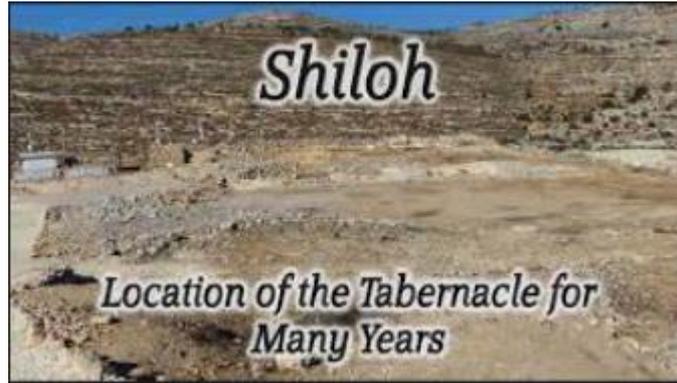
(2) **Shiloh:** became the Religious Centre for the People. They had The Ark of the Covenant there...

(3) **Shechem:** became the Political Centre - (ie) the centre of Government.

### **GILGAL**

- was near Jericho.
  - Joshua made a Memorial of 12 standing stones here making it a Ring Fort.
  - 350 years later it was a centre of administration and was used by Samuel: 1 Sam 7:16
  - It was at Gilgal that Samuel anointed Saul as the first King of Israel: 1 Sam 10:1
  - Samuel executed Agag (Amalakit King) here also: 1 Sam 15:33
  - During the 7-year invasion of Canaan, Joshua used Gilgal as his military Headquarters
  - Since Israel entered the Promised Land through descending into the Jordan and ascending out of it into Canaan, **Gilgal represents resurrection**
    - it ∴ represents Christians after Baptism in our present state of grace: Rom 6:1-10
  - Gilgal also represent the **Place of Responsibility**
    - Since the enemy was near and mobilizing itself
    - it represents Christian alertness: stay awake! Mark 13:33-37 Eph 6:12
- (NB)** The reproach of Egypt (slavery) was taken away at Gilgal, so it represents **a Place of Recovery**, for it was **there** she entered into Abraham's Covenant again: Gen 17:10-14 Lev 12:3
- It was **there** that male circumcision became the Hallmark of this Nation.
    - the flint knives used by Joshua for this mass circumcision were buried with him!  
cf Septuagint (pg305 note 8) cf Deut 10:16

## SHILOH



This place was situated EAST of the main road from Jerusalem to Bethel  
- about 9 miles North of Bethel was chosen for Sanctuary.

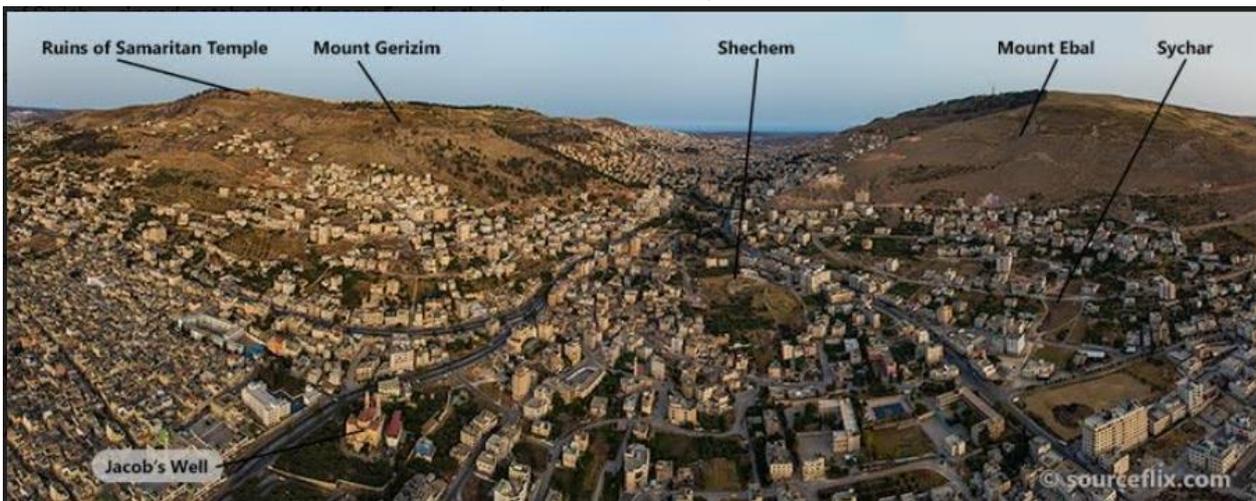
- The religious life of Israel revolved around this Sanctuary during the events of Book of Joshua and Judges. cf 1 Sam 1:3 for the story of Elkanah and his wives.
- The boy Samuel was given to the Lord at Shiloh. His great prophetic Ministry began there... he stayed for years! cf 1 Sam 2:18-21
- The Ark was taken from Gilgal to Shiloh during Joshua's life-time and remained there until it was captured by the Philistines: 1 Sam 3:2-11

