



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

JOSHUA

Week 4

Joshua's Reward for His Leadership

Joshua 18:1–19:51

OPENING
up to the Word

Does it help you to talk with others and discuss your faith? Do you do this in person, on the phone, on the Internet . . . ?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Why was the entire nation of Israel gathering together? What did Joshua recommend to the Israelites?
2. Which tribe had trouble taking their land? What did they eventually do?
3. What was Joshua's reward for his leadership (19:49-50)? Was this appropriate? Do you think the Israelites were unanimous in this gift? How do you think Joshua felt when receiving this reward?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Does it sound like Joshua had an "attitude" in 18:3? Have you ever started something but left it uncompleted? Do you need outside sources to motivate you to finish a task?
2. Is your inheritance from God physical or spiritual? Is it difficult for you to accept your inheritance? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever provided leadership? Did you receive a reward for doing that?

WINDOW
on the Word

*Several times in this section we see the phrase "**towns and their villages**" were the inheritance" of the tribes. You may wonder how a town can have a village. "Towns" usually refers to fortified communities, protected by high walls. These towns would often have smaller villages clustered around them. The villagers lived near town walls in order to do commerce as well as for protection. If their homes were subject to attack, the villagers could abandon their villages and gather inside the walled town.*

Shiloh, in the territory of Ephraim, was the location of the Tabernacle and the center of tribal administration during the time of Joshua and the judges, until its destruction in the time of Samuel (Ps 78:60; Jer 7:12-14).

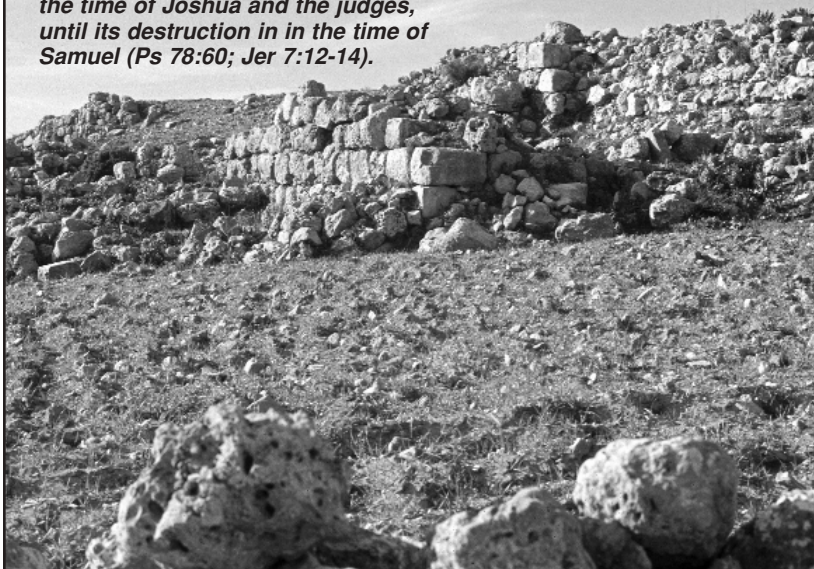


Photo by Ray Dick—PTM

Cistern at Shiloh, used for water storage during the dry season. Access to wells, springs or adequate water storage was vital to ancient Middle Eastern cities, especially in time of siege.

