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**Lessons from the Book
and Life of Joshua
Chapter 22**

Review Scripture:

1 Corinthians 15:57-58 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

Current Scripture:

Ephesians 1:18-19a I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the boundless greatness of His power toward us who believe.

Introduction: The tribe of Levi received their cities which were promised to them by God. Originally, both Levi and Simeon did not receive inheritances of land because of the sin they committed against the Schechemites. However, the tribe of Levi's judgment turned into a blessing because one from their lineage, Moses, turned to God and redemption is received. The tribe's punishment is changed into the reward of the priesthood. This tribe is given 48 Levitical cities so that their influence as priests, teachers and spiritual leaders of the nation would be distributed throughout the promised land. From the tribe, one family had been responsible for the items within the tabernacle, one family for the screen of the doorway, and the other for the tools and equipment used to hold of the tabernacle. Each had physical responsibilities which speaks to our responsibilities as the chosen priesthood for the world we have been called to serve. The Levites were our example of how we are to serve the Lord and serve the people He has

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called us to. Whatever circumstance we find ourselves in, we must trust that it was allowed by the Father and that our obedience to that purpose will determine our success in this lifetime.

- 1. Joshua 22: 1-4** Joshua thanks the eastern tribes for their assistance.
 - a. These eastern tribes had already taken possession of their land under the leadership of Moses. Numbers 32:16-19, 31-33.
 - b. It had been seven years since they came alongside Joshua and their fellow children of Israel to help fight and conquer their enemies.
 - c. They were obedience to what Moses commanded, and what Joshua commanded.
 - d. “Their aid had not only been valuable as strengthening Joshua’s force, but still more so as a witness of the unbroken oneness of the nation, and of the sympathy which the tribes already settled bore to the others.” (Maclaren)
 - e. Their vow had been fulfilled and they were able to return home.
 - f. Do you keep your word? Do you fulfill the vows you have spoken?
- 2. Joshua 22:5-6** The blessing.
 - a. There is a specific order in the words spoken by Joshua.
 - i. We should take care of HEAR God.
 - ii. We should then give Him our love.
 - iii. We will then walk in obedience.

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- b. To mix up this order can cause heresy (loving without hearing) or legalism (obeying without loving).
 - c. “The verbs in Joshua 22:5 give a comprehensive picture of what a proper relationship to God was to include: to love God, to walk in all his ways, to obey his commands, to hold fast (or cling) to him, and to serve him. These were to be done not as a matter of external conformity but ‘with all your heart and all your soul.’” (Howard)
 - d. In order for these tribes to fulfil the command given to them. they needed the Lord’s blessing on them to accomplish it.
- Joshua 22:7-9** The armies leave with incredible surplus.
- a. These tribes’ obedience to the Lord in serving their fellow brothers was rewarded.
 - i. it was a reward not only for those who came and fought, but also the ones who stayed home to assist and keep safe the families who sent soldiers.
 - b. It is important to note that their obedience was rewarded with material possessions.
- Joshua 22:10-12** The impressive altar.
- a. This altar was significant not only because of the size, but because of the meaning of an altar in those days to Israel and pagans.
 - b. It was enormous in size to function as a witness to the all could see.

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- c. As soon as the rest of Israel heard about the altar, there was an immediate reaction.
 - i. The only authorized altar for sacrifice was at the tabernacle, which was placed at Shiloh.
 - ii. The only true altar is God's son on the cross.
- d. Their readiness to fight this battle shows the courage of the western tribes to fight even their own brothers on behalf of God's truth and holiness.

5. Joshua 22:13-20 The confrontation.

- a. The high priest, Phinehas led the group to correct the error of the eastern tribes.
- b. This personal confrontation of those who they thought were wrong showed an important characteristic of God- wisdom and love.
- c. Deuteronomy 13:14.
- d. Phinehas confronts the tribes and shares the leadership's thoughts on what their intentions for building the altar were.
 - i. The children of Israel were not permitted to worship God in any way they pleased, they had to worship in a way that pleased HIM. John 4:24.
- e. Phinehas reminded the eastern tribes of the rebellion at Peor.
 - i. Israel's men had sex with Moabite women, and gave themselves over to the worship of the Moabite gods, which caused a plague, killing 24,000 people.

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- ii. He was the one who stopped the plague by taking a stand for righteousness. Numbers 25:6-9.
 - f. Phinehas knew that the sin of these tribes would reflect and affect the whole nation. The western tribes were not going to budge against the truth.
 - g. Phinehas was willing to give up the eastern lands, if the tribes thought them to be unclean, so that he could bring his brothers back into a right relationship with God.
 - i. They were all willing to sacrifice in order to see their brothers free from this sin.
 - ii. Most churches preach against sin, kick people out when they've failed, but rarely will be willing to pay a price to help their brethren walk rightly before God.
 - h. Phinehas gave a second example of the wages of sin- the sin of Achan.
 - i. His sin caused the children of Israel to lose the battle at Ai and 36 of their soldiers.
- 6. Joshua 22:21-29** The eastern tribes respond.
- a. The tribes first appealed to God's knowledge of their heart and their intention, and Him knowing was all that matters.
 - b. The tribes also recognize the rightness in the challenging of the building of the impressive altar.
 - i. Didn't want any accommodations. Instead they believed that if they were guilty, they should be judged.

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- c. “The defense is passionate, and this is reflected in the syntax. It is choppy in places, and much repetition is found in these verses. It reflects the agitated state of mind in which the Transjordan tribes found themselves, and we can easily imagine them stumbling breathlessly (and perhaps even indignantly) over their words in order to clarify the matter and justify themselves.” (Howard)
 - d. The eastern tribes explain that because of their distance from the center of worship in Israel, they built the altar as a memorial.
 - e. They built an impressive altar that would last so that their descendants would stay connected to their faith of everyone worshipping the same God.
 - f. “The altar’s location should have been a clue from the beginning as to its purpose. Significantly, the Transjordan tribes did not build it on their side of the Jordan, but across the river from where they would live. It served little useful purpose to them there; for it to have been used regularly to offer sacrifices, it would need to have been east of the river.” (Howard)
- 7. Joshua 22:30-31** The explanation is accepted.
- a. Phinehas deserves credit for his willingness to hear them out and not rush to judgement unnecessarily.
 - b. Phinehas acknowledged the Lord was among them because unity had been restored. Psalm 133:1.
- 8. Joshua 22:32-34** The matter is resolved.
- a. Everyone was glad that peace was restored amongst the tribes.

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- b. The altar received a proper name for the function for which it was created.
9. What we, as God's people should learn from this story:
- a. It is right to respond with a concern for God's holiness.
 - b. It is right to respond with directness and clarity.
 - c. It is right to respond with the courage to confront in love.
 - d. It is right to respond with an attempt to reconcile before fighting.
 - e. It is right to be willing to sacrifice to help those believed to be in error; people should not be confronted if there is no willingness to help.
 - f. It is right to see the situation from the perspective of the other person.
 - g. It is right to decide to believe the best of one another.