



Week Eleven: Joshua 22

“Witness”

Study Guide for the week of
January 8, 2023

Eastern Tribes Return Home - Joshua 22:1-34

Some questions to answer and discuss:

1. How do you think you would feel if you were falsely accused of a crime?
2. How had the eastern tribes been blessed by their obedience to the Lord? (22:8)
3. What did the eastern tribes build near the Jordan River? (22:10)
4. Why did the Israelites plan to go to war against the eastern tribes? (22:11-12)
5. What assumptions did the Israelites make about the eastern tribes' behavior? (22:12)
6. How did the Israelites resolve their dispute with the eastern tribes? (22:13-14)
7. How did the Israelites react to the news that the eastern tribes were not rebellious toward the Lord? (22:33)
8. What lessons can this story teach us about resolving conflicts?
9. What does this passage reveal about the consequences of one person's sin on others?
10. What could you do to resolve the conflict peacefully the next time you have a misunderstanding with a friend or family member?

Life Application Bible Notes

22:2-4 Before the conquest had begun, these tribes were given land on the east side of the Jordan River. But before they could settle down, they had to first promise to help the other tribes conquer the land on the west side (Numbers 32:20-22). They had patiently and diligently carried out their promised duties. Joshua commended them for doing just that. At last they were permitted to return to their families and build their cities. Follow-through is vital in God's work. Beware of the temptation to quit early and leave God's work undone.

22:5 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 about 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.

22:11-34 When the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh built an altar near the Jordan River, the rest of Israel feared that these tribes were starting their own religion and rebelling against God. But before beginning an all-out war, Phinehas led a delegation to learn the truth, following the principle taught in Deuteronomy 13:12-18. He was prepared to negotiate rather than fight if a battle was not necessary. When he learned that the altar was for a memorial rather than for pagan sacrifice, war was averted and unity restored. As nations and as individuals, we would benefit from a similar approach to resolving conflicts. Assuming the worst about the intentions of others only brings trouble. Israel averted the threat of civil war by asking before assaulting. Beware of reacting before you hear the whole story.

22:17 For the story of how Israel turned away from God and began to worship Baal at Peor, see Numbers 25:1-18.

22:20 For the story of Achan, a man who allowed greed to get the best of him, see chapter 7.

22:26-28 The tribes were concerned that, without some visible sign of unity between the people on the two sides of the Jordan, future generations might see conflict between them. The altar, patterned after the altar of the Lord, was to remind these people that they all worshiped the same God. Often we need to be reminded of the faith of our fathers. What actions demonstrate to your children your reliance on God and remind them of what he has done? Take the time to establish family traditions that will help your children remember.

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