

For a spiritual lesson from Shechem's history, we look back at Joshua's challenge to the nation in Joshua 24. "Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel and for their heads and their judges and their officers; and they presented themselves before God" (Josh. 24:1).

Joshua called the nation to Shechem because significant things occurred there before.

- It was here that Abram, the father of the Jewish nation, first came when he came to the land.
- And here God promised him the land was to be his.
- It was also here that Abram's grandson, Jacob, settled, and here he buried all his idols.
- Moreover, Joshua called all Israel to Shechem at the end of the conquest, because Joshua and the same group came to Shechem at the beginning of the conquest to shout the blessings and curses.

Joshua called them together again to this historically significant site, because what he had to tell them preached louder in Shechem than it could anywhere else: "And Joshua said to all the people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, from ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods'" (v 2). He starts to review their history by reminding them that Abram, the father of the Jewish nation, was an idolater prior to becoming the father of the Jewish nation. That is a pretty humble beginning.

It is often easy for us as believers to get proud at what marvelous people we have become. Joshua gives us all a good reminder: Remember where you've come from. **God would later tell King David: "I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be ruler over My people Israel"** (2 Sam. 7:8). **In the New Testament Paul writes: "Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth"** (1 Cor. 1:26). What made the difference? God's grace. God's grace shows that none of that matters if you put your faith in Him.

Remember Where you came from!

Ephesians 2 - By Grace Through Faith

1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body[a] and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.[b] 4 But[c] God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Titus 3 - Be Ready for Every Good Work

1 Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. **3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.** 4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. 8 The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people. 9 But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10 As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, 11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

My constant challenge is to not forget where I come from.

- **If I can't forgive then I have forgotten where I came from.** I did not deserve to be forgiven by a Holy God. I was.
- **When I look with disdain at another person I have forgotten where I came from.** That person is a soul that Jesus came to this planet to die for on the Cross and offers them the opportunity to accept that act through faith.
- **When I don't accept another brother or sister I have forgotten that I was unacceptable to a Holy God.** Jesus said you are acceptable because of His finished work. We must offer the same grace because of Jesus.
- **When I can't serve without expectation of personal return I have forgotten where I came from.** If I remember where I came from I will serve because I am grateful for what Christ did for me.
- **When I don't give joyfully of my time and treasure I have forgotten where I came from.** If you truly understand where you came from the natural response is to serve Him joyfully.