



The Threshing Floor

Genesis 50:10-11 *“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. 11 And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, “This is a deep mourning of the Egyptians.” Therefore, its name was called Abel Mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan.”*

It took a little digging but my best guess at the verses above is that Joseph traveled from the land near Cairo to a place just beyond the Dead Sea. It is about 270ish miles. Why do we need to know this? To know the importance of the threshing floor is to know how far you would walk to get there. I probably would not walk to church if my car broke down. That is 4.7 miles. That seems embarrassing doesn't it. I love my church dearly. Walk there? Yet, Joseph was willing to take the bones of his father to a place next to a sacred threshing floor.

To most of us the local church is sacred. We don't take our sandals off at the door but we act pretty clean while inside. The ancient world had made the threshing floor a sacred place. I suspect it was a place in the wilderness that they expected to meet God. Not a whole lot different than a local church. To be fair, they did not generally have horses or cars. Walking far was considered a normal act. It's funny but googling how far Jesus walked in his three-year ministry is: 3,125 miles. That's a guess. I'm betting it was more. Clearly, the threshing floor was worth

the walk. It honored the dead and it honored their God. I would even go further to say it was an honor to gather at the threshing floor.

Deuteronomy 15:14 “you shall supply him liberally from your flock, from your threshing floor, and from your winepress. From what the Lord your God has blessed you with, you shall give to him.”

We have talked at length over the last 6 weeks of what is at the threshing floor. They made wheat, wine, and sacrifices. It's a place where commerce and decisions are discussed. I have even read about judging done from this place. This is a very important place. God is near this place outside the city. They knew this. I love the word liberally from the verse above. The threshing floor is the blessing floor. A good crop goes through this place. You cannot hide the good and bad. The best of your labour goes to God from this place. The whole community can see it too. We tithe in secret most of the time. Not at the threshing floor!

Joel 2:24 “The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, And the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.”

In a way this place can be a display of your wealth. People could see that God was blessing you. It is interesting that Boaz saw Ruth in the fields. That she lay before him at the threshing floor. Was he a man who worked with his hands? After a day of harvesting, we find him drinking and resting at the threshing floor. With all the other workers? Ruth 3:2 *“Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.”* Equally it was a place of judgment and gossip too. God could see your heart from the threshing floor. Micah 4:12 *“But they do not know the thoughts of the Lord,*

Nor do they understand His counsel; For He will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor.”

I find it interesting that so many stories have some sort of reference to the threshing floor. An ox cart stumbles near the threshing floor? 2 Samuel 6:6 *“And when they came to Nachon’s threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled.”* We also see an angel standing near the threshing floor as he sends out an act of judgment. 1 Chronicles 21:15 *“And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it. As he was destroying, the Lord looked and relented of the disaster, and said to the angel who was destroying, “It is enough; now restrain your hand.” And the angel of the Lord stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.”* Some claim Abraham was sacrificing his son at a threshing floor. This place is sacred to God.

Jeremiah 51:33 *“For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor When it is time to thresh her; Yet a little while and the time of her harvest will come.”*

I like this verse above because it applies to us all. Job was a righteous man, yet God allowed him to appear judged. However, we should come to the threshing floor. An altar is built at the threshing floor. I feel that in modern terms it is the altar in a church. Matthew 5:23-24 *“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.”* Jesus believed it. We must bring out works, best, and offering to the altar. I would even say our heart. Give them to the Lord. He will thresh them. Should you give Him your worst?

The threshing floor is not an old thing. We get bread in the store now. We give our offerings online. Yet, Jesus said our bodies are now a holy temple unto the Lord. 1 Corinthians 6:19 *“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own.”* One third of the Trinity of God resides within you. Do you get that? The wilderness of heaven. That is Christian humanity. We are separated from the world. The threshing floor should mean something to you and me. A place we need to sacrifice ourselves to God. What will He toss? What will He find? What are you offering?

The next time you enter a church think about the alter. Think about the offerings you gave in secret. Do you talk at the church about your life? Do you do life there? Is church a threshing floor or just something you do religiously on Sunday? In ancient times you were on full display at the community threshing floor. God expected you to go there and make an offering that He could see. Luke 16:10-11 *“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. 11 So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?”* The church has a purpose to make you a better person. To grow your character. Just as the threshing floor used to do. Go to the threshing floor.