



# 19 | JOSHUA 22

## THE DANGEROUS & DELIGHTFUL GLORY OF GOD

*There is nothing better than God's blessing, and nothing worse than to be outside of his blessing.*

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### Call to Worship

David blessed the Lord in the presence of all the assembly. And David said: "Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. <sup>11</sup> Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. <sup>12</sup> Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. <sup>13</sup> And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name. –1 Chronicles 29:10-13

## Songs

*All Creatures of Our God and King*

*Sing We the Song of Emmanuel*

*Holy, Holy, Holy / Awesome God*

*Man of Sorrows (Hillsong) / Oh come let us adore Him*

*We Will Glorify (Twila Paris)*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**WELCOME:** We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet from the Welcome Center if you are visiting with us.

**GIVING:** Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you. – Deuteronomy 16:17

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We also have a collection box on the Welcome Center

## Introduction

We continue in a series in the book of Joshua called “Footsteps of Faith.” Our title this morning is: “The Dangerous & Delightful Glory of God”.

There are some things in life that are fascinating to study but terrifying up close. So many times, I’ve been fascinated by sharks on the Nat Geo channel or some ocean documentary. But I’ve learned that you don’t want to see a shark up close!

Which brings me to my son William’s national football tournament, which happened to be in the shark attack capital of the world. We were minding our own business, enjoying the white sands and clear ocean waters of Panama City Beach. It was barely dusk when Jill and the kids came running into the shoreline, pale and frightened. It seemed as if they had seen a shark. That’s because they had seen a shark!

It was a beautiful black tip shark, who, as we found out, come out to the sand bars at dusk to catch their prey. They don’t like people, but they do like the little fish that congregate on the sandbars at dusk. We had no idea! Sharks are fascinating to look at in photographs and aquariums, but not so much up close. It’s great to talk about sharks, look at shark documentaries, and study sharks. But no one wants to be 2 feet away from a shark (as Jill and the kids were). Why? As *glorious* as sharks are, they are *dangerous*. My wife’s first reaction wasn’t to stand still, mesmerized by the shark’s beauty. No: it was to *run*! And the glory of God’s creation is just a small little glimpse into our great and majestic God. We study the incredible power of hurricanes or tsunamis, but we don’t want to be in one.

I think of Aslan, the Lion in the Chronicles of Narnia. There’s a wonderful scene in that story where Mr. Beaver first tells the children about Aslan, the King of the wood.

Susan asks, “Is he a man?”

“Most certainly not,” Mr Beaver replies. “Aslan is a lion — the Lion, the great Lion.” “Ooh!” says Susan. “Is he quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.”

Mr. Beaver tells Lucy that Aslan, the true King of Narnia is a Lion. To which Lucy asks, trembling: “Is Aslan (the Lion) safe?” His reply: “Safe? Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King.” Peter interrupts! “I’m longing to see him,” said Peter, “even if I do feel frightened when it comes to the point.”<sup>1</sup>

That’s how it is with us this morning. We know our Jesus is not just the Lamb of God, but the Lion of the tribe of Judah that takes vengeance on the earth.

Jesus is not safe, but he is good! That’s what we are going to learn today. This is the theme of Joshua 22, the passage for our study this morning.

**Key Thought:** Our greatest happiness and safety is enjoyed as we live under the blessing of God’s glory and presence, and our greatest sorrow, misery and danger is inflicted any time we choose to depart from God and his glory.

So let me ask you as we take a look at ancient Israel, who so often ran away from the blessing of God. Are you experiencing the ultimate happiness and comfort from God regardless of your circumstances? Are you enjoying his perfect peace, joy as you walk with him in paths of righteousness? The righteous path is the path where God is most glorified and pleased. Are you satisfied with his sweet presence, resting? Waiting on him? Enjoying him. Few Christians find this to be true, but God wants all Christians to experience it. This is the normal Christian life. Once you understand this, it will bring an immovable foundation and an undefeatable joy that cannot fade to your life.

### THE SITUATION

We come to a passage early in the existence of Israel, where you have a serious crisis that almost leads to civil war in Israel, just about the time the entire land is settled. The story is plainly shocking. This is the end of the book. You’d think it might end with a revival and celebration of the presence of God, but instead, Israel is on the brink of civil war. What? Yep, civil war before they hardly even begin as a nation. Let’s consider what happens.

### THE COMMENDATION (22:1-9)

Joshua commends the people!

Joshua 22:3, 5-6 | You have not forsaken your brothers these many days, down to this day, but have been careful to keep the charge of the Lord your God...<sup>5</sup> Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments and to cling to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.”<sup>6</sup> So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents.