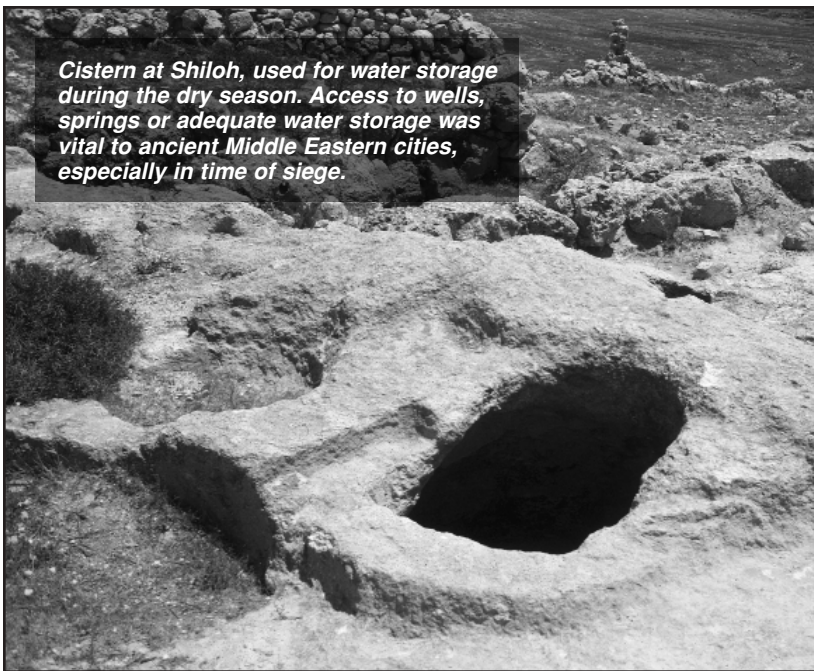


Photo by Leroy Neff—PTM

Safety in the City

Joshua 20:1-9

OPENING
up to the Word

Where do you feel safe? (a) in a city, (b) in the suburbs, (c) in a small town, (d) in the country. Why? Do you feel safe where you're living now?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What is the word of the Lord to Joshua in this chapter?
2. Find the six cities of refuge on the map on the facing page. Note their geographic spacing. What was significant about their locations?
3. When was it deemed safe for a person who sought refuge to return home? Days, months, years or decades?

