

## Joshua—Joshua 22

### Altar Built by Three Tribes

#### I. Additional Scriptures/Notes...

1. Read Number 32:1-33
2. 22:12... **“To go up to war against them** - Supposing that they had built this altar in opposition to that which Moses, by the command of God, had erected, and were consequently become rebels against God and the Israelitish constitution, and should be treated as such. Their great concern for the glory of God led them to take this step, which at first view might appear precipitate; but, that they might do nothing rashly, they first sent Phinehas and ten princes, one out of each tribe, to require an explanation of their motives in erecting this altar.” [*Clarke’s Commentary*].
3. 22:17... **“Is the iniquity of Peor too little** - See this history, [Num\\_25:3](#) (note), etc., and the notes there. Phinehas takes it for granted that this altar was built in opposition to the altar of God erected by Moses, and that they intended to have a separate service, priesthood, etc., which would be rebellion against God, and bring down his curse on them and their posterity; and, in order to show that God is jealous of his glory, he refers to the business of Baal Peor, which took place in that very country they were now about to possess, the destructive consequences of which he, through his zeal for the glory of God, was the means of preventing” [*Clarke’s Commentary*]. /// FROM WHICH WE ARE NOT CLEANSED... “This indicates the long-lasting influence of the events at Baal-Peor. What Phinehas said here, is that there were a lot of people in Israel still around who were hankering after the sinful and sensuous worship of Baal” [*Coffman*].
4. 22:21... **“Then the children:** The conduct and answer of these Reubenites and the associates are worthy of admiration and imitation. Though conscious of their innocence, they permitted Phinehas to finish his speech, though composed of little else than accusations, without any interruption; and taking in good part the suspicions, reproofs, and even harshness of their brethren, with the utmost meekness and solemnity they explain their intention, give all the satisfaction in their power, and with great propriety and reverence, appeal to that God against whom they were supposed to have rebelled.” [*TSK*].
5. 22:30... **“it pleased them:** Heb. it was good in their eyes, It is remarkable, that Joshua is not once named in this transaction; but this only shows, that he did not in his old age assume any regal authority, but left the elders and magistrates to conduct the general business, only acting himself when great occasions made it necessary. Yet we cannot doubt, that his wisdom and piety influenced the counsels of the elders and people at this time.” [*TSK*].
6. 22:34... ED is italicized, thus supplied by the translators.

#### II. Chronology.

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**BIBLE PERIOD: The Period of the Conquest.**

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**III. Summary.**

Of the building of memorials there is no end. In this chapter we read about a memorial set up in stone for the purpose of connectedness. The people of Reuben, Gad, and ½Manasseh felt that their posterity might, at some point in the future, feel disconnected to the rest of the children of Israel because of the physical division of the land caused by the Jordan River. As they were on their way back to their families, evidently this concern became quite great among them and the solution they came to was to construct a monument. This monument would serve as a reminder to the children of Reuben, Gad, and ½Manasseh that the tribes across the river were their brethren. The monument was never intended to serve as an altar. However, the mistaken idea that these 2 ½tribes were building another altar was noised abroad among the other tribes and they were ready to fight against their brethren because of the evil consequences they were sure this would bring to them (e.g., the Achan incident). Though not stated, it was likely through the wisdom of Joshua that a delegation of Phinehas, the priest, and ten princes to discuss the matter, rather than going immediately to war. This was a serious crisis and could have led to a disastrous civil war among these brethren. We have to admire the kind and courteous way the 2 ½tribes listened to the accusations against them and then that they gently denied that they had any intention of setting up a second altar on their side of the river. When Phinehas and the others heard the explanation, it pleased them and there were no more hostilities between them. When this was reported to the rest of the people, it was likewise received with joy. Here is a great lesson on the value and importance of COMMUNICATION!

**IV. Outline.**

1. The Trans-Jordan tribes are sent to their homes after fulfilling the obligations they had made under Moses (Josh 22:1-9).
2. An “altar” is built on their way to their homes (Josh 22:10).
3. The rest of the tribes learn of the altar and prepare to go to war with their brethren (Josh 22:11-12).
4. First an envoy is sent to discuss the matter (Josh 22:13-20).
5. The Trans-Jordan tribes explained their purpose for the “altar” (Josh 22:21-29).
6. The misunderstanding is cleared up and all is well between the tribes (Josh 22:30-34).

**V. Questions.****True or False**

01. \_\_\_\_\_ Reuben, Gad, and ½Manasseh had kept their charge.
02. \_\_\_\_\_ Part of Manasseh dwelt in Bashan.
03. \_\_\_\_\_ Phinehas was the son of Eleazar, the priest.
04. \_\_\_\_\_ Achan is mentioned in this chapter.
05. \_\_\_\_\_ When Phinehas returned to the land of Canaan, the people were not willing to put down their arms, but wanted to attack Reuben, Gad, and ½Manasseh.

**Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)**

06. \_\_\_\_\_ Achan’s father was: (a) Zerah; (b) Tereh; (c) Merah.
07. \_\_\_\_\_ The monument spoken of in this chapter was not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices, but for: (a) fun; (b) witness; (c) disposing trash.
08. \_\_\_\_\_ Who blessed the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and ½of Manasseh: (a) Eleazar; (b) Phinehas; (c) Joshua.
09. \_\_\_\_\_ Of one man it is said that he perished not alone in his iniquity, of whom is it said: (a) Phinehas; (b) Ibzod; (c) Achan.

