

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – **Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221**; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Latest Studies” on the right side. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

The Cities of Refuge;

*Jos 20:1 The LORD also spoke to Joshua, saying,
Jos 20:2 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'Appoint for yourselves cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, (Ex. 21:13; Num. 35:6; Dt. 4:42, 19:12)*

Jos 20:3 that the slayer who kills a person accidentally or unintentionally may flee there; and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.

Jos 20:4 And when he flees to one of those cities, and stands at the entrance of the gate of the city, and declares his case in the hearing of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city as one of them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them.

Jos 20:5 Then if the avenger of blood pursues him, they shall not deliver the slayer into his hand, because he struck his neighbor unintentionally, but did not hate him beforehand.

Jos 20:6 And he shall dwell in that city until he stands before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the one who is high priest in those days. Then the slayer may return and come to his own city and his own house, to the city from which he fled.' "

Jos 20:7 So they appointed Kedesh (Holy, sanctuary) in Galilee, in the mountains of Naphtali, Shechem (shoulder, strength) in the mountains of Ephraim, and Kirjath Arba (which is Hebron – (fellowship) in the mountains of Judah.

Jos 20:8 And on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer (fortified place) in the wilderness on the plain, from the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth (Heights) in Gilead, from the tribe of Gad, and Golan (Exaltation) in Bashan, from the tribe of Manasseh.

Jos 20:9 These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwelt among them, that whoever killed a person accidentally might flee there, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood until he stood before the congregation.

Cities of the Levites;

Chapter 21:1 Then the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites came near to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the children of Israel.

Jos 21:2 And they spoke to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, "The LORD commanded through Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with their common-lands for our livestock."

Jos 21:3 So the children of Israel gave to the Levites from their inheritance, at the commandment of the LORD, these cities and their common-lands:

vs. 1-7 This is the fourth description of the Cities of Refuge - Ex.21; Num.35;Dt.4,19; Joshua. There is something significant and that it the Lord's view of the sanctity of life. A place of refuge! Two sides of one story – one incredibly difficult and one gracious. 6 six cities, **strategically placed, all within one day's journey of running**, from anywhere in Israel. Established because God had drawn a line between involuntary manslaughter and premeditated murder. If the former, there is a city of Refuge you could go to and be safe as long as one stayed within the city of Refuge. Capital punishment, **Gen. 9:6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.** Owe can see that in the Lord's sight, one human being has more value than the entire universe! Human life is so important to the Lord! **Mat 16:26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world (cosmos – universe), and loses his own soul?**

vs. 7-9 So they appointed Cities of Refuge, ("Holy, sanctuary) on the (shoulder, strength) is ("Fellowship") in the (fortified place) in the (Heights) is Exaltation). Six cities selected for cities of refuge. Strategically placed **Notice the beauty in these names when we apply them to our Refuge – Jesus Christ our Savior!**

We come to Him, who is:

Holy and righteous, our Sanctuary!

For strength – the government is on His shoulder!

For fellowship!

For protection!

To exalt Him!

Chapter 21 vs. 1-8 The Levites waited till the other tribes were provided for, before they preferred their claim to Joshua. They build their claim upon a very good foundation; not their own merits or services, but the Divine precept. The maintenance of ministers is not a thing left merely to the will of the people, that they may let them starve if they please; they which preach the gospel should live by the gospel, and should live comfortably.

Cities of Refuge were accessible and available as is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! The cities of refuge as a picture of Jesus. Points of similarity:

Both the Cities of Refuge and Jesus are within easy reach of the needy person; they were of no use unless someone could get to the place of refuge.

Both are open to all, not just the Israelite; no one needs to fear that they would be turned away from their place of refuge in their time of need.

Both became a place where the one in need would live; you didn't come to a city of refuge in time of need just to look around.

Both are the only alternative for the one in need; without this specific protection, they will be destroyed.

Both provide protection only within their boundaries; to go outside means death.

With both, full freedom comes with the death of the High Priest.

Note **two differences** between the refuge cities and our Jesus.

The cities of refuge only helped the innocent, but all, including the guilty can come to Jesus and find refuge.