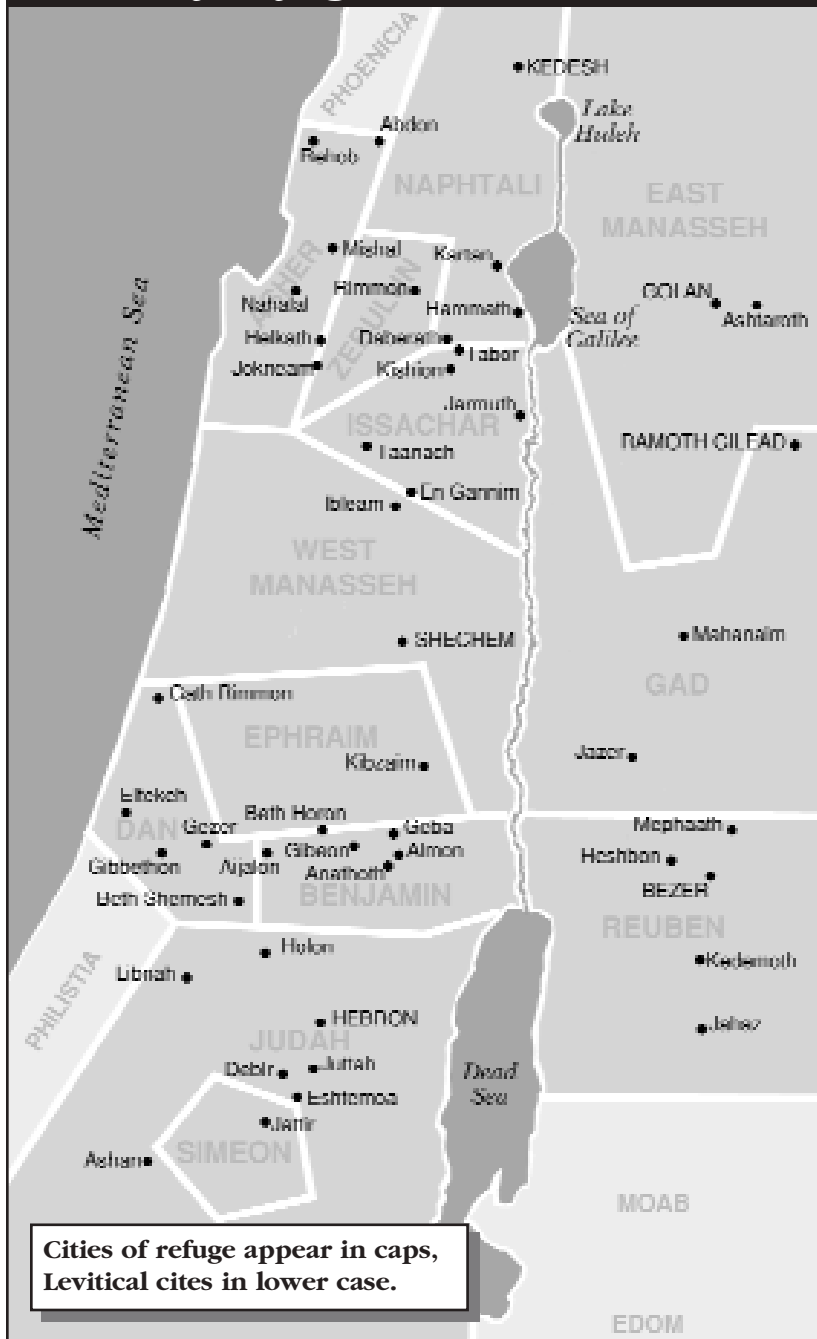
LIVING
out the Word

1. To whom do you turn when you are in trouble?
2. Are there some places of refuge in your community? An example: In some communities, fire stations are designated "safe places" for children who may be in dangerous situations.
3. Viewed through the lens of the New Testament, the cities of refuge remind us that we all have made horrible mistakes. We all need a place of spiritual refuge where there is no condemnation. Jesus is that place.

WINDOW
on the Word

Cities of refuge constituted an enlightened concept in the ancient near east. Those who accidentally killed someone could find protection in such cities. There, people were protected from the private vengeance permitted in that culture. According to Jewish commentators, the responsibility for maintaining a city of refuge was taken very seriously by the city's inhabitants. For example, the road leading to a city of refuge was to be kept in good condition and had to be about 48 feet wide. All obstructions were to be removed or eliminated so that one fleeing toward the city would not be hindered. Bridges had to be built over rivers to accommodate a fleeing person. Signs were posted periodically on the roads bearing the word "Refuge" to guide a fleeing person. Once safely settled in the city, the inhabitants taught the refugee a trade so he could support himself and any family he had.

Cities of Refuge and Levitical Cities



Cities of refuge appear in caps, Levitical cities in lower case.

I Meant What I Said, and I Said What I Meant

Joshua 21:1-45

OPENING
up to the Word

Has anyone made promises to you and kept those promises? Has anyone made promises to you but failed to follow through?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. In this passage who was making a request? To whom was the request made? What was the response?
2. After rescue from slavery in Egypt, wandering in the desert and battling through Palestine—everything came to a logical conclusion for Israel. How do you think the Israelites felt at this point?
3. Describe the promises fulfilled in verses 43-45.

LIVING
out the Word

1. Do you think this verse would be true for you: “Not one of all the Lord’s good promises . . . failed.” Why or why not?
2. What attributes of God can be discerned from verses 43-45? If someone were to study your spiritual pilgrimage, what would they learn about God from your life?
3. Reflect on these words from verse 44—“The Lord gave them rest.” What did these words mean for ancient Israel? What do they mean for you as a Christ-follower (see Mt 11:28-30 and Heb 4:9-10)?

WINDOW
on the Word

*The priestly class of **Levites** were members of the tribe of Levi. There were three branches of the Levites, each receiving their names from Levi’s three grandsons: **the Kohathites, the Gershonites and the Merarites.***

Bless You!

DAY 25

Joshua 22:1-9

Do you feel God needs to work through a religious leader or a ceremony in order to bless you?

1. Who did Joshua call in for a meeting? What was the purpose of the meeting?
2. What spiritual advice did Joshua offer these tribes?
3. What practical advice did Joshua offer them? Do you think the tribes would follow through on his advice?

1. Have you ever been in a meeting where your efforts were publicly praised?

2. From verses 22:1-5, how would you describe the tribes being praised? If someone were asked to write one or two paragraphs describing your virtues, what would be included in the write-up? Who is the source of any virtue?

3. Is there someone in your life you respect enough to receive spiritual and practical advice from? Why would you listen carefully to his or her words?

The Reubenites, the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh are singled out for a special blessing from Israel's leader, Joshua. They are clearly deserving of this recognition since it had been over seven years since they left their loved ones to fight the Canaanites. They endured the hardships of combat and familial separation until the land was secured. They received not only a departing blessing from Joshua, but, in all likelihood, received a hero's welcome upon returning home.

