

Joshua 8:30-35

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 06 July 2022

[0 : 00] We're thankful to have the opportunity to be with you.

We will be back in the book of Joshua this evening. Joshua chapter 8. We finish in the 8th chapter of Joshua chapter 8. So Joshua 8 verses 30 through 35.

Joshua 8 verses 30 through 35. As we just continue to make our way primarily through Scripture. Making our way through the Old Testament in particular.

And specifically in the book of Joshua. It's been a couple of weeks since we've been together. So if you kind of remember we'll set the context here in just a moment. Because I think it is applicable to the text that we have before us.

So that's a little loud guys. I think my voice is a little louder than Brother Wallace's. So I'm trying to calm it down if I don't blow anybody out. But we're good. So Joshua 8 verses 30 through 35 is our text this evening.

[1 : 04] Let's pray and then we'll get right into it. Lord we thank you so much just for allowing us to gather together. And we thank you for the opportunity coming together midweek. Being encouraged. Being renewed in our walk.

Lord we thank you for every opportunity we have of getting into your word. Lord we ask that you would lead and guide us this evening. Pray that you would give us understanding of the Scripture.

Lord give us an understanding of who you are. Lord may we grow in our relation to you. And Lord may we grow in our relation to one another. We pray Lord that you be with all those throughout the place this evening.

Those working with the youth and the children. Lord I ask that you would be glorified and honored through all that takes place. We'll just continue to lead and guide this church through the glory. And we ask it in Christ's name.

Amen. Joshua 8 verses 30 through 35. Now let's put this in context because it always matters. The context of Scripture always matters.

[2 : 04] We don't ever want to take a verse out of context. We're a portion of Scripture out of context. We want to always maintain it in its proper place. But here specifically I think it has direct implications.

Which we will see as we begin to read the passage and apply the passage. So up to this point in the book of Joshua we have entered into the promised land. We've marched around the walls of Jericho. The walls of Jericho have fallen down.

Now keep this in mind. We're tracing this through our Ebenezers. Right? Our stones of help. Our piles of rocks that are built up. So when they cross the Jordan River they erect two pillars or piles of stones.

One is in the middle of the Jordan River where the feet of the priests literally stood when the waters were dried up. Joshua himself built that one. The other one is where they took the 12 stones out from the Jordan River and put them at Gilgal.

The rolling away of the reproach. That's where they renewed their covenant. They circumcised those who had not been circumcised. They observed the Passover. They had a time of just covenantal renewal before the Lord their God.

- [3 : 07] And were in preparation for fighting this battle. Then they go and they march around the walls of Jericho as the commander of the Lord's army had commanded them to do. And they did that.
- The walls fall down. They go straight forward. And every man moves forward victoriously. We move into the chapters that follow that. We see the sin of Achan which literally led to the sin of the nation of Israel.
- And we saw the failure in that. Not only Achan's failure but also Joshua and the leader's failure. How they looked at the next city. I. And said oh this one is not as significant or not as large as Jericho.
- Don't send all the people. Just send a few. And there was this one thing that was missing in their battle plans for I. And that was the asking or seeking God's plan.
- God's will. God's desire for them. They never sought the Lord's counsel. They just moved forward in their own counsel. And they were defeated. So you had this humbling experience. And God reveals their sin in the camp.
- [4 : 08] And we come upon the third pillar that will be raised. And that is the pile of stones that are over Achan and his children. Because of Achan's sin. He had to pay the price for his sin.
- Achan literally was condemned as were the inhabitants of the land of Canaan. He had removed himself from fellowship with God. And brought himself under the judgment of God.
- So this is a pile of stones over Achan. I mean over Achan and his children. Then after the repentance and the dealing with the sin. The nation of Israel is renewed. And we go forward into chapter 8.
- And they once again go up to I. But this time with the Lord's directing and his counsel. And Joshua leads all of the fighting men. He divides the forces. Puts half behind. Not half.
- But the scripture tells us 30,000 troops behind it. They go on the other side. You remember the battle plan was all the Lord's. They're more than victorious. As a matter of fact they completely annihilate I.
- [5 : 04] They take his possession. They plunder it. The king of I is captured alive. They kill him. They put him. They throw him at the gate of I. And here we have our fourth pile of stones over the king of I.
- So what do we have? We have these big piles of rocks everywhere so far. We want to see it before we get to this. Because this matters. Right? So we have these piles of rocks. We have a pile that is buried underneath the waters of the Jordan River.
- That testifies the reality that this was dry ground. Right? We have the pile at Gilgal that testifies the reality that God brought us forth in dry ground. And we are his people.
- And he has rolled back the reproach of Egypt as he told them. We have the pile over Achan that tells us the consequences and the penalty for man's sin. When man chooses to take that which he should not take and to do that which he should not do.
- There is a price to be paid. And a pile over Achan and his children testifies to the price to be paid. We have the pile that's over the king of I that testifies to the reality of the reward for faithful obedience.
- [6 : 09] When we do what God tells us to do, we will be victorious. Even over that which once conquered us, we will overcome it. And I tell you all that because we seem to be right in the heat of battle.
- Right? Things are going on. And literally, if you're reading this as an epic or you're watching, kind of looking on from the outside, they are literally about to take off. They have cut the land of Canaan in half.

