

221102-4 Jos 22, Gilead's Warriors Dismissed & Raise the Altar of Ed–CThurman

Since Israel descended upon the plains of Moab at the end of their 40-yr. sojourn they began warring against the nations of the Gentiles. As result they began possessing much of the land that the LORD promised to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. With those wars came also the spoils of cities and villages, flocks and herds, fields and vineyards, wood, gold, silver, brass and iron. Chapters 20 and 21 is an account of forty-eight cities that Israel shall dedicate to the Levities, the sons of Kohoth (which includes the sons of Aaron) Gershon and Merari. Of these forty-eight cities six of them are constituted as cities of refuge. Three of these cities shall be on the east side of the Jordan River, and three on the west side. On each side there will be a city situated in the north, center, and south of the land. These cities are given to provide refuge to any Israelites, stranger, or traveler than becomes involved in the accidental death of another. To any of these cities the manslayer (as he is called though he shed blood accidentally) may seek refuge from the avenger of blood.

Now, though three cities of refuge had been dedicated on the eastern side by Moses before he died, that was contingent on keeping a promise. If the warriors which want land on the eastern side of Jordan will help their brethren take their possession on the western side then at the end of the campaign Israel will have land on both sides of Jordan. Otherwise all of the twelve tribes of Israel must come into Canaan together. Chapters 18, 19 is an account of the final disposition of land to the remaining seven tribes west of the Jordan River. Chapters 20, 21 is an account of all forty-eight of the Levites cities with their suburbs, which includes the cities of refuge. This chapter (ch.22) accounts for the dismissal of the hosts of Gilead to return to their land, and what they did at the Jordan River when they crossed over.

Chapter 22

Joshua dismisses the warriors of the three tribes east of the Jordan River (vss.1-6)

1 ¶ Then Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh,

After at least 21 yrs. of conflict, since Israel crossed the Jordan River, Joshua called for the chiefs of the warriors of Gilead to meet with him. Very likely they were encamped around Shiloh where the tabernacle was now erected.

2 And said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you:

And what Joshua means when he says that they have kept all that Moses commanded and obey him is explained by the following statement.

3 Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God.

Joshua is referring to the arrangement that these three tribes made earlier when Moses was yet alive. The arrangement was that in order for them to inherit land on the eastern side of the Jordan they, i.e. their men of war, must help the men of war of the other tribes take possession of the land on the western side. (Read Nu.32.28-33)

4 And now the LORD your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side Jordan.

5 But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Deu.6.4 ¶ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

(Read Deu.11.22-28, For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments; 13.12-18, to destroy the apostate.)

teach them diligently to thy children – Note: Parents, of all people, have an obligation to teach their children. That obligation does not stop because they have come into adulthood. When a child, even an adult child, begins to err it is the parent's duty to correct them.

De 21:20 And they (the father and mother) shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. (Gluttony and drunkenness is not a baby or child. This is an adult.

So the question is, Are parents ever relieved of the obligation to correct their children? If anyone knows of a text that says otherwise please share that with me. The parent should be among the first person to speak up when the child begins to err from a good course of life, and if a Christian, in faith and practice. Their Christian friends should also speak up, and of course their pastors should. Listen, if you are a Christian and friend to another Christian you have a duty to correct them when they sin and err. What kind of a friend am I if I cannot say something to my brother or sister in Christ when they err? Parents, if your child should stray, you bear the responsibility to teach them otherwise.

So Joshua warns these men before they depart to their homes to be diligent to be *doers* of the word of God, *But take diligent heed to do ...*

6 So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away: and they went unto their tents.

Explaining that Manasseh has land on both sides of Jordan

7 Now to the one half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given possession in Bashan: but unto the other half thereof gave Joshua among their brethren on this side Jordan westward.

The children of Manasseh through Machir (Jair & Nobah) have the land on the east of Jordan. (cf. Nu.32.39, 40) The rest of the tribe of Manasseh, descended from Machir's son Gilead inherited their lot in Canaan. (cf. Jos.17.1, 2, 5)

***And when Joshua sent them away also unto their tents, then he blessed them,
8 And he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and
with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron,
and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your
brethren.***

Through the war effort the soldiers had accumulated great wealth. But Joshua would have them to remember the word of the Lord concerning dividing the spoils with their brethren that had remained home to watch the families, the houses, the flocks, herds, fields, houses, etc., etc., etc.

The whole lot of the spoils were to be split into two parts; one for the warrior and the other for their brethren not involved in the conflict. The men of war were to give 1/500th part to the sons of Aaron, and in turn the congregation would give 1/50th part to the Levites. Now the spoils under consideration are only man and beasts. The gold, silver and such appear to be left to voluntariness. (cf. dividing man and beast to the brethren, Nu.31.25-30; voluntariness, 21-24, 49-51)

***9 And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of
Manasseh returned,***

(first to their camp to gather their stuff.)

***and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which is in the land of
Canaan, to go unto the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession,
whereof they were possessed,***

(already)

according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

and departed from the children of Israel – They were all the children of Israel. This only means that they departed from their brethren on this side the river to go to their brethren on the other side. But the use of the term *children of Israel* suggests a schism. This becomes evident as we read on through the text.

to go unto the country of Gilead – Gilead is a term that now defines the whole land on the other side of Jordan.

10 ¶ And when they came unto the borders of Jordan,

borders, a Hebrew fem. noun גְּלִילָה, tss. *borders, coasts, country*;
Jos.13.2; 22.10, 11

that are in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan, a great altar to see to.

(lit. 'to the sight,' an obvious altar to be seen)

to see to, לִמְרֹאֶה, of the verb רָאָה, rah-ah, tss. *to see*; this form of the verb לִמְרֹאֶה, is found in Ge.2.9 and tss. *to the sight*.