Our refuge in Jesus is forever, not just for a season!

vs. 7-9 Cities of Refuge were strategically placed. Most likely all believers are strategically placed as well. **How faithful are you to the place where the Lord has placed you?**

Cities of Refuge



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INTERPRETATION

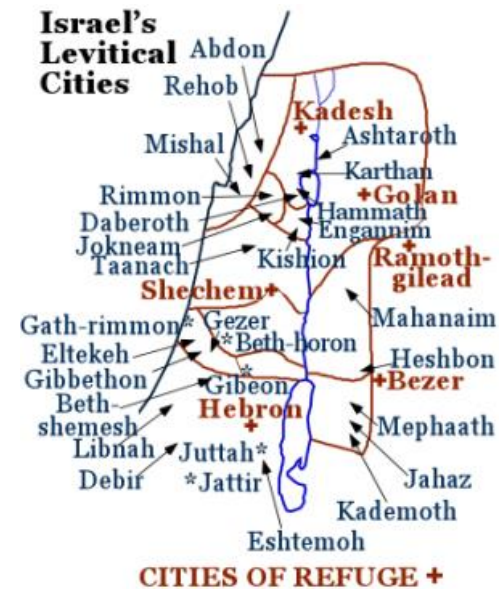
APPLICATION

Jos 21:4 Now the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites. And the children of Aaron the priest, who were of the Levites, had thirteen cities by lot from the tribe of Judah, from the tribe of Simeon, and from the tribe of Benjamin.
Jos 21:5 The rest of the children of Kohath had ten cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Ephraim, from the tribe of Dan, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh.
Jos 21:6 And the children of Gershon had thirteen cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Issachar, from the tribe of Asher, from the tribe of Naphtali, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.
Jos 21:7 The children of Merari according to their families had twelve cities from the tribe of Reuben, from the tribe of Gad, and from the tribe of Zebulun.
Jos 21:8 And the children of Israel gave these cities with their common-lands by lot to the Levites, as the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses.
Jos 21:9 So they gave from the tribe of the children of Judah and from the tribe of the children of Simeon these cities which are designated by name,
Jos 21:10 which were for the children of Aaron, one of the families of the Kohathites, who were of the children of Levi; for the lot was theirs first.
Jos 21:11 And they gave them Kirjath Arba (Arba was the father of Anak), which is Hebron, in the mountains of Judah, with the common-land surrounding it.
Jos 21:12 But the fields of the city and its villages they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as his possession.
Jos 21:13 Thus to the children of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Libnah with its common-land,
Jos 21:14 Jattir with its common-land, Eshtemoa with its common-land,
Jos 21:19 All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, were thirteen cities with their common-lands.
Jos 21:20 And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites, the rest of the children of Kohath, even they had the cities of their lot from the tribe of Ephraim.
Jos 21:21 For they gave them Shechem with its common-land in the mountains of Ephraim (a city of refuge for the slayer), Gezer with its common-land,
Jos 21:22 Kibzaim with its common-land, and Beth Horon with its common-land: four cities;
Jos 21:23 and from the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with its common-land, Gibbethon with its common-land,
Jos 21:24 Aijalon with its common-land, and Gath Rimmon with its common-land: four cities;

vs. 9-42 By mixing the Levites with the other tribes, they were made to see that the eyes of all Israel were upon them, and therefore it was their concern to walk so that their ministry might not be blamed. Every tribe had its share of Levites' cities. Thus did God graciously provide for keeping up religion among them, and that they might have the word in all parts of the land. Yet, blessed be God, we have the gospel more diffused amongst us.

vs. 9-19 The thirteen priestly cities were all in the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. Thus, as Calvin remarks, God so overruled it that the priestly families were placed upon the spot which He had determined beforehand to choose as the site of His temple.

vs. 20-26 Of the cities of the non-priestly Kohathites, for Kibzaim we find Jokmeam in 1Ch₆:68. This is perhaps another name for the same place, since both names may be derived from roots having a similar meaning; and for Gath-rimmon in 1Ch₆:70, Bileam is given, and probably correctly; Gath-rimmon having apparently been repeated inadvertently from the preceding verse. Bileam is but another form of Ibleam Jos₁₇:11.



Chapter 21 - Cities of the Levites; Reversing the Curse

(Gen 49:5-7) "Simeon and Levi are brothers; Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place. [6] Let not my soul enter their council; Let not my honor be united to their assembly; For in their anger they slew a man, And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox. [7] Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob And scatter them in Israel.

