

## IS IT TRUE OR FALSE ?

Joshua 22:1-34

What should you do when you hear that someone who is dear to you has sinned against the Lord? Should you condemn them and speak against them to others? Should you try to find some way to punish them for the wrong that they supposedly have done? Read this story out of the book of Joshua, and learn how the children of Israel handled such a problem. You know that the Lord included these events from the history of Israel in His Word so that we can learn from them and act in a godly way. Here is what the Lord recorded for us.

Joshua called together the Gadites, the Reubenites, and the half-tribe of Manassah. He said to them, "You have done all the that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you. You have obeyed my voice in all that I have commanded you. You have not left your brothers all this time until today, and have kept the charge of the Lord your God. Now the Lord has given rest to your brothers, as he promised them, and you are free to return to your homes, and the land of your possession, which Moses gave you on the other side of the Jordan. Take diligent care to obey the commandments and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you; to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, to keep his commandments, to cling unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul."

Then Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they returned to their inheritance. Joshua said to them, "Return with many riches to your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much clothing. Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brothers."

Then the children of Gad, and of Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manassah turned and left the children of Israel at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go to the country of Gilead. They went to the land of their possession, which the Lord had given them. When they came to the banks of the Jordan River, they built a great altar for all to see.

Now when the children of Israel heard about this, the whole congregation gathered together to go to war against Gad, Reuben, and Half-tribe Manassah. But before they went to war against their own people, the children of Israel wisely sent Phineas, the son of Eleazar the high priest, along with ten princes, each a chief man from his tribe to ask the tribe of Gad, Reuben and half-tribe of Manassah, about what they had done. Israel knew that before condemning, we must allow the person who is accused to explain their actions. They said, "The whole congregation of the Lord say, 'What is this sin that you have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away from following the Lord? Have you built yourselves an altar so that you can rebel against the Lord? Is the iniquity of Peor not enough for us, which we have not been completely cleansed from to this very day, even though there was a plague in the congregation from the Lord because of it? Must you rebel now against the Lord, and then tomorrow he will be angry with the whole congregation? So then, if the land of your possession is unclean, then come back over to this side of the Jordan and inherit with the rest of us. But, do not rebel against the Lord, nor against us, by building yourselves an altar! Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit sin in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? Not just Achan died because of his sin.'"

Then the children of Gad, of Reuben, and of the half-tribe of Manassah answered the leaders of Israel, "The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, He knows the truth. And all Israel shall know, if this is rebellion, or sin against the Lord. The Lord knows whether we have built us an altar to use in worship of false gods, or whether we have built us this altar to remind us not to do this very thing. We have built this altar, so that in the times to come, no one from your side of the Jordan might say to us, that we are not part of the whole congregation of Israel. It is to be a reminder to keep our children from turning away from the Lord. We said among ourselves, 'Let us build an altar here, not for worship, but rather as a monument to keep us true to the Lord our God, and to remind us on both sides of the Jordan that we are one nation of Israel, who worship the Lord our God as one.'"

Then when Phineas the priest, and the princes of Israel heard this, they were glad. Phineas the priest said to Gad, to Reuben, and to the half-tribe of Manassah, "This day we know that the Lord is among us, because you have not committed this sin against the Lord which we had feared, and the Lord is not angry with the children of Israel."

Phineas the priest and the princes of Israel returned to the congregation and to the land of Canaan, and brought them word of all that Gad, Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manassah had said. The thing pleased all the people, and the children of Israel blessed the Lord God, and did not go to fight against their brothers, and to destroy the land where they lived.

The children of Reuben, of Gad, and of the Half-tribe of Manassah called the altar that they had built Ed, for it was a witness between them and the Lord.

The Lord tells us clearly in His Word what to do if a brother is caught in sin. In Matthew 18:15-17, He says to go to that person and talk to him about his sin in private. Then, if he will repent, we have gained that person's love. If they will not repent there are further steps listed. Galations 6:1 tells us to go to the one in sin with gentleness, knowing that we all can fall into sin. The scripture is clear that we are not to ignore the sin of those we care about, but to help them return to obeying God in a loving manner. If all Christians would follow the Lord's command in this area, we would be much more of a light to those who do not know the Lord, and a blessing to all our fellow believers.

In some cases when we have talked directly to the person who has been accused we will find that they are totally innocent. How much better, to talk to the person and learn the truth, therefore avoiding much sorrow. If we assume the worst, never getting the facts, We will cause hurt and disharmony among God's people. The wise person will follow God's instruction and avoid much difficulty.

By doing things God's way Phineas and the princes avoided bloodshed in Israel, and gained the trust of all Israel. They were also a great witness to the pagans around them of how to take care of conflict and misunderstanding. In this way the Lord was honored, and they were blessed by him.

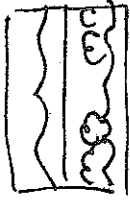
**LEARN:** Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Galations 6:1

1. Draw background on brown sheet. →



2. Tear blue strip to make water-draw on details.

3. Tear bushes from green paper on details.



4. Paste these on background as shown

5. Tear stones from gray and make alter. Paste on sheet.

7. Color peoples and cut out - Paste them on sheet to tell story.

