

Student Notes for Shechem: Choose Life

Joshua 24:15 NKJV 15 "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Shechem is the place of choice. (Num. 3:31)

Shechem: #7926. שֶׁכֶם shakem, shek-em' from #7925; the neck (between the shoulders) as the place of burdens; figuratively, the spur of a hill:--back, X consent, portion, shoulder.

Yeshua's words about bearing his burden come to mind. (Mat. 11:28-30)

Shechem represents the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Gen. 3:4-6, Num. 30:10-11)

A. When Abraham enters the Promised Land for the first time, God speaks to him when he is near Shechem. (Gen. 12:6-7, Mat. 4:8-10)

Like Yeshua, Abraham chose to worship God.

B. When Jacob entered the Promised Land after his exile, his first stop is also at Shechem. (Gen. 15:16, Gen. 34:23, Gen. 35:1, Gen. 28:15, Gen. 28:20-22, Mat. 4:3-4, Gen. 35:2-4)

Abraham built an altar by the terebinth tree; Jacob buried his idols under the same tree.

C. When Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land, God told him even before he entered the Land to make his first stop at Shechem. (Deu. 11:1-7, Deu. 11:26-29, Exo. 33:2, Deu. 11:25, Deu. 28:1, Mat. 4:5-7, Deu. 6:16-19)

They are to do what is right in God's sight.

D. Satan's opening words to Eve are "Has God really said...?" There in Shechem, there can be no doubt about what God said. (Deu. 27:2-4, Deu. 27:5-7, Isa. 53:2b, Dan 2:31-35, Jos. 24:13, Jos. 24:24-27)

Abraham built an altar under the terebinth tree; Jacob buried all his idols under the terebinth tree. Joshua set up a stone under the terebinth tree as a witness to their decision to serve the LORD.

The Israelites continued to serve God as long as there were elders alive who had personally experienced God's work. (Jos. 24:31, Jdg. 21:25)

One day there will be a king in Israel. He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, but shall rule with righteousness. (Isa. 11:1-5)

E. The journey of the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land mirrors our life's journey. At the altar of unhewn stone: (Rom. 12:1-2, Gal. 3:13, Heb. 10:16-22,

1John 2:3-6)

The whole book of 1 John is about recognizing and making the right choices so that we may have fellowship with the Father and His son Yeshua. (1John 1:3-5, 1John 2:15-16, Luke 9:23, 1John 5:11-12, 1John 5:18-21)

Will you choose to follow the wicked one and worship the idols set up in imitation of God or will you choose to worship God and receive life through His Son Yeshua? Choose life.

Discussion Questions Shechem: Choose Life

1. In John's closing words of his first epistle, he describes Yeshua as "true." We tend to think of false as the opposite of true, but true also means real as opposed to an imitation, illusion or replica. Discuss 1 John 5:18-21 with this understanding of the word "true."
2. The book of Judges ends with the words that there was no king in Israel. Who was supposed to be king of Israel (1 Sam. 8:4-9)? What does this say about the spiritual state of Israel at this time?
3. Read Genesis 34 about Simeon and Levi's choice to slaughter the inhabitants of Shechem. How was their action reflected in Jacob's "blessing" on them in Genesis 49:5-7?
4. The study ended by comparing Joshua's final words in Joshua 24:14-28 with the closing words of John's first epistle in 1 John 5:18-21. What is one common exhortation and one common warning in these two passages?
5. Before the children of Israel went into the Promised Land, Moses recited God's deeds from the exodus from Egypt to the current time. Joshua recited God's actions on their behalf twice at Shechem (Josh. 8:30-33 and Josh. 24). What was the purpose of this recital? How can we apply this in our lives?