11 And the children of Israel **heard say, Behold, the**
(on the west of Jordan)

children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar over against the land of Canaan, in the borders of Jordan, at opposite

the passage of the children of Israel.

12 And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of
(this altar)

the children of Israel **gathered themselves**
(probably referring to the men of war)

together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them.

So the report was that when the men of war of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the one-half tribe of Manasseh went home they stopped on the other side of the Jordan and built an altar. That altar was perceived as making a statement that we which live in Gilead will do our own sacrificing, through our own Levitical priesthood, in our own worship, all around our own altar. This is how the children of Israel west of Jordan interpreted their their

action. This is a very serious breach in the nation that must be dealt with severely to avoid the fury of the LORD (this idea will be followed up on in v.16).

13 And the children of Israel sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest,

They didn't send Joshua. Remember that Joshua is old and stricken (אִב, bōh, gone) in years. Phinehas is son of Eleazar and grandson to Aaron. (cf. Ex.6.25) Phinehas' age at this time is unknown. He must be just over 60 yrs. of age, but not more than 80. All we know is that he must have been under 20 yrs. of age at the rebellion at Kadesh Barnea. For the episode given of his zeal in Nu.25.7, 8 he must have been young man then. Given the 40 year sojourn, 21+ yrs. history in the book of Joshua we say Phinehas was over 60 but under 80.

14 And with him ten princes, of each chief house a prince throughout all the tribes of Israel; and each one was an head of the house of their fathers among the thousands of Israel.

Israel sends Phinehas and one prince of every tribe to confront these supposedly apostate tribes.

15 And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying,

16 Thus saith the whole congregation of the LORD, What trespass is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that ye have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the LORD?

17 Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD,

Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us – In so many words, 'Was the judgment we received for the sin at Peor not enough that you'd break away from us to serve another god? For this 24,000 people died.

Nu.25.1 ¶ And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

2 And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

3 And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

Nu.31.15 And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive?

16 Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.

from which we are not cleansed until this day, seems to say that they acknowledge that this bent to sin against God is still with them.

18 But that ye must turn away this day from following the LORD? and it will be, seeing ye rebel to day against the LORD, that to morrow he will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel.

The children of Israel were commanded to be proactive to put away apostasy in all their people. The principle for this is found in Deuteronomy chapter 13. It doesn't matter if the apostasy involves a single person, a prophet or dreamer, a brother, son, daughter, wife or your friend, or a whole city it is to be destroyed from their midst. It is that or else incur the fierceness of His anger.

Due.13.17 ... that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and shew thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee, and multiply thee, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers ...

We can't do much about others outside of this congregation. It's very difficult to communicate to others the truths of the word of God when once they have begun to turn away. But I think we have a responsibility to one another to keep ourselves checked against error in living and error in doctrine.

19 Notwithstanding, if the land of your possession be unclean, then pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the LORD, wherein the LORD'S tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us:

If it is that you can't serve the LORD over there because the land is so polluted, then by all means come over here and be with us where the tabernacle is.

but rebel not against the LORD, nor rebel against us, in building you an altar beside the altar of the LORD our God.

20 Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his iniquity.

Jos 7:5 And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

...

24 And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

25 And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.

21 ¶ Then the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasse answered, and said unto the heads of the thousands of Israel,

22 The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if it be in

rebellion,

disobedience, provocation, bitterness

(מַרְדָּ, meh-red masc. noun)

or if in transgression against the LORD, (save us not this day,)
trespass, falsehood, grievousness
(מַעַל, mah-[g]al, masc. noun)

23 That we have built us an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer thereon burnt offering or meat offering, or if to offer peace offerings thereon, let the LORD himself require it;

24 And if we have not rather done it for fear of this thing, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the LORD God of Israel?

25 For the LORD hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben and children of Gad; ye have no part in the LORD: so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the LORD.

26 Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice:

27 But that it may be a witness (עֵד, [g]ehd) 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.

28 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

pattern, תַבְנִיט, tav-neeth, fem. noun, also tss. likeness, similitude, figure, form.

of the altar of the LORD, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness (עֵד, [g]ehd) between us and you.

Brethren! note the shape, the appearance, the form of this altar. It is not for offering sacrifices to God.

29 God forbid (חַל־לֵהֱלֹךְ, chah-lee-lah, Far be it) that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn this day from following the LORD, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for meat offerings, or for sacrifices, beside the altar of the LORD our God that is before his tabernacle.

altar, מִזְבֵּחַ, miz-beh-ach, a masc. noun found 15 times in the book of Joshua. 12 of these times are in this chapter. Twelve is the number for government. This is the government of God for Israel to worship Him only by the sacrifices offered upon the brazen altar.

30 ¶ And when Phinehas the priest, and the princes of the congregation and heads of the thousands of Israel which were with him, heard the
(the ten [v.14])

words that the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the children of Manasseh spake, it pleased them.

31 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, This day we perceive that the LORD is among us, because ye have not
(to bless rather than to curse)

committed this trespass against the LORD: now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD.

They were accountable to one another. Which is better? For them to ignore the potential problem and potentially expose the whole nation to the chastening of the LORD or to set aside the misunderstanding by directly confronting the issue?

No one likes confrontation. But sometimes we ought to ask to clear the air of misunderstanding. Did I hear you right or did I misunderstand what you said.

32 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the princes, returned from the children of Reuben, and from the children of Gad, out of the land of Gilead, unto the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought them word again.

33 And the thing pleased the children of Israel; and the children of Israel blessed God, and did not intend to go up against them in battle, to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt.

34 And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar Ed (עֵד, [g]ehd): for it shall be a witness between us that the LORD is God.

