

ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE AND MOVE ON LESSON 17

Series Subject: Accept the Challenge and Move On!

Lessons 17-19: The Final Admonition: To Live a Full and Victorious Life in the Promise Land Josh. 22:1-24:33

Lesson 17: Caution to the East Jordan Tribes Josh. 22:1-34

Today's Study: Josh. 22:1-34

1. Strong Commendation Vv. 1-3
2. Served Honorable/Sent with Appreciation v. 4
3. Submission to God Emphasized v. 5
4. Satisfactory Compensation Vv. 6-8
5. Serious Situation Developed Vv. 9-20
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7. Settlement and Unity Vv. 30-34

Time is available only for a brief discussion of review questions from previous lesson.

INTRODUCTION

1. Highlights from Lesson 16 (Josh. 20:1-21:45)

(a) Repeated quote for emphasis:

“The cities of refuge were set aside to handle cases of murder through the land. Note that the cities of refuge were immediately designated right after the Promised Land had been divided among the twelve tribes. This is significant, for it shows that murder is a serious crime in the eyes of God. In fact, murder is a serious crime in the eyes of God, so serious that one of the commandments prohibits taking another life, and God says that the very ground where the body fell is defiled whenever murder goes unpunished (Num. 35:33-34). In the Holy Scriptures, the *sanctity of life* for both man and animal is stressed. The sanctity of life is to be revered (Gen. 9:4-6).

Capital punishment is demanded by God when deliberate, premeditated murder is committed. However, there is a clear distinction between intentional, premeditated murder and accidental murder. **The cities of refuge were set up for those persons who were guilty of manslaughter. As cities of refuge, they are clear picture of Christ who shelters us from coming judgment. The grace and mercy of God are clearly seen in setting up these cities of refuge.**” (The Preacher’s Outline and Sermon Bible).

(b) **Place of Refuge.**

- (1) It was the desire of God to have these cities, as seen in His command to Joshua (Josh. 20:1-2).
 - (2) God had earlier instructed Moses to have these cities established (Num. 35:6-28; Deut. 19:1-3; note also Ex. 21:13).
- (c) **Purpose of the cities.**
- (1) The fundamental objective for the cities of refuge was to provide a refuge for people guilty of accidental murder.
 - (2) The custom of blood revenge was long standing (Gen. 9:6). The cities of refuge (Josh. 20:2) were established to give asylum to those who had unintentionally killed another person (Deut. 19:1-12; etc.). This provision of the cities of refuge prevented blood feud excess.
 - (3) These cities provided safety of the murderer who was fleeing the **“avenger of blood”**. The manslayer was secured until appropriate actions were taken to determine the true situation of the murder.
 - (4) The **“avenger of blood”** or **“kinsman”** or **“kinsman-redeemer”** etc. was a male relative who, according to various laws found in the Pentateuch, had the privilege to act for a relative who was in trouble, danger and needed vindication.
 - (5) The **“kinsman-redeemer”** served in various areas, for example see Lev. 25:25-28, 47-49; Num. 35:19-21; Deut. 25:5-10 (Review Lesson 16 pages 7-8).
- (d) **Precondition**
- (1) Once the manslayer reaches a city of refuge, he was to be accepted and protected from the avenger of blood.
 - (2) The manslayer was to remain in the city of refuge and granted living accommodation until his trial by the city officials.
 - (3) If he was found guilty of willful murder, he would be handed over to the avenger of blood. If he was not guilty of intentional murder, he was to remain in the city until the death of the serving High Priest.
- (e) **Six cities of refuge were established.**
- (1) Three cities were located on either side of the Jordan River and were supervised by the priests.
 - (2) The cities of refuge were openly available as places of refuge (Josh. 20:9).
 - Anyone who had accidentally killed a person, whether he was an Israelite or a foreigner could flee for asylum in a city of refuge (Josh. 20:9).
 - Equal protection was granted to foreigners who lived in Israel (Lev. 19:33-34; Deut. 10:18-19).
 - (3) This open opportunity demonstrates the grace of God.
 - This is a clear picture that any person can flee to Christ for refuge, from the avenger of death and receive a warm welcome to the open access He provides from judgment to come.
 - God’s message of mercy, was and continues to be available to the whosoever will (John 3:16; Rom. 10:9-13; Rev. 22:17).

- God wanted the innocent protected. Men were not protected because they were Israelites but because they were innocent of willful murder.
- (4) **If a person is to escape death and judgment, he must flee to Jesus Christ; Christ alone has been appointed by God to give refuge and safety from death and judgment** (Gal. 1:4; 3:13; Heb. 2:9, 14-15; 9:28; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18).
- (f) **The Levitical Priesthood**
- (1) While the priesthood of pagan countries that surrounded Israel was connected to magic and superstition, Israel's priesthood took another dimension in the religious world, that of supernatural revelation by the true and living God.
 - (2) The office of priesthood was vested in the Levite family.
 - (3) Among the Levites there were three families: Gershon, Kohath and Merari (*the three sons of Levi Gen. 46:11*)
 - (4) There were three divisions of the Levitical Priesthood.
 - The lowest order of the priesthood was the **Levites** who cared for the Tabernacle.
 - **The family of Gershon**—were in-charge of the exterior of the Tabernacle.
 - **The family of Merari**—were in charge of the transportation of the Tabernacle and care of the structural components.
 - **The sons of Aaron, the Kohath's family, were set apart for the special office of priest and they were above the Levites.**
 - **The highest order of priesthood was the High Priest.**
 - The first High Priest was Aaron and succeeded by one of his descendants.
 - Only the High Priest was allowed to enter the Most Holy Place and that was once per year.
- (g) **The Levites presented their claim for cities (Josh. 21:1-2).**
- (1) The leadership of the Levites made their claim to the committee in-charge of land distribution, based on God's command (Num. 35:1-8)
 - (2) There were reasons for such delay in making their claim. It was necessary for the other tribes to be settled in order for them to be able to determine what cities were to be given to the Levites.
 - (3) It was also necessary for the Levites to live among the people in order to be nurtured in the ways of God and for holiness to be realized. This would be possible by the Levites being dispersed among the people in each tribe.
 - (4) **Humility, modesty and patience!**
 - The Levites by waiting until after other tribes were settled showed an outstanding example of humility, modesty and patience.

- They were willing to be served last and they never feared for the worst of such delay. They knew the God that they served and His promises to them.
- (5) The cities given to the Levites (Josh. 21) were scattered throughout the land because God wanted His ministers serving the families. Every family was to have a minister within the community. The priest or minister was to teach the people the law and lead them to holy lives, to minister to their needs, to lead them in worship, and to be a strong witness for the LORD.
 - (6) The Levites were not given the amount of land allocated to the other tribes because they were not to be entangled with the affairs of this life, looking after property and finances and managing the purchases and selling of land, livestock and produce.
 - (7) The priest was to give his—life, all his attention and energy and work to the LORD. He was to focus upon the LORD and upon ministering to the people of God. **The LORD and the people of God were to consume his very life!!**
- (h) In regard to this special time in Israel’s history, I noted four important lessons:
- (1) God is faithful to His promises (Josh. 21:43-45).
 - (2) Delay is not failure (*In regards to this pointer see the supporting pointers below*)
 - (3) The Lord both makes promises and fulfills them (Josh. 21:43-45; Psa. 37:40)
 - (4) The conquest by Israel of the Promised Land was complete and incomplete (**NOTE: The national campaign was completed (Josh. 10:40-42; 11:23; 12:7-24) but the occupation was not completed (Josh. 13:2-6; 14:12; 17:12-18; 23:5).**)
- (i) **Note these supporting pointers on “Delay is not Failure”.**
- (1) Abraham waited many years before a son was born to him.
 - (2) Israel spent four-hundred years before they were liberated from Egyptian slavery.
 - (3) They spent forty years wandering in the wilderness before they crossed the Jordan River.
 - (4) During those years, God was not unfaithful . . . He was still there!!
 - (5) God’s faithfulness prevailed in the fullness of time and as the author of Joshua states: “**All came to pass**” (Josh. 21:45 KJV)
 - (6) **Do not cave-in, God is faithful, He will see you through!** Our belief in God leads to courage and our courage leads to strengthening us **and our God given strength leads to victory!** (Psa. 27:14).

