

2019 EXPERIENCE ISRAEL TOUR

Study Guide for 3a: Mount Gerizim and the Site of the Samaritan Temple



Historical Background:

God commanded the Israelites to travel to Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim to recite blessings and curses of the covenant once they entered the Promised Land ([Deuteronomy 11:26-32](#)). God identified tribes who were to stand on Mount Ebal and those who were to stand on Mount Gerizim to recite the blessings and curses ([Deuteronomy 27:12-13](#)), and around 1406 BC, Joshua led Israel into the land of promise ([Joshua 8:30-35](#)). Now, fast forward to about 538 BC when the Jews returned to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. The Samaritans wanted to help, but according to [Ezra 4:1-4](#), Zerubbabel and Jeshua refused to let them. Despised by the Jews, Samaritans were often considered half-breeds, because they had intermarried with the foreigners and adopted their idolatrous religion. Sanballat, a Samaritan leader, obstructed the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem and, tricky as he was, thought it would be wise for his daughter to marry a Jew within Jerusalem. Nehemiah's effort for racial purity forced Manasseh out of Jerusalem because he was a Jew and had married Sanballat's Samaritan daughter. Thus, anger between Jews and Samaritans became great. Sanballat, scheming again, built a Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim and made Manasseh the high priest. Destruction of the Jewish Temple occurred two hundred years later. In spite of the hatred between Jews and the Samaritans, Jesus broke down the barriers, preaching the gospel of peace to the Samaritans ([John 4:19-24](#)), and Jesus' apostles followed His example ([Acts 8:25](#)).



Bible Application: [Joshua 1-4 and 8:30-35](#)

1. God commissioned Joshua to lead the sons of Israel into the Promised Land by crossing the Jordan River. In Joshua 3:1 they would set out from _____ before they crossed.

2. What did Joshua say to the people In Joshua 3:5?

3. How did Joshua get the people across the river? In Joshua 3:16 it says that the waters which were flowing down from above stood and rose up in one heap, a great distance away at _____, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those which were flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea (Dead

Sea), were completely cut off. So the people passed over opposite _____.

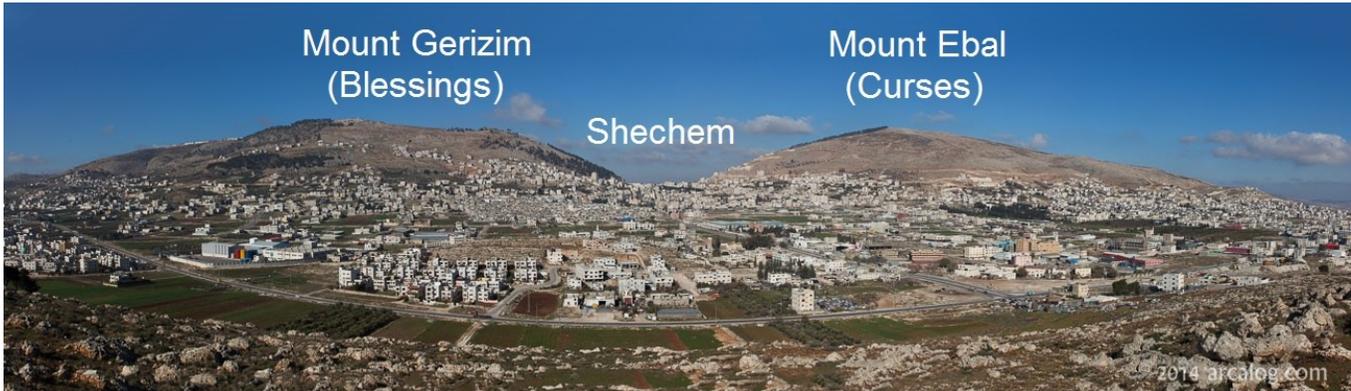
4. After crossing the Jordan River, the people lodged at Gilgal east of Jericho where they built an altar. Joshua 4:5-7 said that these 12 stones were to be a _____ so that when the children asked about their meaning, their parents would tell of the wonderful things God had done.

5. Joshua set out and conquered the land of Canaan first at Jericho and then Ai. Then in [Joshua 8](#), he built an altar on Mount Ebal as God had commanded, and all of Israel along with others were led to worship at Mount _____ and Mount _____ (v 33).

Thanksgiving and Praise: Think about the gift of salvation offered to us. Take a small stone that you can fit in your pocket, and keep it with you until we get to Israel. There we will find a special place as a memorial and thank God for the gift of His son. [John 4:22](#) says that salvation comes from the Jews. Jesus brought salvation to the Gentiles (us). Maybe this can be a place to recommit your life to Christ or invite Him to become Lord of your life for the first time.

Digging Deeper:

When Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land, the Lord taught about blessings and curses in the region of Samaria! God commanded the people to set the blessings on Mount Gerizim and the curses on Mount Ebal. Shechem lies between the two mountains and was the first capital of Israel ([Deuteronomy 11:26-32](#)). Blessings and curses are pointed out one by one as you continue to read Deuteronomy.



Mount Gerizim, Mount Ebal, and Shechem are right in the heart of Samaria. There is an interesting point regarding this territory. Once most Jews were driven from the land in 70 AD, Arabs took over. When they did, they named many of their cities according to the Arab translation of the Biblical name. Thus, when the land was re-inhabited by Jews about 1,800 years later, archeologists began unearthing ancient Jewish sites, at times confirmed by the Arab names given to them. Blessings would come if the Israelites obeyed and curses would come to them if they didn't. Check out more about the [Blessings and Curses](#). One of the commands given was to set a king over them whom the Lord God chose ([Deuteronomy 17:14-15](#)). Thus oddly, despite God's presence with the wandering Israelites and His promise to be their king, they wanted an earthly king like everyone else. God gave them their wish, and Saul became the first king of Israel. King David followed, and then his son, Solomon. It didn't take long, though, for those 12 tribes to forget all the Lord had done to bring them out of Egypt and plant them in the Promised Land. The Kings and Prophets [diagram](#) is a great timeline visual. Take a peek at Kym's blog post about [The Divided Kingdom](#).

Keep looking for blessings!