

January 8
Joshua 23-24

Challenged

As for me and my house,
we will serve the LORD
Joshua 24:15

Israel Tribe Allotments

Joshua 13:8 – 19:49

- City ○ City uncertain location
- ▲ Mountain peak



Joshua Crossing the Jordan with Ark of Covenant
c. 1800, by Benjamin West

FBC Woodville
Sunday School Class
Michael G. Maness
see
PreciousHeart.net/SS



Conquest and Challenges of Israel's Settlement

1. Dec 4 Commissioned Joshua 1 Lord Calls Joshua
2. Dec 11 Conquest Joshua 6 Jericho Walls Down
3. Dec 18 Savior Announced Luke 1 Angel Gabriel to Mary
4. Dec 25 ... *Merry Christmas* ...
5. Jan 1 Settled Joshua 22 Heart, Honor, Home
- ★ 6. Jan 8 Challenged Joshua 24 *The Jewel & The Crown*
7. Jan 15 Value All Prov. 24 & Mark 10 Sanctity of Life Sunday
8. Jan 22 Rebellion's Cycle Judges 2 Return to God to Live
9. Jan 29 Willing Servants Judges 4 Deborah Lifts Barak
10. Feb 5 Timid Warrior Judges 6 Angel Charges Gideon
11. Feb 12 Compromised Potential Judges 16 Samson & Delilah
12. Feb 19 Faith Through Trials Ruth 1 Ruth Helps Naomi
13. Feb 13 Redeemed & Secure Ruth 3-4 Noble Ruth Wins

Lesson Author's Theme

**Faithfulness grows through reflection, evaluation,
and renewed commitment to God**

Joshua's Farewell Tour

23:1-16 After Long Time, Joshua's Farewell: *Love God, See His Work*

24:1-13 Joshua Calls a Convention at Shechem

24:14-15 **The Example Set** – Me & My House—We Will Worship Yahweh

24:16-18 **The People's Reflection** – After ALL God's Done—We Too

24:19-20 **A Somber Warning** – If you Abandon God, He will Destroy You

24:21-33 They Lived Happily TROUGHOUT the Lives of Joshua & Elders



The Jewel



Key Verses: Joshua 24:15 & 31

**¹⁵ As for me and my house,
we will serve the Lord.**

**³¹ Israel served the LORD
THROUGHOUT the lifetime of
Joshua and of the elders who
outlived him and who had
experienced everything the
LORD had done for Israel.**

The Crown



Alternate Title

The Jewel and The Crown



24:15 is STUNNING!

This stunning verse rocks us ...

Resonates with our heart & soul ...

NO ONE dislikes it ...

Who cannot help but be AWED by it ...



**As for me and my house,
we will serve the Lord.**



Why?

What calls to you in this verse:

**As for me and my house,
we will serve the Lord.**

What calls to you?

Why do these words **RESONATE**
with our heart & soul?

What comes to **YOUR** mind first?



I suspect they're stunning because

**As for me and my house,
we will serve the Lord.**

Touch a universal truth about our
humanity ... even about our *heart*

All of us value **CONVICTION**

All of us treasure **FORTITUDE**

I suspect ALL of will **CLAIM** that ...

Yet ... it was **Senior Citizen Joshua**
that had LIVED it for 80+ years



Hah What a jewel is

**As for me and my house,
we will serve the Lord.**

If we can say it **HONESTLY** ...

If we do not merely “parrot” it ...

If we mean it from our **HEART** ...

If we do no politics ... or sales ...

If from **LOVE OF GOD** such
SPRINGS from our **HEART** ...



Josh. 24:15 is such a Precious Jewel

Joshua's Last Days ...

23:1-3, After a long time had passed and the LORD had given Israel rest from all their enemies around them

Joshua ... **very old** ... summoned all Israel—elders, leaders, judges and officials—

Joshua said to them: “I am very old.”

There comes a time when we **KNOW** ...

- ✓ we are **NO LONGER** young
- ✓ we have passed over the mythical **“HILL”**
- ✓ Older people **do NOT** seem **THAT OLD** anymore

Yet, we are **NEVER** really, truly, **“OVER the HILL”**
whatever that truly means ... (I have suspicions)

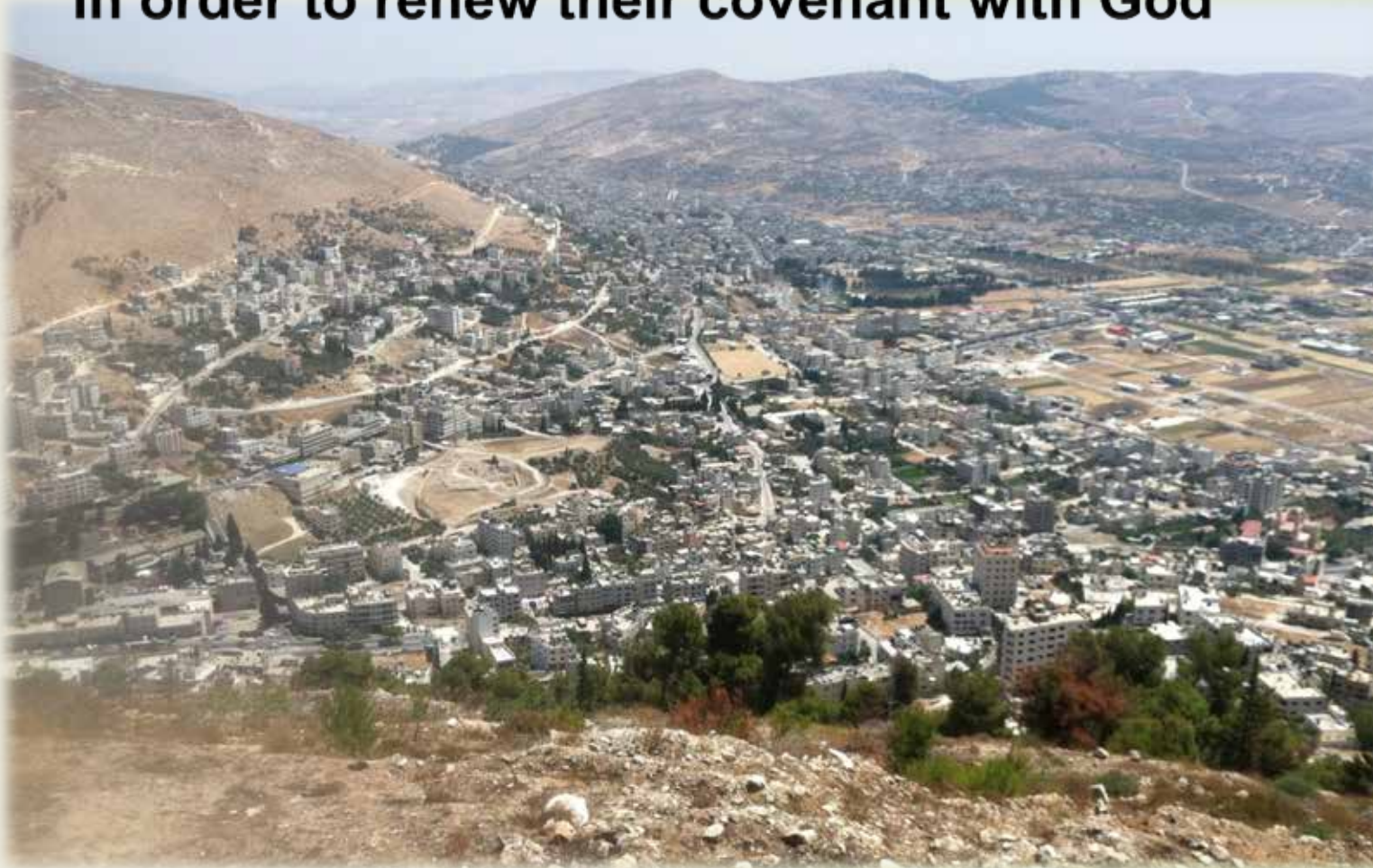
For as long as we draw breath ... we can serve God