2. Summary of Joshua 22

This chapter solely focuses on the East Jordan tribes: Reubenites, Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh. We have noted in other lessons that they represent the “borderline believers” because they fell short of claiming their inheritance in the Promised Land. However, let’s not overlook their commitment as will be clearly see in this chapter. Obviously, the only thing that separated the two and one-half tribes

from the other tribes was the Jordan River. There was a strong cohesiveness among all the tribes and they allowed nothing to detach their bond of unity.

Joshua made a highly complementary acknowledgment of the East Jordan tribes' outstanding service, loyalty and wholehearted obedience to the LORD. He then released them (the soldiers who served during the military campaign of Canaan) to return to their inheritance on the other side of Jordan. Joshua's greatest concern was that they were very careful to remain loyal to the commandments of God.

Upon returning home they built a huge altar, being deeply moved with appreciation and acknowledgement for all the mighty works of God that they witnessed. No consultation was made with the tribes or leadership in Canaan (west side of Jordan) and immediately when the tribes in the Promised Land (Canaan) were informed of the altar being built military action was decided on, because of what seemed to be a serious violation of the laws of God concerning Israel.

The East Jordan tribes made their apology and explained the real purpose why they erected the altar. Their explanation was accepted and a great war was averted through effective dialogue. It should be noted that the motive behind the actions of both the East Jordan tribes and the tribes in the Promised Land were justified and eventually harmony was maintained; the pathway forward continued to be assured and all were encouraged.

3. Excerpts from Josh. 22 (Josh. 22:1-6, 10, 12, 15-16, 21-24, 30, 33 NKJV)

“Then Joshua called the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, and said to them: ‘You have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I have commanded you. You have not left your brethren these many days, up to this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God. And now the LORD your God has given rest to your brethren, as He promised them; now therefore return and go to your tents and to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side of Jordan. But take careful heed to do the commandment and law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to hold fast to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.’ So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents.

.....

And when they came to the region of the Jordan which is the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben, . . . Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built an altar there by the Jordan—a great impressive altar. And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them.

... Then they came to the children of Reuben. ... Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, to the land of Gilead, and they spoke with them saying, 'Thus says the whole congregation of the LORD: 'what treachery is this that you have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that you have built for yourselves an altar, that you might rebel this day against the LORD?'

Then the children of Reuben, ... Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh answered and said to the heads of the divisions of Israel: 'The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, He knows, and let Israel itself—if it is rebellion, or if in treachery against the LORD, do not save us this day. If we have built ourselves an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer on it burnt offerings, or if it to offer peace offerings on it, let the LORD Himself require an account. But in fact we have done it for fear, for a reason, saying, In time to come your descendants may speak to our descendants saying, What have you to do with the LORD God of Israel?'

Now when Phinehas the priest and rulers of the congregation, the heads of the divisions of Israel who were with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben, ... Gad, and the children of Manasseh spoke it pleased them. So the thing pleased the children of Israel, and the children of Israel blessed God; they spoke no more of going against them in battle."

A. Strong Commendation Josh. 22:1-3

1. Conditions of their Agreement (Num. 32, NB Vv. 20-24)

(a) The tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh desired to live on the east side of the Jordan River (Num. 32:1-5).

(1) Moses was not happy with the request due to the experience resulting from the spies' report as seen in Num. 13:26-14:12, 13-45 (See also Num. 32:6-13).

(2) Upon reaching an agreement that these two and one-half tribes would send troops in the liberation of Canaan, Moses agreed for them to live on the East Jordan area (also referred to as "Gilead" Josh. 13:11; etc.) (Num. 32:20-23, NB v. 20).

The agreement was documented and repeated:

- The agreement made: Num. 32, NB Vv. 16-24, highlight Vv. 31-32.
- Reminded of by Moses: Deut. 3:18-20.
- Reminded by Joshua: Josh. 1:12-18, NB Vv. 12-15, highlight v. 16.

(b) Due to their decision to have their inheritance east of Jordan they represent the borderline believers.

(1) They fell short of taking full advantage of what God promised when they chose to live on the east side of Jordan.

(2) The following definition was noted in other lessons:

"Borderline believer" is one who lives on the border of believing or below it. The tell-tale revelatory sign of a borderline believer is that they never get very far into Christianity, they always linger near the border."

- (3) Unfortunately, there are far too many believers who have lost sight of the great and awesome inheritance God has provided for His people. Many are in this grave situation because their focus is on the allurements of the world (1 John 2:15-17).
- (c) These two and one-half tribes were faithful to their commitment to fight alongside their brethren until Canaan was liberated and their loyalty is both commendable and exemplary.
2. **Complied with Leadership** (Josh. 22:2)
They were loyal to their leaders (v.2)
- (a) Loyalty was pledged from the outset of Joshua's leadership (Josh. 1:16-18).
- (1) Note the level of disciplinary action they decided on for any act of disobedience (Josh. 1:18).
- (2) The message they conveyed was: **"They would accept nothing but total and absolute commitment to obey the orders of Joshua."** (As noted in Lesson 1B, page 19).
- (3) The people's word of encouragement to Joshua echoed and reinforced those from the LORD (See Josh. 1:6-7, 9).
- (b) Leadership does need good followers and this also relates to God's work, especially that we are involved in eternal matters.
- (1) When followers and leaders are working together this will have a positive impact on the work they are pursuing and will produce great and rewarding results.
- (2) Time is available to list only a few examples of: **The Qualities of Good Followers** (Please note: this list is not exhaustive).
- They managed themselves well. They learned how to work with others in a productive and profitable way.
 - There is a high level of commitment. They are committed to the organization, purpose, principles and whatever projections of the body they were a part of.
 - Competence: In order to follow, followers must be competent. They must have the relevant knowledge and skills needed for their position. They will improve themselves and focus their effort for maximum impact.
 - They are courageous, honest and credible.
 - Loyalty is important and relies on strong allegiance and commitment.
 - Etc.
3. **Committed to Unity** (Josh. 22:3a)
They were loyal to their fellow soldiers.
 "You have not left four brethren these many days, up to this day . . ." (v. 3a NKJV)
- (a) They abided by their commitment and have gone out and fought on behalf of their brethren although they already had their own inheritance.

- (b) They had spearheaded the attacks against the enemies of the Promised Land, they were first to engage the enemy through the seven years of military conquest and were faithful through the entire process.
- (c) Unity is strength (Psa. 133) and the Israelites knew that if they were going to successfully liberate the Promise Land, unity was top priority.
- (d) The following was noted in Lesson 1B page 13:
- (1) 1 Cor. 12:12 NKJV
 “For as the body is one and has many members, but all members of that body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.”
- (2) Note a brief comment on the above quote (1 Cor. 12:12) (Also read 1 Cor. 12, NB Vv. 12-31). . . . “In essence, this is the simplest and clearest statement about **teamwork** in the **Bible**. The body of Christ or the people that are the whole of humanity, are a team. The body is not supported by one person, but by all of us. We are one and we are strongest working together.”
- (3) Quotes on working together:
- “Alone we can do so little. TOGETHER we can do so much.”
 - “Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.”
 - “We are all needed to do our part as we fit together in the body of Christ.”
- (e) The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh had been faithful, loyal and completed their given mission, fighting side by side with their Israelite brethren. Oh, may the Church of Jesus Christ unite in accomplishing our mandate (Matt. 28:16-20).
- (f) **“The Church is One Foundation”**
Verse 2
 Elect from every nation,
 Yet one o’er all the earth,
 Her charter of salvation,
 One Lord, one faith, one birth;
 One holy name she blesses,
 Partakes one holy food,
 And to one hope she presses,
 With every grace endued.