They have defeated I. I mean, they have defeated Jericho. They have defeated I. And along with it, Bethel is there. It fell as well. So now they've cut it in half. They will turn and go south and defeat all the kingdoms of the south and then make their way north.

And then they will divide the land. But before they do that, before they do that, right after this great battle, they go 25 miles out of the way to the north to do something.

And that's where we're at. Right here, Joshua 8, starting in verse 30. Then Joshua built an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, in Mount Ebel.

[7 : 16] Just as Moses, the servant of the Lord, had commanded the sons of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of uncut stones on which no man had wielded an iron tool.

And they offered burnt offering on it to the Lord and sacrificed peace offerings. He wrote there on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written in the presence of the sons of Israel. All Israel, with their elders and officers and their judges, were standing on both sides of the ark before the Levitical priests, who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, the stranger as well as the native.

Half of them stood in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebel, just as Moses, the servant of the Lord, had given command at first to bless the people of Israel. Then afterward, he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law.

There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded, which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women and the little ones and the strangers who were living among them.

Joshua 8, verses 30 through 35, I want you to see worship at the mountain. Really, literally, it would be at the mountains, because you have two.

[8 : 28] Mount Ebel and Mount Gerizim. Worship at the mountains. This is the thing which Moses had commanded them to do at the end of the book of Deuteronomy. If you remember, when we were making our way through the book of Deuteronomy, we got to this point where Moses told them that they should have the Mount of Blessing, the Mount of Cursing, and they should raise up stones, and they should plaster these stones, and they should write these blessings and curses, this law on these stones.

And I told you that when we got to the book of Joshua, we would see this literally being fulfilled. Well, here it is. They are doing exactly what Moses commanded them to do as part of his final admonition to the nation of Israel that we find in the closing of the book of Deuteronomy.

This is his command. This is his teaching. This is his requirement. Boy, it's really hard when your granddaughter is sitting over there clapping at you to continue staying focused. I don't mean to be distracted, but I keep sitting around the corner of my clapping at me.

All right, Millie, so I appreciate that support. We'll go on. But anyway, we see all this that Moses commanded them to do, and now the nation is doing it. It seems to us to be a most unlikely of times because it is right in the heat of the battle, right?

It's right in the midst of great victories, and now all of a sudden they go out of their way because they will go back south. The battles they fight are to the south of Ai, not to the north.

[9 : 43] We don't find them back in this region until Joshua chapter 24. For that reason, some, and I just like to be honest with you and tell you this, for that reason, if you read manuscripts, different manuscripts, they have this placed at different parts of the book of Joshua.

They have it, some of them have it all the way there at the end of 24. Some of them have it at the end of chapter 9. People, critical scholars, always kind of go back and forth to, does it belong here?

I just want to go ahead and settle that. As far as I'm concerned, it belongs here. Okay? It belongs here. The easiest way to interpret Scripture is the most natural reading of Scripture is usually the most accurate reading of Scripture.

Okay? And it is here intentionally, and it is here because some would say, well, this event took place actually along, corresponding with the events that happened in Joshua chapter 24, because they would have already been in that region.

There's no need for them to go there and then come back. And, well, hopefully we'll flesh that out in just a moment. The most natural reading is that God wants us to see this happening, because there's this word, and it really doesn't matter which translation we read, and it says, then, then, then Joshua built an altar.

[11 : 02] Just to be honest, in my study of Scripture, not in my reading of Scripture, these are the type of questions I ask and kind of wrestle with, and I couldn't get over that word, then. After these things, then this happened.

