

### **A The Farewell Speech (Joshua 22:1-8)**

- ❖ Since the Jordan was going to separate the tribes, Joshua gave wise advice to the two and a half tribes so that they could remain faithful (Joshua 22:5 NIV):
  - To love the Lord your God. Love is the principle that should lead us to God. We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19)
  - To walk in obedience to him. This is how Joshua indicates the conduct expected of those who choose to walk with God
  - To keep his commands. Obedience is the natural result of a grateful heart that understands what God has done
  - To hold fast to him. We must cling to God without letting any distraction break that union
  - To serve him with all your heart and with all your soul. We find our true purpose, satisfaction, and abundant life when we willingly serve our Creator with love

### **B The reason for the conflict (Joshua 22:10-12)**

- ❖ Near the place where Joshua had erected a memorial of the miraculous crossing of the Jordan, the two and a half tribes built an altar similar to the altar of the Sanctuary (Josh. 22:10, 28).
- ❖ This act was interpreted as a transgression of the law that prohibited offering sacrifices in a place other than the altar of burnt offerings in the Sanctuary (Lev. 17:8-9).
- ❖ The rest of the Israelites decided to eradicate this sin by attacking their brothers (Josh. 22:12). But God intervened to prevent a bloody civil war. He raised up people who chose not to judge without all the evidence; they granted the benefit of the doubt; and they decided to give their brothers the opportunity to explain themselves (Josh. 22:13-14).

### **C The accusations (Joshua 22:13-20)**

- ❖ Why was Phinehas chosen to head the investigating committee (Josh. 22:13-14)? Phinehas, the high priest's son, had been relentless in stopping the sin at Baal-Peor (Num. 25:7-8). In his speech, he linked this sin to Achan's sin and equated it with the sin supposedly committed by the two and a half tribes (Josh. 22:16-20).
- ❖ Phinehas's speech made perfect sense. If sacrifices were offered on the newly erected altar, God would punish all of Israel for it (Josh. 22:18b).
- ❖ However, he gave them the opportunity to rectify this mistake, before they committed the sin: he offered them the chance to return to the Jordan side where the Sanctuary was (Josh. 22:19).

### **D The kind answer (Joshua 22:21-29)**

- ❖ The tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, when accused, acted in an exemplary manner:
  - They listened to the accusations in silence
  - They called God as their witness
  - They accepted to be punished if they had sinned
  - They revealed their true motivations
- ❖ When the Israelites did not know the motivations of their brothers for building the altar, they assumed: rebellion, a desire for separation, and divine punishment.
- ❖ The reality was: a desire to remain united with their brothers and avoid a future separation on the part of the Israelites (Josh. 22:24-26).
- ❖ Although the accused tribes could have felt offended by the accusations and reacted violently in their defense, thanks to their friendly response, war was avoided.

### **E Reconciliation (Joshua 22:30-34)**

- ❖ Seeing that the accusation was unfounded, Phinehas and the Israelite delegation were relieved (Josh. 22:30-31). For their part, when the Israelites learned the truth, they rejoiced and praised God (Josh. 22:32-33).
- ❖ Through their example, we can see the necessary steps to restore peace in similar situations when relating to family, church, and community:
  - Communicating our thoughts
  - Do not jump to conclusions
  - Talk about the problems before acting
  - Be willing to make sacrifices to achieve unity
  - Give a polite response to the accusations
  - Rejoice and bless God when peace is restored