4. **Completing God’s Mission** (Josh. 22:3b)

They had been loyal in carrying out the mission given them by God.

“. . . but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God” (v. 3b NKJV).

- (a) The two and one-half tribes knew that their agreement meant there would be a **“Price to be Paid”** (Num. 32:16-27).

The following pointers were noted in Lesson 1B, page 15):

- (1) For as long as it took to conquer Canaan, they would be away from home and family.
 - (2) At **any cost**, the price had to be paid if the enemies in the Promised Land were to be defeated.
 - (3) It meant getting out of their comfort zones and pressing forward with the assignment.
 - (4) It meant that despite all obstacles, it was forward in the strength of the LORD! It was a price to pay but the dividends were much greater!!
- (b) They knew that their agreement was not limited to Moses (Num. 32:16-27) nor Joshua (Josh. 1:10-18) but it was to God (Josh. 22:3b).
- (1) They did not desert their brethren but wholeheartedly carried out the mission given them by God!
 - (2) Concerns for their families and other matters must have confronted them at times and they may have desired a short visit but, like good soldiers they would not attempt returning until such orders were given by their commanding general.
- They remained steadfast and were kept by Him who they served.
 - **Deut. 31:8 Amplified Bible**
 “It is the Lord Who goes before you; He will [march] with you; He will not fail you or let you go or forsake you; [let there be no cowardice or flinching, but] fear not, neither become broken [in spirit] (depressed, dismayed, and unnerved with alarm).”
 - **2 Tim. 2:4 Amplified Bible**
 “No soldier, when in service, gets entangled in the enterprises of [civilian] life; his aim is to satisfy and please the one who enlisted him.”
 - See also Psa. 18:31-36; 46:1; 73:26; Isa. 41:10; Phil. 4:3; etc.
- (c) We may be deeply desirous of our heavenly home but we must work and wait on our heavenly Father!!
- (1) Matthew Henry states:
 “So though our heavenly Father’s house above be ever so desirable, yet we must stay on earth till our warfare be accomplished, wait for a due discharge, and not anticipate the time of our removal.”
 - (2) See Phil. 1:19-26, NB Vv. 20-24.
5. **Commendable Example . . . Practical Lesson** (Josh. 22:2-3)
- (a) The East Jordan Tribes’ Example (Josh. 22:2-3)
 - (1) They have strongly demonstrated a dynamic example of faithfulness, loyalty and completion of one’s mission.
 - (2) Think of them being fully engaged for seven long years (some say five years) in battle.
 - They spearheaded all the battles, fought ... always first to engaged the enemy.

- They were thus involved in not just three or four battles but for the duration of the entire military campaign.
 - They were faithful in their mission, loyal in persevering to the very end of the conquest of the Promised Land.
- (b) This is a powerful demonstration of “**follow through**” which is vital in God’s work.
- (1) We must overcome the temptation of quitting early and leave God’s work undone.
- (2) **Mark 13:13 ESV**
 “And you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”

(c) **Summarized Presentation . . . “Follow Through”.**

The importance of “Follow Through”

The Christian life is a race (Heb. 12:1; 1 Cor. 9:24), it is a lifetime marathon and endurance is necessary (Ecc. 9:11a; Matt. 24:12-13; Mark 13:13). A very large number of people participates in a marathon but not all will endure to the end; in the Christian race it is expected for us to endure to the end (Phil. 3:12-14).

In the past there was an old saying among believers: **“It is not how loud you shout or how high you jump, but how you walk when you hit the ground.”**

Jesus, in the parable of the “Sower and the Seed”, noted four types of soils (hearts in their response to the Word of God ... See Matt. 13:1-23): (a) The Stolid Heart (*Hardened heart*) (Vv. 4, 19), (b) The Shallow Heart (*The external emotional and superficial*) (Vv. 5-6, 20-21), (c) The Strangle Heart (*The thorny ... overcome by worldliness, etc.*) (Vv. 7, 22), (d) The Steady Heart (*The soft, tender and receptive*) (Vv. 8, 23).

We all need to be like the “Steady Heart” which produces to the glory and honor of God! **Beloved only as we abide in Jesus Christ and He abides in us that we will be fruitful (John 15:1-8).**

Please note a few highlighted pointers ... Follow Through:

- (1) Our Christian experience should result in victory over the former life and we live a holy life, otherwise the grace of God is in vain (2 Cor. 6:1-4, NB v. 1).
- The new life should be evident in how we live (2 Cor. 6:14-18).
 - Take the Galatians for example, they had a good start but were in danger of returning to that from which they were delivered. The emphasis was for them to remain liberated (See Gal. 3:1-3; 5:1).
 - As believers we must hold fast the Word of God by believing and living it! (Phil. 2:16)
 - As indicated above, living as God would have us means holiness of life (Lev. 11:44-45; 1 Peter 1:15-16; etc.).
- (2) **A good start is commendable but not good enough if we do not endure to the end. It is not how we start but how we finish!**

- King Saul had a great start and all the possible opportunities within his reach to set an outstanding example as the first king of Israel but it didn't end well (Example see 1 Sam. 13, 28, 31).
 - The Israelites enthusiastically proclaimed their intention to follow God's law (Ex. 19:8; Josh. 24:16-18, 20, 24) but see God's final analysis of them (Example see Heb. 3:10-11; also Isa. 59:1-8; Jer. 8:7; etc.).
 -
- (3) **The necessity for commitment is of uttermost importance because that's where "follow through" is enhanced** (*For summarized notes on "Commitment" see Lessons 12, 13 and 14 of this series*).
- It means counting the cost if we intend to follow through (Luke 14:25-35, NB Vv. 28-30)
 - It means having made up minds and with Jesus' help there will be no turning back, no giving up (Rom. 8:28-39, NB Vv. 35-39).
 - Scripture is clear as to what God thinks about us failing to keep our commitment (Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21; Ecc. 5:4-5).
 - Our commitment as Christians must be taken seriously (Deut. 27:10; Gal. 6:9; 1 John 5:3).
 - Beloved, we must keep depending on Jesus, He will see us through, enabled by the Holy Spirit (Isa. 40:31; Ezek. 36:27; 2 Cor. 4:16; etc.).
- (4) We must have a made up mind: "It's forward ever, and backward never!!"
We must never look back!! (1 Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9; 1 Peter 1:13)

The song: "I've Come Too Far to Look Back!"

Partial Quote

I've come too far to look back
My feet have walked through the valley
And I've climbed mountains, crossed rivers
Desert place I've known
But I'm nearing the home shore
The redeemed are rejoicing
And heaven's angels are singing
I've come too far to look back.

(d) **Tenacity is required by God!**

*I know that we are spending some extra time on this first main point but beloved, I am thus led of the Lord. **There are other points that flooded my thoughts but I will close this pointer with a quote from The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible.***

"God demands faithfulness, loyalty and perseverance to the end of our mission upon earth. We are to complete the call; the task God has given us to do. We are to persevere to the very end, laying hold of the inheritance God has promised us. The call of the hour is for men and women, boys and girls who will be faithful to

God and His mission of reaching the world so that every human being can inherit the promised land of God.

To achieve the mission of God, faithful and loyal witnesses are needed—who will persevere to the very end. Just as the East Jordan tribes helped their fellow brothers of Israel, so we must help our fellow brothers and sisters all over the world, help them to achieve their inheritance of the promised land. We must be faithful in reaching out to assist them, loyal and preserving to the very end.”