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
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It's All Settled, Then

Joshua 22:10-34

OPENING
up to the Word

Has there been a time when you experienced conflict with a family member, friend or colleague? Was the issue: (a) swept under the rug, (b) denied, (c) ignored, (d) resolved?

DIGGING
into the Word

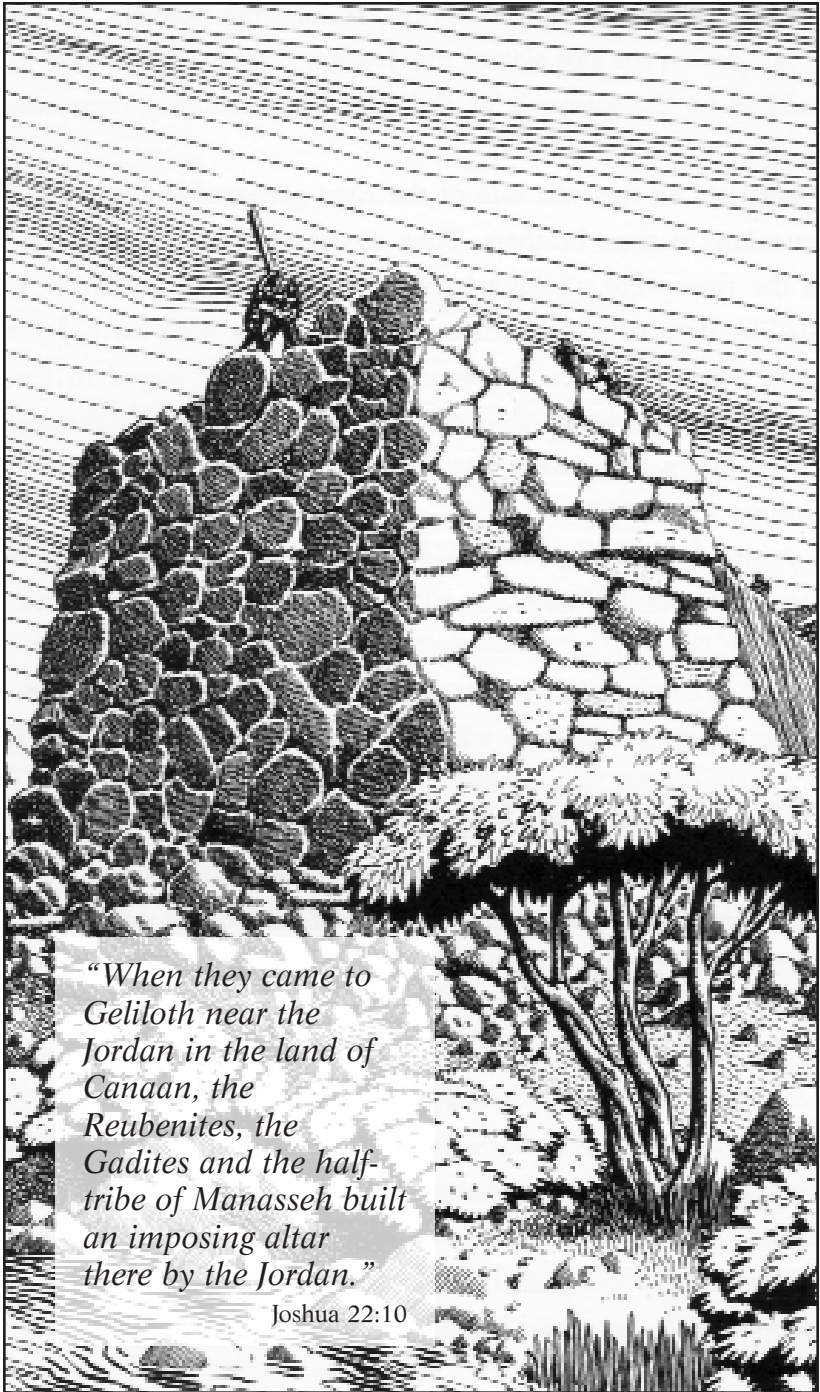
1. What did the three departing tribes do at Gilead? What was the reaction from the Israelites? Why such a fierce reaction?
 2. Who was sent to mediate before war broke out?
 3. Explain in your own words the reasons that the three tribes offered to the Israelite delegation.
 4. How did the delegation respond to the explanation?
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LIVING
out the Word