10. \_\_\_\_\_ The Trans-Jordan tribes thought that the other tribes in Canaan would cause their own children to cease from: (a) crossing the river; (b) fearing the Lord; (c) being protected.

**Fill in the Blanks**

11. "...Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for \_\_\_\_\_ offering..."  
 12. "God \_\_\_\_\_ that we should \_\_\_\_\_ against the Lord..."  
 13. "...the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at \_\_\_\_\_, to go up to \_\_\_\_\_ against them."  
 14. "...for it shall be a \_\_\_\_\_ between us that the Lord is God."  
 15. "But take \_\_\_\_\_ heed to do the commandment and the law..."

*Each Question is worth 7 Points*

**My Score is:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Answers will be found on next week's handout*

**ANSWERS to Lesson 01-79 ...** [01—True, Josh 12:10; 02—True, Josh 10:32; 03—False, Josh 12:2; 04—False, Josh 11:13; 05—True, Josh 12:24; 06—b, Josh 11:9; 07—b, Josh 11:15; 08—c, Josh 11:22; 09—c, Josh 12:9; 10—b, Josh 10:40; 11—fought, Josh 10:42; 12—sand, Josh 11:4; 13—war, long, Josh 11:18; 14—Lord, harden, Josh 11:20; 15—inheritance, Josh 11:23.]

## VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. **...Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you...** (Josh 22:2). This was honorable service indeed. From a reading of the Numbers 32:18, it appears that the men of these 2 ½ tribes had not settled in with their families at all up to this point. They had been allowed to build houses and sheepfolds for them (Num 32:16) on the other side of the Jordan, but these fighting men from the 2 ½ tribes continued their work for the six or seven years it took to gain control of the land west of Jordan. These men had done well in keeping their promises related to their inheritance.
2. **And when the children of Israel heard say,...** (Josh 22:11). This is one of the most troublesome problems that ever exists among any large group of people. The thing that they had heard was NOT TRUE. What people were saying about the "altar" was a falsehood, yet a civil war nearly began because of it. Jumping to hasty conclusions before gathering all of the evidence is a very dangerous and destructive matter, as can be learned from this incident. It is easy to understand how they might get so stirred up about what they had heard in view of what had happened at Ai because of Achan's sin at Jericho. However, there could very easily have been much bloodshed and loss of innocent life were it not for the fact that a delegation was sent to gather the facts and be sure first.
3. **The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knoweth,...** (Josh 22:22-29). Whoever was the spokesperson for the 2 ½ tribes did a masterful job of courteously and kindly dealing with the misunderstanding here. Patiently they waited as these very serious accusations were hurled at them (actually it would have been quite insulting). Then they used great GRACE in their speech to calm down the situation. This is in the category of the Book of Philemon in the New Testament as far as the kindness of the speech is concerned.
4. **And when Phinehas the priest,... heard the words... it pleased them** (Josh 22:30). This was the proper reaction. This disaster turned into a good thing. The desire of the 2 ½ tribes was not to rebel against God, and the other tribes were thankful for it and rejoicing in it. Here is a time when all of the twelve tribes wanted to feel connected and

united together, and this is always a wonderful result and pleasant to observe. Consider the value of unity as depicted in Psalm 133.

**VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.**

W S X C D E E R F V B G E D C V F R T B  
 B N M V C R X Z T A Y H N M J U I K E L  
 O P I K A M J U Y L H N B G T R F H V C  
 D E W P S X C D E T R F V B G T O Y H N  
 M J E U I K O L P A Y H N B G L R G F V  
 C R D E W S X Z A R C D E R D T G E B G  
 P T G B V F R E D C X S W T Q A Z N V E  
 B G T Y H N T B G T E D H C X E Y E K M  
 B G T R F R C D E W V E B T G B V R E O  
 D C V F A R T G B N P Y H N M J U A I C  
 X Z A P B N M J T A R F V C D E W T V O  
 Y H O N M J U I T Y H N B G T R F I V T  
 C N D E R F V T B G T Y H N N H Y O U E  
 C D E R F V E B G T S B G T S Y M N N M  
 B G T R F R V C D E U W S X S Q A S Z I  
 X S W E N D C V F R R T G B E N H Y U T  
 N M J U Y H N B G T E R F V N E D C X N  
 S W E D M A D E C V T F R T T B N H Y I  
 T G B V F R E D C E F W S X I T G B N Y  
 Y U C H I L D R E N A F V R W E C D R L

*[The highlighted words can be found above. They may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. DRL]*

**Joshua 22:26-28**--<sup>26</sup>Therefore we said, Let us now **prepare** to build us an **altar**, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice: <sup>27</sup>But *that it may be* a **witness** between us, and you, and our **generations after us**, that we might do the service of the LORD before him with our burnt offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your **children** may not say to our children **in time to come**, Ye have **no part** in the LORD. <sup>28</sup>Therefore said we, that it shall be, when they should *so* say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say *again*, **Behold the pattern** of the altar of the LORD, which our fathers **made**, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it *is* a witness between us and you.