So Joshua sends the people of Israel off into to groups: those on the West side of Jordan, where Israel is today, and then you had the two and a half tribes on the East side

<sup>1</sup> C.S. Lewis. *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), 43.

of Jordan: Gad, Reuben and the half tribe of Manasseh. We see here that all the land is distributed from the Western side of the Jordan to the Eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Joshua thanks them (21:1–9). All is well. The land is finally settled. Time to celebrate! They go home. End of story, right? Wrong.

### THE SHOCK (22:10-12)

The Eastern Israelites have erected an altar, which is a complete departure from God. Remember their parents had erected an altar to Baal. It looks like a repeat. So the good western tribes get ready to go to war with the what looks like the “bad” eastern tribes. Let’s read about it.

**Joshua 22:10-12** | And when they came to the region of the Jordan that is in the land of Canaan, the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by the Jordan, an altar of imposing size. <sup>11</sup> And the people of Israel heard it said, “Behold, the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh have built the altar at the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region about the Jordan, on the side that belongs to the people of Israel.” <sup>12</sup> And when the people of Israel heard of it, the whole assembly of the people of Israel gathered at Shiloh to make war against them.

What would make Eastern Israel go against Western Israel (west of the Jordan)? I’ll tell you what it was: idolatry. The children of Israel understood that to be blessed by the LORD, you had to worship him alone. There could be no other. That’s actually the meaning of life. That’s what Joshua commended everyone for! You love God alone! You will be blessed and supremely happy in him! They were to love the Lord (22:5-6)!

Once back in their land, these tribes did a shocking thing. They built a very large and impressive altar (21:10). Nice, right? Wrong. The law of Moses clearly spelled out that there was to be only one altar for sacrificing to the Lord, and that was in Shiloh (Deut 12:5–7). This was an act of flagrant rebellion and must be quashed! The rest of Israel was shocked and enraged. They knew what this meant. Any idolatry of a tribe, in this manner, was to be dealt with through capital punishment. They were to treat their brothers as if they had been pagans. They cannot risk an infection of idolatry. When they heard of what looked like idolatry, they prepared for war (22:12).

### WHY WAR?

What would make these who were ready to celebrate, not get ready to conquer the other remaining two and a half tribes west of Jordan? Seriously, why war? *Because living with the blessing of God over you is everything.* Love God. That’s the command. Outside of loving God, you get counterfeits, misery, agony, emptiness. War is necessary. They were willing at this time to do whatever it took to remain under the blessing of God. It’s dangerous to live outside of the blessing of God.

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## 1. OUR GOD IS A DANGEROUS GOD (22:1-20)

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Our God is a dangerous God. It's dangerous to live for self. He's not safe, but he is good. We read this in so many places.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. –Hebrews 10:31

Israel was to live out the fear (worship) of the Lord and be blessed. Without that worship, there is only death. It's dangerous to live a life outside of the glory and blessing of God. God wants to bless his people. But you have to choose to stay under that blessing.

The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death. – Proverbs 14:27

Sadly, we find later on, much of the time, the Israel goes running recklessly towards death. And these people are a picture of all of us. We must see ourselves in them and learn from their failure to rightly fear God. Fear the Lord! He's a dangerous God. His glory is frightening in a sense. This is a warning that the eastern tribes and Joshua want to give to those who erected this altar.

### IDOLATRY IS DANGEROUS

In verses 13 and following, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest and a group of the ten chiefs of the tribes on the east side of the Jordan, met with those on the west side who erected the altar. He mentions two incidents of idolatry: one was **national idolatry** at **Baal-Peor** (22:17) where the people of Israel were introduced to the golden calf Baal worship when Moses was still alive. The Baal Peor fiasco (Num. 25) brought Yahweh's plague against the congregation.<sup>2</sup> The other incident wasn't national idolatry, but the **personal idolatry** of **Achan** at Jericho (22:20). In both incidents, there were severe consequences. People died. Misery ensued. Idolatry will always bring you misery.

Now thankfully, Israel didn't have to descend into a civil war, because the altar, we'll find out is actually just a memorial and reminder for the western tribes to remember to go to Shiloh once a year to bring the Passover, so that they never forget they are part of Israel, though they are separated by the Jordan River. Needless to say, this was so serious that the tribes of mainland Israel met at Shiloh to 'go to war' against the east-side tribes (21:12). What would bring the tribes west of the Jordan to eliminate the eastern tribes? To be certain, this wasn't vengeance. These were brothers. But you have to understand, they saw the glory of God in so many ways. That is why Joshua 22 is a fitting conclusion as we wind down the book of Joshua. God's people understood the majesty of God's glory.

