

Joshua 24

Verses 1 – 2

Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel at Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, their heads, their judges, and their officers; and they presented themselves before God. ² Joshua said to all the people, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel says: ‘From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the *Euphrates* River, *namely*, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods.

Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel at Shechem and they presented themselves before God

The town of Shechem was a place of significant spiritual importance.

1. Shechem was the scene of God's first covenant with Abraham.

See Genesis 12:6-7

2. Jacob bought a field near Shechem and built an altar there.

3. Moses gave the blessings and curses of the Law there.

See Deut. 27 – 28

Because of the importance of this event the Tabernacle was moved from Shiloh to Shechem for this event.

See verse 26

²⁶ And Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God; and he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the LORD.

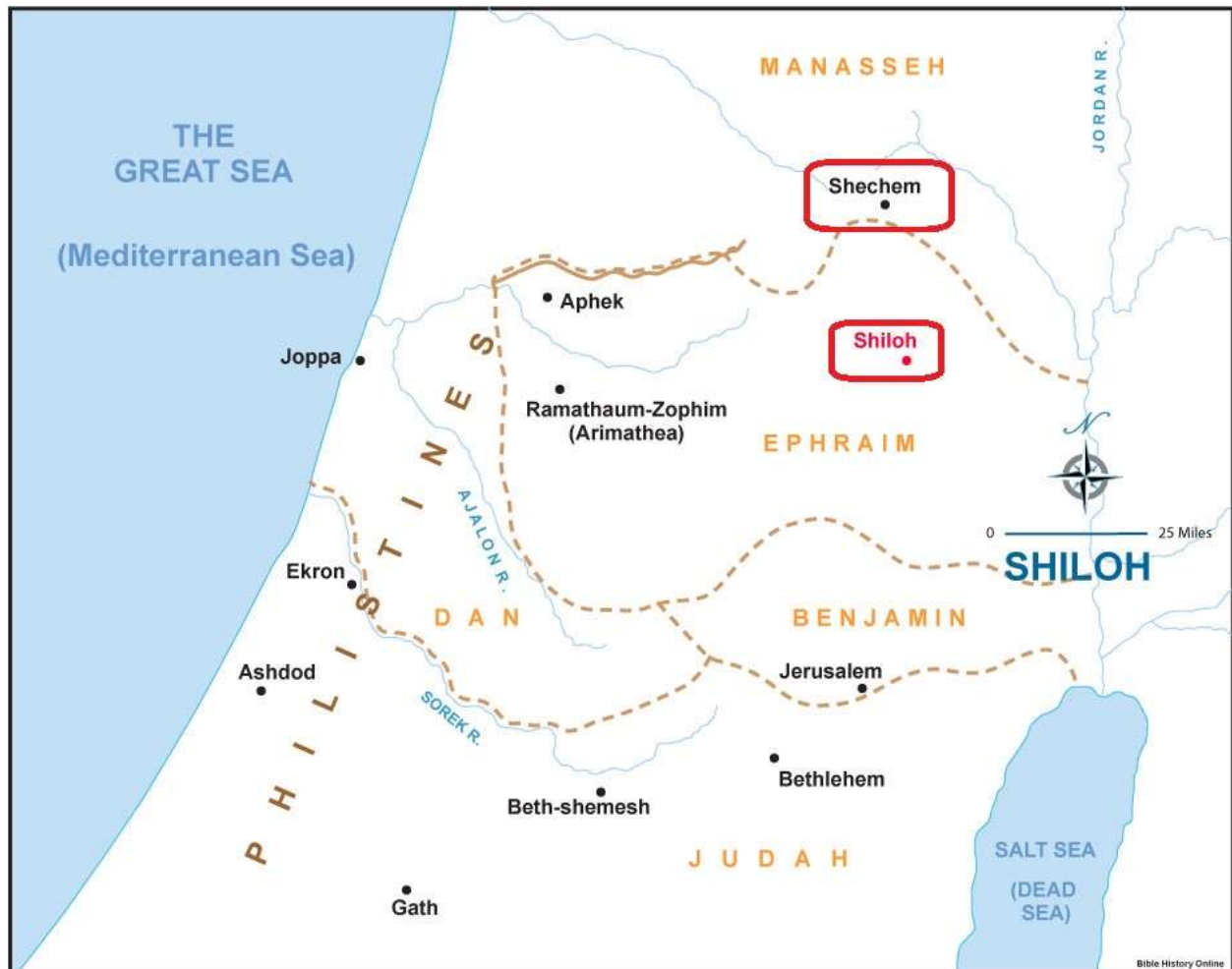
Even though the Tabernacle was at Shiloh for over 300 years, there were times when it was moved to another location for several reasons:

1. A special event like the one here.

2. A sign that God was with Israel during a military battle.

Moving the Tabernacle from Shiloh to Shechem was a short journey.