2 Peter 3:13-14 NKJV

“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless.”

B. Served Honorable/Sent with Appreciation Josh. 22:4

1. Desired Goals Accomplished (Josh. 22:4a)

Josh. 22:4a NKJV

“And the LORD your God has given rest to your brethren, as He promised them ...”

(a) God’s promises fulfilled!

(1) The promise was made to Abraham (Gen. 12:1; 15:18; 17:8; etc.).

(2) Through the centuries the promise remained in focus and Joshua himself was reminded of its fulfillment (Josh. 1:1-9).

(b) Canaan was now belonging to Israel!

(1) The national campaign was completed (Josh. 10:40-42; 11:23; 12:7-24).

(2) The occupation was not complete, but the remaining weaker enemies were the responsibility of the individual tribes and God assured them of His help (Josh. **13:2-6**; 14:12; 17:12-18; **23:5**).

(c) God makes and fulfills all His promises!

(1) In Josh. 21: 23-45 reference is made to the Lord’s promises of land and rest, and victory and all good things. All of these assurances are declared fulfilled.

(2) **Josh. 21:45 RSV**

“Not one of all the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.”

2. Discharged with Honor (Josh. 22:4b)

Josh. 22:4b NKJV

“... now therefore, return and go to your tents and to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side of Jordan.”

(a) The East Jordan tribes received an honorable discharge.

(1) The conquest of Canaan took years of fighting but these tribes were there helping their brothers to liberate the land.

(2) It was a long hard struggle

- They had witnessed the screams and horrors of war: the blood-shed, mutilated bodies; missing limbs, and agonizing deaths of soldier after soldier.
 - But despite the horrors and haunting realities these tribes remained faithful, making sure their brothers secured victory over the enemies.
- (b) It was a long time to be away from family, home and other business interest.
- (1) They never returned home nor displayed a negative attitude but remained focused on the goals to be accomplished.
 - (2) However, now victory was realized, the Promised Land had rest . . .
 - The tribes of Israel could now experience the promised rest God assured them.
 - With the reality of victory over the enemies and promised rest realized the East Jordan tribes were given an “honorable discharge” and were allowed to return home!

3. **Dedicated and Honorable Service . . . Practical Lesson** (*Briefly Presented*)

Dedication not only has a solemn significance but it also involves the quality of being loyal or devoted to a cause or purpose.

The word honorable has to do with people and actions that are honest, fair and worthy of respect. An honorable person is someone who believes in truth, doing the right thing and living up to his responsibilities.

Service goes beyond being impressive and is done with the objective that God can reach others through our hands. In 2 Cor. 9:2-14, we are taught that the service we provide not only meets the needs for which such was intended but also glorify God, as a result of thanks given by the recipients. As noted in Ephesians 4, the purpose of gifts (v. 11) is for the equipping of the saints to do the work of ministry, which serve to build up the church (v. 12).

Jesus Christ has set the example for us and we are summoned to be imitators of Him (Eph. 5:1). Christ has set a high standard of service for His followers to live up to in Matthew 20:28. It must have been a mind blowing experience when He washed the feet of His disciples (John 13:1-17 . . . note carefully Vv. 13-17)

Beloved, James chapters 1 and 2 boldly declare that a religious reputation is worthless if Christians do not put hands and feet to their faith with practical generosity that meets the needs of real people where they live. “If I can help somebody as I travel along my living shall not be in vain.”

(a) The following are six main points from a message, published by Bible.org.

“Characteristics of Honored Servants”

- (1) Honored servants are willing to lead by example.

- (2) Honored servants are committed to seeking God’s will.
 - (3) Honored servants are willing to obey the Lord’s commands.
 - (4) Honored servants are willing to sacrifice and be uncomfortable.
 - (5) Honored servants are committed to building God’s house.
 - (6) Honored servants are willing to serve without receiving glory here on earth.
- (b) I have used the following “Words of Wisdom” many times in the past and it still carries a powerful message:
 Because we children of Adam wanted to become great
He became small.
 Because we will not stoop,
He humbled Himself
 Because we want to rule
He came to serve.
Matt. 20:29 RSV
 “Even so the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”
John 13:15 ESV
 “For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.”

C. Submission to God Emphasized Josh. 22:5

1. Strong Admonition and Charge (Introduction)

Upon releasing the East Jordan tribes from active military duties, Joshua gave them a strong warning and charge. He knew that ever so often, men forget the LORD after the battle is over.

- (a) When all is well, men have the inclination to ignore his need for and dependence on God.
- (1) Many will pray and seek God when difficulties are being experienced but in times of prosperity they fail to pay attention to God’s ordinances.
 - (2) In this admonition and charge, Joshua repeats the advice given by Moses in Deut. 6:5; 10:12; 11:13.
 - (3) These principles are still binding upon the Church and fundamentally important (*this fact is briefly noted below as well as in other lessons*).
 - In essence these principles (Deut. 6:5, etc.) teach that an **undivided allegiance** should be given to the One from whom so much has been received (Matt. 22:37-39; Mark 12:29-30; Luke 10:27)
 - Joshua could point to his own life as a testimony that this was (is) the way of true happiness and tranquility.
 - Likewise, the charge was given to him that, “God’s Word is to be his (our) guide ceaselessly! (Note Josh. 1:8a)
 - Note also the guaranteed result of faithfully adhering to this charge: “For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success” (Josh. 1:8b NKJV).

- (4) Joshua wanted the East Jordan tribes to maintain a constant mindfulness of God!! A regular reminder that I give to my children is: "If you go with God He will go with you!"
- (b) The great themes of Joshua's life are reproduced in three significant words of admonition he gave in his demobilization address: **love, serve, and obey** (Josh. 22:5).
- (1) He was fully convinced that **love, service and obedience** to God are bonds that unite the different people of God.
- Persons may differ in the way they think, in geographic location, the homes they live in, etc. but love, service and obedience to God make them one.
 - The relationship with God is the most powerful antidote for all the hate, bitterness, etc. charactering the world.
- (2) This ancient concept of oneness (noted in our text) was sharply focused in Christ's ministry.
- This was the primary focus of His priestly prayer in John 17, note carefully for example verse 21.
 - Jesus Christ is our peace and He makes us one, irrespective of ethnic background, social status, education achievements, etc., Jesus makes the difference (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 10:17; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 4: 12-13).

The remaining sub-points have been referred to in the introduction above; however, because of their importance, I am listing them separately with limited comments.

2. **Set Your Affections on God** (Josh. 22:5b)
 "... to love the LORD your God ..." (v. 5b)
- (a) The stability and success of the nation of Israel depended on this most essential requirement (See Deut. 6, **NB v. 5**).
- (1) Love is the root of all obedience and in the Book of Deuteronomy, it is the primary attitude that people should have toward God.
- (2) The East Jordan tribes must be careful to love the LORD their God.
- Loving God is the first and greatest commandment.
 - God's people must love Him with all their heart, mind, body, soul, and strength . . . with their all and everything!!
- (b) Jesus Christ re-emphasized this most essential requirement and went further to add "loving others as we love ourselves" (See Matt. 22:37-40; Mark 12:29-31).
- (c) See also Col. 3:14; Jude 21; Psa. 31:23; etc.
3. **Stay Within the White Lines!** (Josh. 22: 5c)
 "... walk in all His ways ..." (v. 5c)
- (a) The East Jordan tribes were reminded of the necessity to be careful that they walk in the ways of the LORD.
- (1) They profess to be the people of God, therefore, they must follow God!

