



## Session 5

# SETTLED

The rewards of faithfulness come with the expectation of continued obedience.

## JOSHUA 22:1-8

<sup>1</sup> Joshua summoned the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh <sup>2</sup> and told them, “You have done everything Moses the LORD’s servant commanded you and have obeyed me in everything I commanded you. <sup>3</sup> You have not deserted your brothers even once this whole time but have carried out the requirement of the command of the LORD your God. <sup>4</sup> Now that He has given your brothers rest, just as He promised them, return to your homes in your own land that Moses the LORD’s servant gave you across the Jordan. <sup>5</sup> Only carefully obey the command and instruction that Moses the LORD’s servant gave you: to love



the LORD your God, walk in all His ways, keep His commands, remain faithful to Him, and serve Him with all your heart and all your soul.”<sup>6</sup> Joshua blessed them and sent them on their way, and they went to their homes.<sup>7</sup> Moses had given territory to half the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, but Joshua had given territory to the other half, with their brothers, on the west side of the Jordan. When Joshua sent them to their homes and blessed them,<sup>8</sup> he said, “Return to your homes with great wealth: a huge number of cattle, and silver, gold, bronze, iron, and a large quantity of clothing. Share the spoil of your enemies with your brothers.”

*Identify words that give accommodation to the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh. What do these words of praise reveal about these men?*

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*Notice the directions given by Joshua. How do the directions point to a continued responsibility?*

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## FIRST THOUGHTS

Most of us grew up with the expectation that we were always to keep our word. Our parents or grandparents no doubt had some phrase they would repeat that reinforced that expectation. Most of us recognized that we were expected to tell the truth even when we were caught misbehaving. A sure way to increase the punishment we faced was to lie about what we had been caught doing. Integrity is built on honesty and trustworthiness.

*Why is integrity so important today? What makes many people stop and take notice today when they see a person of integrity?*

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Most people would probably agree that a good reputation is built over a lifetime but can be ruined in an instant. The bond of trust between a husband and wife can be ruined when one spouse decides he or she will be dishonest or cheat on the other. Children need trustworthy parents. Employers look for dependable employees who will put in a good solid effort every day.

Prior to Joshua's conquest of the promised land, Moses gave land east of the Jordan River to the tribes of Reuben [RHOO ben], Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh [muh NASS uh]. But Moses charged these two and a half tribes to help conquer the land west of the Jordan. Having been faithful to Moses' charge, and with the conquest complete, Joshua blessed these two and a half tribes and released them to go home. He instructed these tribes to continue to be obedient to the Lord's commandments.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

### JOSHUA 13:1–22:24

The Book of Joshua can be divided into two sections. Chapters 1–12 record the conquest of the promised land. Some Bible scholars categorize Joshua's victories as the Central Campaign (Jericho and Ai, chaps. 6–8), the Southern Campaign (the cities in the Jerusalem area but not Jerusalem, chap. 10), and the Northern Campaign (the city of Hazor and regions east of the Jordan River, chaps. 11–12). Joshua 11:23 summarizes the first 12 chapters: "So Joshua took the entire land, in keeping with all that the LORD had told Moses."

Chapters 13–24 record the division of the promised land among the tribes. Joshua 11:23 transitions between the conquest and the division: "Joshua then gave it [the land] as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments."

Beginning with Joshua 13:8, the writer recorded the division of the land among the twelve tribes: Reuben (13:15), Gad (13:24), East Manasseh (13:29), Judah (15:1), Ephraim [EE fra ihm] (16:5), West Manasseh (17:1), Benjamin (18:11), Simeon (19:1), Zebulun [ZEB yoo luhn] (19:10), Issachar [ISS uh KAHHR] (19:17), Asher (19:24), Naphtali [NAF tuh ligh] (19:32), and Dan (19:40). Joshua 19:51 summarizes chapters 13–24: "So they finished dividing up the land." In chapter 22, Joshua released the "fighting men" (see 1:14) of the tribes



of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh in order for them to rejoin their wives and children east of the Jordan River. (See the map on the inside back cover.)

Compare the list of the tribes in the previous paragraph with the sons of Israel (Jacob) in Genesis 35:23-26. One immediately notices the names Levi and Joseph missing from tribal allotment. Because the Levites served as priests, the Lord gave them no land (Josh. 13:14; 14:3; also, see Deut. 10:9 and 18:1-2, where the Lord served as the inheritance of the Levites). Two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, filled the two vacancies. In reference to tribal allotment, what many refer to as the sons of Israel (Jacob) are actually sons (10) and grandsons (2) of Israel.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### A PROMISE KEPT (JOSH. 22:1-3)

#### VERSES 1-2

**<sup>1</sup> Joshua summoned the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh <sup>2</sup> and told them, “You have done everything Moses the LORD’s servant commanded you and have obeyed me in everything I commanded you.**

Under Moses’ leadership, the Israelites conquered what has become known as the Transjordan (the land immediately east of the Jordan River; see Deut. 3:8-17). Moses gave this territory to ***the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of •Manasseh*** (see Num. 32). Joshua’s army would have been weakened and the conquest jeopardized had these two and a half tribes chosen to remain in their allotted territories and not support the effort to take the promised land. To preempt this possibility, Moses charged the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh to participate militarily in the conquest of the promised land. Moses allowed their wives and young children to remain in the Transjordan. He informed the members of the two and a half tribes they could then return to their homes after the conquest (Deut. 3:20).

