



Joshua 22

¹⁰ And when they came to the region of the Jordan that is in the land of Canaan, the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by the Jordan, an altar of imposing size. ¹¹ And the people of Israel heard it said, "Behold, the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh have built the altar at the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region about the Jordan, on the side that belongs to the people of Israel." ¹² And when the people of Israel heard of it, the whole assembly of the people of Israel gathered at Shiloh to make war against them. ¹³ Then the people of Israel sent to the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, ¹⁴ and with him ten chiefs, one from each of the tribal families of Israel, every one of them the head of a family among the clans of Israel. ¹⁵ And they came to the people of Reuben, the people of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead, and they said to them, ¹⁶ "Thus says the whole congregation of the LORD, 'What is this breach of faith that you have committed against the God of Israel in turning away this day from following the LORD by building yourselves an altar this day in rebellion against the LORD?' ¹⁷ Have we not had enough of the sin at Peor from which even yet we have not cleansed ourselves, and for which there came a plague upon the congregation of the LORD, ¹⁸ that you too must turn away this day from following the LORD? And if you too rebel against the LORD today then tomorrow he will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel. ¹⁹ But now, if the land of your possession is unclean, pass over into the LORD's land where the LORD's tabernacle stands, and take for yourselves a possession among us. Only do not rebel against the LORD or make us as rebels by building for yourselves an altar other than the altar of the LORD our God. *ESV*

Please read Joshua 22.

1. There may be times when your walk with Christ is misunderstood.
2. There may be times when your motives are misunderstood.
3. There may be times when your worship feels insufficient.

What does a life of passion before God look like? It looks like the perfect harmony of God's love and God's Truth, not merely external conformity (similar to Joshua 1:7-8). This is a comprehensive picture of what a relationship with God is to include. The themes of love, walk, keep, hold fast, and serve are all recurring in the book of Joshua.

In the living out of our faith in Christ, Truth needs love and love needs Truth. Both need each other, just like the 12 tribes of Israel needed each other. The 2.5 tribes, called the "Trans-Jordanian Tribes," needed the 10 tribes that inhabited Canaan. In this instance 10 tribes needed love and 2.5 tribes needed truth. The 2.5 tribes had been faithful to their word in Joshua 1. Joshua commended

them as "brethren in arms!". These 2.5 tribes loved, but overlooked the realm of Truth. They sought after something other than what God had originally intended for them. They built an altar, a replica of the altar, and in so doing were seeking after another icon for worship. They were well-intentioned, but lacking some discretion. This is the lesson for one who chooses to push against the boundaries of God's clear blessings and principles. That person puts himself in the realm of "near" Truths and not in the integrity and safeguard of Truth.

How do we "push" against God's clear blessings and principles?

- By not having a spirit that is in "check" with God's clear commands
- By not esteeming the proper value of God's commands
- By not believing that the liberty we have in Christ is liberty to draw near to Him, not liberty to experiment with things that are unclear
- By not being satisfied with simple Christianity, simple Church, simple faith, simple Gospel

All 12 tribes had been programmed to fight for the last 7 years. They had just left the Tabernacle of God's holiness to return to their lands. The 10 tribes knew of those who

were granted the land on the other side of the Jordan and desired no part in that, except for the national and brotherly bonds. Even half a tribe (Manassah) was split over their desires! There was a holy essence about staying in the Promised Land. Their quick-to-draw action to fight with their Trans-Jordanian brothers speaks of their zealotry for the holiness of God, but reveals their neglect to advance in love. Their love for God's holiness, His set-apartness, His truth, became an excuse to neglect Love. **The counterfeit of holiness in human nature is self-righteousness. In self-righteousness there is no love for God nor for any other person.** There is not true love, only self-love, self-satisfaction, and self-assurance.

How do we promote self-righteousness instead of holiness and love?

- By failing to recognize that holiness is of God, and not of us originally and continually
- By misunderstanding that we are not the guardians of God's holiness
- By pretending to promote God's holiness, but substituting our own expectations
- By not resolving that God's holiness and God's love are not mutually exclusive

Love and Holiness are not mutually exclusive attributes of God. No attribute of God is in contradiction of another, including Mercy and Justice. In God there is no paradox, but complete and perfect holy harmony of Himself with Himself. While we may not be able to reason or reconcile God's nature and ways He is satisfied to act in perfect synchrony with all of His attributes all of the time.

Holiness and Love do co-exist. This is the essence of Christ's confrontation with the Pharisees. **In fact, Jesus Christ, being the perfect man, the God-man, lived out the complete harmonization of love and holiness.** This was in direct opposition to a world filled with self-righteous people, not merely the Pharisees, but also the fishermen, the woman at the well, etc...

In God's offering of the New Covenant, God deals with mankind in harmony of love and truth. He cannot deny

Himself either of these attributes because He even proclaims Himself to be Love and Truth.

- Truth is not God. Love is not God.
- God is Love and God is Truth.

This is important to believe. We cannot divorce the essence of Who God is from Him. **Truth is only known through God's self-revelation—namely the Word of God and Jesus Christ—the Living Word of God.** Love is only known because of the origination of Love, the inventor of love, the author of love—God.

God's dealing with Israel was framed in a covenant relationship where truth and love were in perfect harmony. Neither one was put aside in any of His dealings. He approached them in Truth and Love. He designed a way for the unholy to approach Him in Truth and Love through the Tabernacle. All of this was to be both a pattern and empowerment for how they would deal with Him and with others.

The only way to really walk in Truth is to do so in Love. Walking in truth without love denies the integrity of that Truth. To walk in truth without love is to live in a self-loving way, a self-seeking way. **God's holiness knows nothing of impersonal love or indifferent obedience.** His Truth demands that those who walk in it, do so in love of Him. His commands are not binding nor His holiness a burden. They are in contradiction to the self-loving, self-righteous, legalistic way of the humanist.

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS: _____

Who is the only reliable source of Truth and Love? And how can one live in Truth and Love? (see John 14:21, 15:9,10)

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