

## Joshua 22

Verses 1 - 6

Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, 2 and said to them, “You have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, and have listened to my voice in all that I commanded you. 3 You have not abandoned your brothers these many days to this day, but have fulfilled the obligation of the commandment of the Lord your God. 4 And now the Lord your God has given rest to your brothers, as He spoke to them; therefore turn now and go to your tents, to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you beyond the Jordan. 5 Only be very careful to follow the commandment and the Law which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, to love the Lord your God and walk in all His ways, and keep His commandments and cling to Him, and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.” 6 So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents.

You have not abandoned your brothers these many days to this day, but have fulfilled the obligation of the commandment of the Lord your God.

See chart 2205

3	Crossing the Jordan	1-10-1406	
6	Fall of Jericho	1-22-1406	
10	Sothern cities conquered	1406 - 1403	
10	Sun stands still	1403	
11	Northern Kings defeated	1403 - 1400	
12	List of Kings defeated	1400	7 years of war
13	Still a lot of land to be taken over	1400	Joshua is very old
14	Hebron given to Caleb	1400	Caleb is 85
14 - 19	Land allotted in Canaan	1400 - 1393	Took 7 years
20	Cities of Refuge	1392	
21	Towns for Levites	1392	
22	Eastern tribes return home	1392	14 years from home
23	Joshua's farewell	1375	vs 1 - a long time had passed

The war lasted 7 years and the surveying and dividing of the land took another 7 years.

The 2 ½ tribes did not waver in the commitment they had made to Moses during those 14 years.

See number 32:18

**<sup>18</sup> We will not return to our homes until every one of the sons of Israel has gained possession of his inheritance.**

**Love the Lord your God and walk in all His ways, and keep His commandments and cling to Him, and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul**

There are 5 important aspects involved in living for God.

Love, walk, keep, cling, serve.

Verses 7 - 9

**Now to the one half-tribe of Manasseh Moses had given a *possession* in Bashan, but to the other half Joshua gave a *possession* among their brothers westward beyond the Jordan. So when Joshua sent them away to their tents, he also blessed them, <sup>8</sup> and said to them, “Return to your tents with great riches and with very many livestock, with silver, gold, bronze, iron, and with very many clothes; divide the spoils of your enemies with your brothers.” <sup>9</sup> So the sons of Reuben, the sons of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh returned *home*, leaving the sons of Israel at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go to the land of Gilead, to the land of their possession in which they had settled, in accordance with the command of the Lord through Moses.**

**So when Joshua sent them away to their tents, he also blessed them, <sup>8</sup> and said to them, “Return to your tents with great riches and with very many livestock, with silver, gold, bronze, iron, and with very many clothes; divide the spoils of your enemies with your brothers.**

Since the tribe of Manasseh was split evenly between the east and west sides of the Jordan River Joshua reminded the men of Western Manasseh that their brothers in Eastern Manasseh deserved a portion of the spoils of war from the battles that occurred in the Promised Land. After all, there were many more battles on the western side.

So they returned *home*, leaving the sons of Israel at Shiloh, to go to the land of Gilead, to the land of their possession.

See map 2210



Here, Gilead refers to the region including all of the land of the 2 ½ tribes.

In other places it refers to a city.

The context makes it clear which one is referred to.

Verses 10 - 12

**When they came to the region of the Jordan which is in the land of Canaan, the sons of Reuben, the sons of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh built an altar there by the Jordan, a large altar in appearance. <sup>11</sup> But the sons of Israel heard a report: "Behold, the sons of Reuben, the sons of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh have built an altar at the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan, on the side *belonging to* the sons of Israel." <sup>12</sup> And when the sons of Israel heard *about it*, the entire congregation of the sons of Israel assembled at Shiloh to go up against them in battle.**

**When they came to the region of the Jordan they built an altar there by the Jordan, a large altar in appearance**

The principle of "only one sanctuary" for the entire nation was understood by all so when the eastern tribes built an altar it was an act of rebellion against God.

See Deut. 12:5 - 7

**<sup>5</sup> But you shall seek the Lord at the place which the Lord your God will choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and you shall come there. <sup>6</sup> You shall bring there your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the contribution of your hand, your vowed offerings, your voluntary offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock. <sup>7</sup> There you and your households shall eat before the Lord your God, and rejoice in all your undertakings in which the Lord your God has blessed you.**

That one place was currently at Shiloh in the tribe of Ephraim

**But the sons of Israel heard a report.... And when the sons of Israel heard *about it*, the entire congregation of the sons of Israel assembled at Shiloh to go up against them in battle.**

The decision to build an altar should have been cleared with the eastern tribes which would have prevented a possible disaster from occurring.