- (2) They must walk after the LORD, walk in the path He laid out before them!!
- (b) The doctrine that teaches that there are different alternatives to God is a lie of the devil!! (Note for example 2 Cor. 4:4; etc.)
- (1) Jesus Christ is the ONLY way to God!! (John 14:6).
- (2) There are only two choices available to ALL mankind and ONLY ONE leads to eternity with God (Matt. 7:13-14).
- (3) Those who are living in sin, habitually, are not in the will of God and cannot walk with Him (1 John 3:1-10, NB Vv. 6-10; Isa. 35:8).
- (c) See also Rom. 6:6; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 4:1; 5:2, 15; 1 John 1:7; etc.
- (d) Beloved, if we talk the talk, we must walk the walk!!
4. **Submission to God** (Josh. 22:5d)
- “... and to keep His commandments . . .” (v. 5d)
- (a) A strong emphasis has been placed on the necessity to keep God’s commandments . . . note that it has been repeated twice:
- (1) *“But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law ...” (v. 5a NKJV)*
- (2) *“... to keep His commandments . . .” (v. 5d NKJV)*
- It takes diligence, effort, steadfastness, etc. to follow the way of God!
 - No one ever lives by God’s requirements by accident . . . personal action is compulsory and required!!
- (b) It is possible to obey God’s requirements because of our love for Him!!
- (1) The East Jordan tribes were charged **to walk in His ways, to keep His commandments**. Joshua told them to obey God with all that they have, to **keep His commandments, to hold fast to Him** in a personal sense, and to serve Him with ALL their heart, soul, mind and strength.
- (2) Beloved, this is where we prove who we really are:
John 14:15 Amplified Bible
 “If you [really] love Me, you will keep and obey My commandments.”
- (3) See also John 14:21; 15:10, 14; 1 John 3:24; etc.
- (4) **1 John 5:3 ESV**
 “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”
5. **Steadfastness in Your Commitment** (Josh. 22:5e)
- “... and to cleave to him . . .” (v. 5e)
- (a) “Steadfastness” . . . definition by the KJV Dictionary:
 “Firmness of mind and purpose; fixedness in principle; constancy; resolution; as steadfastness of faith.”
- (b) The East Jordan tribes were charged to be careful **to cling and hold fast to God**.
- (1) They must stand firm and never let go of the LORD.
- (2) They must remain true to Him, true in their devotion and worship of Him.

- (c) We all need to be steadfast and immovable which means that we are to be spiritually grounded. Relating to the need there are so many known references, for example see 1 Cor. 15:58 which is a favorite.
- (1) A steadfast person knows what he believes and is not someone who is so immature that he is “tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes” (Eph. 4:14 ESV).
 - (2) An unmovable person can hear false teaching, engage with the truth without the error shaking his faith.
- (d) Note a **few** pointers randomly listed:
- (1) We do need a made up mind, depending wholly on Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:13-14; 4:13).
 - (2) We need to know the Word of God (2 Tim. 2:15; Acts 17:11; Psa. 119:9-16, NB Vv.9-11)
 - (3) Our victory is not by human might (Zech. 4:6)
 - (4) We must allow the Holy Spirit to be in control of our lives (John 14:17; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 1 John 2:27; etc.)
 - (5) A spirit filled life enables our steadfastness (Acts 1:8; Eph. 3:14-21, NB Vv. 17-18; 5:18; etc.)

6. **Serve God Wholeheartedly** (Josh. 22:5f)

“. . . and to serve Him with all your heart and with your soul.” (v. 5f)

- (a) The East Jordan tribes knew they had to serve the LORD and such had to be done with all their heart and all their soul.
- (1) It was their responsibility to keep themselves from idolatry and their loyalty was due to God and God alone.
 - (2) It was God who promised them rest and did all that was necessary to make that promise a reality.
 - (3) They could reflect on all that God did for them and they knew that their wholehearted devotion belongs to God!
- (b) The Life Application Study Bible comments on verse 5 as follows:
- “Here Joshua briefly restated the central message Moses gave the people in Deuteronomy: Obedience should be based on love for God. Although the Israelites had completed their military responsibility, Joshua reminded them of their spiritual responsibility. Sometimes we think so much about what we are to do that we neglect thinking who we are to be. If we know we are God’s children, we will love Him and joyfully serve Him. We must not let daily service take away from our love for God.”

D. **Satisfactory Compensation Josh. 22:6-8**

1. **Blessing Pronounced** (Josh. 22:6-7)

- (a) The function of a blessing is to acknowledge God as the source of all blessings.

- (1) God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:1; etc.) and such was fully realized by Abraham's descendants (Josh. 21:45)
 - (2) He was always there for Israel (Deut. 8:18).
 - (3) He is the giver of good gifts (James 1:17; Phil. 4:19; etc.)
 - (b) There is something very special about a blessed person, a home, a family, etc.; in such situation there is evidence that God is in control, His presence is very much evident, something special is happening in this life, home. etc. and it's of God.
 - (c) Note the following two quotes:
 - (1) First by Max Lucado
"Gratitude lifts our eyes off the things we lack, so we might see the blessings we possess."
 - (2) Source unknown
"Those blessings are sweetest that are won in prayer and worn with thanksgiving."
 - (d) **"So Joshua blessed them and sent them away."** (Josh. 22:6)
 - (1) Joshua had purposed not to send them away without a blessing; he knew that they could not do what God wanted them to do without His blessing among them.
 - (2) Joshua not only prayed for them as a friend, but he blessed them as a father in the name of the LORD, recommending them, their families, and affairs, to the grace of God.
 - (3) Joshua's prayer may have been recommended by God (See Num. 6:22-27, NB Vv. 24-26).
 - Here is a beautiful summation of the priestly role (see also Numbers 3-6).
 - The priests are to be the persons through whom God's **name** (Num. 6:27) or character can be manifested to the people and through whom the blessings of God can rest upon the people.
 - However stern God may sometimes seem or however rigorous His expectations, His end purpose is blessing and peace!!
 - (4) Joshua decreed and declared God's ultimate blessing upon the East Jordan tribes.
2. **Benefits Awarded** (Josh. 22:8a)
- (a) The East Jordan tribes were given a wonderful reward for their faithfulness and loyalty.
 - (1) Soldiers go to war in the defense of their country but not at their own expenses.
 - (2) All the land they had helped to conquer was to go to the other tribe, however, they were to be recipients of the plunder of war, which was the pay for soldiers in those days.
 - They had proven to be faithful and loyal, persevering to the end to accomplish the mission given.

- Their obedience to God and faithfulness to their brethren have been rewarded. God has allowed them to gain much plunder that they can take back home with them.

(b) God always reward the faithful.

(1) Faithfulness is highly regarded throughout the Bible

- It is listed by Paul as one of the character of the “fruit of the Spirit” (*Gal. 5:22: the KJV has “faith” . . . the NKJV has “faithfulness”*)
- Jesus Himself taught the importance of faithfulness and that it will be rewarded:
 - See Matt. 25:14-30, NB Vv. 20-23.
 - **Matt. 24:45 Amplified Bible Classic edition**
 “Who then is faithful, thoughtful and wise servant, whom his master has put in charge of his household to give to the others food and supplies at the proper time”
(Note also verse 46)
- The Bible clearly shows that faithfulness to God will be rewarded (Luke 19:17; Rev. 2:10; 7:9-17; 20:4; Rev. chaps. 21 and 22).

(2) **“There’s a Great Day Coming”**

Verse 2

There is a bright day coming,
 A bright day coming,
 There’s a bright day coming by and by,
 But its brightness shall only come
 to them that love the Lord,
 Are you ready for that day to come?

3. **Brotherly Care and Thoughtfulness** (Josh. 22:8b)

(a) Upon being discharged the East Jordan tribes received great wealth from the spoils of war (v. 8a).

- (1) They were given large herds of livestock, with large quantities of silver, gold, bronze iron and clothing (v. 8a).
- (2) It was a long period of war but they remained faithful and loyal and persevered to the end of their assignment and were considerably rewarded.