Later, as Joshua and his army prepared to cross the Jordan River, he reminded the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh of Moses’ charge (Josh. 1:12-18). They responded, “Everything you have commanded us we will do, and everywhere you send us we will go” (1:16). One cannot miss the passion in their commitment as

they said, “Anyone who rebels against your order and does not obey your words ... will be put to death” (1:18).

With the conquest complete, **Joshua summoned** the soldiers from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. These soldiers could take great pride in the fact that Joshua commended them for doing **everything** that Moses and he **commanded** them to do.

### VERSE 3

**<sup>3</sup> You have not deserted your brothers even once this whole time but have carried out the requirement of the command of the LORD your God.**

The Hebrew verb translated **deserted** means “to forsake” or “to abandon.” Doubtless these soldiers faced tremendous challenges during the duration of the conquest. But under duress, with even their lives at stake, the soldiers from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh had not forsaken or abandoned their fellow soldiers or the cause. In fact, Joshua could not remember a single occurrence **this whole time** when a soldier from these two and a half tribes had disobeyed a **command of the LORD your God**.

God keeps His promises. The Lord had made a promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that He would give this land to their descendants (see Deut. 34:4). He kept His promise when He “gave Israel all the land ... and they took possession of it and settled there” (Josh. 21:43). Not only did the Lord promise the land to the Hebrews, He also promised them rest within it (Deut. 12:10). Now the Lord had given them “rest on every side according to all He had sworn to their fathers” (Josh. 21:44). God also promised the Hebrews security from enemies (Deut. 12:10). The writer of Joshua wrote that none of the Hebrews’ enemies could stand against them (21:44). In fact, “none of the good promises the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed” (Josh. 21:45). None of the promises that Jesus makes to Christians will fail either.

***Why was it important that these two and a half tribes keep their promise? Why is it important for believers to keep all of our promises?***

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## AN ONGOING RESPONSIBILITY (JOSH. 22:4-5)



#### VERSE 4

**<sup>4</sup> Now that He has given your brothers rest, just as He promised them, return to your homes in your own land that Moses the LORD’s servant gave you across the Jordan.**

With the conquest of the promised land essentially complete, Joshua sent the men from Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh home to their allotted territories east of the Jordan. No doubt the two and a half tribes rejoiced when Joshua released them from military service. One can imagine these soldiers as they began their journey home, knowing their wives and children were waiting for their return.

We wonder what the men thought as they began their journey home. Did they have sense of pride in what they had accomplished? Did they have a sense of gratitude recognizing God’s assistance? Did they have a sense of gravity when considering their ongoing responsibility? As Christians, we have ongoing responsibilities. Jesus demands that we be forever faithful in our Christian responsibilities. Let the prayer of every believer be that the Lord might help us be forever responsible in our love, worship, work, and witness for Him.

#### **BIBLE SKILL: *Develop a paraphrase.***

Read Joshua 22:5 in various Bible translations. Then write the verse in your own words. Finally, write a couple of sentences stating how the verse can help you to face a tough decision or a difficult situation. How does Joshua 22:5 provide help for your walk with the Lord? List areas where you need to apply the truth of this verse in your life this week.

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#### VERSE 5

**<sup>5</sup> Only carefully obey the command and instruction that Moses the LORD’s servant gave you: to love the LORD your God, walk in all His**

**ways, keep His commands, remain faithful to Him, and serve Him with all your heart and all your soul.”**

Prior to their release, Joshua gave one final charge to the soldiers of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. Joshua charged them to be responsible to ***carefully obey the command and instruction that Moses the LORD’s servant gave you.*** This phrase contains two commands in Hebrew: keep and do. Regarding the commandments and instruction of the Lord, Joshua issued a succinct, unambiguous command: “Keep them!” and “Do them!” Joshua’s release from military responsibilities did not release them from their responsibility to the Lord.