And it seems as if the Lord wants us to understand this, and the Spirit of God is leading us to understand, this is exactly where it happened. This is where we have the worship at the mountain.

And I want you to see three great truths of this worship. The first one is the intentionality of the event, that it was an intentional thing. I believe that it happened here, according to Scripture, and in no other translation, no other, when I mean translations, I mean like the Septuagint, or the Latin Vulgate translations, those that are trying to move it around, no other translation has a legitimate reason to move this event from where it is here.

There is nothing in the context of the Scripture. There is nothing in the context of history. This matters. Stay with me. I know because sometimes, well, we're just splitting hairs. But it matters. Okay, pay attention to me.

There's nothing within the passage of the book of Joshua. There's nothing within the pages of the book in its entirety. To help us or to cause us to think that this would have happened at any other point in history than immediately following the Battle of Ai.

[12 : 20] Which means they intentionally stopped their battle march to go do what they did. The most natural thing would have been to ride the wave of victory and to continue to fight the battle.

But they intentionally stopped and marched 25, 20 to 25 miles out of their way across hostile territory to worship.

And I think that's the thing we would miss if we tried to move it to any other time in history. The worship was more important than the victories.

Because what's the theme throughout Joshua? Faithfulness brings victory. The battle is won by faith, not by might, nor by power, nor by strength.

The battle is not the nation of Israel's. Rather, the battle is the Lord's. As one commentator pointed out, it was very, very common in the days of Joshua for military leaders to take stones and to whitewash these stones or to etch and engrave in these stones a declaration of their own great victories.

[13 : 31] Much of our interpretation of Scripture, by the way, we can attribute to these stones that are erected throughout that region. Stones that testify to the reality of things that happened historically. The Bible speaks of.

The archaeologists for years said, we don't know if this happened. And all of a sudden, they would find an oblique or a stone somewhere in some other region that would declare the very same thing which Scripture says. And it's like, well, this king wrote it here.

And this king said it here. Kings would always declare the things they had done. The stone that Joshua raises up has nothing at all to do with the nation of Israel. As a matter of fact, he declares the greatness of God.

He did not wait till the victories were won. He waited until it was an opportune time because the command of Moses was, as soon as you can do it, do it. So the moment that Jericho and I have fallen and the moment we'll read in chapter 9 following this that all of the kings of that region were in confusion and chaos trying to figure out what are we going to do with the inhabitants that have now come into our land?

What are we going to do with this military that's marching through our land? And the reason that all these enemies are in confusion, at the very moment when they're in confusion, the nation of Israel stops and allows them to sort out their problems while they go worship.

[14 : 40] Because worship's more important than battle. Because they knew that the victory wasn't theirs, the victory was his.

The intentionality of the event, they stopped here to go there for this purpose. So not only was it intentional in its timing, this was as soon as they can do it, it's also intentional in its location.

We missed this. This is so good. I want you to stay with me. This text, by the way, is just rich. It is a lot richer than I envisioned it being. But it is so rich. It's an intentional in its location. Where did they go? Mount Ebel and Mount Gerizim, right?

Two mountaintops. You turn to the back of your Bible. You have those great maps back there, the things that you never use, those color-coded maps. And one of those maps will show you the conquest of the land of Canaan.

One thing you will never find is a battle being fought in these regions because no battle was ever fought in these regions, which has led some mankind to understand why in the world they could go there. Well, maybe the people and the inhabitants of the towns in that region said, you know what?

[15 : 46] We're okay. We've seen what you're doing. And they kind of surrendered peacefully. Or maybe it's because the very region they were moving into, God's name had already been declared there. See, because the city that sets in the valley of the two mountains is the city of Shechem.

That should all of a sudden stand out to you. Shechem is a very important place because, as you know, every problem of man is introduced in the first 11 chapters of the Bible, Genesis 1 through 11.

God's answer to man's problem is introduced in Genesis 12. God had a plan for man's problem, right? Because God called from the land of the early Chaldeans this man named Abram, right?

And he told Abram, who would later become Abraham, it's good stuff, right? Stay with me, follow me. This is the things that get your pastor excited, by the way. That to go sojourn through the land. Do you know the very first place that Abraham stopped in the land of Canaan?

I just told you. Shechem. He went to Shechem near the Oaks of Memory. And you know what he did when he went to Shechem? And there he built an altar of the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord his God.