1. Do you feel the Israelite response was fair and just, or was it an over-reaction?
 2. Has an innocent action on your part ever resulted in a major misunderstanding? Was it resolved?
 3. What would have happened if Phinehas, the priest, had not been sent on a fact-finding mission? Have you ever plunged into something without taking time to gather facts? What was the result?
 4. What spiritual lessons can be learned from this passage of Scripture?
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WINDOW
on the Word

***Phinehas** was Aaron's grandson and an important Israelite priestly leader. He first appears in the book of Numbers and is remembered for running a spear through an Israelite man and a foreign woman who were engaged in sexual immorality. In recognition of that act, Old Testament authors and editors explain that God stopped a plague that had taken 24,000 Israelite lives (Nu 25).*



*“When they came to
Geliloth near the
Jordan in the land of
Canaan, the
Reubenites, the
Gadites and the half-
tribe of Manasseh built
an imposing altar
there by the Jordan.”*

Joshua 22:10

Joshua's Long Goodbye

Joshua 23:1-11

OPENING
up to the Word

In the 9th verse, Joshua reminds his people of God's power: "The Lord has driven out before you great and powerful nations." Has there been a time when you have experienced the power of God?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Describe the social circumstances of Israel at that time.

2. Whom did Joshua bring together for a meeting? What was Joshua's message to ancient Israel's leaders?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Have you ever attended a goodbye party?

2. In verses 6-8, Joshua reminded the Israelites to remain faithful to the true God. Have there been times when you have been tempted to compromise your faith—perhaps replacing genuine worship with legalistic religion. How did you handle the matter?

3. In verse 6, the Israelites were instructed to "be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses." While Christians are careful to obey all the teachings of Jesus, how has our ability to obey been impacted by the new covenant, as contrasted with the old?

WINDOW
on the Word

The *Great Sea* cited in verse 4 was the Mediterranean.

Compromising the Covenant

DAY 28

Joshua 23:12-16

Have you compromised recently? Was it a good compromise or a bad compromise? Can any compromise be good?

1. Was it racial intermarriage or was it interfaith marriages that were regarded as dangerous by Joshua? Is there any way that a Christ-follower can justify prohibiting racial intermarriage? Obviously, some have “used” the Bible to do so—but they have “used” the old testament as their “proof.”

2. Why did Joshua urge the people not to serve other gods? Why would the temptation to serve false gods be so great to the people of Israel?

1. Are there certain people you need to avoid for your own good? Why?

2. Ponder the phrase “good promise of the Lord your God” (v. 15). What are some good promises of God you can claim for your life?

3. What are some “other gods” (v. 16) which people worship in our culture—for example, materialism or grace-less religion? Are you tempted to follow any of their practices?

This latter part of Joshua's farewell can be linked with the apostle Paul's advice in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. There the apostle urges Christians to avoid spiritual compromise. Christians cannot be bound to light and darkness, goodness and evil at the same time.

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
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WINDOW
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Don't Forget!

Joshua 24:1-28

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever taken time to review your relationship with God? If you were to write a summary of the major points of your beliefs, what would that summary include?