**No
Retiring
from
Loving
God**

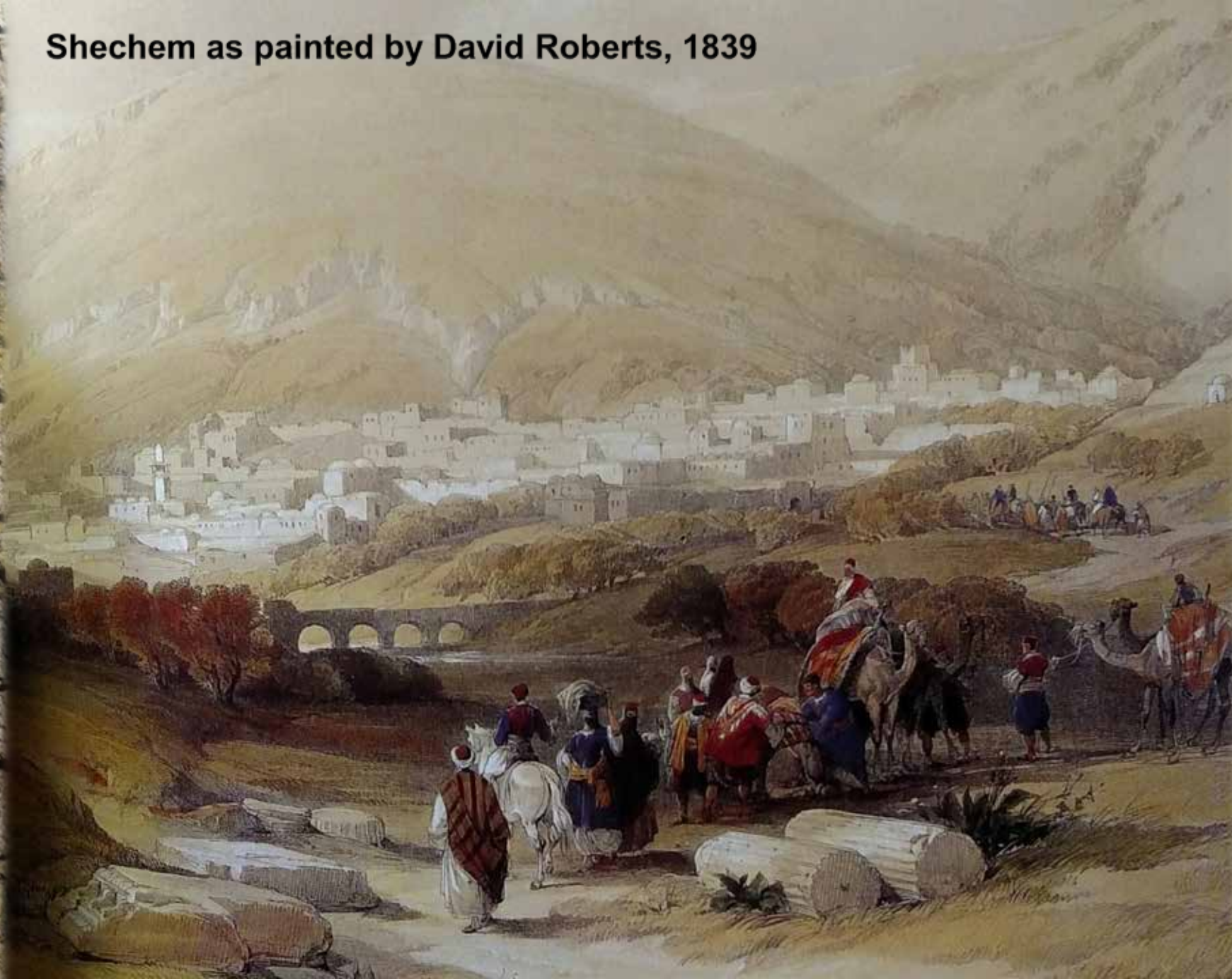
Joshua's Last Days ...

24:1, Joshua summons all to Shechem –
in order to renew their covenant with God



View of Shechem from the top of Mt. Gerizim with Mt. Ebal on the left

Shechem as painted by David Roberts, 1839



Joshua's Last Days ...

Joshua 24:29-30 – Joshua son of Nun,
the Servant of the LORD, **died at 110**

When we die ... or pass away ... IF we can be known as
“**Servant of the Lord**” ... *no grander moniker than that*

They bury Joshua in hill country of Ephraim,
north of Mount Gaash.