Joshua provided clarification to his commands when he instructed them ***to love the LORD, walk in all His ways, be faithful to Him, and serve Him.*** The word translated *walk* can also be translated “live.” Joshua instructed these men to live according to the ways of the Lord. The verb rendered ***remain faithful*** literally means to “cleave” or “keep close.” In the Book of Genesis, the same verb is used in instructing the man to leave his father and his mother and “cleave” to his wife (Gen. 2:24). The noun that relates to this verb can be translated “slave.” This is similar to apostle Paul insisting he was a slave of Jesus (Rom. 1:1; Phil. 1:1). Joshua left no room for irresponsibility; he instructed these men to serve the Lord with all their ***heart*** and all their ***soul***. The words ***heart*** and ***soul*** underscore the need for the Israelites to be “all in” in terms of their commitment to the Lord. Nothing other than total commitment would suffice.

God expects no less of every believer today. Jesus said: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command” (Matt. 22:37-38).

***Why does obedience prove to be a better indication of genuine faith than mere words of affirmation? Would you say that genuine faith normally should lead to action? Why or why not?***

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**A WELCOMED BLESSING** (JOSH. 22:6-8)

**VERSE 6**

**<sup>6</sup> Joshua blessed them and sent them on their way, and they went**



**to their homes.**

**Joshua blessed** the soldiers from Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh and sent them on their way. They returned **to their homes** as Joshua had commanded them (see v. 4). These men, in all probability, could not remember a time when they had had a permanent home. With the exception of Joshua and Caleb, every male 20 years old and up had died during the wilderness wanderings (see Num. 14:29-30). These soldiers had been children and teenagers (less than 20 years old) when Joshua sent the spies to scout the promised land. They had grown up in the wilderness. They had little, if any, concept of a permanent home. How welcome the words of Joshua must have been.

Verse 6 comprises a brief summary of what follows. Verses 7-8 provide further details regarding Joshua's blessing.

#### VERSES 7-8

**<sup>7</sup> Moses had given territory to half the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, but Joshua had given territory to the other half, with their brothers, on the west side of the Jordan. When Joshua sent them to their homes and blessed them, <sup>8</sup> he said, "Return to your homes with great wealth: a huge number of cattle, and silver, gold, bronze, iron, and a large quantity of clothing. Share the spoil of your enemies with your brothers."**

Verse 7 clarifies that the large tribe of Manasseh received an allotment of land on both sides of the Jordan River. When Moses allotted territory to the nine and a half tribes on the west side of the Jordan River, he gave land **to half the tribe of Manasseh** (along with Reuben and Gad) in the territory of **Bashan** [BAY shan]. Bashan was located almost directly east of the Sea of Galilee, with Gad located to the south of Bashan (now the half-tribe of Manasseh), and Reuben located to the south of Gad.

Evidently, the initial prohibition against taking material things from conquered land had been lifted (see Deut. 20:16-18). Perhaps initially, the Lord didn't want the Hebrews to be motivated by the possibility of material gain. Joshua sent the soldiers from Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh home **with great wealth**. The writer further defined this wealth as **a huge number of cattle, and silver, gold, bronze, iron, and a large quantity of clothing**.

Joshua previously had warned the Hebrews not to keep goods from Jericho (Josh. 6:19). Achan and his family died for disobeying

this command at Ai (7:24-25). With this prohibition, Joshua's military would not have anticipated receiving anything materially. What a welcome blessing for Joshua's army to be sent home with wealth in tow. Joshua gave one final command. He instructed them to **share the spoil** with their relatives.

When God blesses us, it is important that we faithfully exercise our stewardship to bless others. We are to remember that everything we have is a gift from God (1 Cor. 4:7). The Lord wants us to use what He gives us as a channel of blessing to others as well.

**Agree or disagree: God always provides a blessing so that you can provide for the needs of others. Explain your response.**

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Prior to crossing the Jordan River (to the east side), the soldiers from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh built "a large, impressive altar" (Josh. 22:10). The nine and a half tribes on the west side of the Jordan River interpreted this altar as a competitor to the true altar of Lord God. They assembled to wage war against the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. The soldiers from the two and a half tribes explained their altar. They didn't build it as a place of sacrifice. Instead, they built the altar as a memorial, signifying unity between the tribes on the west side of the Jordan with the tribes on the east side (22:21-29).

### **KEY DOCTRINE: Stewardship**

Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions

## **IN MY CONTEXT**

- Honor comes to believers who keep their commitments.
- God expects His people to be faithful to Him regardless of life's circumstances.



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- God expects His people to be good stewards and to use their blessings to bless others.

***Review commitments you have left unfulfilled or have not kept. What actions do you need to take to make things right with the person or group to whom you fell short? How can you use that past failure to bring honor to Christ?***

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***List key markers or milestones in your life. Note how each marker has impacted your faith in Christ. Ask God to help you grow in your Christian faith as you face future challenges.***

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***Discuss as a group the blessings God has given to this group. How can your Bible study group use your blessings to bless others?***

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## MEMORY VERSE

Only carefully obey the command and instruction that Moses the LORD's servant gave you: to love the LORD your God, walk in all His ways, keep His commands, remain faithful to Him, and serve Him with all your heart and all your soul. —Joshua 22:5