However, whenever we hear something about someone or a group of people we should not assume it's true without talking to the other person or group.

That should have been done before the 9 ½ Western tribes were called to assemble at Shiloh. See map 2115



Even though Shiloh was centrally located it would still take several days for many of the men who lived 40 to 50 miles away.

Also after the conflict was resolved it would require the same amount of time going back to their homes.

Verses 13 - 16

**<sup>13</sup> Then the sons of Israel sent to the sons of Reuben, to the sons of Gad, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, <sup>14</sup> and with him ten leaders, one leader for each father's household from each of the tribes of Israel; and each one of them was the head of his father's household among the thousands of Israel. <sup>15</sup> They came to the sons of Reuben, the sons of Gad, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead, and they spoke with them, saying, <sup>16</sup> "This is what the whole congregation of the Lord says: 'What is this unfaithful act which you have committed against the God of Israel, turning away from following the Lord this day, by building yourselves an altar, to rebel against the Lord this day?"**

**Then the sons of Israel sent Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, <sup>14</sup> and with him ten leaders, one leader for each father's household**

The western tribes wanted to know if the allegation was true and if it was true, why did the eastern tribes do such a thing as this.

Sending a delegation of 11 prevented an overreaction on the part of the eastern tribes

**What is this unfaithful act which you have committed against the God of Israel, by building yourselves an altar, to rebel against the Lord this day?**

Did the western tribes jump to an unfair conclusion? What other reason could the eastern tribes possibly have for building an altar other than to sacrifice to their God?

Verses 17 - 20

**<sup>17</sup> Is the wrongdoing of Peor not enough for us, from which we have not cleansed ourselves to this day, although a plague came on the congregation of the Lord, <sup>18</sup> that you must turn away this day from following the Lord? If you rebel against the Lord today, He will be angry with the entire congregation of Israel tomorrow. <sup>19</sup> If, however, the land of your possession is unclean, then cross into the land of the possession of the Lord, where the Lord's tabernacle stands, and settle among us. Only do not rebel against the Lord, or rebel against us, by building an altar for yourselves besides the altar of the Lord our God. <sup>20</sup> Did Achan the son of Zerah not act unfaithfully in the things designated for destruction, and wrath fall on the entire congregation of Israel? So that man did not perish alone in his guilt."**

### **Is the wrongdoing of Peor not enough for us?**

This event took place just a few months before they entered Canaan.

Israel began to commit infidelity with the daughters of Moab and many in Israel became followers of Baal.

See Numbers 25

Because of this sin 24,000 Israelites died from a plague sent by God

The leaders of the Western tribes wanted the Eastern tribes to know that if they committed this sin against God that many people could die as a result of their actions.

### **If you rebel against the Lord today, He will be angry with the entire congregation of Israel tomorrow.**

Israel as a nation had a covenant with God so whatever any part of Israel did affected all of Israel.

The next example that the western tribes bring up fits this scenario well.

### **Did Achan the son of Zerah not act unfaithfully in the things designated for destruction, and wrath fall on the entire congregation of Israel? So that man did not perish alone in his guilt.**

Achan took some spoils of war from Jericho and because of his actions 36 Israelite men died in the battle of Ai and all of Israel was humiliated and suffered great fear.

Plus the family members of Achan were put to death along with their father.

See Joshua 7

If the Western tribes had just asked the Eastern tribes to explain their actions before giving them a sermon on the consequences of sin and how it could affect them and all the rest of Israel they could have avoided looking foolish.

The western tribes assumed the eastern tribes had sinned but we are about to find out that this was not the case. Their motives were pure and the western tribes ended up with egg on their face.

Verse 21 – 25

**<sup>21</sup> Then the sons of Reuben, the sons of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh answered and spoke to the heads of the families of Israel. <sup>22</sup> “The Mighty One, God, the Lord, the Mighty One, God, the Lord! He knows, and may Israel itself know. If *it was* in rebellion, or if in an unfaithful act against the Lord, do not save us this day! <sup>23</sup> If we have built us an altar to turn away from following the Lord, or if to offer a burnt offering or grain offering on it, or if to offer sacrifices of peace offerings on it, may the Lord Himself demand it. <sup>24</sup> But truly we have done this out of concern, for a reason, saying, ‘In time to come your sons may say to our sons, “What have you to do with the Lord, the God of Israel? <sup>25</sup> For the Lord has made the Jordan a border between us and you, *you* sons of Reuben and sons of Gad; you have no portion in the Lord.” So your sons may make our sons stop fearing the Lord.’**

**<sup>23</sup> If we have built us an altar to turn away from following the Lord, or if to offer a burnt offering or grain offering on it, or if to offer sacrifices of peace offerings on it, may the Lord Himself demand it.**

The eastern tribes were not guilty of rebellion because this altar was not set up to offer sacrifices of any kind on it.

