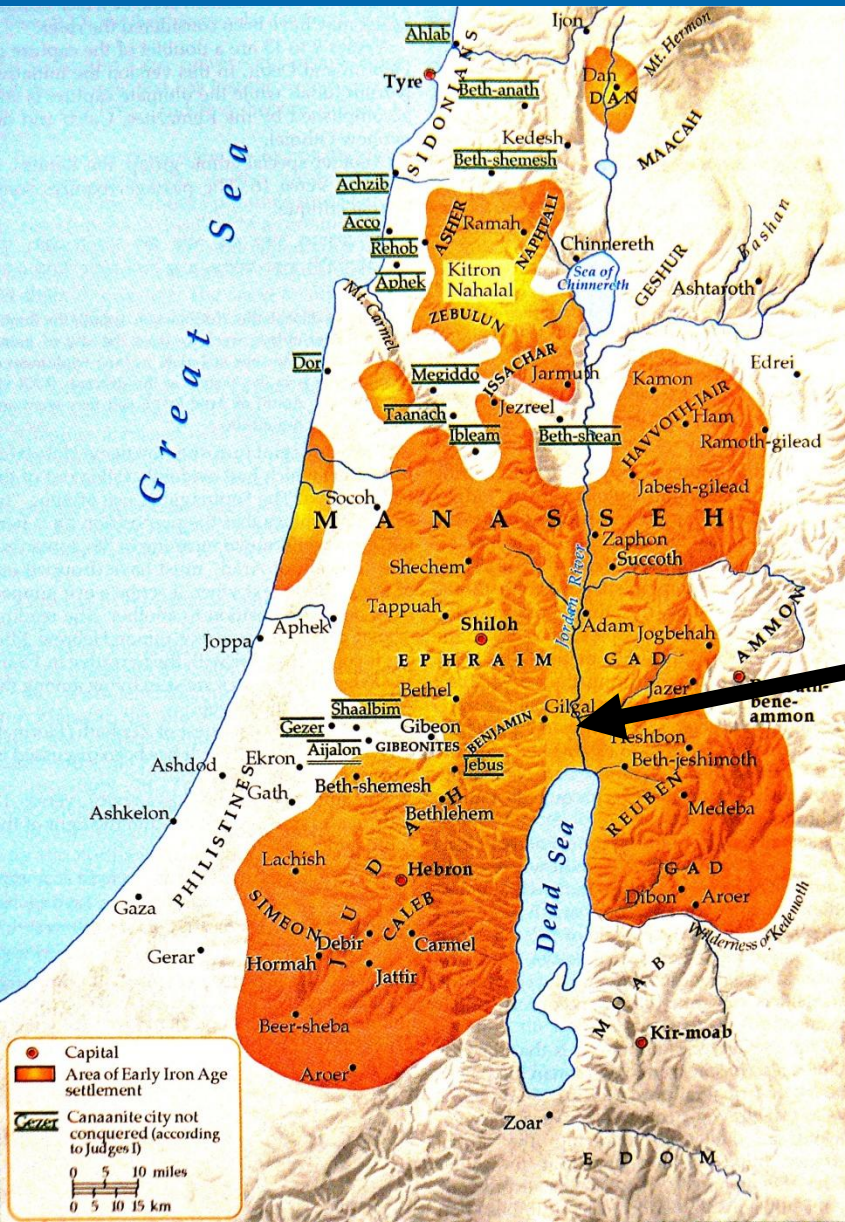


JOSHUA 22



- 1) Who are God's people?
- 2) Where is proper worship to take place?
- 3) What is proper worship?
- 4) Does our sincerity trump God's laws?
- Trans-Jordan tribes build an altar (probably near Gilgal)
- 10 tribes react by deciding to go to war against the 3 tribes
- 3 tribes say that they only built the altar as an **"ED"** (witness)

THE PROBLEM WITH AN ALTAR



- The 3 Trans-Jordan tribes say the altar was an attempt to show solidarity
- BUT....they could have built something OTHER than an altar
- *Tabnith* = pattern
- This altar would probably have been made of stone, unlike the Tabernacle altar which was portable and made of metal



DID THE 3 TRIBES SIN BY BUILDING THAT ALTAR?