[16 : 48] Ha! Abram. The very first altar Abram ever built was built at Shechem. Abraham, which is between Mount Ebel and Mount Gerizim. And he called upon the name of the Lord.

Now we've said, we understand this. To understand what called upon the name of the Lord goes, we must go all the way back to the descendant of Seth, who is the descendant of Adam and Eve, who called upon the name of the Lord. And it doesn't mean that he prayed to him.

It means he declared God's greatness. So get this picture. Stay with me. This is really good. Okay, can't miss this because we're understanding this worship here and we're understanding the intentionality of why they went there.

Abraham goes and the very first place Abraham declares the greatness of God is at Shechem. Well, we fast forward just a few chapters, a number of years, from Genesis chapter 12 where that happens.

By the way, this is also the same region that God promises Abram he would give him the land and the descendants. Pretty important, right? Circle it.

[17 : 44] We go forward a couple of chapters and a number of pages in history and we get to Genesis chapter 33. Genesis 33 naturally follows Genesis 32.

In Genesis 32, there was this man who wrestled with God. His name was Jacob. Later, his name, because of that wrestling, is called Israel. In Genesis 33, Jacob encounters his brother.

The whole reason he's wrestling with God in 32 is because he's about to encounter his brother. Remember? He's going to encounter his brother and he does all this stuff and he says, okay, you go ahead and I'll go behind you.

Well, we know that Jacob doesn't follow his brother. Jacob goes and he stays in a place called Succoth which is Booth and that's kind of outside the land but the very first place that Jacob goes and makes his home inside the promised land is Shechem which is where Abraham was at.

And you know what Jacob does when he gets to Shechem? Genesis 33. Very end of it, Genesis 33. And there he built an altar to the Lord and he called the altar God, the God of Israel.

[18 : 53] He named it. Jacob. Abraham had built an altar there in Genesis 12. Jacob, the very first altar, Jacob, who is Israel, builds in scripture is Genesis 33.

It is at Shechem and he names that altar and the name of that altar is God, the God of Israel. El Elohim Israel. God, the God of Israel. Read Joshua 8 verse 30.

What does it say? Then Joshua built an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel. The same place. The very first altar that is built in the promised land when the nation of Israel comes back is here.

Intentionality. Connecting them with the past. The reason we never see a battle at Shechem is maybe we don't know. We have to assume either they surrendered peacefully or Jacob bought a piece of land there.

Remember? Jacob beat them. And I'll give you an irony of this and this is some of the things that we lose if we're not careful in scripture because it is at Shechem that Levi and Simeon do their deed.

[20 : 04] You know, where they convince the men to be circumcised so that they can intermarry and then Levi and Simeon go in and kill all the men and actually the son's name that took their sister and violated her, his name was Shechem.

That is who the city is named after. And this is where Levi and Simeon lose their right to an inheritance in the promised land. You know the grace of God on display here. Don't ever tell me that God, that the Old Testament is not a God of grace because it is the descendants of Levi who are holding the Ark of the Covenant at Shechem when they worship.

To me, that amazes me. See, the very site, the region they were in was intentional because it connected them with the faithfulness of God going all the way back to Abraham.

And let's get a little bit more specific. The very place of the altar is specific. There are two mountains there, Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebel.

They build the altar, where does it say? On Mount Ebel. Why? Why not Mount Gerizim? Why not just in the valley floor? Why here?

[21 : 15] Mount Gerizim is the mount of blessing. Mount Ebel is the mount of curse. Only by the blood of the sacrifice will man ever overcome the curses of his sin.

So on the mount of curses was the altar built. They could have built it at either place but they built it there because this spoke of the curse of man as a result of his sin and the blood on the altar of the mountain of curse was going to ensure the hope of the mount of blessing.

See, this was not just some happenstance event. This is an intentional event. This shows us that God's people truly worship when they're intentional about it.

Some worship happens spontaneously. I get it. I understand. The spirit of God moves over the people of God and worship comes in the spontaneous nature. Sometimes it happens to me in the quietness of the room.

Sometimes it happens to me in the words of a song. Sometimes it happens to me in meditative studies. Sometimes it just happens to me when I'm walking around in nature. I get it. But God's people worship best when they're intentional about their worship.

[22 : 31] This is a theme that runs throughout Scripture. When God's people choose to worship, when God's people determine to worship, when God's people are intentional, even when there are other things that could be done, they stop and go out of their way and say, to worship is more important.

see the intentionality of the event. Secondly, we see the instructions followed by the event. It says that when they got there, they did everything Moses commanded them to do.