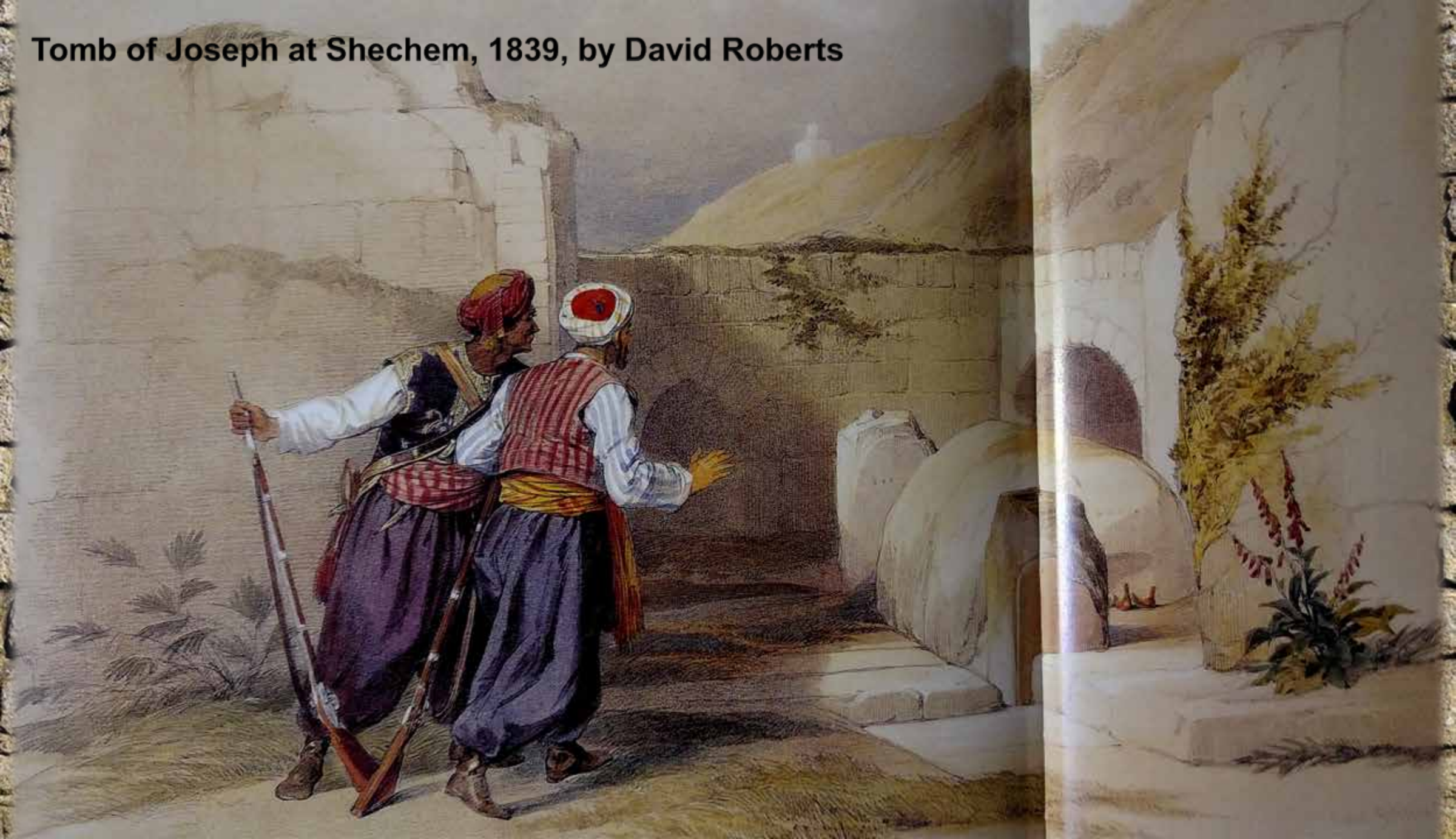
**24:31 Israel served the LORD *THROUGHOUT* the lifetime
of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who
had experienced everything the LORD had done for
Israel.**

32 Joseph's bones buried at Shechem

33 Eleazar son of Aaron died ... buried at Gibeah



Tomb of Joseph at Shechem, 1839, by David Roberts



Joshua's Last Days ...

Notice: No "Will" ...

No "Last Will & Testament" as we know ...

How nice it would be to simply be able to

TRUST all your family and descendants

to do "right" with all you leave behind

Notice, too, what precisely

Joshua does leave behind

He leaves an **INSPIRATION** ...

Leaves an **INSPIRATION** that **STICKS**

Leaves a **CONVICTION** spreads

Leaves a Legacy of Leadership



Joshua's Last Days ...

24:1, Joshua summons all to Shechem –

View of Shechem from the top of Mt. Gerizim with Mt. Ebal on the left



There, Joshua renews their Covenant with God

Joshua ... **110 yrs young** ... at the height of his leadership

Many have BEGUN their *BEST YEARS* as Seniors

Plato ... student to 40, began to teach at 50

Aristotle ... student to 37, started his school at 53

Bacon's genius ripened at 60, his publication *New Instrument of Science* ... 1620, science hits a high gear!



Picked up this jewel 30-plus years ago ... **Published 1881**

Rev. S. G. Lathrop, Methodist minister in New York

FIFTY YEARS AND BEYOND;

OR,

GATHERED GEMS FOR THE AGED.

BY

REV. S. G. LATHROP.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

REV. ARTHUR EDWARDS, D.D.,

EDITOR OF THE NORTHWESTERN CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

FIFTY YEARS
AND BEYOND.