**<sup>24</sup> But truly we have done this out of concern, for a reason, saying, ‘In time to come your sons may say to our sons, “What have you to do with the Lord, the God of Israel?**

This altar was a memorial. It was a way to inform future generations that the Jordan River is not a boundary line between the Promised Land and the eastern tribes.

The eastern tribes took land outside the Promised Land but they are not a separate nation. They are a part of Israel as much as the Western tribes.

As things turned out, there was no need for this altar because the sons of Israel on both sides of the Jordan River abandoned the Lord long before the Western tribes had any inclination to reject the Eastern tribes as fellow worshippers of the Lord God.

See Judges 2:6 – 15 below.



<sup>6</sup> When Joshua had dismissed the people, the sons of Israel went, each one to his inheritance, to take possession of the land. <sup>7</sup> The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the Lord which He had done for Israel. <sup>8</sup> Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of 110. <sup>9</sup> And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. <sup>10</sup> All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and another generation rose up after them who did not know the Lord, nor even the work which He had done for Israel.

<sup>11</sup> Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals, <sup>12</sup> and they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and they followed other gods from the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them; so they provoked the Lord to anger. <sup>13</sup> They abandoned the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. <sup>14</sup> Then the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and He handed them over to plunderers, and they plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around *them*, so that they could no longer stand against their enemies. <sup>15</sup> Wherever they went, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had spoken and just as the Lord had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed.

These are some of the most shocking verses in the bible. This is also how churches can go from thriving congregations to closing the doors in one generation.

Verse 26 – 29

<sup>26</sup> “Therefore we said, ‘Let’s build an altar, not for burnt offering or for sacrifice; <sup>27</sup> rather, it *shall be* a witness between us and you and between our generations after us, that we are to perform the service of the Lord before Him with our burnt offerings, our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings, so that your sons will not say to our sons in time to come, “You have no portion in the Lord.”’ <sup>28</sup> Therefore we said, ‘It shall also come about if they say *this* to us or to our generations in time to come, then we shall say, “See the copy of the altar of the Lord which our fathers made, not for burnt offering or for sacrifice; rather, it is a witness between us and you.”’ <sup>29</sup> Far be it from us that we should rebel against the Lord and turn away from following the Lord this day, by building an altar for burnt offering, for grain offering, or for sacrifice, besides the altar of the Lord our God which is before His tabernacle.”

**So that your sons will not say to our sons in time to come, “You have no portion in the Lord.”** <sup>28</sup> Therefore we said, ‘It shall also come about if they say *this* to us or to our generations in time to come, then we shall say, “See the copy of the altar of the Lord which our fathers made, not for burnt offering or for sacrifice; rather, it is a witness between us and you.

The Eastern tribes may have been feeling some guilt for taking an inheritance outside of the Promised Land. This guilt caused them to worry about future generations not seeing them as fellow heirs to the covenant and true worshippers of God.

What they didn’t see coming was that both sides would reject God for the false gods of the Canaanite people.

Verses 30 - 40

<sup>30</sup> **So when Phinehas the priest and the leaders of the congregation, that is, the heads of the families of Israel who were with him, heard the words which the sons of Reuben, the sons of Gad, and the sons of Manasseh spoke, it pleased them.**

<sup>31</sup> **And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the sons of Reuben, the sons of Gad, and to the sons of Manasseh, “Today we know that the Lord is in our midst, because you have not committed this unfaithful act against the Lord; now you have saved the sons of Israel from the hand of the Lord.”** <sup>32</sup> **Then Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest and the leaders returned from the sons of Reuben and from the sons of Gad, from the land of Gilead to the land of Canaan, to the sons of Israel, and brought back word to them.** <sup>33</sup> **The word pleased the sons of Israel, and the sons of Israel blessed God; and they did not speak of going up against them in battle to destroy the land in which the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad were living.** <sup>34</sup> **And the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad called the altar *Witness*; “For,” they said, “it is a witness between us that the Lord is God.”**

**Today we know that the Lord is in our midst, because you have not committed this unfaithful act against the Lord; now you have saved the sons of Israel from the hand of the Lord.”**

The response of the Eastern tribes was a blessing to the 11 men and they went home and shared the good news with the people.

It does seem odd that the 40,000 men from the Eastern tribe that had been so faithful for 14 years and yet the Western tribes jumped to a misguided assumption about them so quickly.

