

95 Shiloh

Names (also known as)

Khirbet Seilun

Etymology

Strong’s H7887 - שִׁלּוֹ - *shilôh* - “place of rest”.

Location/Description

It is a site is at modern Khirbet Seilun, south of ancient Tirzah and 16 kilometres (10 miles) north of the Israeli settlement of Beth El in the West Bank. It was the major cultic centre of Israel before the first Temple was built in Jerusalem.



Scriptural references

Old Testament

Josh. 18:1,8,9,10; 19:51; 21:2; 22:2,9,12; Jud. 18:31; 21:19,21; 1 Sam. 1:3,9,24; 2:14; 3:21; 4:3,4,12; 14:3; 1 Kings 2:27; 14:2,4; Ps. 78:60; Jer. 7:12

Famous characters

Joshua, Samuel, Eli

Brief history

Shiloh was a city in Ephraim where the Tabernacle of Moses was set up to allow the Land to be divided among the tribes of Israel. It became the home of the Ark of the Covenant until it was captured by the Philistines in the days of Eli and Samuel. It was also the place where Samuel grew up under the tutelage of Eli the high priest.

Today Tel Shilo is an archaeological site, located in the Ephraim hills of the Shomron. In addition to the ruins, there are artifacts from other periods, notably the end of the Second Temple (130- 70 BC), the Byzantine period (350 -618 AD), and the early Muslim period (638-900 AD).



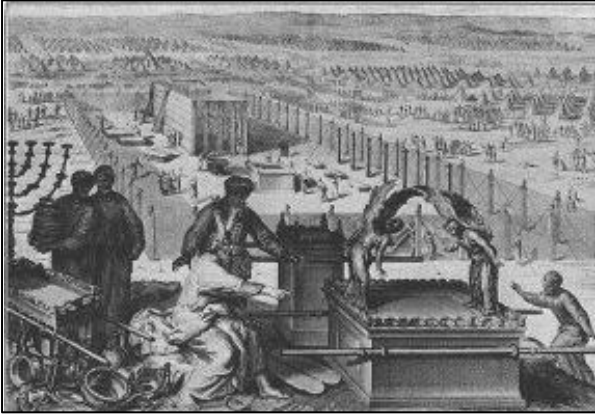
Ruins of Shiloh (Seilun) - 1898-1914 [American Colony photo, Matson Photograph collection; Library of Congress]

The Tabernacle at Shiloh

The Tabernacle was located in Shiloh for 369 years. The Talmud claims during those years a more permanent structure was built to house the Ark of the Covenant. The Mishna states, “And in Shiloh there was no roof but a building of stone below and cloth above, and it was a resting place.”

The significance of Shiloh for the first four centuries of Israel’s occupation of the Land is emphasized in Deut. 12:4-7, “Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God. **But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose** out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand

unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.”



The location of the city was important, and until the death of Eli the High Priest (whose tomb is marked in Shiloh), Shiloh was the place of pilgrimage for the children of Israel. Three times a year the faithful sojourned in Shiloh to bring their festival offerings.



Archaeologists discovered holes carved into the ground in Shiloh which could have held the beams of The Tabernacle

The warning of Shiloh

In Jer. 26:2-6 Yahweh commanded Jeremiah to stand in His house and appeal to Judah to return to Him and His ways. The threat was that the temple and Jerusalem where He had placed His name would become like Shiloh.

“Thus saith Yahweh; Stand in the court of Yahweh’s house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in Yahweh’s house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word: If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings. And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith Yahweh; If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and

sending them, but ye have not hearkened; **Then will I make this house like Shiloh,** and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.”

They did not heed the warning and history tells the rest of the story. The temple was destroyed in the days of Zedekiah (586 BC) and Jerusalem denuded of its inhabitants for 70 years. Today Shiloh is a barren hill.



Looking north from the highway at the hill of Shiloh

It is ironic that archaeologists found an oil press near the ruins of Shiloh. It doubtless produced olive oil for the Lampstand. Oil is a symbol of the Word of God. That word had been ignored by God’s people and led to the judgements that eventually fell, not only on Shiloh, but on Israel and Judah.

The principle is no less relevant today.



Sources:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shiloh

(Compilers – Ron Leadbetter/Jim Cowie)