

Joshua 22

Joshua 22.1-6

V1 – Which troops did Joshua address? Men from tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh

- Why was he talking to them?** They had crossed to the west side of the Jordan to fight, even though they were going to live on the eastern side
- They had been away from their families for about 7 years

V2-3 – How did he evaluate these men?

- They had obeyed Moses and Joshua, had not forsaken their brothers, and had kept the commandments of God
- In other words, Joshua was very complimentary concerning them

V4 – Joshua's instructions to them? They could return to their land

V5 – Key words in his charge to them? Observe, love, walk, keep, hold fast, serve God

- Why would he admonish them in this way?** They would be separated from their fellow Jews (easy to fall away)

V6 – They went home – for rest

- Remember *Hebrews 3-4*, where Christians are promised a place of rest – we enter into rest, because we are no longer at war with God

Joshua 22.7-9

V7 – Why does the Bible refer to the "half-tribe of Manasseh"? It was such a large tribe that they had two territories (east and west of the Jordan)

V8 – What were they to do? Divide the spoil with those who had stayed at home

- This was a policy in the Old Testament – **Read Numbers 31.25-27** **See 1 Samuel 30.23-25**
- That was the policy of David
- Those who "kept the home fires going" had a great job to do, as well as those who did the actual fighting
- The missionary has glory, but so does the congregation that supports him -
- The Apostle Paul had his four great missionary journeys – congregations were established all over the Mediterranean area – **Which congregation supported him on his journeys?** Church at Antioch of Syria
- We cannot literally go to Jos, Nigeria, and be a part of the school of preaching there, but we can support the work

V9 – They prepared to cross the Jordan and return home

Joshua 22.10-12

V10 – When these men started to cross the Jordan River, what did they do? Built a "very large

altar" on the banks of the river

-**Why do you think they built this "monument" there?** They were going to be separated from their fellow Israelites by living on the other side of the Jordan River (no bridges in those days)

-But in v 24 they said that they built the altar to remind the children of the God of Israel

-**What size?** Very large, could be seen for a long distance away

-We can go down to St. Louis and see the Gateway Arch – **Why was it built?** To celebrate the pioneers who passed through St. Louis on their way west – they were separating themselves from their loved ones living east of the Mississippi River

V 11 – What news spread throughout Israel? "Altar" built on land controlled by the Israelites

V 12 – Reaction of the rest of the tribes? War clouds formed immediately – there was going to be a civil war over this altar

-**How did the other tribes see it?** A violation of the 2nd of the Ten Commandments

-They assumed that idolatry was starting (strictly forbidden)

-**Read Exodus 20.4-5 – Was this a violation of the 2nd Commandment?** Yes and no

-God did not authorize it, and there are things that are sort of in a gray area

-The other tribes were going to attack the 2½ tribes over this

-We have to admire their fierceness in defending the commandments of God

-**Read Deut. 13.12-15** – What God said about hearing that strange things were going on in another city of Israel

Joshua 22.13-16

V 13 – Fortunately, they did not act rashly

-**Who was sent to investigate the matter?** Phinehas (son of Eleazer the priest)

See **Numbers 25.1-19** – Phinehas had dealt with sin in the camp before – had killed Israelite man and the Midianite woman he had married (a pagan woman)

V 14 – Who came with Phinehas? Chiefs from the various households of Israel

V 15 – They all went to the 2½ tribes

V 16 – Their question? What have you done?" – "This is rebellion against God!"

In such a situation, it is important that we got the facts first – in the New Testament, we have to get the facts first – that is always the best policy – it is a lot easier to gossip and whisper over in the corner of the auditorium or call people on the phone and spread nasty rumors about other members

Joshua 22.17-20

V 17 – What did they remind them of? *Num. 25* – plague because of the idol worship and intermarriage (24,000 died)

V 18 – Their reasoning? This sin will spread

-Excellent reason for church discipline today – **Read 1 Cor. 5.6-7**

-Very few church problems ever just work themselves out on their own – it just never happens

V 19 – **What solution did the committee suggest?** That the 2½ tribes move back to western side of the Jordan where the Tabernacle was located (at Shiloh)

V 20 – **What else did they remind them of?** What had happened to Achan (*Joshua 7*)
-The Israelites had gotten the message: they knew that the Lord "meant business"
-Severe punishment was coming for any person who disobeyed God
-There is a lot to admire about what the 9½ tribes did – they were so upset over even the appearance of idolatry

Joshua 22.21-25

V 21 – The 2½ tribes made a reply

V 22 – **Their opening remarks?** Praise of the **one** Almighty God (they were not idol worshippers)
Their attitude? If they have done anything wrong, may God take their lives

V 23 – They **wanted** punishment, if they had sacrificed to an idol with the altar

V 24 – **What was their explanation for the altar?** Just a memorial for their children
-so they had their children in mind

Notice how they were not upset at being questioned – today, some people just explode when you even question them about what they have done, and to try to correct them: they scream in your face
-But the 2 ½ tribes had a better attitude than that

Joshua 22.26-29

V 26 – They had said that this would not be an altar, but a memorial – but remember *Joshua 22.23* – an "altar"

V 27 – **What was the purpose of the memorial?** A constant reminder of their ties to the Israelites on the western side of the Jordan River

V 28 – To be a reminder for all generations

V 29 – They were not even thinking about the danger of this being an altar to a pagan god

Joshua 22.30-34

V 30 – **The reaction from Phinehas and the chiefs of the families?** They were very pleased

V 31 – **Spokesman?** Phinehas

V 32 – **What did Phinehas and the others do?** They took word back to the other tribes, reported back

V 33 – Talk of war was dropped, and everyone was pleased with the situation

V 34 – Name of the altar? "Witness"

- Explanation?** A witness between the tribes on the east and west of the Jordan River
- Ultimately, the 2½ were led into apostasy because they were separated from the other tribes by the Jordan River

It was not God's original plan for them to live on the other side of the river, but for all the tribes to live west of the river – but they bragged that they were too big and needed more land

- So Moses allowed it (without consulting with God)
- But in time they fell under the influence of Assyria, and the Assyrians attacked east of the Jordan River leading up to the complete defeat of the Northern 10 Tribes in 721 BC

Read 1 Chron. 5.23-26 – Little digressions can lead to far worse things in time

- It was like when Lot cast his tents toward Sodom and Gomorrah (*Genesis 13.10-11*)

Was it wrong for Lot to do that? No, but it led to a spiritual disaster for his family

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