(b) Joshua charged them to share with their brothers who had stayed behind.

“Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brothers” (Josh. 22:8b ESV).

- (1) Joshua recognized that those who remained at home had performed an important part and were worthy of being rewarded (See also 1 Sam. 30:21-25, NB v. 24).
- (2) Let your brethren in the Promised Land know of your good deeds when you share with your brethren; it will be a resounding testimony of your thoughtfulness.

- (3) Let your brethren to who you return, who stayed and took diligent care of the needs while you were away be blessed as you share with them the spoil of war and be witnesses of your generosity.
- (4) Let the reunion of those who longed for your safe return have pleasure of a momentous time of fellowship by your sharing the spoil of war.
- (5) It should be noted that Moses also had seen the need for a fair sharing of the spoil of war as directed by God (Num. 31:25-31, NB Vv. 25-27).
- (c) **Beloved, God doesn't bless just for us to be able to say we are blessed people!**
 - (1) There are at least two reasons why God blesses us (a) because He loves us and (b) so we can bless others.
 - (2) The Lord blesses us! He loves us! Because of this we can be a blessing to others. He instructs us, so we can instruct others. He comforts us so we can comfort others; etc.
 - (3) **Blessings flow from God, but they should never stop with us. They come to us, and then flow through us!**
 - (4) See Matt. 5:7, 42; Rom. 12:13; 2 Cor. 1:3-4; Gal. 6:2; Heb. 13:16; etc.
 - (5) Think on this quote:
"We are responsible to use our resources in a way that impacts God's kingdom."

E. Serious Situation Developed Josh. 22:9-20

1. Crisis Developed (Josh. 22:9-10)

- (a) The awesomeness of God and the impact upon them continued to be the focus of the East Jordan tribes.
 - (1) These heroes, who were now homeward-bound, had witnessed in an unusual degree the power of God during the conquest of Canaan.
 - (2) Joshua had strongly admonished and charged them to remain committed to God and like Joshua they felt as deeply about keeping a right relationship with God.
 - (3) Their departure involved not only separation from those with whom they served during those years of war but the desire lingered as to how to hold on to the depth of the religious experience they had in Canaan.
- (b) They needed something in place as a reminder and they built a large, impressive altar by the Jordan River (v. 10).
 - (1) This altar was an exact replica of the LORD'S altar at the Tabernacle in Shiloh (See v. 28... NKJV).
 - (2) The altar was "large enough to be seen from the east bank of Jordan, it was designed to serve as a memorial of the link between the tribes on the two sides of Jordan." (Charles Pfeiffer).
- (c) The erection of a second, unauthorized **altar**, however innocently intended, would violate the principles laid down in the Mosaic Legislation (Lev. 17:8-9; Deut.12:1-14; 13, NB Vv. 12-15).

- (1) The situation carried with it an apparent danger of political disunity and apostasy (Josh. 22:16-20).
 - (2) Note again Deut. 12:1-4: If the people were allowed to build shrines to God everywhere, they would soon forget His Oneness.
 - This unfortunate situation we witnessed occurring later in Israel's history (for example see 1 Kings 12:25-33, NB Vv. 28-31).
 - Initially, in Israel's history and until Samuel's day, the Tabernacle was at Shiloh, the place approved by God. God's final choice was Jerusalem.
 - (d) The altar erected by the East Jordan tribes presented serious and consequential implications.
 - (1) As noted before, the altar gave the appearance of rebellion, of turning from God and of breaking off from the other tribes.
 - (2) God's instructions were for His people to worship only at the place appointed by Him (Example see Deut. 12:5-6). At this particular time in Israel's history that designated place of worship was the Tabernacle which was the worship center of Israel and was located at Shiloh. The Tabernacle continued to be their place of worship until the Temple was built.
 - (3) Worshipping God within communities or wherever the people were, on a daily basis, could be done but there was only one Tabernacle appointed by God (See Lev. 17: 8-9; Deut. 12:5-7 and 8-14).
- 2. Collective Effort to Address the Situation (Josh. 22:11-14)**
- (a) The erection of this altar was initiated and carried out without consultation with the West Jordan tribes or the leaders.
 - (1) The motive and objective of erecting this altar was good.
 - This altar was innocently and honestly designed but it would have been well if they had consulted leadership in regards to regulations.
 - Their zeal was commendable, but such should have been guided with discretion and approached in a timelier manner, instead of rushing into action.
 - (2) Communications broke down and bitter feelings began to rise, giving way to a potential war (note v. 12).
 - (b) Upon being informed of the altar being built, the western tribes' understanding was that this act was an apparent rebellion of the East Jordan tribes and that matter had to be addressed (Vv. 11-14).
 - (1) The western tribes assumed that the new altar was designed as a place of idol worship and so it was a rival sanctuary. Such an act would be rebellion against God (Deut. 13:13-15) and such would not be tolerated!
 - (2) The western tribes knew that in the past when deliberate sin was committed the entire nation of Israel was judged as a corporate body.
 - Taking in consideration the possible wrath of God if the issue was not addressed; the western tribes assembled to march against the apparent rebellion against God.

- Instead of taking hasty action, they wisely appointed a delegation to investigate the apparent rebellion (Vv. 13-14).
 - The delegation was made up of Phinehas, who was the son of the High Priest and was to serve as the chairman of the delegation; they also appointed one high-ranking official from each of the ten western tribes.
- (3) **Their readiness to go to war demonstrated great courage to confront on behalf of God’s truth and holiness. Appointing a committee to investigate showed that they were not happy about taking military action, nor will they do it rashly—but if necessary they will do it!!**

3. Clarification Sought (Josh. 22:15-20)

- (a) The investigating committee spoke with the East Jordan tribes (v. 15).
- (1) Israel reacted according to God’s character. Their assembling for war (*as noted above*) demonstrated God’s holiness, but their personal confrontation demonstrated God’s love.
- (2) The primary objective of the investigating committee was twofold: **first**, to discover the cause of the offense; **second**, to amend the situation.
- (b) Let us briefly note the questions and reasoning of the delegation (investigating committee) with the leaders of the East Jordan Tribes:

(1) Their first three searching questions:

- How did they come to the place to transgress, abandon and break faith with God? (see v. 16a)
 - The basic meaning noted here is: to commit an act of treachery or grievous transgressions; secretly did the wrong.
 - It means that they willfully, knowingly and deliberately did what was strictly forbidden.
 - The penetrating thought was: how could they have forsaken God and become deceitful; you who were so firm in your commitment are now betraying your loyal allegiance.
- How could they turn away from following the LORD? (see v. 16b)
 - Such an act was both a turning away from and a rebellion against God, building an altar in rebellion, despite the known law.
 - Previous, they were fighting to protect, now they are in opposition to that which they once defended.
- Had they forgotten the sin of Peor? (see v. 17)
 - “Peor” is the place in Moab where the Israelites yielded to the practices of paganism.
 - Some of the Israelites gave in to immorality, false worship, forsaking God and adapting to the evil influence among their neighbors.
 - A few people sinned but all Israel suffered, in fact about 24,000 people died under the judgment of God (Num. 25:1-18).