Archaeologists have discovered that when the Philistines captured the Ark – that they destroyed Shiloh and its sanctuary: Ps 78:59-61

- This capture and defeat was due to the wickedness of the 2 sons of the High Priest, Eli:  
1 Sam 2:12-17, 22-36 cf Jer 7:12-15 / 26:6-7

## SHECHEM

*Panoramic View at Shechem*



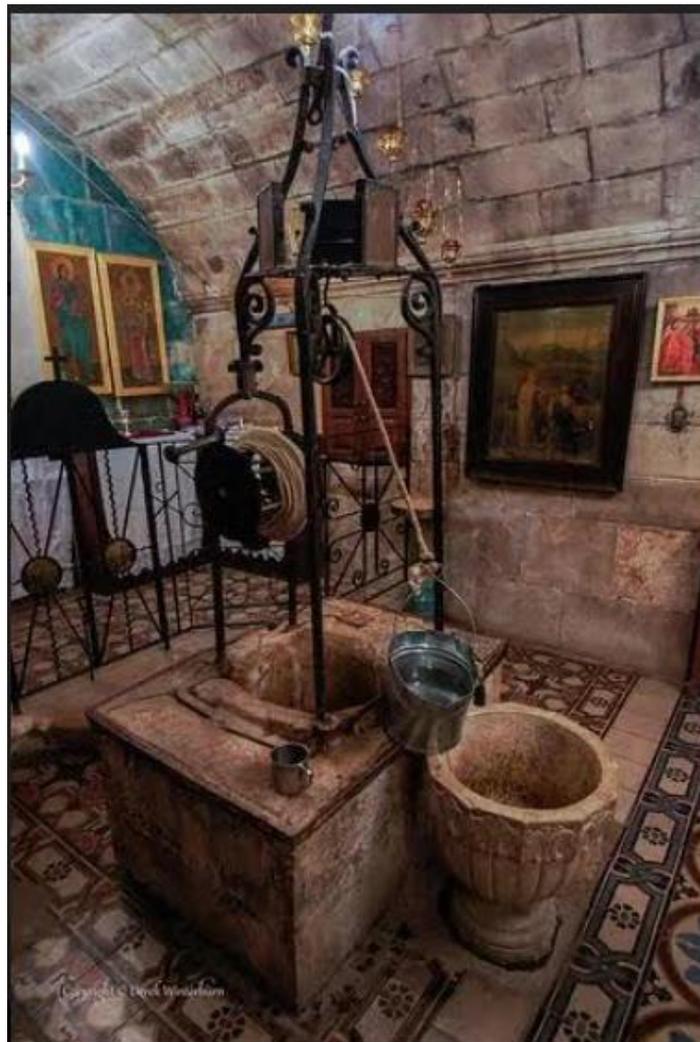
*Ancient Shechem*



**Ancient Shechem (Tell Balata): Western end (looking south)**

Adapted from a photograph by Richard Cleave of ROHR Productions Ltd.  
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*Jacob's Well near Mt Gerizim and Shechem*



This ancient city was situated on the Floor of a Valley with Mt Gerizim and Mt Ebal as its walls  
- the contours of the land formed a natural amphitheatre where the acoustics were so good that the natural voice carried great distances.

