

Joshua 22

FIRST DAY: Introduction

There is an old saying, *Never judge a book by its cover*. This adage conveys the mistake people make when they judge based only on what they see outwardly at a given time. Another adage states, *There is more than meets the eye*. The validity of these sayings is also seen in the Bible. God told the prophet Samuel not to judge by outward appearance, *for the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart* (1 Samuel 16:7). Proverbs 18:13 warns, *He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him*. In Joshua 22, the danger of judging by appearances is clearly portrayed through the events that transpired among the tribes of Israel. Destruction was averted only by pausing before judgment, interceding, and listening to the heart of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

In our own lives, we can appreciate that God is slow to anger and abounds in mercy. He sent Jesus to intercede on our behalf to save us from destruction.

*Ask God to help you to be slow to judge
and quick to listen, intercede, and pray.*

SECOND DAY: Read Joshua 22:1–9

1. After the conquest of the Promised Land, *Joshua called the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh* (Joshua 22:1). Use his farewell address to them in Joshua 22:2–4 to note and comment on:
 - a. Their obedience (verse 2)

(1) Recall that these tribes were allowed to take their inheritance on the opposite side of the Jordan if they did what Moses and Joshua *commanded* them. Use Numbers 32:20–22 to summarize this command.

b. Their faithfulness (verse 3)

(1) By staying to help their *brethren*, these tribes had to be away from their families for seven years. What do you find admirable about this?

c. Their reward (verse 4)

2. Joshua then exhorted the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh concerning their relationship with God. Use Joshua 22:5 to fill in the action words below:

But take careful heed to _____ the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to _____ the LORD your God, to _____ in all His ways, to _____ His commandments, to _____ to Him, and to _____ Him with all your heart and with all your soul.

a. Which of these actions most speaks to you today concerning your relationship with the Lord?

b. Why is it necessary to take *careful heed* to this exhortation?

3. After speaking to these tribes, *Joshua blessed them* and they returned to their inheritance (Joshua 22:6–7). From Joshua 22:8, summarize his blessing on these tribes.

a. Numbers 6:22–27 records the blessing the priests were to speak over God’s people. As you read this blessing, comment on God’s desire to bless His people.

(1) What does Ephesians 1:3 convey about God’s blessing?

(2) Take a moment to write a blessing for another believer.

4. As the tribes departed from Shiloh, where the tabernacle of the Lord was established, they left to possess their allotment. According to Joshua 22:9c, by what means had they *obtained* their possession?

- a. What does this minister to you about the way to obtain God's promises?

THIRD DAY: Read Joshua 22:10–20

1. Having left Shiloh, what did the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh do on their return? Joshua 22:10

2. According to Joshua 22:11, what did they hear *someone* say?

- a. What did the *children of Israel* do when they *heard* this? (verse 12)

(1) The only place sanctioned for sacrifices was the altar at the tabernacle in Shiloh (Deuteronomy 12:13–14). How does this explain Israel's strong concern?

3. Who did they send to confront Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh? Joshua 22:13–14

a. Why do you think this was wise? See also Proverbs 18:13.

b. Use Joshua 22:3–4 to underscore why the rulers needed to exercise caution before judgment.

4. In Joshua 22:15 the leaders *spoke with* Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. Use Joshua 22:16–20 to note and remark on:

a. The accusation made (verse 16)

b. The examples given (verses 17, 20)

c. The consequences presented (verse 18)

(1) How does this speak to you about sin?

d. The solution suggested (verse 19)

(1) What do you think of this solution?

3. David Guzik says of Israel, *Their assembling for war demonstrated God's holiness, but their personal confrontation demonstrated God's love.*⁶ Link this with the following Scriptures to describe the right way to address other believers:

a. Galatians 6:1

b. 1 Thessalonians 5:14

c. 2 Thessalonians 3:15

d. 2 Timothy 2:24–26

e. James 5:19–20

(1) Use Romans 2:4 to identify God's attitude toward us.

(2) What attitude do you desire to have when dealing with other believers?

FOURTH DAY: Read Joshua 22:21–29

1. After hearing such a strong accusation, Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh *answered* the leaders (Joshua 22:21). To whom did they appeal as their witness? Joshua 22:22a

a. Why is this wise? See Hebrews 4:13.

2. What did Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh tell the Israelites to do if they had committed *treachery*? Joshua 22:22b–23

a. What does this convey about their attitude?

3. In Joshua 22:24–29, Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh explained their actions. Use these verses to identify the following:

a. Their motivation (verse 24a)

(1) Why is this **not** a good motivation for our actions?

b. Their concern (verses 24b–25)

(1) What does their concern suggest about their distrust?

c. Their solution (verse 26)

(1) Why was this **not** necessarily the best solution?

d. Their rationale (verses 27–28)

e. Their sincerity (verse 29)

4. How did their explanation shed a different light on their actions?

a. What lesson can you receive from their explanation?

5. Link this episode with Proverbs 29:25 and share your thoughts.

FIFTH DAY: Read Joshua 22:30–34

1. From Joshua 22:30 note the leaders' reaction to the words of the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh.
 - a. Why was it important that Phineas and the rulers listened to their defense?
 - (1) What does this indicate to you about listening? See also James 1:19–20.
2. According to Joshua 22:31a, what did Phineas *perceive*?
 - a. Why did he believe this? Joshua 22:31b
 - b. Use Joshua 22:31c to record what resulted from the actions of the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh.

(1) What lesson do you derive from this?

3. Phinehas and the leaders *brought back word* to the children of Israel concerning Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh (Joshua 22:32). From Joshua 22:33, note and comment on Israel's reaction to this news.

a. What do you find commendable about their reaction?

(1) How do you react when you realize you have misjudged someone?

4. Use Joshua 22:34 to expound on the name given to the *altar*.

a. What testimony would this altar now convey?

5. Describe the turnaround that took place after the rulers heard the reasoning of the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh.

SIXTH DAY: Review

1. Use your study this week in Joshua 22 to remark on:
 - a. The danger averted (verse 12)
 - b. Wrong assumptions (verse 16)
 - c. The truth (verse 22)
 - d. The outcome of intercession (verse 33)
2. With your lesson in mind, share a thought concerning the following:
 - a. Appearances

b. Sin

c. Conflict

d. Judgment

e. Reconciliation

f. Unity

g. Possessing God's Promises