Levites were the priests, those descendants of Aaron. Spread out in 48 cities. No one would be more than 10 miles away from a Levite. Like home fellowships all around! All spread around – remember Jacob prophecy that Levi and Simeon spread around. Both were cursed. Simeon pretty much disappeared. No place to hand their hand. Levi's curse was turned around to be spread everywhere to serve the Lord. Both tribes were wrong, but at the Golden Calf situation. Levites step forward to deal with this sin. Only Levi stepped forward. Went through the congregations dealing with the sin. Levi took the invitation. Simeon didn't! God can reverse the curse! Whatever you've done, if you, if I repent, here on out I'm going Your way! He'll reverse that curse! 2 men, same opportunity. Levi chose to repent, the other, Simeon, apparently didn't!

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Jos 21:25 and from the half-tribe of Manasseh, Tanach with its common-land and Gath Rimmon with its common-land: two cities.
Jos 21:26 All the ten cities with their common-lands were for the rest of the families of the children of Kohath.
Jos 21:27 Also to the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, from the other half-tribe of Manasseh, they gave Golan in Bashan with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), and Be Eshterah with its common-land: two cities;
Jos 21:28 and from the tribe of Issachar, Kishion with its common-land, Daberath with its common-land,
Jos 21:29 Jarmuth with its common-land, and En Gannim with its common-land: four cities;
Jos 21:30 and from the tribe of Asher, Mishal with its common-land, Abdon with its common-land,
Jos 21:31 Helkath with its common-land, and Rehob with its common-land: four cities;
Jos 21:32 and from the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Hammoth Dor with its common-land, and Kartan with its common-land: three cities.
Jos 21:33 All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families were thirteen cities with their common-lands.
Jos 21:34 And to the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites, from the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with its common-land, Kartah with its common-land,
Jos 21:35 Dimnah with its common-land, and Nahalal with its common-land: four cities;
Jos 21:36 and from the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with its common-land, Jahaz with its common-land,
Jos 21:37 Kedemoth with its common-land, and Mephaath with its common-land: four cities;
Jos 21:38 and from the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Mahanaim with its common-land,
Jos 21:39 Heshbon with its common-land, and Jazer with its common-land: four cities in all.
Jos 21:40 So all the cities for the children of Merari according to their families, the rest of the families of the Levites, were by their lot twelve cities.
Jos 21:41 All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel were forty-eight cities with their common-lands.
Jos 21:42 Every one of these cities had its common-land surrounding it; thus were all these cities.

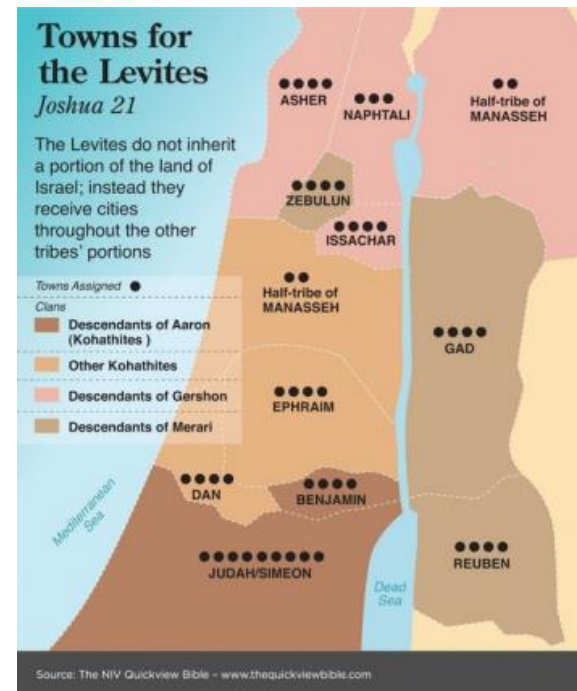
The Promise Fulfilled:

Jos 21:43 So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it.

vs. 27-33 Of the cities of the Gershonites, for Beesh-terah read (Beeshterah.) The name is a contraction of Beth-Ashterah (“house of Ashterah”) and the city is undoubtedly the Ashtaroth or Astaroth of Og. Jos_12:4; Deu_1:4; 1Ch_6:71.

v. 34 They are here called the rest, because they are last numbered, and Merari was the younger brother, (Gen_46:11).

vs. 43-44 It’s important to notice **the use of the word “all” in these two verses:** 1) **All** the land which the Lord had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. 2) The Lord gave rest **all** around to **all** He had sworn to their fathers. 3) Not a man of **all** their enemies stood against them. 4) For the Lord had delivered **all** of their enemies into their hands!



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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Jos 21:44 The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand.

Jos 21:45 Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

Eastern Tribes Return to Their Lands;

Jos 22:1 Then Joshua called the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh,

Jos 22:2 and said to them: "You have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you.