- (2) **The investigating committee (delegation) asked a heart-probing question (see v. 18)**
- Is this act an indication that they, the East Jordan tribes, were forsaking the LORD?
 - Did they realize that such an act would result in God's wrath on all Israel?
- (3) **The investigating committee (delegation) exhibit a costly love, in that they were willing to pay any price to restore their lost brethren (see v. 19a).**
- Their offer was impressive because of their willingness to share their own land, if the problem was with the East Jordan tribes which had the desire to be closer to the central worship center of the Tabernacle.
 - The offer made by the investigating committee was an outstanding act of pure love, unselfishness, and a strong confirmation of their readiness to restore their brethren. This is such a powerful example for all believers of all times.
 - Too many of us lack this willingness; we tell people to stop sinning, but we are not willing to help them if it costs us something (Gal. 6:2; Matt. 25:35-36; Rom. 14:1; 15:1; etc.).
- (4) **The investigating committee (delegation) beseeched the East Jordan tribes to refrain from rebelling against God (see v. 19b).**
- This was actually a twofold appeal: **first**, they should not turn against God, and **second**, they should not break the bond of unity as fellow Israelites. This they would be able to do if they do not build an altar of false worship. Unity with God and their brethren was of uttermost importance!!
 - Oh, beloved, "**Blessed Be The Tie That Binds**"
Verse 1
 Blessed be the tie that binds
 Our hearts in Christian love;
 The fellowship of kindred minds
 Is like to that above.
- (5) **The investigating committee (delegation) reminded the East Jordan tribes of what happened when Achan transgressed (see v. 20)**
- Achan purposefully violated the command of God and tried to conceal his trespass (Josh. 6:18-19; 7:1-5)
 - Being a cooperate community the nation suffered defeat and loss of lives because one person transgressed (his family compromised) (Josh. 7:1-26)

The investigating committee (delegation) consisted of specially selected men who were mature and wise. They had a good reputation for discretion and presented their concerns methodically with care and compassion. Now they have made their presentation, it was for the East Jordan tribes to explain why they had built an opposing altar for false worship.

F. Sufficiently Explained Josh. 22:21-29

1. Shaken by the Charge . . . Introduction

- (a) The effects of the charge.
- (1) Upon hearing the charges presented, the East Jordan tribes were in a state of shock and were extremely shaken.
 - (2) The charge of rebellion against God was disquieting and made them speechless and bewildered.
- (b) The two and half-tribe tribes were overwhelmed with grief and astonishment as they saw themselves as the western tribes saw them; it was definitely a humbling experience.
- (1) They denied any wrong intent and explain their motives why they erected the altar.
 - (2) They wanted everyone to know that their purpose was, in all respects, the very opposite of that which they had been accused.
 - (3) They gave a passionate defense in response to the charges, and their defense is a significant lesson on the need to remember God, and never to forget Him.

2. Solemn Appeal . . . (Josh. 22:21-23)

- (a) Observe the somber manner that the East Jordan delegation commenced and presented their response.
- (1) The charges presented against them were serious and carried grave consequences if they were found guilty (Lev. 17:8-9).
 - (2) Throughout their defense their language was emphatic and they remained steadfastly focused and with meekness defended themselves of the charges presented by the west Jordan delegation.
- (b) They earnestly called upon God Himself as witness to their innocence (Vv. 22-23).
- (1) The East Jordan tribes in making their appeal to God as their witness, used a solemn appeal to God as their witness, it was an appeal they used not just once but twice (Josh. 22:22-23).
 - The repetition of the sacred names gives an oath-like quality to this strong denial of any wrongdoing.
 - This response also reveals a profound awe and reverence of God to whom they are strongly committed.
 - (2) **“The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods . . . ”**(v. 22a NKJV)
 - The appeal in the Hebrew says, **“the Mighty One, God the LORD! The Mighty One, God LORD! ... He knows!”**
 - By this address they bore witness that God is self-existent and self-sufficient, He is Jehovah and has sovereignty and supremacy over all beings and powers! (Psa. 83:18; Isa. 12:2; 26:4).

- In essence, it is an appeal to God as the Mighty One, as the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator of the universe (Deut. 29:29; Psa. 139, NB Vv. 1-4; Isa. 40:28; Jer. 10:12).
- (3) Even before presenting their defense, the East Jordan delegation gave an answer to the West Jordan delegation that God knows the truth (Vv. 22-23) (See also Psa. 44:20-21) **Note their declaration:**
- If they built the altar in disobedience to the LORD, they asked not to be spared.
 - If they were guilty of rebellion, then they deserved the judgment of God to fall upon them.
 - The LORD should hold them accountable and punish them if they are guilty.
 - **When we fall under the condemnation of men; it is comforting to know that we are able, with humble confidence, to appeal to God concerning our sincerity.**

1 Cor. 4:3-4 Amplified Bible Classic Edition

“But [as for me personally] it matters very little to me that I should be put on trial by you [on this point], and that you or any other human tribunal should investigate and question me. I do not even put myself on trial and judge myself. I am not conscious of anything against myself, and I feel blameless; but I am not vindicated and acquitted before God on that account. It is the Lord [Himself] who examines and judges me.” (*Read the chapter NB Vv. 1-5*)

3. **Setting up of the Altar Explained** (Josh. 22:24-28)
- (a) Fear of isolation was the underlying motive why they decided to build the altar (Vv. 24-28)
- (1) They feared that in the future they may be separated from the true faith and worship of God, due to the barricade by the Jordan River.
 - (2) Even more troubling was the thought that in future the tribes west of the Jordan River might deny their representation, their profession that they had an established relationship with the LORD.
 - (3) The East Jordan tribes were saying it is a possibility that the western tribes ...
 - . . . might dictate that they are the true followers of the LORD and have a stronger claim to the true worship of the LORD.
 - . . . might dictate that the East Jordan tribes are not true believers and they should not be allowed to engage in worship at the Tabernacle, the true center of worship.
- (b) Their futuristic outlook was troubling and a matter of great concern ... it was their primary concern.
- (1) It is possible that in the future the western tribes disallowed the eastern tribes from worshipping at the Tabernacle.

- (2) They declared that this lingering fear of isolation was a major and driving force as to why they had built the altar.
 - The altar was **not** built in order to offer burnt offerings and sacrifices (v. 26).
 - They were fully aware that burnt offerings and sacrifices were allowed **only** upon the altar at the Tabernacle, **only** at the center of worship appointed by God (Lev. 17:8-9; Deut. 12:1-14 NB Vv. 5-6).
- (3) The East Jordan tribes declared that the altar was built as a memorial, as a witness of their strong faith in the LORD (Vv. 27-28).

Three strong declarations were made:

The following is a quote from The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible

- "They declared that they would approach the LORD through the substitute sacrifice, only at His sanctuary (v. 27; Deut. 12:14).
- They declared that the altar was a witness to future generations that they must not be isolated, cut off from the Tabernacle of the LORD (v. 27).
- They declared that the replica, the copy, of the LORD'S altar at the Jordan River was actually proof of their worship and loyalty to the LORD (v. 28). If future generations attempted to prevent them from worshipping at the Tabernacle, they could point to the replica as a witness of their true faith in the LORD."

4. Steadfastly Committed to the Lord (Josh. 22:29)

(a) The East Jordan tribes strongly declared their unswerving allegiance and loyalty to the LORD (v. 29)

(1) They pledged that under no circumstances would they ever turn away nor rebel against God by building an unauthorized altar for false worship.

(2) They would abide by guidelines in place and approach God through the substitute sacrifices and the required offerings only at the LORD'S Tabernacle, the true center of worship.

(b) The eastern tribes were confident that God knew they that intended the altar only as a monument to Israel's unity.

(1) They would not allow the Jordan River to separate them from their brethren who are unified by their common faith.

(2) Having the altar built on the western side of the Jordan River was meant to emphasize that the people of both sides of Jordan worship the same God, the true and living God!

G. Settlement and Unity Josh. 22:30-34

1. Proclamation of Loyalty (Josh. 22:30-31)

(a) The investigating committee (delegation from west of Jordan) was exceedingly pleased with the fervent defense of the East Jordan delegation.

(1) It was deeply gratifying and reassuring as they were presented with a firm declaration of loyalty to the LORD by the East Jordan delegation.