They did everything that Moses commanded them in the law to do. All that he commanded them, they did, even to the way they built the altar. And we have to pay special attention to this. These things matter because the Scripture tells us this over and over again.

It says they built an altar of stones, of uncut stone, and it clarifies this for us, right, on which no man had wielded an iron tool. Archaeologists found, I can't remember where I saw this, archaeologists some time ago found a stone altar on Mount Ebel that went back to the Bronze Age.

Most people believe is Joshua's altar. I'll testify to that. One thing that is unique about it, and one thing that is unique in the Scripture is that the stones that were chosen were uncut.

[24 : 03] God had declared in the book of Leviticus that every altar should be an earthen altar, and if stones were to be used, they were to be natural stones, uncut stones, unfashioned.

Why? God gives very clear instructions. Why that? Because no work of man could ever be exhibited or put on display in the atoning for man's sin.

God says, if you're going to offer a sacrifice to atone for your sins, you use what I made, not what you make, because it's not the work of man. Don't make your altar pretty. By the way, we have kings throughout the nation's history who erect pretty altars, but they don't do anything.

Right? This is the altar that you built. Make it of rocks that you have not cut. You say, well, what about the altar and all the things that are in the tabernacle and things like that?

Those are clear commands given. But God had declared that the true work was his work, not man's work. So we see they follow those instructions. They offer the sacrifices, the right sacrifices.

[25 : 11] There are sacrifices of atonement and sacrifices of rejoicing. Because it says there that they offered burnt offerings, that was offerings that were wholly consumed, that were to atone for their sins, and peace offerings.

Those peace offerings were the good ones, right? They were the sacrifices that were offered after the whole burnt offerings in which a portion of it, I know this sounds kind of, it's lack of a better word, a portion of it was cooked and then taken off the altar and given to the Levites and then given to the people and they had a fellowship meal.

It's also referred to as fellowship offerings. And the reason they did that is because this is eating in the presence of the Lord their God, having fellowship with Him. They have atoned for their sins through the burnt offering and now they are rejoicing in the fellowship they have with Him through the peace offerings.

They have a great cookout as their worship. This wasn't a Baptist idea, this was God's idea. They were to have a great time of fellowship, of rejoicing, not just that they could fellowship with one another, but they had true, genuine fellowship with the Lord their God.

And that was a part of their worship. What does it tell us in the book of Acts? Their primary things that the early church did, teaching, prayer, taking of the ordinances, fellowship.

[26 : 39] That's what they did. The teaching of the Lord's word, prayer, prayer, they prayed together, corporate prayer, took of the Lord's supper and baptism, there's the ordinances, and they fellowshiped one with another, breaking their house, breaking bread house to house daily with one another.

These things matter, right? It is part of the worship of God's people. And we see they do everything Moses commanded them to do.

Now it kind of reads a little bit here. After they do this, it says, and they took the stones and they wrote upon it. That's not the stones of the altar. They took large stones and plastered these stones. We'll go back to Deuteronomy and see Moses' declaration to them.

And they plastered these stones and they write the blessing and curse. It's not all of Moses' law, but they write all that he commanded them to do. So there's this testimony, this testimony before them.

This is what would happen. Everything Moses commanded them to do, they did. The instructions followed by the event. The third thing we see here, and the final thing, and it's a glorious thing, we see the inclusion of all at the event.

[27 : 55] We see the inclusion. The nation of Israel stops in the midst of the military campaign to go a number of miles out of the way. It would have probably been somewhere near a 50-mile round trip on foot at the multitude of people.

And everybody goes, and they go for the primary purpose and the only purpose of worship. And they go up to Shechem and Mount Ebel and Mount Gerizim, and they're there in the valley, and they have the people, and the Levites are standing there with the Ark of the Covenant, and they divide it just as Moses told them to do, and they have half over here and half over here, and they read the blessing and curse, and as they declare the curses, the people on Mount Ebel say amen, or let it be.

And then when they pronounce the, I mean the curses are Mount Ebel, and when they pronounce the blessings, the people on Mount Gerizim say let it be, or amen, and they have this, everybody has a part, everybody does this.

But notice the inclusion, it says that Joshua read all the law which Moses recorded. And it goes on to say that he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse according to all that is written in the book of the law.

There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel. That's just to say they looked at the entirety of God's word.

