**Shiloh** (Hebrew: **שלה - Šīlōh**) was a city in ancient [Israel](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Israel), situated north of [Bethel](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Bethel) and south of [Shechem](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Shechem) in the hill-country of Ephraim (Judg. 21:19). In Hebrew the word means “he whose it is, that which belongs to him, tranquility.” When my sister and I traveled to the Tel at Shiloh we were told that between these hills, it was the quietest place in all of Palestine. A wonderful place for prayer and worship.

Tel Shiloh was the religious capital of Israel during the times of the Judges, and spans 4,000 years of continuous settlement starting from the 18th C BC. Shiloh was an assembly place for the people of Israel and a center of worship.    Its sacred area (Tabernacle - Mishkan) in Shiloh housed the Ark of Covenant, Table of Showbread, Altar of Incense and Golden Lamp stand.

   Shiloh is sacred to the three religions - Jewish, Christian and Muslim - and pilgrims have come to visit the ruins for the past 3,060 years. On the south-east side of Tel Shiloh are ruins of Mosques and Churches and a modern Synagogue.

 When the Israelites arrived in the land, they set up there the ancient wilderness tent shrine (the Tent of Meeting: Heb. 'Ohel-Mo'ed') and there Joshua divided the land among the tribes. Because Levi’s tribe was responsible for the worship of the Tabernacle, and the other tribes would pay them a tithe, it was not given land. In honor of Joseph, his two sons were given two separate sections of land: Manasseh and Ephraim. The other tribes were give large areas of the land: Judah, Simeon; Reuben; Dan; Gad; Issachar; Zebulun; Naphtali; Asher; and Benjamin. (Joshua 14, 15) Subsequently, Shiloh became one of the leading religious shrines in ancient Israel, a status it held until shortly before [David](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David)'s elevation of [Jerusalem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem).

According to [Talmudic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talmud) sources, the [tent sanctuary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabernacle) remained at Shiloh for 369 years until the Ark of the Covenant was taken into the battle camp at [Eben-Ezer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eben-Ezer) ([1 Samuel 4:3–5](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Samuel)) and captured by the [Philistines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philistines) at [Aphek](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aphek_(biblical)). At some point during its long stay at Shiloh, the portable tent seems to have been enclosed within a compound—a Greek "[temenos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temenos)". According to I Samuel 1–3, Shiloh was the site of a physical structure that had "doors" ([1 Samuel 3:15](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Samuel)). At some point, the Tent of Meeting was moved to [Gibeon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gibeon_(ancient_city)), which became an Israelite holy site under David and [Solomon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solomon).

The people made [pilgrimages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilgrimage) there for major feasts and sacrifices, and Judges 21 records the place as the site of an annual dance of maidens among the vineyards.

After Joshua conquered the Land of Israel, the Ark of the Covenant was placed in the village of Shiloh. Located in the area settled by the tribes of Benjamin and Ephraim, Shiloh became known as the "place of the Lord’s Tabernacle." It was to Shiloh that the Israelites brought their sacrifices. It was at Shiloh that the priest Eli promised that Hannah would bear a son. That son, Samuel, became a prophet who dedicated himself to the Lord and served the Tabernacle in Shiloh.  
  
**Joshua 18:1** The children of Israel assembled together at **Shiloh**   
  
Archaeological excavations were carried out and findings of great significance were found: elaborate mosaics, a testimony of settlement and an unprecedented mosaic inscription in Greek referring to the site as the "**Village of Shiloh**." The excavations conducted by Danish archeologists in 1926 and 1929 have shown that the site was inhabited also in the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, and Arab periods.

Shiloh declined in importance after this, and especially after the establishment of the [Temple of Jerusalem](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Temple_of_Jerusalem). However, it became briefly famous as the home of the prophet [Ahijah of Shiloh](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Ahijah_of_Shiloh), who commissioned [Jeroboam I](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Jeroboam_I) to become the king of [Israel](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Kingdom_of_Israel) in opposition to the Davidic dynasty.

A number of biblical scholars who accept the [documentary hypothesis](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Documentary_hypothesis) of biblical criticism believe that the "Elohist" ("E") source of the [Pentateuch](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Pentateuch) originated from Shiloh. In this theory, Shiloh continued as a competing center of worship and literary activity in the early days of the [Temple of Jerusalem](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Temple_of_Jerusalem), which the Shilonite priests treated as their opponent and rival.

A modern [Israeli](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Israel) settlement has been established adjacent to Tel Shiloh next to the Palestinian town Turmus Ayya. About 1200 people live in Shiloh proper, with about another 700 people living within its municipal boundaries. The future of modern Shiloh-whether it will become part of a future Palestinian state or be claimed as Israeli territory-is disputed. (Notes taken from Wikipedia on “Shiloh”)