Dedication in *Fifty Years and Beyond* says volumes

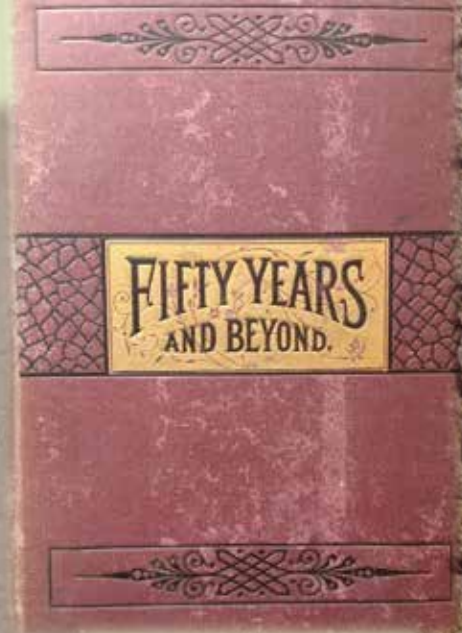
DEDICATION.

TO THE GOODLY COMPANY OF MEN AND WOMEN IN OUR COUNTRY, WHO
HAVE REACHED OR PASSED THE

FIFTIETH MILE-STONE OF LIFE,

THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY ITS AUTHOR,
WHO, THROUGH A MERCIFUL PROVIDENCE, HAS PASSED
HIS THREE-SCORE YEARS, AND IS RAPIDLY
APPROACHING HIS

HOME IN THE GREAT BEYOND.



Joshua ... passed at 110 ... maybe
he was 100 during his Last Farewell at Shechem

From *Fifty Years and Beyond*, 106-135, small clip:

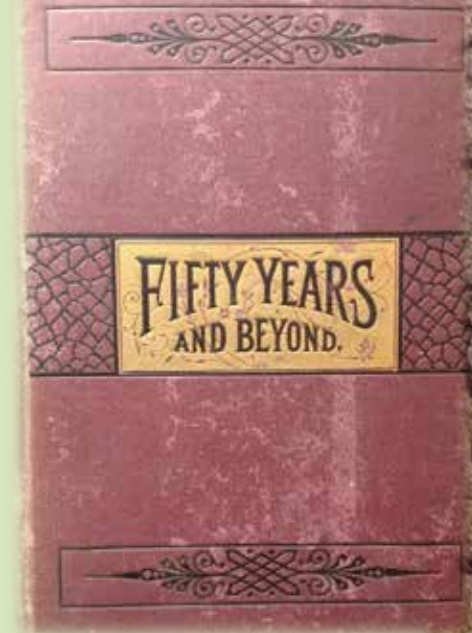
THE GLORIES OF OLD AGE.

REV. J. B. WENTWORTH, D.D.

“THE HOARY HEAD ^{is} A CROWN OF GLORY, *if* IT BE FOUND IN THE
WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.”—PROV. 16: 31.



THE younger portion of my readers may—upon
the instant—think that this is a subject
which does not particularly interest them.
A moment's reflection, however, will con-
vince them that they are quite as deeply interested in it as



Rev. John B. Wentworth,
D.D. (1823-93) pastored
several Methodist Episcopal
churches in Buffalo, NY

From *Fifty Years and Beyond*, 106-135, small clip:

Rev. J. B. Wentworth *closed* ...

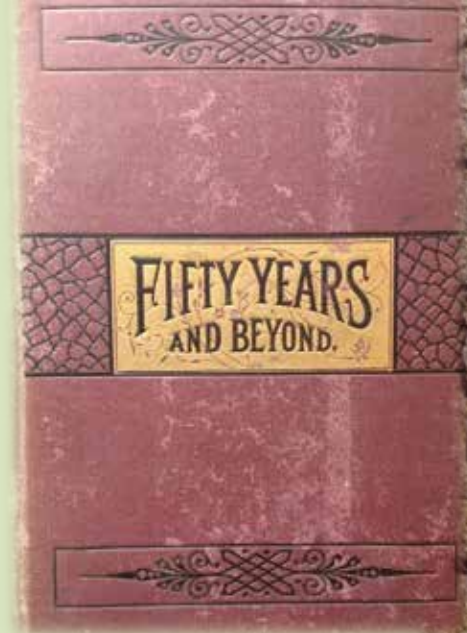
Earlier periods ... well employed ... honor and a good name ... crown our character when our locks shall be silvered over with the frosts of time....

The unconscious influence of their presence ... is all-powerful for good.

***They* never outlive their days of usefulness....**

Even when spared to extreme old age, their ... forms seem rather to be bowed down under the pressure of the sheaves of their wisdom and goodness than under the weight of their years....

With such the closing days of life are a going up into the mount of vision rather than a decline....



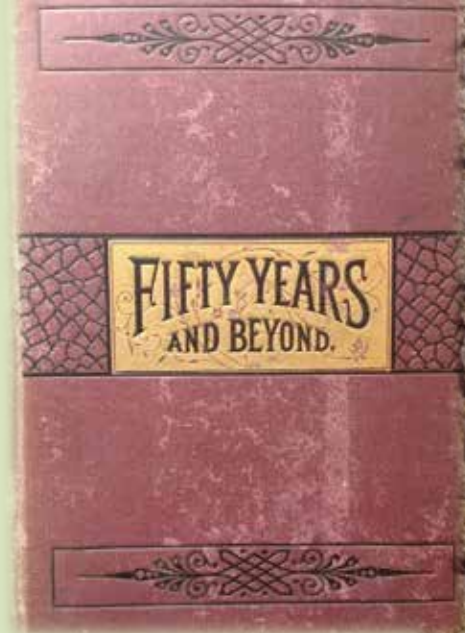
From *Fifty Years and Beyond*, 106-135, small clip:

Rev. J. B. Wentworth *closed* ...

As they stand upon the last verge of time, their spirits catch fresh inspiration from their nearness to the other world....

As earthly objects fade from their vision, they see more clearly the glories of the better land. As earthly sounds strike more dimly on their ears, they hear all the more distinctly the sounds of melody coming from the heavenly world.

Their departure is a glorious triumph over death—a speedy and happy flight to that fair clime where their life shall renew itself forever, by partaking of the fruit of “the Tree of Life.”



