

Theology on the *Web.org.uk*

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Palestine Exploration Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_peq_01.php

ACOUSTICS AT MOUNTS EBAL AND GERIZIM.

From WM. C. WINSLOW, D.D., LL.D., D.C.L., Vice-President for the United States of the Egypt Exploration Fund.

THE recent cablegram to a Boston (U.S.A.), daily journal of "A Singular Experiment" that a party at Mounts Gerizim and Ebal in Palestine had successfully tested the ability to hear the blessings and curses proclaimed at that spot or site (*see* Deut. xxvii, and Josh. viii), is interesting as another bit of essential confirmation of the narratives of the Pentateuch and other biblical history; but the experiment is not a "singular" one, having been previously made, I am certain, and at all events by myself, in 1880, while engaged in scientific and archæological work in the Holy Land. On a perfectly clear and windless day in spring (like our late May) I stationed two persons on Mount Ebal, myself and an attendant on Mount Gerizim, and several persons in the valley between the mountains. We who read were some 700 feet above our little audience. We had arranged visual signals to indicate when one party was to begin and end in reading, lest the other party should not know when to "take up the tale," or even the audience when to say the *amens*. But no signal was needed. Not only did the audience hear our words distinctly and we their *amens*, but each speaker heard the words of the other speaker shot across a distance of nearly half a mile. We pronounced the blessings and the curses with Websterian deliberation, on, however, a high key, and not with a Phillips Brooks-like rapidity of utterance.

In all probability Joshua delivered the sentences midway between the two mountains, and the Levites re-echoed them for some distance up and down the valley, so that from the mountain sides on either hand the million or two of hearers intelligently replied with their *amens*. Jotham, we remember, used Gerizim as a pulpit from which to speak his parable to the Shechemites. With the hills for a sounding-board the spot is wonderfully acoustic. The sense of hearing in Joshua's day was particularly acute, as the Israelites were accustomed to listen to out-door services and sermons. Nor does the record state literally that every man, woman, and child heard the words, but that Joshua read the words before them.

Boston, November 2, 1890.