Jos 22:3 You have not left your brethren these many days, up to this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God.

Jos 22:4 And now the LORD your God has given rest to your brethren, as He promised them; now therefore, return and go to your tents and to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side of the Jordan.

Jos 22:5 But take careful heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to hold fast to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul."

Jos 22:6 So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents.

Jos 22:7 Now to half the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given a possession in Bashan, but to the other half of it Joshua gave a possession among their brethren on this side of the Jordan, westward. And indeed, when Joshua sent them away to their tents, he blessed them,

Jos 22:8 and spoke to them, saying, "Return with much riches to your tents, with very much livestock, with silver, with gold, with bronze, with iron, and with very much clothing. Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren."

Jos 22:9 So the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go to the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, which they had obtained according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

An Altar by the Jordan *Jos 22:10 And when they came to the region of the Jordan which is in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh built an altar there by the Jordan—a great, impressive altar.*

Jos 22:11 Now the children of Israel heard someone say. "Behold, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh have built an altar on the frontier of the

v. 45 The Lord keeps His promise, then, and now! We are under the New Covenant, which is superior to the Old, under which He had made with Israel. The a better, a more exacting covenant than that God made with Israel

vs. 1-4 With the seven years of war now over and the Lord delivering the enemies to the children of Israel, Joshua calls the two and a half tribes and gives them an honorable discharge.

vs. 5-6 Joshua commends them to take careful heed to do the commandments of the LORD, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to hold fast and to serve Him with all they heart and soul. He then blessed the and sent them home to their tents.

vs. 7-9 The two and one half tribes were given much riches, livestock, silver, gold, bronze, iron and much clothing to take back to the people who had remained on the east side of the Jordan. Note the principal, which will again be given by David at Ziklag. **1 Sam. 30:24** *For who will heed you in this matter? But as his part is who goes down to the battle, so shall his part be who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike."*

v. 10 When the two and one half tribes returned to join their families on the east side of the Jordan, they built a great and impressive altar by the Jordan on their side, the east side.

v. 11 Now we have a most important lesson for each of us. That of responding to hearsay, receiving information that was correct, but the way it was communicated was incorrect. The nine and one half tribes on the west side of the Jordan believed that the altar had been built to perform the blood sacrifices, to which were only to be done on the altar in Shiloh. So often we hear something and we make the wrong assumption as to the purpose and motive behind the action.

v. 45 Do you know that you therefore have as much, if not more, assurance than Israel? Now there are times when we are tested – like Israel who at times were in doubt, hot and tired, hungry and thirsty. And I am so weak and cowardly, but I have God's Covenant! I have God's power! I have God's promises! I am assured of His promises!

How about you? Are you confident, thrilled and assured that this is true in your case? Don't you know that one day this one verse, for certain, will all happen to you!! ***Jos 21:45 Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.***

God is always faithful. As older saints, does your life testify of that? Do you always mention that?

v. 5 But (charging them) **take careful heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you:**

- 1 - to love the LORD your God,**
- 2 - to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments,**
- 3 - to hold fast to Him, and**
- 4 - to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul**

So this is the charge! What a tremendous charge it is. One that each of us should personally take to heart. Love the Lord your God. Walk in all of His ways. Keep His commandments. Cleave to Him and serve Him with all of your heart and soul. If you do that, you'll never have any problems, guaranteed. That's the good life. Loving God, serving God, cleaving to God, keeping His commandments, walking in His ways.

Following great victories or at times in our lives where we seem to be doing so great spiritually, we need to be especially careful! Times of greatest spiritual danger. We **urgently and fervently need to maintain closeness to the Lord** during such times. **Are we doing that?**

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan—on the children of Israel's side."

Jos 22:12 And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them.

Jos 22:13 Then the children of Israel sent Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Jos 22:14 and with him ten rulers, one ruler each from the chief house of every tribe of Israel; and each one was the head of the house of his father among the divisions of Israel.

Jos 22:15 Then they came to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, to the land of Gilead, and they spoke with them, saying,

Jos 22:16 "Thus says the whole congregation of the LORD: 'What treachery is this that you have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that you have built for yourselves an altar, that you might rebel this day against the LORD?'

Jos 22:17 Is the iniquity of Peor not enough for us, from which we are not cleansed till this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD,

Jos 22:18 but that you must turn away this day from following the LORD? And it shall be, if you rebel today against the LORD, that tomorrow He will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel.