DIGGING
into the Word

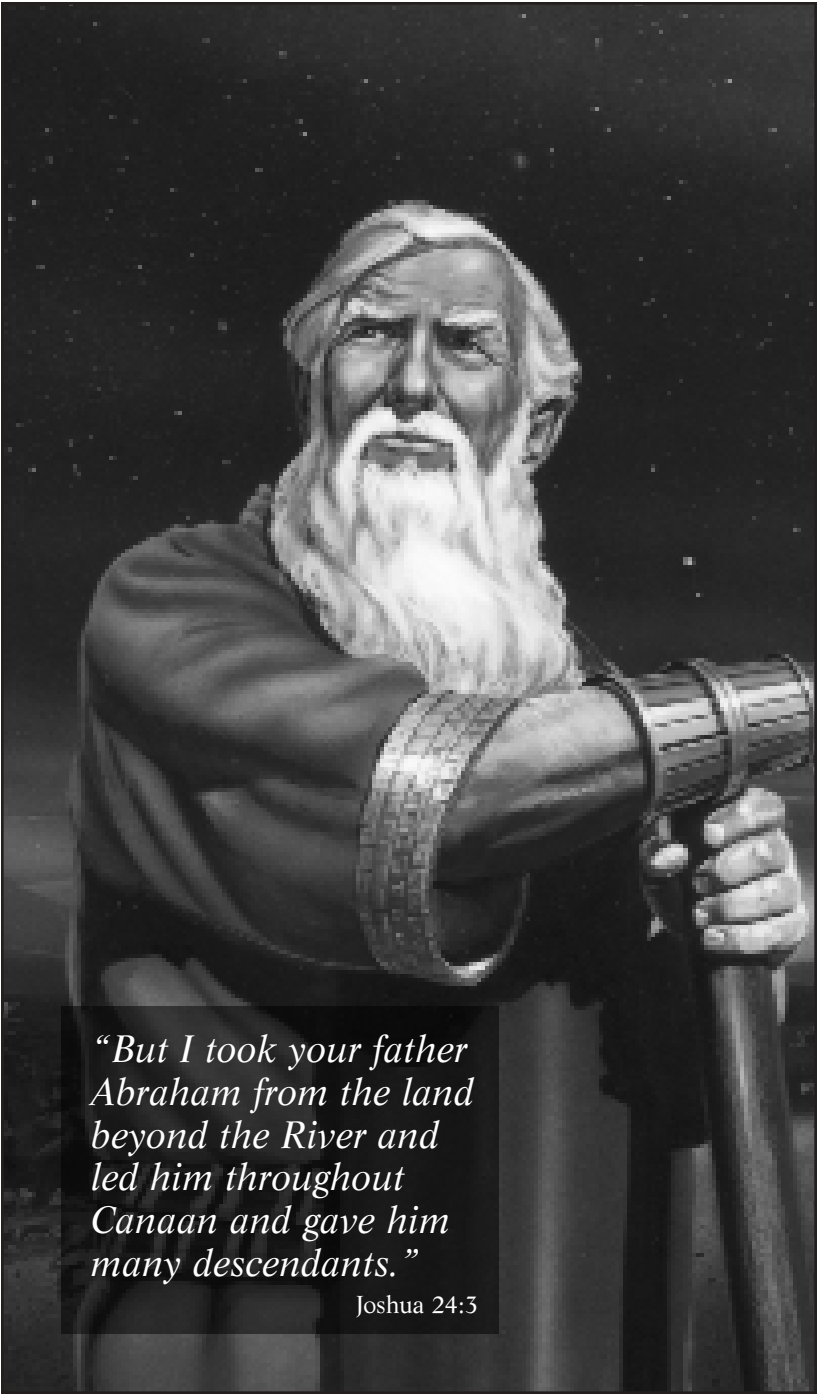
1. Who was assembled by Joshua, and where did they meet? What did Joshua tell them?
2. What specific instructions were given by Joshua in verse 14? Why do you suppose the Israelites might have kept the idols of their ancestors in their homes and among their possessions?
3. How did the people respond to Joshua's words (v. 16)? How was their commitment symbolized by Joshua?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Of verses 2-15, which verse speaks most to you and your circumstances right now? Explain why that verse is important to you.
2. Verse 15 is worth further consideration—"choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...." What cultural and societal "gods" are people today tempted to serve? Money? Status? Power? Fame? Religious rules and regulations?
3. What about you? Besides worshipping and following the God of Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Peter and Paul, are there other "gods" that tempt you in any way? Who or what would they be?