Many have **BEGUN** their **BEST YEARS** as Seniors

Hobbs was 62 for his treatise on “*Human Nature*”
and 63 for his book, *Leviathan* in 1651,

Thomas Reid was 54 authored treatise on “*Common Sense*” and 78 on “*Active Powers of the Mind*”

Montesquieu, 59, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 1748



Homer was OLD and BLIND when he recited from
memory his epic poem *Iliad* to rapt Grecian multitudes
Dante did not finish *Divine Comedy* until near 60
Milton was 54 when he *BEGAN Paradise Lost*
Handel 57 when he finished *Messiah*,
continuing in musical genius past 70



Joseph Haydn's *Creation*, 1799 musical masterpiece, was finished when he was 70

Michael Angelo's "*Last Judgement*" – he was 67

Cicero, great 1st century Roman lawyer, said:

"Nothing can be more void of foundation than the assertion that old age ... disqualifies a man for taking part in the great affairs of the world."



Shechem

Shechem ... “shoulder/saddle” ... mountains

931 – Death of Solomon, northern tribes refuse son Rehoboam

930 – Israel crowns Jeroboam King at Shechem

DIVIDED KINGDOMS

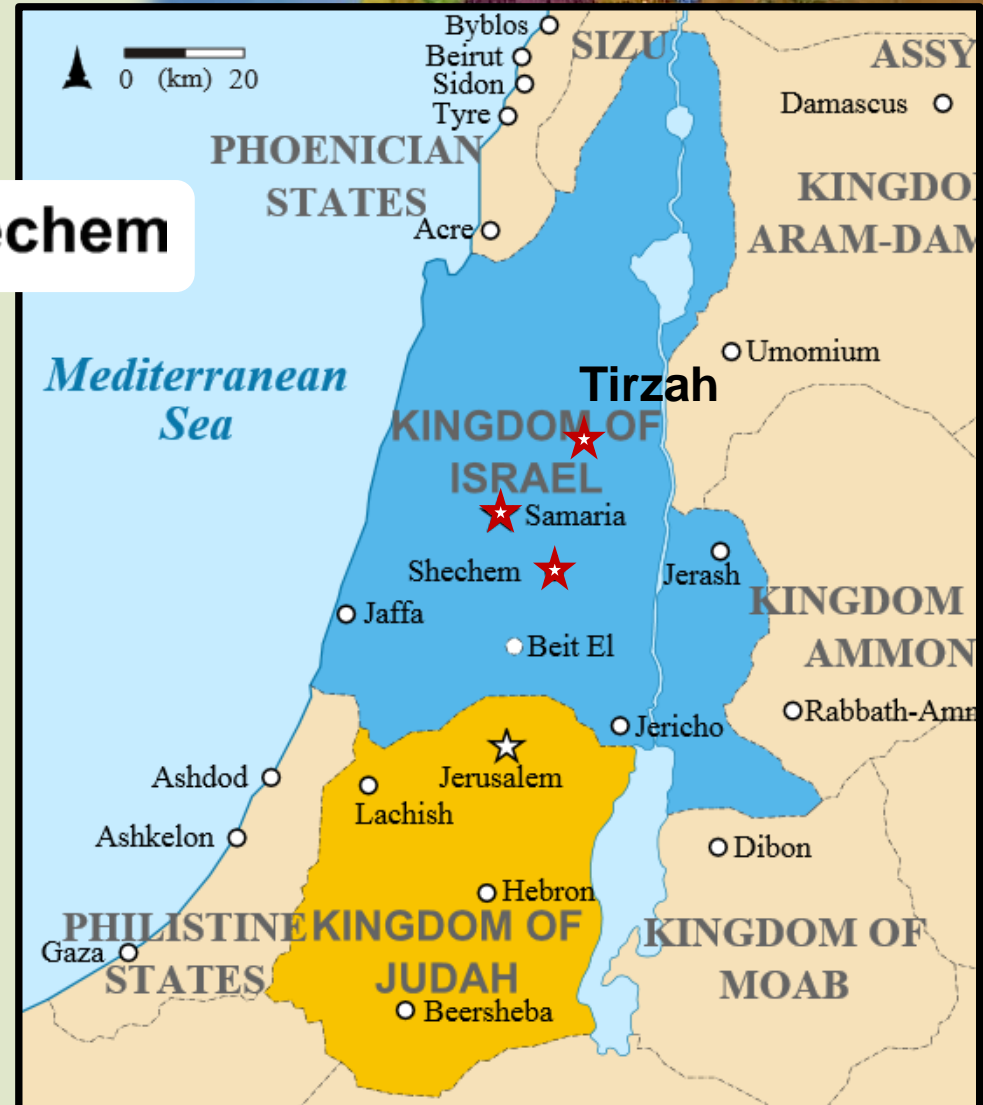
- Kingdom of Israel to north
- Kingdom of Judah to south

Northern Kings of Israel moved to Tirzah

... Then to Samaria ...