Jos 22:19 Nevertheless, if the land of your possession is unclean, then cross over to the land of the possession of the LORD, where the LORD's tabernacle stands, and take possession among us; but do not rebel against the LORD, nor rebel against us, by building yourselves an altar besides the altar of the LORD our God.

Jos 22:20 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 did not perish alone in his iniquity.' "

Jos 22:21 Then the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh answered and said to the heads of the divisions of Israel:

Jos 22:22 "The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, He knows, and let Israel itself know—if it is in rebellion, or if in treachery against the LORD, do not save us this day.

Jos 22:23 If we have built ourselves an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer on it burnt offerings or grain offerings, or if to offer peace offerings on it, let the LORD Himself require an account.

v. 12 So acting on the “heard say”, they gathered together at Shiloh to go to war! How tragic to jump to the wrong conclusion based on incomplete information! How frequently at such times when you hear, do you think the best, probably over 90% of the time? How many of you think the very worst, or very close to the worst? Here the implied accusation is that they built the altar to make blood sacrifices, which was prohibited at any place other than where the Lord specified, which at that time was Shiloh.

vs. 13-14 The children of Israel, although jumping to the wrong conclusion, did do the right thing in following *Deu 13:14 then you shall inquire, search out, and ask diligently. And if it is indeed true and certain that such an abomination was committed among you.* They sent the priest, Phinehas along with ten rulers, one from each tribe to meet with the children of Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh in the land of Gilead. Phinehas - *Num 25:14 Now the name of the Israelite who was killed, who was killed with the Midianite woman, was Zimri the son of Salu, a leader of a father's house among the Simeonites. - the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi the daughter of Zur; he was head of the people of a father's house in Midian.*

vs. 15-17 Note the **very harsh accusation** that what was made by the nine and one half tribes. They **accused those in Gilead of treachery, apostasy and rebellion against the Lord!** What a shock this must have been to those on the east side of the Jordan!

v.18 They were told to get right with the LORD. Failure to do that would result in God being angry with all of Israel! We'll all have to pay for this!

vs. 19-20 Those on the east side were invited to come to the west side and depart from their sin. They were reminded of the sin of Achan and how it affected the whole nation.

vs. 21-23 Finally, the children of the two and one half tribes are able to respond to the wrongful accusation saying that if we have done wrong in the sight of the LORD, have rebelled or are in treachery against Him as you have so accused, then let Him take us. If we have built the altar to make burnt offerings or to make peace offerings, then let the Lord Himself require an account. We agree with what you're saying, if we have trespassed then we would be in the wrong. But we have not done what you are making accusation.

v. 12 Great lesson here – How frequently when we hear facts, do we misjudge what is being communicated. What is meant in *Mat 7:1 "Judge not, that you be not judged?* While we are indeed to judge what is evil and what is good, **we are not to judge the motives behind** what we see. *Pro 18:13 He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him.*

v. 13 Great lesson here – Phinehas and ten rulers went to talk to them. *Dt. 13:14. This is exactly what we are to do.* We are to go directly to the source and talk to them! Nearly every time you do that, you will find out things which are so different what we thought! This results in our being so happy, we didn't say what we originally thought!

vs. 15-16 When we hear something, do we not think the absolute worst in the motive behind? Notice here that the conversation did not start with Phinehas asking a question/s to hear the altar builders reason for it construction, but the gave a most harsh accusation, accusing them in one sentence of three most serious things – **treachery, apostasy and rebellion!** All of these were not true!

Have you ever done this? Is this a somewhat common occurrence in your life?

v. 19 An interesting gesture. **How often are we willing to make a sacrificial offer** to someone to help restore them?

vs. 21-23 We note here the assumptions of Phinehas and the 10 leaders was completely wrong! How easy it is to see that this disagreement almost erupted in war between the tribes, even though they had just been fighting shoulder to shoulder for the past 7 years with each other. **Can you imagine how quickly our wicked hearts can change?**

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INTERPRETATION

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Jos 22:24 But in fact we have done it for fear, for a reason, saying, 'In time to come your descendants may speak to our descendants, saying, "What have you to do with the LORD God of Israel?"

Jos 22:25 For the LORD has made the Jordan a border between you and us, you children of Reuben and children of Gad. You have no part in the LORD." So your descendants would make our descendants cease fearing the LORD.'