- (2) The entire proceeding was greatly beneficial especially that both sides focused on a peaceful solution as there was evidence of zeal for God by both groups. It is a fact that quarrels about religion, for want of wisdom and love are often proven the fiercest and most difficult to be made up.
- (b) **Note carefully the wisdom and love displayed by the West Jordan delegation:**
- (1) They did not doubt the sincerity of the East Jordan tribes, nor indicated that the erecting of the altar disproved what they were stating.
- (2) They did not rebuke them for their hastiness and lack of obtaining proper advice in erecting the altar, although, if they had sought counsel it would have saved the trouble and all else involved in the investigation.
- (3) Neither did the East Jordan tribes needlessly sought for evidence to make their defense more convincing; instead they were glad that their error was rectified and they willingly humbled themselves.
- (c) Phinehas' response to the final outcome of the meeting showed how relieved the West Jordan delegation was (see v. 31).
- (1) The act which almost brought about a civil war was now regarded as evidence that God was present among all the tribes of Israel.
"This day we perceive that the LORD is among us . . ." (v. 31b).
- (2) The joy of the West Jordan tribes was an overwhelming response of joy and rejoicing.
- They were pleased with the declaration of loyalty by the East Jordan tribes (v. 31c).
 - They were pleased that war was averted (v. 31d).
- (3) Phinehas could see ". . . **that the LORD is among us . . .**" (v. 31b), because unity had been restored among the people of Israel. This is so powerfully stated in Psalm 133.
2. **The Western Delegation made Their Presentation to Leadership** (Josh. 22:32-32)
- (a) Phinehas and his delegation returned to Canaan and reported to Joshua and the other leaders about their meeting with the East Jordan tribes.
- (1) The report presented was well received and it **"pleased them"** (Vv. 30, 33), this was true both among the leaders as well as the entire congregation of Israel.
- (2) The news of the outcome stirred joy and praises to God, for reconciliation and unity among God's people, this was a great accomplishment for the nation.
- (3) Similarly, we should be filled with joy and rejoicing for our brothers' zeal for the power of godliness, faith and love, even though they may not be perfect in all that they do.
- (b) ". . . **and did not intend to go up against them in battle . . .**" (v. 33b).
- (1) The above quote (Josh. 22:33b) may be read: *"spoke no more of making war against them"* (RSV).

- (2) Good news!! Great news!! They would remain as one people, never to be split asunder, because united they stand!!
- Teaches the value of being willing to negotiate as in this situation it prevented bloodshed and strife!!
 - **The danger of fighting among themselves and planting the seed of division and ill feeling for all future generations had been averted!!**
 - This accomplishment became the basis for thanksgiving and praises to God for His manifest presence in their midst. God's people are reconciled, bound together in unity and oneness of spirit!!

3. Proof of Loyalty (Josh. 22:34)

(a) Witness for the present-day.

(1) The East Jordan tribes “. . . **called the altar *Ed*: for it shall be a witness between us that the LORD is God**” (Josh. 22:34b).

- The name “*Ed*” in this situation means “**Witness**”
- The altar was to stand only as a memorial, as a witness that the East Jordan tribes were followers of the LORD.
- The altar was **not** built for sacrifices; or any form of worship, the East Jordan tribes would approach God only through the substitute sacrifice at the Tabernacle, the true worship center appointed by God.

(2) **NOTE:**

- These people were eager to pass on to their descendants a religion which was pure and entire. They would use this monument as a witness against them if ever they should forsake God, and turn from following Him.
- Happy will it be when all professed Christians learn to copy the example of Israel, to united zeal and steady adherence to the cause of truth, with sincerity, meekness and readiness to understand each other. **May the LORD increase the number of those who endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace! May increasing grace and consolation be with all who love Jesus Christ in sincerity!!**

2 Tim 2:15

KJV

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Amplified Bible

“Study and be eager and do your utmost yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.”

LESSON 17 REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Complete the following:

“The cities of (a) _____ were set up for those persons who were guilty of (b) _____. As cities of refuge, they are clear (c) _____ of Christ who (d) _____ us from coming (e) _____. The (f) _____ and (g) _____ of God are (h) _____ seen in the setting up these cities of refuge.”

2. As it was during the old Testament period (a) define “avenger of blood”; (b) what other terms were used to describe this practice?

3. (a) Answer True or False. (b) Explain your answer. (c) As it relates to God, what is revealed by having these cities being openly available?

“The cities of refuge were available only to Israelites.”

4. (a) Who were the three sons of Levi? (b) Briefly note the division of Levitical Priesthood each family served.

5. List three qualities of good followers (*five examples were highlighted in our lesson*).

6. Briefly explain 1 Cor. 12:12.

7. Complete by choosing the correct answer.

“No soldier when in service gets entangled in the enterprises of civilian life; his aim is to satisfy and please _____.”

(Give the reference and translation used) _____.

- (a) those who cheer him along
- (b) the one who enlisted him
- (c) the ones who criticize him

(d) those who compromise with him.

8. (a) Answer True or False. (b) Explain your answer.

“The Christian life is like a 100-meter sprint.”

9. Complete by choosing the correct answer.

“A good start is commendable but not good enough if we do not endure to the end. It is not how well we start _____.”

- (a) but by impressing everyone
- (b) but by good acting
- (c) but by looking fit
- (d) but how we finish

10. Why is commitment so very important to believers completing (or follow through with) their goals given by God? (*Brief explanation*).

11. Complete by choosing the correct answer:

“To achieve the mission of God, faithful and loyal witnesses are needed—who will _____.”

- (a) persevere at least for sometime
- (b) persevere to the very end
- (c) persevere until it becomes difficult
- (d) persevere if personal benefits secured

12. Explain what is meant by “dedicated and honorable service”.

13. How would you **summarize** the essence of the message conveyed in James chapters 1 and 2, in reference to our Christian reputation?

14. The following are verses randomly selected from our lesson; **match the statements on the left with their correct reference on the right.**

STATEMENTS	CORRECT REFERENCE	JUMBLED REFERENCES
The Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and give His life a ransom for many.		Josh. 21:45 RSV
I have given you an example that you also should do as I have done to you.		Mark 13:13 ESV
Not one of all the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed, all came to pass.		1 Cor. 12:12 NKJV
And you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.		Matt.20:29 RSV
For as the body is one and has many members, but all members of that body, being many are one, so also is Christ.		John 13:15 ESV

15. What great themes of Joshua’s life were revealed in his demobilization address to the East Jordan tribes? (b) Why did he so highly valued these three traits?

16. What fundamental characteristic must be evident in our lives if we are going to sincerely and consistently keep God’s commandments? (*Note Josh. 22:5d*).

17. In what way does Josh. 22:5 corresponds to Moses’ central message in the Book of Deuteronomy? (Briefly)

18. Briefly explain two reasons why God blesses us.

19. Why was the building of an unauthorized altar regarded as a serious violation among the nation of Israel?

20. Complete the following:

This statement was made in reference to the West Jordan tribes and their response to the East Jordan tribes erecting an unauthorized altar.

“Their (a) _____ to go to (b) _____ demonstrated great (c) _____ to confront on behalf of God’s truth and (d) _____.
Appointing a (e) _____ to investigate (f) _____ that they were not happy about taking (g) _____ action, nor will they do it (h) _____ --but if necessary they will do it!”

21. In regards to the West Jordan delegation, note and briefly explain three of the pointers discussed in our lesson as it relates to their consultation with the East Jordan tribes regarding the altar they erected.

22. Explain the significance of the opening statement of the East Jordan delegation when they presented their defense . . . **see Josh. 22:22.**

23. What was the fundamental reason given why the East Jordan tribes erected the altar (*briefly*)?

24. In their defense, what three declarations were made by the East Jordan tribes?

25. Briefly explain “. . . **and did not intend to go against them in battle**” (Josh. 22:33b).