722 B.C. – North into Captivity

Return ... Shechem Capital of Samaria



Area around Samaria

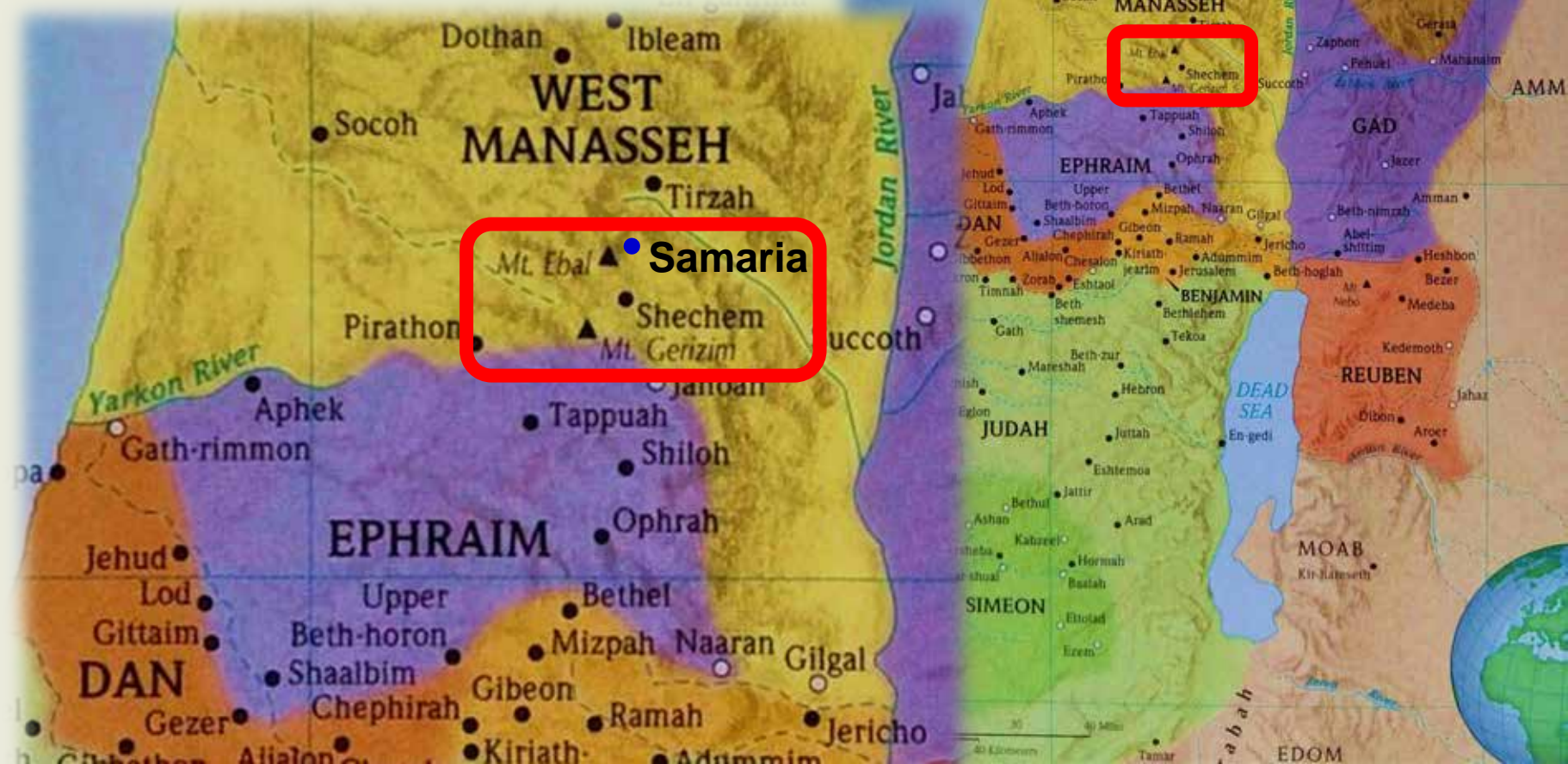


Shechem

Shechem ... “shoulder/saddle” ... mountains

On the “shoulder” of Mt. Ebal

About 12 miles from Samaria



Shechem - from top of Mt. Gerizim, Mt. Ebal on the left



Shechem

Gen 12:6 – Abraham arrives in Shechem @ 75 yrs old

Lord appears to him at Shechem – 1st Altar

Gen 33 – after Jacob returned from Padam-Aram

Jacob buys property around Shechem

Shechem was also the name of the prince

Gen 34 – Shechem rapes Dinah ...

then he wants to marry her ...

Her brothers Simeon & Levi plot revenge

They talk Shechem & company to be circumcised

3 days later—still hurting—

Simeon & Levi kill all the males

Other brothers looted the city



Shechem

Joshua follows Moses in Deuteronomy

Joshua takes up “Servant of Lord” after Moses

Joshua – after Jericho and Ai partial conquest

**Joshua 8 – Joshua had gathered the Israelites
for their FIRST covenant renewal**

On Mt. Ebal Joshua had built an Altar

People were before Mt. Ebal & Mt. Gerizim

Joshua read the Whole Law

THEN Joshua proceeds to TAKE the land ...

**North, South, East, West – then divide land
Reuben, Gad, half-Manasseh go HOME ...**



23:1-16 After Long Time, Joshua's Farewell: Love God

¹⁻³ After a **LONG TIME HAD PASSED** and the LORD had given Israel **REST** from all their enemies around them

Joshua ... **very old** ... summoned all Israel—elders, leaders, judges and officials—and **said to them: “I am very old.”**

- ✓ You yourselves have seen everything the LORD your God has done to all these nations for your sake...
- ✓ ⁴ Remember ... allotment ... how Lord fought for you
- ✓ ⁶⁻⁷ “Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the **Book of the Law of Moses** ... NOT turning to the right or to the left. Don't ... mess with nations ... or their gods
- ✓ ⁸ Hold fast to the LORD your God, **as you have until now...**
- ✓ ¹¹ So be very careful to **love the LORD your God.**



23:1-16 After Long Time, Joshua's Farewell: *Love God*

¹²⁻¹³ “But if you turn away and

- ✓ ally yourselves with the survivors of these nations ...
- ✓ and intermarry ...
- ✓ then Lord will not longer “drive out” nations
- ✓ Instead, nations will “snares and traps” for you
- ✓ perish from this good land, which the LORD your God has given you.



23:14-16 “I go the way of all the earth”—God Kept ALL His Promise

¹⁴ “Now I am about to go the way of all the earth.

You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed.

Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.

Joshua ... somber ... serious ...

Here's a fine quote from *Fifty Years and Beyond*, p. 184

“If we have a home to shelter us, and friends have been gathered by our firesides, then the rough places of wayfaring will have been worn and smoothed away in the twilight of life.... Happy, indeed, are those ... the world has not changed the tone of their holier feelings, or broken the musical chords of the heart, whose vibrations are so melodious, so touching to the evening of age.”



24:1-13 Joshua Calls a Convention

¹ Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel....

2-11 Joshua gives History Preview

- ✓ Abraham who lived beyond the Euphrates**
- ✓ Jacob ... then to Egypt**
- ✓ Moses and Aaron ... crossing Red Sea Life**
- ✓ Moses and YOU in wilderness**
- ✓ Moab fights ... God forces Balaam to bless Israel**
- ✓ You cross the Jordan ... take Jericho**
- ✓ Then God helps with the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites and Jebusites**



24:1-13 Joshua Calls a Convention



¹² I sent the **hornet** ahead of you ... drove them out before you ... You did not with your own sword and bow.

¹³ So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.'

I'll tell you what—HORNETS will get one running!



Exodus 23:28 foretold, "I will send the **HORNET** ahead of you to drive the Hivites, Canaanites and Hittites out of your way."



Deut. 7:20 also foretold, Moreover, the **LORD** your God will send the **HORNET** among them until even the survivors who hide from you have perished.



