



Serving God **in** the Land of Promise A Study on Joshua 22-24

Part I – Joshua 22: 1-8

Joshua's courage to trust and believe God brought him to a place where his obedience blessed a nation, a nation of God's people. Has it ever truly occurred to you that our individual and congregational courage to trust and believe God will bring us to a place where our obedience to God will bless not just our families, our neighborhoods, and our city but that OUR congregational, collective courage to trust and believe God will bring us to a place where our obedience to God will help shape a nation and the world! God did it once, He will do it again, and again, and again, and again... ad infinitum!

Earlier in the Book of Joshua, the two and a half tribes faithfully fulfilled their commitments to conquer the land with the remainder of the tribes of Israel. The preceding chapters also revealed and reinforced that the conquest of that which God had promised and what God had already given to the Nation of Israel was neither or easy. Israel coming to its own as landowners and leaders again was neither quick nor easy. It took a long time, there were battles, there was loss, yet through faith, trust, and obedience, Joshua and the people persisted! The two and a half tribes to which their land had been given, had families waiting for them back on the home front. They had fields that they had not planted and animals that had not tended waiting for them. Their wives, and children both younger and older awaited their return. The people from these two tribes hadn't had time to build their homes, plow their fields, or sow their new crops. It certainly would have been a temptation and understandable for them to make up their minds and go back when the conquest was partially done and to begin to live their lives on their own lands. But yet they



stayed, not until there was a break in the fighting but they stayed until the very end, when the battle was won! In the end it was not the two and a half tribes who announced their departure. Neither did they go to Joshua and ask permission to return home. They patiently stayed until they end. It was Joshua who took the initiative, who summoned them and tells them they can go home (Joshua 22: 5-6)! From these two and a half tribes, we learn both the importance of perseverance and keeping one's commitments even if it takes a long time to view the promise visually and physically and even when we are battle weary and battle scarred.

Joshua faithfully kept his word to these two and a half tribes. These tribes were a great resource to the entire Nation. In addition to continuing to help fight battles they could have helped the Israelites build their cities, plow their field, and sow their crops. But Joshua knew that they had the same work to do on their land. Some leaders might have shown bias and favored the larger majority group and asked the smaller "minority" tribes to stay longer in order to help the "majority" tribes. But Joshua was fair-minded. He treated the "different" tribes justly and without bias and favor. The heart of a God appointed leader continually rests on the wellbeing to all that God has entrusted to him or her. Not only that but Joshua had given his word that they could return when the mission was accomplished, and that time had come! Fairness and commitment to one's word prevailed. Joshua 22:1-6 says that Joshua blessed them and sent the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh back to their homes and families on the east side of the Jordan. Knowing that it would be a challenge for the two and a half tribes to continue serving God when they were apart from the rest of the Nation, Joshua persisted in exhorted them to continue to put God first. Joshua affirmed "you have kept all that Moses...commanded you. Yet only praise for past service was not sufficient. Joshua warns them to continue to be "very careful to observe the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you..."

- In what way had the two and a half tribes kept the commandment of the Lord?
- Why was the blessing of Joshua important for the two and a half tribes as they left the other tribes?
- What was the new priority the two and a half tribes now that they were separated from the remainder of the Nation?
- Have you ever received a new assignment from God? How did you see the hand of God in the transition?

- What reminders did Joshua give them before sending them away?

OTHER SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES

- ❖ Numbers 30:2 – When a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said.

- ❖ Psalm 89:34 – I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered.

- ❖ Identify two additional Old or New Testament scriptures to support the messages in Joshua 22: 1-8