[29 : 13] All that they had. Right? Every bit of it. It took some time. It took some time. And that was okay. Because they wanted to make sure that if they were doing this, if they were truly worshiping, they wanted to hear all that God had said to them through Moses.

So everything Moses had recorded, they read and heard and responded to. They weren't just picking apart.

They didn't just read the blessings. They read the blessings and the curses. They read everything God had told them. Because worship flows through the entirety of Scripture, not just the parts that seem to appeal to us most.

Sure, it's kind of tiresome. Sure, it took a while. But they did it and they looked at all of it. But the thing that really moves me is it wasn't just the leaders that did this.

This was inclusive not of only all of the word, but also all of the people. The Levites were standing there and it says that there were the elders and the leaders and the judges and the women and the small children.

[30 : 25] And in two times in this passage it tells us, and the strangers. And the strangers. See, this wasn't a private closed worship.

This was a public worship of God's people for all who desire to be united with the Lord their God.

All that wanted to live under the reign of God and experience the blessings of God were included in the worship of God because it had application to all.

Surely, some have pointed out, and I think rightfully so, who's included and who's excluded. Rahab is here, but Achan is not. Rahab the harlot is there, but Achan the Israelite is not.

That alone shows us that God is not leading his people into a mission of genocide. Right? He's leading them to call men and women to faithfulness. The reality is there's always a mixed multitude with the nation of Israel.

[31 : 31] There's always the stranger or the alien or the sojourner, someone who is not of heritage for the nation of Israel because God understood that men and women would be attracted to them because of his blessings upon them.

And here we see the inclusion. They didn't say, well, you guys aren't welcome here because the glory and the wonder of it all is that worship is something that is open to all who wanted to be there.

Right? All who desire to be in the presence of the Lord God. We're worshiping together. All who desire. Now, some of them say, you know, we've seen God do these wonders and we're seeing these victories and we're seeing everything that's going on.

We surely want to unite with that and we want to be a part of that. And they say, okay, well, then come sit under the blessings and curses. Right? Come hear the instruction. Hear everything that God has commanded us to do. Hear everything that God has called us to do.

And then worship him with us. Because here's the reality. When God draws people in, we don't need to keep them on the fringes of our worship. We need to invite them into the depths of Scripture and say, here's everything God's commanded us to do.

[32 : 33] Now let's worship together. And it's the inclusion of this that we see this mixed multitude. Some say that those strangers, probably a number of them, are inhabitants of Shechem.

Because the two mountains here are the guardians of the city that overlook the trade route that went through the northern and southern portions of the land of Canaan. And it was really, Shechem was a stronghold.

Yet they never fight a battle there. But they worship there. Why? Because the worship of God's people is quite often more powerful than the battles they fight.

The worship of God's people really transforms a number of people, sometimes more, than the battles they fight. See, I think at times we're more focused on our battles than we are our worship.

And I have to agree with Martin Lloyd Jones who said something amazing happens when God's people gather together under God's word and they worship. It touches more hearts by people coming into their presence through the worship of the corporate gathering of the body of Christ called the church.

[33 : 46] Where people are transformed by true worship than they are by the church's opposition. And while they never fought a battle in Shechem, they worshiped there.

This will be the place, by the way, Joshua chapter 24, I told you that was where the city is mentioned. That's where we get that great speech where Joshua says, choose you this day whom you will serve.

That's for me and my house. That happens in Shechem. This place. Why? It's a place of worship. It's a place of stopping, not being as concerned about all that must be done, and go doing the one thing that has to be done.

Worship. Going into the presence of God before Him with the people of God around you. All of the people. And worshiping. You ever put yourself in a position, I know we've had two little kids leave, but you ever put yourself in that like, in this place, in the book of Nehemiah, when they're reading the entirety of Scripture, and everybody is there, nobody leaves, you know?

I think kids have always cried. I'm not getting on those that leave. I understand that they need to leave because the kids are little, but I'm just saying that I remember when our kids were younger, and they were like, this is so long. Even Brayton was like, Dad, you preach so long.

[35 : 21] I'm like, well, Nehemiah was like four hours. So I'm not yet there, right? And then they would stop, and then they would explain the law, and they'd come back and do it again the next day.

Four hours. People standing and hearing the word. Wow. That's worship, right? That's worship. This is what we see when they worship at the mountain in Joshua 8, 30 and 35.

Thank you. Amen.