24:14-15 The Example Set – Me & My House—We Will Serve God

¹⁴ “Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.

¹⁵ But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether

1. gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or
2. gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living.

But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

Those golden, stunning words of utter resolve ...

**But as for me and my household,
we will serve the LORD.**

24:14-15 The Example Set – Me & My House—We Will Serve God

Notice first Joshua's charge ... **CHOOSE:**

- or**
1. gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates
 2. gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living

That is, beyond the Euphrates meant Pagans of Ur,
Pagans surrounding former home of Abraham

That is, “gods of Amorites” were Pagans gods of Canaan

CHOOSE ... *almost like Joshua was giving up ...*

- ✓ Some say, like reverse psychology ...
- ✓ Some say, like a sarcasm ... go forth *if yee be an idiot!*

Perhaps like both, I suspect Senior Citizen Joshua was a tad tired

If his **LIFE** & last **80+ years** was not enough – **GO YOUR WAY!**



24:16-18 The People's Reflection – After ALL God's Done—We Too

¹⁶ People answered, “Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods!

Then the people parrot Joshua ...

¹⁷⁻¹⁸ It was the LORD our God himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt ... drove out before us all the nations

We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God.

Nice to know ... hope it is so ...

Pray it is so ...

yet, Joshua WAS 100 years old ... he was no fool ...

Joshua has HEARD such many, many, many times before

How quickly a young man will parrot an older one



24:16-18 The People's Reflection – After ALL God's Done—We Too

A quote from *Fifty Years & Beyond*, page 212,
by last pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church
in Brooklyn, New York, before it burned down in 1872
the Rev. Dr. Thomas De Witt Talmage (1832-1902)

“The Grandeur of Old Age”

Blessed old age, if you let it come naturally.

The grandest things in all the universe are old.

Old mountains; old rivers; old seas; old stars;
and old eternity.

Then do not be ashamed to be old, unless you are
older than the mountains, and older than the seas.



24:19-20 A Somber Warning – If you Abandon God, He'll Destroy You

¹⁹ But Joshua told the people, "You will not be able to worship the Lord, because He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not remove your transgressions and sins.

²⁰ If you abandon the Lord and worship foreign gods, He will turn against you, harm you, and completely destroy you, after He has been good to you."

One of the hardest verses in the Bible to clarify definitively

"You will NOT be able to worship the Lord"

Among meanings,

- ✓ perhaps best is Joshua simply referred to Absolute Holiness**
- ✓ They still NEEDED a priesthood ...**
- ✓ Kingdom of God still looked for Messiah**

24:21-28 Get Rid of Foreign Gods, Records in Book of Law, Stone Set

²¹ But the people said to Joshua, **“No! We will serve the LORD.”**

24:22-28 Very well, then, Joshua said, **“THEY WERE WITNESSES”**

- ✓ Charged them to “throw away the foreign gods”
- ✓ Recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God
- ✓ Set up a Stone under an Oak Tree near the Holy Place
 - Called “*Matzevah*” – Sacred Pillar
 - Lot of these set up in Bible
- ✓ Joshua dismissed them ...
- ✓ Joshua’s Last Farewell ...

What shall we make of it?



Stone Tradition says Joshua
put up in Shechem

24:21-28 Get Rid of Foreign Gods, Records in Book of Law, Stone Set

Strangely enough ... the it was ILLEGAL to set up pillars:

Lev. 26:1 “**You shall not make idols for yourselves or erect an image or pillar, and you shall not set up a figured stone in your land to bow down to it, for I am the LORD your God.**”

Deut. 16:22, simply says, “**You shall not set up for yourself a sacred pillar which the LORD your God hates.**”

Furthermore, Exod. 23:24, 34:13; Deut. 7:5, 12:3, 16:22—**ALL** the verses command Israel to
“**tear down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars.**”

As we saw in 1 Samuel,

Israelites did NOT follow ALL of the LAW ...

Not at ANY time from Moses to the return from exile, 538 B.C.
So those folks who want to go back to the O.T. really do NOT!



24:21-28 Get Rid of Foreign Gods, Records in Book of Law, Stone Set

Ten Commandments seemed
to be hard enough ...

Judaism did not KICK into high gear
until AFTER return from Exile, 538 B.C.

When Ezra & Nehemiah rebuilt the Temple,
returning exiles OBEYED like never before

1400 B.C. Israelites were **VERY Tribal** ...

1000 B.C. King David unites Israel ... *still*

LAW was loose in 1400 B.C.

Israelites relied more on **LEADERSHIP**

Israelites leaned to the DYNAMISM of God's Word

God **WORKED** through Moses, Joshua, Judges, Prophets & David



Joshua's Last Days ...

Joshua's Legacy of Leadership – so very grand

Joshua 24:29-30

Joshua son of Nun, Servant of the LORD, died at 110

³¹ Israel served the LORD THROUGHOUT the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the LORD had done for Israel.

Joshua left a Legacy of Leadership ...

His **CONVICTION** caught hold ...

His **VALUES** became **THEIR values** ...
at least for one generation ...

Loved God THROUGHOUT the
lifetimes of Joshua and elders



**The
Crown**



Joshua's Last Days ...

I cannot think or imagine anything greater
Than believing, hoping ...

wishing ... dreaming ...

desiring with all my heart ...

than believing that those I LOVED

FOLLOWED diligently after

MY VALUES ...

That ... for a generation after me ...

those I loved LOVED what I Loved ...

Best of all, it was recorded in the Bible ...

treasured for as long as this old earth survives



Joshua's Legacy of Leadership ... recorded forever

24:31 Israel served the LORD THROUGHOUT the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the LORD had done for Israel.

THAT is all any parent or leader could ask ...

Rather—ahhh ... correction ... in better words ...

