



## **The Threshing Floor: The Meeting Place**

Genesis 50:10 *“Then they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, and they mourned there with a great and very solemn lamentation. He observed seven days of mourning for his father.”*

There are many places in the Bible that signify something. Jacobs well and areas where rocks were stacked. There are the plains of Armageddon and the Mt of Olives. Some of these places have been said to have several events in the same place. Sodom and Gomorrah are not that far from Jesus’ baptism or the mountain that Moses died. Before we actually talk about the threshing floor, there are a few other events that connect to this place. Genesis 50 has the first mention of the threshing floor. However, this area is old. As old as time. Why? Because everything happens near a threshing floor.

This place called the threshing floor is a place the readers knew. It is not explained in the Bible. Instead, it is used to tell the reader where they are. I do believe that it is also understood what the threshing floor represents. The tent of meeting was the first way that the people could attach something to God. The Lord made it a dwelling place. This was not a place of worship but a place of reverence. Yet, sacrifices happened there. The priests made atonement for sin there. I mention this place because God asked that this tent be at the centre of the camp. The threshing

floor was usually placed where wind had access. A place outside the camp. A place where people gathered.

Israelites met God at the tent of Meeting. The threshing floor could be a place where people met neighbors. A place where livestock changed hands. Hosea 9:1 mentions prostitution and the threshing floor. *“Do not rejoice, Israel; do not be jubilant like the other nations. For you have been unfaithful to your God; you love the wages of a prostitute at every threshing floor.”* Yet, I would not go so far as to say sex work was sold there. God could have been talking about giving themselves over to money, sex, idols, and more. What I would say is that the people met there to thresh. They met there to do the town business. Why did Boaz drink and then sleep at the threshing floor? I suspect it was the barn dance. The town council. A place of sacrifice and farming. Everything under the sun happened at the threshing floor. It’s possible that is why it was not the centre of town.

Why there? Numbers 15:20 says *“You shall offer up a cake of the first of your ground meal as a heave offering; as a heave offering of the threshing floor, so shall you offer it up.”* The town sacrificed there. I suspect they probably worshiped there. This area did many things for the people. It was important to them. Other verses offer up animals and other grains. It makes sense that where they thresh is where they did sacrifices. On a hill away from the town.

Some scripture; however: put this place just outside the city gates. This is usually a place where the leaders met. A place where decisions were made. 1 Kings 22:10 *“The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, having put on their robes, sat each on his throne, at a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them.”* In my city there is a place where the people go to meet. It’s called city hall. Yet, that is not

the only place. Every Wednesday there is a food truck and market place rally. The place is packed. The people will go to a common place like the threshing floor to meet.

I wonder how many people talked and fell in love at the threshing floor? It was the barn dance of the ancient world. Naomi was not dumb. She sent Ruth to the threshing floor. How did she know that Boaz would be there? Was he alone? I think after a hard day's work people just slept there. After a day of negotiation and commerce the men drank and slept. There were no suits and ties in this business. It's amazing that (for the most part) we don't know our neighbors. In those days they did at the threshing floor.

Our verse at the beginning of this study says it all. When Jacob died, Joseph held a funeral of mourning there. In ancient times it was customary to have the dead outside the camp. Some events in the Bible happened near a threshing floor. An altar was sometimes placed there. This place is where the people did life and death. A place of work and play. Of banking and buying. Even Egypt knew that the threshing floor was important. A community survives because of the threshing floor.

The Bible is smart. We need community. We need sporting events and places of worship. Why? It's to do things together. To have common ground. The meeting place was celebrated in ancient days. They knew it was a holy place of sorts. A well-respected area that fed them physically and spiritually. These days we don't care for people all that much. I believe that a whole city of millions can be the loneliness place on earth. I know we sometimes feel forced to be with people. It was not that way in ancient times. The barn or threshing floor meant something. It was sought after and looked forward to. Today a stadium and church fill those roles. Sometimes it's a parade or market. People need people. A meeting place to do people stuff.