

# Courageous

Claiming Canaan, Lessons from the Book of Joshua

Lesson 19: Committed (22:1-34)

Before a word was exchanged, conclusions were drawn, motives were imputed, and intentions were assigned. A single act had caused all of Israel to declare that they were apostate—no longer worshipers of the True God, but disloyal and rebellious against Him, divisive among His people and indifferent to His laws. Their choice to separate themselves from the rest of the nation seemed reason enough to believe the report.

But *"he who answers a matter before he hears it, it is a folly and a shame to him"* (Proverbs 18:13, NKJV).

While battle was brewing in the hearts and minds of the uninformed, the Rubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh worshiped God with pure and sincere motives. When the time came to explain their actions, *"the Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, [Who] knows"* (Joshua 22:22) would be their witness, and *"Israel [would] know it, too!"* (NLT).

*Read Joshua 22:1-6.*

1. What obligation did the tribes of Ruben, Gad, and half Manasseh fulfill? Review Numbers 32:20-22 and Joshua 1:12-18.

What did seven long years of battle cost them?

What would occur if they chose to defect before they fulfilled their obligation?

2. Why were the departing tribes strongly cautioned to heed the law, to love and serve the Lord?

3. What danger lies in isolation?

4. Why do many believe that they can practice their faith independent of the church body? What fallacy lies in this belief? Generally, what results?

Think on Genesis 2:18, Proverbs 18:1, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Hebrews 10:24-25, Philippians 2:3-4, Galatians 6:2, Romans 12:4-5.

*Read verses 7-9 of Joshua 22.*

5. What reward was given to the two and a half tribes for their faithful service?

6. With who were the spoils to be divided?

*Keep reading: Joshua 22:10-20.*

7. How do you generally resolve conflict?

8. What did the departing tribes do that infuriated the leaders? (v.10)

9. Why was this an issue? What was the purpose of an altar?  
(Exodus 23:17, Joshua 22:23, 29)
  
10. How did the information reach them? How did all of Israel react to the news? (v.11-12)
  
11. Why shouldn't one act against another based simply on the word of another and/or partial information?
  
12. What would have occurred if the Israelites failed to approach the "transgressors" and ask questions?
  
13. What can occur when we leave things unspoken? (Ephesians 4:27) Why do we do this?
  
14. How do Proverbs 16:28 and James 3:4-6, 9-12 apply?

Also consider Proverbs 10:12, 13:10, and James 3:16-18.

15. Contrast these verses with Proverbs 13:3, 18:21, 21:23.

16. What does Matthew 12:34-37 reveal about a man's character and his view of God?
  
17. Per Matthew 18:15-20, what steps are to be taken to resolve conflict? What prevents individuals from taking these steps?
  
18. Return to Joshua. How did the high-priest's son, Phineas, and the ten tribe rulers seek to resolve the conflict? (22:13-15) How far were they willing to go? (vv.13, 32)
  
19. What did the leaders assume motivated the two and one-half tribes to build the altar? (v.16)
  
20. What consequences did the leaders fear would come upon them as a result of their actions?
  
21. What had occurred at Peor? See Numbers 23:27-30, Numbers 25:1-18, and Psalm 106:28-31.
  
22. What were the leaders willing to do for the two and one-half tribes if their actions were due to the "unclean" pagan practices of the remaining inhabitants in Gilead?
  
23. What additional example was given? How did it further substantiate their claim? (v.20)

*Now read Joshua 22:21-29.*

24. What danger lies in judging a man's actions before hearing his heart?
  
25. Who alone judges correctly and fairly?
  
26. Describe the two and one-half tribes' conviction concerning their choice to build the altar. (v.22)
  
27. What did they fear that caused them to believe they needed to erect this altar?
  
28. What do their words reveal about their decision to settle on the east side of the Jordan all those years ago?
  
29. What would it take for them to cross over and dwell among their brethren?
  
30. Who created the border— the separation from their brethren— them or the Lord? (v.25)
  
31. What was the stated purpose of the altar?

32. Some commentators believe that the building of the Altar of Witness was "the *first* in a series of independent acts on the part of the various tribes which would lead to a later fragmentation of the tribes of Israel," and the construction of the altar as a "departure of God's plan for centralized worship."<sup>i</sup>

Do you agree? Why or why not?

How do independent actions affect relationships?

*Read Joshua 22:30-34.*

33. How did Phineas and the leaders respond to their explanation?
34. What evidence is provided in verse 33 that ensures the conflict had been resolved? See 1 Peter 4:8 and 1 Corinthians 13:5.
35. Are you willing to believe the words of others without further reproaching them? Can you refrain from mentioning the conflict again? How does this emulate Jesus Christ?

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<sup>i</sup> John J. Davis. (1977). *Conquest and Crisis: Studies in Joshua, Judges and Ruth*. (pg. 86-87). Grand Rapids, Baker.