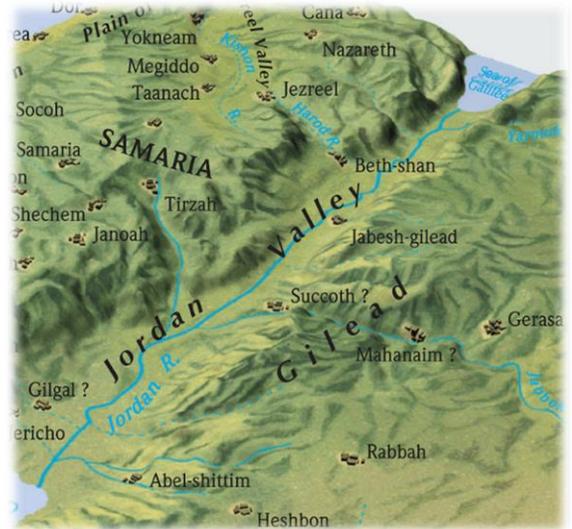


2019 EXPERIENCE ISRAEL TOUR



Study Guide 6e & 8a - Bet Shean (*Scythopolis*) and Jordan Valley

Historical background: 17 miles south of the Sea of Galilee in the Jordan Valley, Bet Shean is located in the center of main crossroads between the Harod and Jordan Valleys. Treasured there is a tel (*notice the hill in the background of the picture*) with the remains about 20 cities buried in it. The nearby Harod Stream and Jordan River, provides Bet Shean with abundant water, creating fertile land. Around 1600-1400 BC, before the Israelites arrived, the Egyptians ruled. The Philistines took possession in the 11th century BC. During the battle between the Israelites and the Philistines on Mount Gilboa, the bodies of King Saul and three of his sons were hung on the walls of Bet Shean. King David conquered Bet Shean around 1000-970 BC and it became Israel's territory. It was destroyed around 731 BC after the northern Kingdom of Israel was defeated by the Assyrian king at the time. In 63 BC Bet Shean, also known as Scythopolis, was captured by the Romans and eventually became a Decapolis city ("10 cities"), sharing Greek culture and government. Not far from Nazareth, it is likely that Jesus worked with his father in Bet Shean and later ministered to others as he passed by the city. Massive archeologic excavations have been carried out at the tel in Bet Shean uncovering 20 layers of civilization. We will see this ancient city, built 600 years before Christ, including a [Roman bathhouse](#) and a theater which is still in use today. How cool is that! The entire city was destroyed by a massive earthquake that shook the Jordan Valley in 749 AD, yet God has opened a window for us to see civilizations from before Jesus' time.



Bible Application: Romans 15:4 says, "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." Let's study a small portion of Saul's leadership as king, learn from it and find some hope.

1. God knew that when His people entered the Promised Land they would want to appoint a king. So, God stated clearly what kind of King should be chosen ([Deuteronomy 17:14-20](#)). He said in verse 15, "You may indeed set a king over you whom _____."
2. Read [1 Samuel 15](#) about how God commanded King Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites. Saul was on a mission to fulfil prophecy written in [Exodus 17:14-16](#) that God will utterly blot out the memory of _____ from under heaven.
3. God commanded Saul to destroy Amalek and all they had ([1 Samuel 15:1-3](#)). Saul attacked the Amalekites and destroyed all but _____ (1 Samuel 15:9).
4. After this terrible decision made by King Saul, the prophet Samuel heard these words from God, "I greatly _____ that I have set up Saul as king..." (1 Samuel 15:10-11). What was Samuel's response _____?
5. I believe Samuel understood the seriousness of the words spoken to him. I wonder if Samuel remembered Scripture when the Lord said that He _____ that he had made man on the earth ([Genesis](#)

[6:6](#)). The remaining verses in chapter 6 of Genesis give us some hope, but should also remind us that God is grieved when we don't listen to Him.

6. According to [1 Samuel 15:13](#), did Saul believe that he had followed God's command? What words make you think that Saul was pleased with what he had accomplished _____?
7. Samuel expressed concern when he heard the bleating of the sheep and lowing of the oxen, because God commanded Saul to destroy all that belonged to Amalek, even the animals. What was Saul's reason for sparing the best of the animals ([1 Samuel 15:15](#))?

8. Saul's intentions were good, but he only partly obeyed. In [1 Samuel 15:18-19](#) Samuel rebuked Saul and reminded him what God had commanded and revealed Saul's good intentions as _____ in the sight of the Lord. How often do we think that our good intentions are enough? How might good intentions be keeping you from full obedience to what God has commanded?
9. When Saul was enlightened by Samuel, a prophet of God, what was his response ([1 Samuel 15:20](#))?
_____.
10. Saul disobeyed God many more times and at a time when he was afraid and the prophet Samuel was dead, he inquired of the Lord, but the Lord _____ him ([1 Samuel 28:6](#)). Instead of repenting, Saul sought out a medium, someone who consults the dead and tells the future, and asked to hear from Samuel. Samuel prophesied a grave end for Saul ([1 Samuel 28](#)).

Thanksgiving and Praise: Today we face a similar decision as the Israelites did. Who do we want as king of our lives? King Saul missed the mark. King David, chosen by God, struggled keeping the Lord always before him, and King Solomon, the wisest king known, did not fit the qualifications that God said a king should have. Do you see our need for a savior? Only one King has met the qualifications God wanted for His children ([Deuteronomy 17:14-20](#)). There **is** a king greater and wiser than Solomon ([Matthew 12:42](#)). Praise God for His grace and mercy!

Digging Deeper:

- Video: [Bet Shean and Saul's Disobedience](#)
- Resources from Looking4theBlessedHope.com:

[View from the Tel at Bet Shean](#)

[Bet Shean](#)

[Public Bath House at Bet Shean](#)

Keep looking for blessings!