Jos 22:26 Therefore we said, 'Let us now prepare to build ourselves an altar, not for burnt offering nor for sacrifice,

Jos 22:27 but that it may be a witness between you and us and our generations after us, that we may perform the service of the LORD before Him with our burnt offerings, with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your descendants may not say to our descendants in time to come, "You have no part in the LORD."

Jos 22:28 Therefore we said that it will be, when they say this to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say, 'Here is the replica of the altar of the LORD which our fathers made, though not for burnt offerings nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between you and us.'

Jos 22:29 Far be it from us that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn from following the LORD this day, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for grain offerings, or for sacrifices, besides the altar of the LORD our God which is before His tabernacle."

Jos 22:30 Now when Phinehas the priest and the rulers of the congregation, the heads of the divisions of Israel who were with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh spoke, it pleased them.

Jos 22:31 Then Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh, "This day we perceive that the LORD is among us, because you have not committed this treachery against the LORD. Now you have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD."

Jos 22:32 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the rulers, returned from the children of Reuben and the children of Gad, from the land of Gilead to the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought back word to them.

Jos 22:33 So the thing pleased the children of Israel, and the children of Israel blessed God; they spoke no more of going against them in battle, to destroy the land where the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt.

Jos 22:34 The children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar, Witness, "For it is a witness between us that the LORD is God."

vs. 24-25 Were they more concerned about their children or about their cattle, when they chose to settle on the east side of the Jordan. The accusation that the LORD has put a border between them, was not the LORD but it was their own decision. The eastern tribes explain their true reason for building the altar: it was built as a memorial, not as a place of sacrifice. The eastern tribes recognized their distance from the center of worship in Israel, and that there was a natural barrier (the Jordan River) between them and the rest of the nation. So they built the altar a memorial to link the two segments of the nation. They wanted it to stand as a memorial to future generations that the tribes on both sides of the Jordan worshipped the same God.

vs. 30-31 The explanation of the eastern tribes is accepted by the western tribes. Phinehas is pleased by this explanation; yet he deserves credit for being willing to believe his brothers. Phinehas puts himself in the shoes of the eastern tribes now, and so the explanation makes sense. Phinehas could see that the LORD was among us, because unity had been restored among the people of Israel.

vs. 32-34 The matter is resolved. Everyone is glad, and everyone enjoys the blessing of having peace among the people of God. The altar is given the name Witness, because it was a witness to the tribes on both the eastern side and the western side of the Jordan that the LORD is God.

Summary of this incident: (vs. 10-34)

We should respond to misunderstanding in the same manner, according to these same principles.

- **Respond with a concern for God's holiness.**
- **Respond with the courage to confront in love.**
- **Determine that you will see the situation from the perspective of the other person.**
- **Determine that you will believe the best of one another.**
- **Respond with an attempt to reconcile before you fight.**
- **Determine that you are willing to sacrifice to help them; don't confront unless you are willing to help.**

v. 24 They **built their altar based on fear and not on what the LORD had told them.**

Our lesson here is **not to build any altar or icon unless the LORD gives us that instruction.** If it looks like an altar then in future generations, it will probably not be used for that for which it originally was built.

Zeal for purity is a good thing. Judgment, before we have discussion, is often a foolish thing! Be an observer not a participant until you have the facts. When we're falsely accused, we're to return wrath with a soft answer. We're to be merciful and judgmental. To come to terms with the right information before we pass judgment! What is our initial reaction, when we hear controversial sounding news. After all this seven years of victory, Satan couldn't have victory there, so now **he turns to putting them at odds with each other, "inside the camp". It's so important for us to remember this!**

STANDING ON THE PROMISES - R.Carter – Maranatha Standing on the promises of Christ the King, through eternal ages let His praises ring; glory in the highest, I will shout and sing, standing on the promises of God.

Refrain: Standing, standing, standing on the promises of God my Savior; standing, standing, I'm standing on the promises of God.

Standing on the promises that cannot fail, when the howling storms of doubt and fear assail, by the living Word of God I shall prevail, standing on the promises of God. (Refrain)

Standing on the promises I now can see Perfect, present cleansing in the blood for me; Standing in the liberty where Christ makes free, Standing on the promises of God. (Refrain)

Standing on the promises of Christ the Lord, bound to Him eternally by love's strong cord, overcoming daily with the Spirit's sword, standing on the promises of God. (Refrain)

v. 33 Although there is no apology mentioned here, we need to remember that is important and helpful to include one. **Do you find it hard to offer an apology to others?**