

Joshua 22-23

Serving the LORD God in the Land

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September 27, 2026

Remembering the structure of the Book of Joshua CROSS TAKE DIVIDE SERVE

Indicative – Imperative Structure I have given you the land I promised to your fathers, therefore serve me as you dwell in the land where I dwell among you

The structure of the last three chapters God demands Israel to live faithfully in the land

- Each chapter begins with the statement that Joshua *summoned* or *gathered* the Israel (22:1; 23:2; 24:1-2)
- The chapter 21 ended with an emphatic proclamation of the LORD God fulfilling all of His promises made to Israel – God's faithfulness
- The remaining three chapters focus on God demanding faithfulness on the part of His children, the people of Israel
- So the last three chapters show us the writer's application – call for Israel's faithfulness in light of God's unwavering faithfulness demonstrated in redemptive history of the people of Israel

Transjordan Tribes Commendation and controversy

1. Joshua speaks to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh commending them for their faithful obedience to the God's command they received through Moses (Joshua 1:12-15)

2. It is good to recognize and acknowledge the faithfulness of God's people
3. What follows the commendation is the call to continuous obedience
4. The *excitement* of the conquest may have helped, yet the same obedience is needed during the everyday live
5. On the way to their land east of the Jordan river, the people of Reuben, the people of Gad, and the half-tribe Manasech build an altar (on the west side of the Jordan river)
6. When the western tribes learned about the altar, they reacted in a peculiar way:
 - They gathered at Shiloh ready to wage war against the Transjordan tribes
 - They sent representatives of each of the western tribes, led by Phinehas, priest to inquire why the Transjordan tribes acted in the breach of faith
 - The western tribes assumed that the newly erected altar was the alternative place of worship, of offering sacrifices to the LORD God, which action would break God's commandment recorded in Deuteronomy 12:1-11
 - They remind them that the sin of one affects all of the people of Israel
7. The people of Reuben, Gad and half-tribe of Manasech respond: the altar is not an alternative place of worship, it is going to serve as a reminder to the western tribes that the people east of the Jordan river also belong to the people of God
8. Phinehas and the representatives of the western tribes are satisfied with the explanation
9. The altar is called *Witness* between us (the people of Israel on both sides of the river Jordan) that the LORD is God
10. The unity of the people of God is not undermined by geography, race, social standing, level of education, etc.
11. Vigilant, but careful fidelity – the care for the purity of the church (godly anxiety for the purity of worship)

Joshua's exhortation to fidelity Joshua at the end of his life reminds the children of Israel about the mighty works of the LORD God and calls for staying alert and obedient

1. Joshua reminds the Israelites that they have seen the works of God themselves, they are the witnesses to the conquest and miraculous provision of the land
2. They are a privileged generation (they have seen it with their own eyes), but the faithfulness is not genetic
3. Two forms of motivation for constant obedience:
 - (a) Faithfulness of God (verse 23:5)
 - (b) Consequences of disobedience (mixing with pagans) – verse 23:14-16

