

“God’s Rewards and Reconciliation”

Joshua 22:1-34

Intro. Well intentioned godly people will often be misjudged ...

Subject: The eastern tribes build an altar as they return to their land.

Object: Experience God’s rewards and reconciliation

A. God rewards [1-9]

1. God rewards the eastern tribes’ faithfulness in conquest of PL [1-4, 7-9]

- a. The 2 ½ eastern tribes fulfilled their vow to fight with their brothers to conquer the PL, & God was faithful to provide their promised inheritance east of the Jordan [1-4]
- b. Tribes receive great blessings – gold, silver, bronze, iron, livestock, clothing [8],
 - i. Encouraged to share the blessing with their brethren [9]

Heb. 11:6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

2. God encourages continued faithfulness [5-6] 5But 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.” 6So Joshua blessed them and sent them away ...

a. Be careful to do God’s word (apply), love, live (walk), obey, cling to (hold fast) & serve God with all your heart and soul [5] [good picture of a disciple]

? How can the promise of God’s rewards motivate right behaviors (& attitudes)?

B. God reconciles [10-34] [The altar by the Jordan]

1. Care about holiness [10-20] 2 ½ Eastern tribes build a great + impressive altar on PL side at edge of Jordan [10-11]. An altar is a place of sacrifice & worship. Since only allowable place for sacrifice was Tabernacle [**Lev. 17:8-19**] there is concern that the eastern tribes are setting up an alternate form of worship that will corrupt all Israel, and PL tribes west of the Jordan are ready to go to war [12]

Jn.4:24 God desires worship that is in spirit and truth, more important than the place of worship. Not all worship is acceptable to God.

a. Communicate your concern about behavior [10-20]

- i. High Priest and leaders from the 10 PL tribes seek to confront their brothers [13-14]
- ii. Attempt to communicate rather than divide and go to war
- lii. Unfortunately they presume wrongdoing [v.16 “treachery” “rebel against the Lord”] [Accuse of rebellion 4x – 16, 18, 19 (2x)]

Gal. 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

Note: try to avoid “labeling” and focus on the behavior

? What might be some behaviors that raise concerns about a potential big issue and someone's walk with God? * serious issues shouldn't be ignored, cancer v. paper cut

b. Communicate concerns about the consequences of sin [17-20]

i. **Peor (17-19) [Num.25]** sexual sin with Moabite woman and 24,000 killed by God. Phineas (v.13) was the one who took the stand for God that stopped plague.

ii. **Achan (20) [Josh. 7].**

iii. **Moral:** sin impacts others [impacts the whole assembly (18,20)]

? What are some of the ways that one person's sin can impact others?

2. Consider the response with empathy [21-28]

a. **Listen to their explanation** Eastern tribes respond that they have done nothing wrong and God is there witness [21-23]. They explain their motive was *fear* of being excluded from the Jews in the PL across the Jordan [24-25]. The purpose of the memorial was to be a witness so future generations would connect those east of Jordan as part of Israel [26-28].

b. Learn to understand their motivation [29]

i. **They were not rebelling against God at all:** did not build the altar as an alternative place for sacrifice and worship [cf. 1 Ki.12 Jeroboam & northern kingdom]

3. Conclude in support of reconciliation wherever possible [30-34] The delegation from the western tribes were pleased with the response [30]. They recognize they were united with God [31]. The delegates reported to the western tribes and they were pleased, no more talk of war [32-33]. Blessed God [33] for reconciliation and unity are gifts from God [**Ps. 133:1-3**]

Conc. Be slow to assume another person's heart for God: communicate, consider, and be reconciled whenever possible

Context: Conquest of PL complete, division of land to tribes, Levites, refuge cities

Discussion Qs

1. How can the promise of God's rewards motivate right behavior?

2. Have you ever jumped to a conclusion about someone's walk with God to later discover that you were wrong? What did you learn from the experience?

3. What might be some behaviors that would raise concerns about a potential big issue and someone's walk with God?

4. What are some of the ways that sin can impact others?