- Revolves around the matter of “does heartfelt sincerity trump God’s laws?”
- Altar built from worry and fear
- Afraid that in a few generations they would be viewed as “foreigners” to Israel
- Later when Hebrew migrated all over Asia, some were denied their heritage, others seen as “lesser” Hebrews
- BUT.....they ignored the Torah laws that only the Levites could operate an altar and only ONE altar could exist at only ONE place

ALTARS SOON APPEARED IN HEBREW HOUSEHOLDS

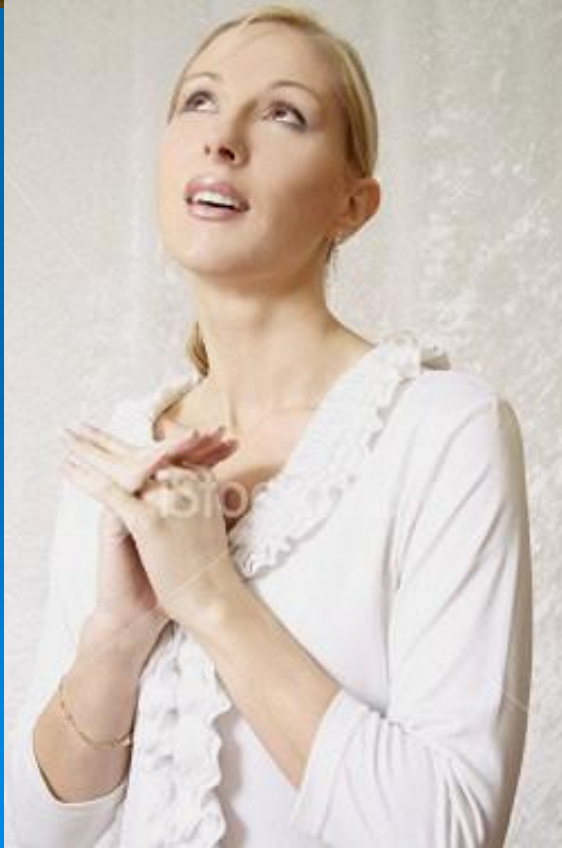


- The Prophets complained about these “home” altars
- Humans often believe we can do dangerous things and not be harmed
- Unlikely those who built the altars INTENDED to be rebellious
- Probably altars were built for convenience ⁴



OBEDIENCE VS. SINCERITY

- Building the altar was meant for good; but it was against the Torah!
- Christian symbols are much like that altar: good intent, but a slippery slope
- God says don't make symbols of creatures as an image of Him
- But we do it and say that if we don't worship it, it's OK



ISRAEL SOON FELL TO IDOLATRY

- Book of Judges tells the story of the slide off that slippery slope
- 9 ½ tribes were accusing the 2 ½ tribes of apostasy
- The issue was both the place of worship and the manner of worship
- Pinchas gives us a model of how to confront difficulties within the dispersed Body of Christ



MAINTAINING UNITY IN THE MIDST OF DIVERSITY



- Judaism and Christianity have always struggled with identity
- Both are terribly divided within themselves
- Today Jews and Christians are being thrust together and a NEW kind of identity struggle is underway!



CHRISTIANS ARE AS THE 2 ½ TRIBES

- Physically living outside of the Promised Land
- Jews physically living inside of the Promised Land
- Christians seek identity with the people of the Promised Land
- We are building MONUMENTS OF GOOD INTENTIONS (symbols)
- But these monuments can be misunderstood





JOSHUA 23: FAREWELL ADDRESS

- Either at *Timnath-serah* or *Shiloh*
- Joshua nearing 110 years old
- Probably up on a hilltop to give final address to his people
- Follows the pattern of Moses
- Being on a hilltop is symbolic of authority and power
- Unlike Moses' speech there was nothing new in Joshua's
- Joshua was exhorting Israel to continue following Moses



THE LORD WILL FINISH DRIVING OUT THE CANAANITES

- Yeshua also tells His followers to continue to follow Moses Matt.5:17-19
- Lord will drive out Canaanites **IF** Israel will be obedient and loyal
- Joshua recommends no contact with the nations left in the land
- The problem was **IDOLATRY!**



A MULTITUDE OF GODS

- Israel had yet to grasp that Yehoveh was the **ONLY** God
- Other nations' gods were always gods of nature
- The antidote to the danger of idolatry is: **LOVE GOD !**
- Obedience is the love language of God for God's worshippers



GOD'S REDEMPTION CAN BE TAKEN BACK



- God's justice demands that His followers remain faithful
- Hebrews 6:1 *“impossible to renew them (who have fallen away)...from their sin”*
- Romans 11:22 *“you too can be cut off”*
- Israel is without excuse
- They have witnessed the power and faithfulness of God