See map 2405



² Joshua said to all the people, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel says:

All of scripture is inspired, but this section is a direct quote from God.

From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the *Euphrates River*, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods.

Both Terah (Abraham's father) and Nahor (Abraham's uncle), were idolaters.

But why is God making the point that the relatives of Abraham were idolaters?

The answer to this question will become apparent very soon.

Verses 3 – 7

³ Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the *Euphrates* River and led him through all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. ⁴ To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau, and to Esau I gave Mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt. ⁵ Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt by what I did in its midst; and afterward I brought you out. ⁶ So I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea; and Egypt pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. ⁷ But when they cried out to the Lord, He put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them and covered them; and your own eyes saw what I did in Egypt. And you lived in the wilderness for a long time.

God continues with a history lesson concerning some of the things that he has done from the time of Abraham until the end of the wilderness experience.

Then I took your father Abraham

I multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac

To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau

To Esau I gave Mount Seir

Then I sent Moses and Aaron

I plagued Egypt

Afterward I brought you out.

I brought your fathers out of Egypt

Your own eyes saw what I did in Egypt

God wanted everyone to know how these events came about.

They did not happen by chance.

They were the result of God directing and intervening in human history in such a way that a man who was unable to have a son would become the father of Israel.

These events would take place over a period of more than 500 years.

No other god has ever attempted to do such a thing.

Verses 8 - 13

⁸ Then I brought you into the land of the Amorites, who lived beyond the Jordan, and they fought with you; but I handed them over to you, and you took possession of their land when I eliminated them before you. ⁹ Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, rose up and fought against Israel, and he sent *messengers* and summoned Balaam the son of Beor to curse you. ¹⁰ But I was not willing to listen to Balaam. So he had to bless you, and I saved you from his hand. ¹¹ You crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho; and the citizens of Jericho fought against you, *and* the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Girgashite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. Therefore I handed them over to you. ¹² Then I sent the hornet before you and it drove out the two kings of the Amorites from you—not by your sword nor your bow. ¹³ And I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and cities which you had not built, and you have lived in them; you are eating of vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.’

Joshua continues to write what God is dictating to him.

- I** brought you into the land of the Amorites
- I** handed them over to you
- I** eliminated them before you
- I** was not willing to listen to Balaam
- I** saved you from his hand
- I** handed them over to you (The 7 nations in Canaan)
- I** sent the hornet before you
- I** gave you a land on which you had not labored

God doesn't usually go around bragging about His accomplishments but He found it necessary here to make a point to the people of Israel.

Despite all the miracles that God had performed in order to bless Israel they often refused to follow his commands and sought out foreign gods. After receiving the 10 Commandments Israel decided to make a golden calf and gave it the credit for taking them out of Egypt.

So a golden calf that didn't exist when Israel was taken out of Egypt got the credit for that accomplishment. A quote from Forrest Gump's mother is appropriate here, Stupid is as stupid does!

¹⁰ But I was not willing to listen to Balaam. So he had to bless you, and I saved you from his hand.

Balaam wanted to curse Israel but was prevented from doing so.

Mankind has freewill but God does intervene at critical times to accomplish His will.

¹² Then I sent the hornet before you and it drove out the two kings of the Amorites from you—not by your sword nor your bow.

Some people think that this term is used to signify some kind of irrational fear rather than an actual hornet (insect).

If that was the case, God could have said he put fear into their hearts, which He did a number of times, but He never called it a hornet.

Verses 14 - 15

¹⁴ “Now, therefore, fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and do away with the gods which your fathers served beyond the *Euphrates* River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. ¹⁵ But if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served, which were beyond the *Euphrates* River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

¹⁴ “Now, therefore, fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and do away with the gods which your fathers served beyond the *Euphrates* River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord

Despite all the miracles that God had shown them some of the people were still clinging to their pagan gods.

Choose for yourselves today whom you will serve:

Joshua wanted the people to make a choice that day. Serve the gods of your fathers, the gods of the Amorites or the one true God.

Verses 16 – 18

¹⁶ The people answered and said, “Far be it from us that we would abandon the Lord to serve other gods; ¹⁷ for the Lord our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slaves, and did these great signs in our sight and watched over us through all the way in which we went and among all the peoples through whose midst we passed. ¹⁸ The Lord drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who lived in the land. We also will serve the Lord, for He is our God.”

