

March 30 Answers

- 1) The crisis began when Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh returned to their own territory with Joshua's blessing. Before they crossed the Jordan, they built a large **altar** by the side of the river (cf. Deut 12:1–13). When the other tribes heard about it, they believed the **worst** of their brothers, and sent a delegation to confront them. The Transjordan tribes protested their innocence, for the altar was only meant to be a **witness** of the common faith shared by Israelites on both sides of the Jordan. This incident teaches us how important it is: (1) to **investigate** an alleged wrong before leaping to judgment, (2) to consider how our actions may be **perceived** by others and go out of our way to avoid the **appearance** of evil, and (3) to respond in **humility** and a desire for reconciliation when others misunderstand our actions. The years passed, and Joshua reached the age of **110**. Knowing that his death was near, he called all the tribes together and challenged them to remain **faithful** and obedient to God. He warned them that just as all God's good words had come true, so also His threats would come true if they disobeyed. He then gathered Israel together at Shechem and admonished them to **renew** their loyalty to the covenant. He deliberately **questioned** their expressions of faithfulness and commanded them to "put away the foreign **gods** which are in your midst" (Josh 24:23). His exhortations came from a heart of love for God, and Israel served God all the days of Joshua's life. This shows us the power and **influence** of a dedicated leader!