- It was the geographical centre of the land and also it's Heart.
- Here Abraham built his first altar to the Lord in the Promised Land.
  - it was here that God appeared to him: Gen 12:7
- Near Shechem Jacob purchased a field and settled there for a while on his return from abroad. Gen 33:18-20
- The crimes of Simeon and Levi made Jacob withdraw in shame from Shechem.
- In obedience to Moses, Joshua put 6 tribes on Gerizim and 6 on Ebal and raised a cairn of stones for remembrance and he inscribed the Law on them.  
∴ at Shechem Joshua made the Law of God the law of the land!
- At the end of his life Joshua called a great assembly to Shechem of ALL ISRAEL in order to get them TO COMMIT TO GOD before he died!

## The Great Assembly at Shechem

### Joshua 24

- This city is still inhabited today – called Nablus – it was V.I.P. to the Samaritans in Jesus' day.
- Joshua did not conquer Shechem – he occupied it with the agreement of the local inhabitants.
- It was an ideal place for a large convocation – this was Joshua's "LAST STAND" – he retired with a great flourish!

**24:1-2** The gathering of all the leaders at Shechem.

#### **24:2-13** Part I: God addresses His People!

- but through Joshua, His Servant, and mouthpiece.
- Ⓝ The Focus of the speech is God's interventions on behalf of His People – what God has done...
- It paints a picture of God as a Merciful Father who has guided His People from the call of Abraham and to the present day...
- So the land was acquired not by force of arms but by the Power of God – illustrated perfectly in the conquering of Jericho – by a LITURGICAL EVENT – not a military campaign! cf Zec 4:6
- Notice the **ABSENCE** of Sinai and the giving of the Law
  - the emphasis is on Israel's spiritual relationship with God
  - the emphasis is also on the **UNMERITED GRACE** given to this People.

#### **24:14-24** PART 2: Joshua's Last exhortation to Israel

- This section emphasises Israel's responsibility to respond to such Mercy and Grace.
  - a) "Fear the Lord": serve God with Faith, Love, Humility (occurs 14 times in Deuteronomy)  
→ e.g. Deut 6:13
  - b) the emphasis shifts from boasting about what OUR GOD has done for us – to our responsibility to DO "something beautiful **FOR** God" (Mother Teresa)
    - God gave Israel this land but she can only KEEP it by her fidelity to Him... as later History shows...
  - c) Joshua called for a New Commitment to God.
    - (i) Joshua and his people: 24:15b
    - (ii) all the other Leaders: 24:18b
  - d) Dire Warning: 24:19-24

- Both the Blessings **AND** the Curses of the Covenant are alive and will kick-in when the situation demands it.
  - God is a Jealous God and will not brook Rivals from demons masquerading as so-called “gods”.
    - (iii) Third Commitment: 24:21
    - (iv) Fourth Commitment: 24:24

### 24:25-28 PART 3: The Covenant at Shechem

- Memorial { pillars  
stones } have been unearthed by archaeologists dating from 1800 – 1100 BC cf Deut 16:22 where standing stones are forbidden – from a later stage in History! e.g. the obelisks of Egypt

#### Notice

- What an ending to the wonderful Events of Exodus!
  - we are, **indeed**, a fallen race!

## SUMMARY A

### Joshua 24: The Exodus is Over!

- 24:2-4 God’s faithfulness to the Patriarchs
- 24:5-7 God’s faithfulness in the Exodus
- 24:8-10 God’s faithfulness in the Wilderness
- 24:11-13 God’s faithfulness in the Promised Land
- 24:14 Challenge to Serve God faithfully and exclusively

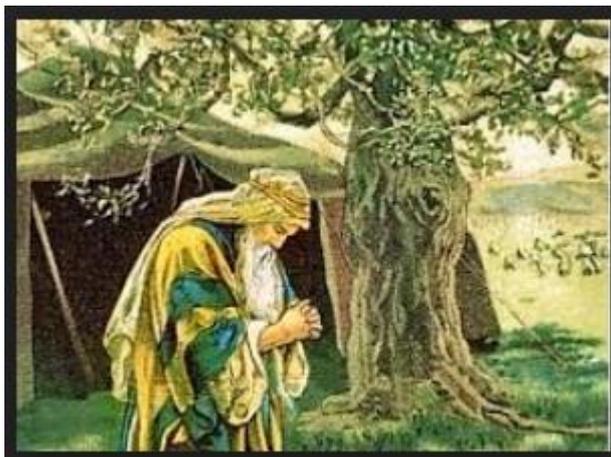
#### SERVE THE LORD!

