

## Message #37

## Joshua 22:10-34

If you have ever tried to do something for the Lord and been misunderstood, criticized or falsely accused, you will really be able to relate to this passage. There are times when people shoot off their mouths and wound people deeply. It happens to women in the church. It happens to men in the church and it can even happen to children in the church. People who just start verbally talking and making irrational and irresponsible judgments without getting the facts end up causing deep hurt.

That is exactly what was happening here in Joshua. The 2 ½ tribes were finally heading home to the other side of the Jordan. They had been challenged by Joshua to make certain that they held fast to God and served Him with all their hearts (22:5). That challenge really took.

As they were traveling back to their homes on the other side of the Jordan, they were worried that future generations could lose sight of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They had been truly touched by what Joshua told them. After all, they did not live in the Promised Land like the rest of Israel and it would be easy for them to forget about God.

So **verse 10** informs us that the 2 ½ tribes decided to put up an altar. **This was not an altar on which to sacrifice animals; but one that would be a visible monument dedicated to God.** This would be something their children could see. It would be something that would speak to future generations about the faithfulness of God and His Word.

The lesson to see from this section is this:

**GOD'S PEOPLE MUST ALWAYS ASCERTAIN THE TRUE FACTS BEFORE JUMPING TO FALSE CONCLUSIONS AND STATING THINGS THAT ARE NOT TRUE OR ELSE TERRIBLE DESTRUCTIVE THINGS WILL OCCUR.**

**This is not promoting some false leniency or suspension of judgment philosophy. It is promoting factual judgment.** Before we make judgments we must get the facts.

The entire nation of Israel almost went to war with 2 ½ tribes over a misunderstanding. They were inventing things that were not true and they were talking about things that were not true.

There are five simple historical parts to this story:

**HISTORICAL PART #1** – The 2 ½ tribes are moved to build a monumental altar in faithful response to Joshua's challenge. **22:10**

What these people did was build an altar on the on the west side of the Jordan as a visible monument for their children (22:26-28). It was a large altar in its appearance and it was an altar that could be seen from a great distance.

This must have been an impressive structure. Archeologists have discovered the ruins of an altar near the Jordan and it is impressive.

The reason why they did this was they wanted to do something to keep their children mindful of God. They were faithfully responding to Joshua's message, but the reaction they will get from others was not what they expected.

Instead of the people being positive because of the great moving of God in their lives, they were very upset. I know a story of a woman who came to faith in Jesus Christ who had been saved out of a sordid past. She started telling everyone. One would think the whole church would be thrilled. But some became very upset. To their way of thinking, who was she to tell others about being right with God?

You may be certain if you try to do something for God, there will be those who will put some evil spin on it.

**HISTORICAL PART #2** – The sons of Israel call a congregational meeting for the purpose of going to war with the 2 ½ tribes. **22:11-12**

We are not sure how the sons of Israel got wind of this, but they did (**verse 11**). Satan is in the business of twisting things in order to make them look different than the way they really are.

**Now there is a positive here in that the Sons of Israel were not going to allow anyone to do something idolatrous.** They were dead serious about obeying God and God alone. But they don't have any facts. **They are basing what they believe and do on their convictions, which are wrong.**

What they did was call a secret congregational meeting and not one person at this meeting knows the actual facts of the case. Do you see that? You have a massive congregational meeting and everyone there assumes the worst and they do not even bother to ascertain reality.

Israel considers this to be a real breach of purity and a moving into apostasy. We must be very careful to always get the true facts before we form our conclusions.

**HISTORICAL PART #3** – The sons of Israel send Phinehas and ten chiefs to confront the 2 ½ tribes. **22:13-20**

They do not send them there to commend them for doing something for God; they send them there to confront and condemn them.

Now before going to war at least they decided to have a sensible inquiry. This is an amazing confrontation. There are so many wrong assumptions made here that if it weren't so real, it would be funny. There are six confrontation points brought out against people trying to do something right for God:

**Confrontation Point #1** - The whole congregation is against you. **22:16a**

Remember, these 2 ½ tribes have not done one thing wrong and they learn that the whole congregation views them as unfaithful rebels. Think of this. They are trying to honor God and they are told everyone is against them.