WINDOW
on the Word

***Terah** (v. 2) was a descendant of Noah's eldest son, Shem. He was the father of Abraham. Nahor (v. 2) was Abraham's brother. Genesis 31:53 suggests that Terah and Nahor worshiped other gods. According to Jewish legend, Terah was an idol maker. He fashioned 12 idols, one for each month and worshiped them in succession. Scoffing at idol worship, Abraham smashed his father's idols with an ax, according to the legend.*

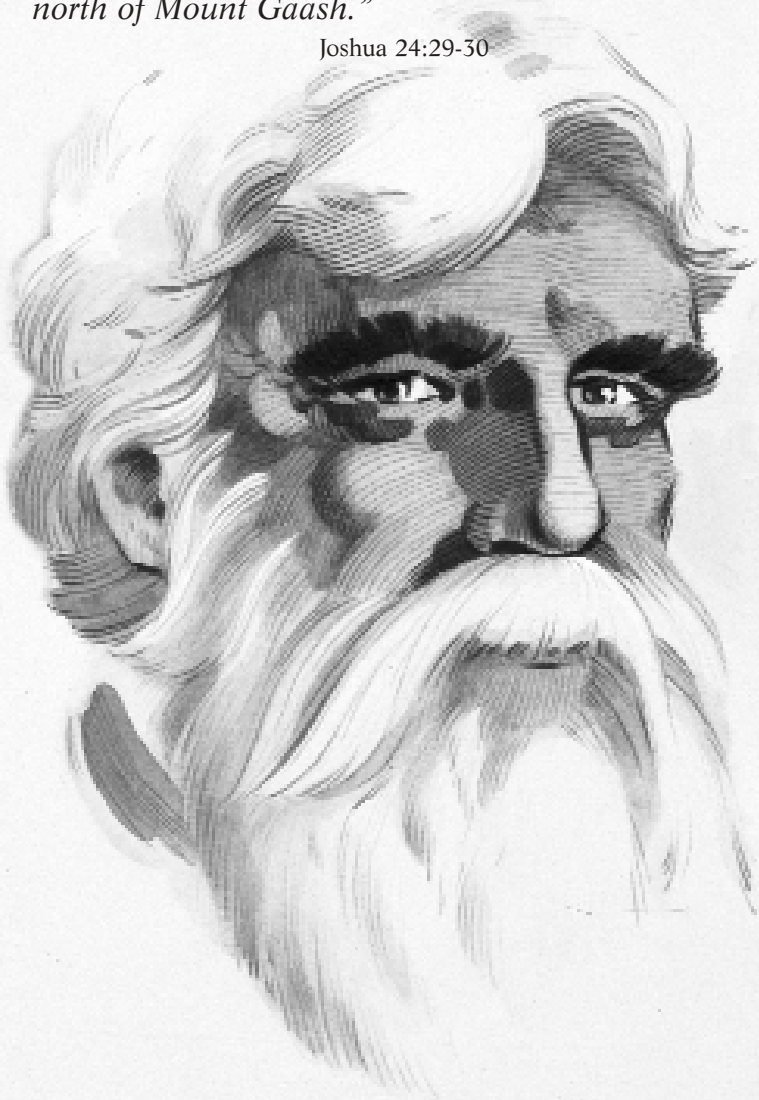


*“But I took your father
Abraham from the land
beyond the River and
led him throughout
Canaan and gave him
many descendants.”*

Joshua 24:3

“Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of a hundred and ten. And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Serah in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.”

Joshua 24:29-30



The Funeral of Joshua

Joshua 24:29-33

Has a funeral or memorial service ever had a lasting impact on you? What was there about the deceased person's life that moved you?

1. How old was Joshua? Where was he buried?
 2. Whose bones were buried at Shechem? Why was this linked to Joshua's death?
 3. Who else died at about the same time Joshua did? What impact would these deaths have upon the emerging nation of Israel?
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1. This section contains a highly condensed "obituary" of Joshua. Pretend you are a newspaper reporter covering Joshua's death. What would you say?

3. Have you recently witnessed the end of an era or dynasty in your family? Your denomination or group of Christ-followers? Your community? Your nation?

*There are three deaths mentioned in these final verses: **Joshua, Joseph and Eleazar**. These three are linked because they were each deliverers of people. Joseph delivered his family from a famine. Joshua delivered his people from the wilderness into the Promised Land. Eleazar, as a priest, was a deliverer because through his death all who had fled to a city of refuge (Jos 20:6) could now return home and be reunited with family and friends.*

DAY 30

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

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