- In this review of history Joshua contrasted the works of the Lord with 3 types of so-called “gods”:
  - (i) 24:2-4: the gods of Babylonian **heritage** (time of Abraham)
  - (ii) 24:5-7a: the gods of Egypt – their **upbringing**
  - (iii) 24:7b-13, 15: the gods of the Amorites: gods of **culture**

We have to choose God ABOVE **all** things and experiences!

- 24:15 CHOOSE! Joshua points to their **FREE WILL**  
God doesn’t want Robots or slaves. He wants those who **choose** Him and His Kingdom...  
both parties choose each other!

(NB) Joshua’s choice: **As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.**



- (i) Joshua chose to serve the Lord by serving Moses: a place of Humility
- (ii) Joshua chose to fight the Amalekites – when it might have cost his life
- (iii) Joshua chose to reject the Golden Calf - when the flesh might demand it
- (iv) Joshua chose to believe in God’s Word regarding the Promised Land – even though this was rejected by the majority of the nation and the leaders at Kadesh Barnea.
- (v) Joshua chose to recognise the leadership of the Captain of God’s Army - choosing to surrender – to go against his own Ego. ∴
- (vi) Joshua chose to lead Israel **INTO** Promised Land to deliver victory **because** it was **God’s** Will. When the job was completed, he **RETIRED**.

Ⓝ God gives us **CHOICES**, our future depends on them.

## SUMMARY B

### **But As for me And my House...**

Joshua shows his choice of God no matter **what** the world would say  
- and even if there was an apostasy... this is the **“BUT”**

- For him**
- (i) there was no hesitation in serving the Lord
  - (ii) he would live his commitment to God in the teeth of all opposition
  - (iii) he would shun **evil influence** from anywhere, anyone
  - (iv) his decision was DEEP, CALM, CLEAR, FIXED, WELL-GROUNDED and made solemnly.
  - (v) his decision was made OPENLY before the Congregation
  - (vi) he kept his commitment onto **death**.

Joshua died a faithful servant of the Lord.

**24:16-18** The Nation responds in kind: **We too will serve the Lord.**  
This is true leadership. After Joshua’s exhortation they realise that FIDELITY was required from **them** as a response to God’s Fidelity to them... this is gratitude.

Remember **John 6:66-69** **Lord, to whom shall we go? You (alone) have the words of eternal life.**  
**So, if serving the Lord seems hard, just think of the ALTERNATIVES!**

**24:19-21** Joshua censures them against a lightly-made commitment.  
He reminds them that God is Holy... this demands holiness from us: cf Lk 14:25-33  
So an insincere commitment is an insult to His Majesty.

- Joshua got the right response from them: **We will serve the Lord!**

**24:22-28** So, Joshua renewed the Covenant calling on themselves **AND THEIR OWN WORDS**  
as a witness against them!  
cf Num 14:28 **As I live – it is the Lord who speaks – I will deal with you according to the very words you have used in my hearing.**

Ⓝ Be careful to **DO** what you promise God!

## SUMMARY C

- The two witnesses: (i) People (ii) stones of Witness cf Deut 19:15  
So, Joshua told them **TO PUT AWAY** their foreign gods  
- you've just committed yourself, so begin to live it by clearing out the obstacles from your life.

### 24:29:31 DEATH of Joshua and Eleazar

- the end of an Era!

*Death of Joshua*



- Joshua's death is given simply, without drama – even though it was **TRAUMATIC** for the Nation...  
- He was 110 years old and they buried him in the small piece of land he got for his inheritance.

**Notice** that he was **NOT** buried at Machpelah **with the Patriarchs!**

- his death was humble and simple – like his life.

**But** the greatest tribute to him was: **Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the ELDERS who outlived him.**

**24:32** **The Bones of Joseph** - it is at the very end of this book that we are reminded of an oath they took to Joseph in Egypt – to bring his bones to the Promised Land.

- Joseph was the first of the saints of Israel to live most of his life outside the land of Promise, but he wanted (and got it) that his descendants would be part of the Chosen Race – these were the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. cf Gen 50:25 Heb 11:22

*Joseph's Tomb at Shechem*



**24:33** **Death and burial of Eleazar the Son of Aaron**

- With these 2 deaths the **LINKS** to the Wilderness experience were severed.  
Now Phinehas, his son was High Priest – he, too, was buried in his inheritance place.