**Confrontation Point #2** - You are guilty of committing an unfaithful act of idolatry against God. **22:16b**

This is absolutely false. They are honoring God, not being unfaithful to God. These leaders accuse them of turning away from following God. Here these tribes were doing something to see to it that God was esteemed in the years to come and they are falsely accused of doing just the opposite. This is all emotional and none of it is factual.

**Confrontation Point #3** - Your sin is as bad as the one committed years ago in Peor. **22:17-18a**

This particular episode is described in Numbers 25:1-9. Israel fell into immoral and idolatrous worship of the false god of Baal of Peor. They got involved with Moabite women and as a result, 24,000 were killed by a plague.

This was a terrible episode in Israel's history and the effects were still seen and known. These people are telling the 2 ½ tribes that this was where they were at. They do not have a clue as to what is really happening, so they are making false allegations and they are using the Bible as a basis.

**Confrontation Point #4** - You will make God angry with the entire nation. **22:18b**

There was absolutely no truth to this. God was not angry with what they were doing. In fact, God was honored by what they are doing. They are just assuming this about God and they are giving warnings to go with it.

**Confrontation Point #5** - You need to move to our side of the Jordan and not build an altar. **22:19**

Now this was the land that Moses, by decree of God, had given to these 2 ½ tribes (22:2, 4). So here come the leaders of Israel and they are now advising that these 2 ½ tribes do something totally contrary to God's Word. Their counsel is exactly the opposite of the Word of God.

When people get emotional and irrational, it is just a matter of time until they will believe and say what is unbiblical. They misunderstood everything and just started making things up.

**Confrontation Point #6** - Your sin is just like Achan's sin at Jericho and he perished. **22:20**

Now they take this to a whole new level. Achan had blatantly rebelled against the Word of God and God executed Him. They are threatening these 2 ½ tribes with the same thing.

**The truth is God is very pleased with what these 2 ½ tribes are doing even though these people are falsely telling them God is angry with them.**

Think of this. They are making all of these assumptions and allegations and they are not true. What a sad commentary on the people. They believe a lie. They don't even bother to get the true facts.

**HISTORICAL PART #4** – The 2 ½ tribes respond to the allegations. **22:21-29**

After listening to the nonsense allegations, the 2 ½ tribes decided to respond. There were three responses:

**Response #1** - God knows this is not an act of rebellion. **22:22**

Their response is we are not rebelling against God or His Word.

**Response #2** - If this had been an act of rebellion, God would have held them accountable.  
**22:23**

These people were not afraid of God's judgment because they knew they had done nothing wrong.

**Response #3** - This altar was constructed as a monument for future generations. **22:24-29**

Someone has said the severest test of faithfulness is the test of endurance. There are three altar facts they present:

**(Altar Fact #1)** - The altar would be a monument that shows Israelites on both sides of the Jordan that we worship the same God. **22:24-27**

**(Altar Fact #2)** - The altar was not built for sacrifices but for a sign. **22:28**

Our children need to see God's church. They need to remember it and worship at it.

**(Altar Fact #3)** - The 2 ½ tribes would never construct a sacrificial altar to replace the one at the tabernacle. **22:29**

**HISTORICAL PART #5** – The sons of Israel respond to truth. **22:30-34**

At least when this group heard the truth they rectified their mistake. They do not stay in their proud rebellion. They admit they have been hasty and they respond in four ways:

**Way #1** - They were pleased with what they heard. **22:30**

**Way #2** - They agreed to the truth and admitted the 2 ½ tribes had been faithful. **22:31**

**Way #3** - They went back and told the truth to the whole nation. **22:32**

**Way #4** - The entire nation was pleased. **22:33**

The nation finally calmed down. What a mess. What a waste of time this was. This all occurred because the people did not get the facts.

A tongue is a dangerous weapon. A tongue without true facts is a satanic weapon. It is capable of doing some very destructive things. Before you make your judgments, get all the facts.