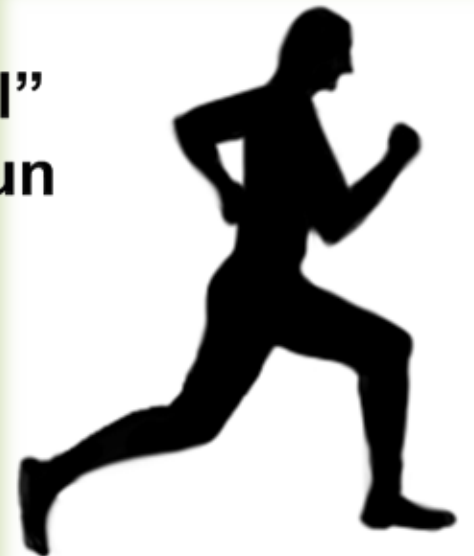
That is all any “**Servant of the Lord**” ever wants

I've known *several* pastors who left in a *HURRY* ...

I've seen several pastors LEAVE in a rush ... “God's Call”
so they say ... as they grab their severance and run

Some pastors left running ... *Fallen from Grace*

Nixon Resigned because ... he was caught conniving



Joshua's Legacy of Leadership ... recorded forever

Not so with Joshua ...

Joshua had no "Bug Out Bag"

Joshua had ZERO plans on leaving Israel ...

Besides NO PLACE to go ... never DREAMED of leaving

In fact and truth ... for him, there in 1400 B.C.

No Greater Station in Life

While we have trouble with a LOT of things *way back when* ...

for Joshua, he was the undisputed leader by **WORK**, by **LIVING**

He was **HOME** ... and had worked hard for Israel

He was **HOME** ... and **LOVED** his people

Joshua was passing the baton of his **LIFE** & **how he LIVED**



Joshua's Legacy of Leadership ... recorded forever

Joshua ... left a Golden Legacy of Leadership ...

24:31 ISRAEL SERVED THE LORD THROUGHOUT THE LIFETIME of Joshua **AND** of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the **LORD** had done.

That is all any **“Servant of the Lord”** ever wants

Let it be said of you or I – those precious golden words
“ Throughout the Lifetime of ”

What better epitaph for anyone ...

There is no better epitaph anywhere than
“Servant of the Lord”

There is no better gravestone carving than
“Servant of the Lord”



Joshua's Legacy of Leadership ... recorded forever

No sir ... no mam ...

No matter how you stretch your imagination ...

“Servant of the Lord” is top of the shelf for Christians

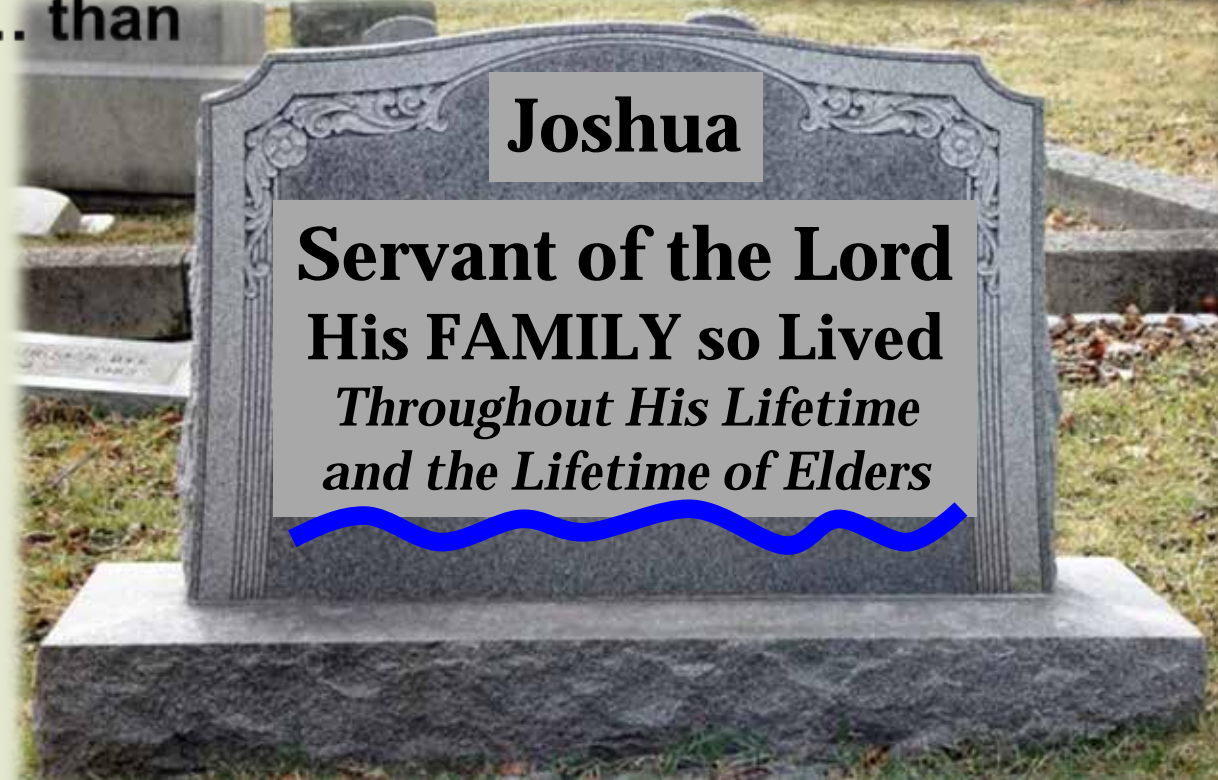
No better epitaph ... no better gravestone carving
for any Parent, Pastor or Leader ... than

Servant of the Lord ...

**His/Her Children so Lived
*Throughout Their Lifetime***

I suppose, looking down from
heaven, Joshua felt mighty good

He saw what he had hoped for



Joshua 24:15

**As for me and my house,
we will serve the Lord.**

If we can say that ...

From our Love for God ...

Say that from the innermost of our Heart ...

Most especially in our **Senior Years** ...

there is scarcely in life a more precious jewel

**The
Great
Jewel**



Joshua 24:31

Israel served the LORD
THROUGHOUT the lifetime
of Joshua and of the
elders who outlived him.

Truly, after we have passed ...

No better inheritance than this ...

No better reward than this ...

those you **LOVED** chose to **LOVE** what you **LOVED**!

The
Crown
of Life



**May Our House & Life so
Outlive Us that Our
Family Will Love God
Far After Us**

View from Mt. Nebo



FBC Woodville
Sunday School Class
Michael G. Maness
see
PreciousHeart.net/SS