The people answered and said, “Far be it from us that we would abandon the Lord to serve other gods

According to Joshua 24:31, this generation lived up to their commitment.

³¹ Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, and had known every deed of the Lord which He had done for Israel.

Verses 19 – 24

¹⁹ Then Joshua said to the people, “You will not be able to serve the Lord, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your wrongdoing or your sins. ²⁰ If you abandon the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and destroy you after He has done good to you.” ²¹ And the people said to Joshua, “No, but we will serve the Lord.” ²² So Joshua said to the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen for yourselves the Lord, to serve Him.” And they said, “We are witnesses.” ²³ “Now then, do away with the foreign gods which are in your midst, and incline your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel.” ²⁴ And the people said to Joshua, “We will serve the Lord our God and obey His voice.”

²⁰ If you abandon the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and destroy you after He has done good to you.

The history of the Jews is summed up in this one verse.

They would serve God and be blessed by Him but in time they would turn back to the pagan gods around them and suffer the consequences for rejecting the Lord.

Now then, do away with the foreign gods which are in your midst, and incline your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel

This is the second time that Joshua was brought this matter up.

See verse 14

There is no doubt that this generation had more faith in God than their parents but they still held on to some of their parent's pagan ways.

They had not totally rejected the gods that their parents followed.

Verses 25 – 28

²⁵ So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. ²⁶ And Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God; and he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. ²⁷ Then Joshua said to all the people, “Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us, because it has heard all the words of the Lord which He spoke to us; so it shall be a witness against you, so that you do not deny your God.” ²⁸ Then Joshua dismissed the people, each to his inheritance.

So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem

Despite the fact that the people had been faithful during the reign of Joshua he was still concerned that they might forget the promise they had made.

So Joshua made a Memorial that it might help them remember the commitment they had made to the Lord.

Verses 29 - 30

²⁹ Now it came about after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being 110 years old. ³⁰ And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance, in Timnath-serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, on the north of Mount Gaash. ³¹ Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, and had known every deed of the Lord which He had done for Israel.

²⁹ Now it came about after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being 110 years old. ³⁰ And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance, in Timnath-serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, on the north of Mount Gaash.

Joshua died at the age of 110 and was buried at Timnath-serah.

See map 2410



Verse 31

³¹ Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, and had known every deed of the Lord which He had done for Israel.

It seems this generation knew more about the Lord than their parents even though their parents had seen more & greater miracles.

The previous generation had seen numerous miracles, the 10 plagues, the crossing of the Red Sea but the miracles they witnessed did not increase their faith. When told to enter Canaan they refused not understanding that God would provide the victory.

However, their sons and daughters that had not seen these miracles believed in God and entered Canaan.

Just for clarity, 2/3 of the new generation had not seen these miracles.

Only those who were 20 years old or younger at the time of the rebellion were able to enter Canaan except for Joshua and Caleb. The rebellion took place in 1444 BC, the second year in the wilderness and this new generation enters Canaan in 1406 BC.

Those who were 20 years old or younger at the time of the rebellion are now 38 to 58 years old. So anyone under the age of 38 (2/3 of that new generation) was born in the wilderness and had not seen those miracles.

Faith does not depend on miracles (that which is seen) to believe in that which cannot be seen.

See Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is *the certainty of things hoped for, a proof of things not seen.* ² For by it the people of old gained approval.

Verses 32 - 33

³² **Now they buried the bones of Joseph, which the sons of Israel brought up from Egypt, at Shechem, in the plot of land which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money; and they became the inheritance of Joseph's sons. ³³ And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him at Gibeah, *the town* of his son Phinehas, which was given to him in the hill country of Ephraim.**

Now they buried the bones of Joseph, which the sons of Israel brought up from Egypt, at Shechem

The Patriarchs were buried in Hebron but Joseph was buried in Shechem.

See map 2415 Hebron & Shechem



And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him at Gibeah, the town of his son Phinehas, which was given to him in the hill country of Ephraim.

Just as the death of Aaron and Moses closed the book Deuteronomy, so the death of Eleazar and Joshua closed the book of Joshua.

Sir Isaac Newton believed that it was the prophet Samuel who added the record of the deaths of Moses and of Joshua.

The death of Eleazar meant the High Priesthood transferred to Phinehas.

So far there have been 3 High Priests:

Aaron, Eleazar, and now Phinehas.