### MOSES' EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S DANGEROUS GLORY

Moses brings the Israelites out of Egypt to meet with God at Mount Sinai. God wraps the glory cloud around Mount Sinai, and there is smoke, lightening, thunder, and a trumpet sound. God had revealed himself to Moses at the burning bush, but now he

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<sup>2</sup> Dale Ralph Davis, *Joshua: No Falling Words*, Focus on the Bible Commentary (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 166–167.

reveals himself to an entire nation (Ex 19), and the people tremble with fear. They can't even go near the holy mountain, upon punishment of death.

When Moses was confronted with the glory of God, he feared he trembled and took his shoes off. Do you have a reverence for the presence of God that is in you? Moses goes up on the mountain. People are told if they touch the mountain, they will die. Moses has a heart that the Lord can see is completely devoted to God and his glory. Moses comes down with his face shining, so much so that he had to wear a veil over his face. The people are now afraid of Moses, because God's glory shines on him. You know those who like to play around with idols often don't want to be around those who walk with God.

### THE CORINTHIANS EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S DANGEROUS GLORY

God wants his people to live under his blessing. But if you won't live under his blessing, you are subject to sickness and death. Paul had to teach the Corinthian church about the danger of the glory of God. Paul says because you don't take the glory of God seriously "some of you are sick and some of you have fallen asleep [died]".

Mainland Israel got it. They understood. It was holiness or death for them. Death for their brothers was better than living without the glory of God. They treated idolatry like the beginning stage of cancer. They knew that idolatry had to be cut out no matter what the cost. Are you willing to say I want holiness so bad that I invite the chastening of God into my life if I don't go that way. "I want God to cut me and prune the dead parts of my life!"

Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. –John 15:2

Now God's glory is dangerous, but it doesn't have to be. His glory is his person. We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. We will all give an account. We will all have to reckon with this holy God, the scrutiny of the living God.

I could never stand before him in my own merit. I have the merit of another. Now that I know the delight of God's glory in Christ, why would I ever live under the danger of an unblesed life?

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. <sup>2</sup>I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust. –Psalm 91:1-2

I don't want to live without the blessing of God's shadow and presence in my life. That's dangerous! Look at this tension in John 3.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup>For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. –John 3:16-17

Wonderful, right? Delightful, right? Right. But keep reading.

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. –John 3:36

That’s frightening. Our great God is not safe! But he is good! Listen to what the great theologian and pastor J.I. Packer said.

No one stands under the wrath of God except those who choose to do so. –J. I. Packer (p. 153, “Knowing God”)

So what do we say? Why would Joshua and Israel be willing to fight against their own brothers? Let me say: it’s a good thing. They treated idolatry like the beginning stage of cancer. They knew that idolatry had to be cut out no matter what the cost.

### APPLICATION

What is your attitude toward idolatry in your own life? Do you rationalize? Do you make excuses? That’s dangerous. You will experience the glory of God. Will it be dangerous for you?

God yearns jealously over your heart. For the child of God, there is no wrath. There is no danger like that. But there is a fierce love for you. There is a fierce jealousy for your soul.

You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup>Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “**He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us**”? <sup>6</sup>But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” <sup>7</sup>Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup>Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup>Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup>Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. –James 4:4-10

When you commit idolatry against God, he jealously years over your spirit and heart, like a husband who’s been betrayed by an adulterous wife. That’s a dangerous jealousy. You are not in danger of damnation. You will never be condemned. But God is going to deal with your adultery. You can either humble yourself, or God will humble you.

Ok, so far this is heavy, as it should be. Glory has the idea of weightiness. But God wants us to enter into his glory, not be decimated by it. He wants us to delight in it.

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## 2. OUR GOD IS A DELIGHTFUL GOD (22:21-34)

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But the glory of God is the most beautiful and delightful thing ever. There is no overstating it. God is first and foremost a merciful God. The very reason he displays the fierceness of his glory to us is that he might humble us to receive his mercy.

**Key Thought:** Our greatest happiness and safety is enjoyed as we live under the blessing of God's glory and presence, and our greatest sorrow, misery and danger is inflicted any time we choose to depart from God and his glory.

Now let's understand why this is an incredibly good story, and why we need it. What does it teach us about God? This story teaches us that God is both a dangerous and at the same time a delightful God. Before we go back to Joshua and their willingness to destroy their brothers in order to wipe out idolatry from Israel, I want to consider a lesson from Moses.

### A WITNESS OF GOD'S GLORY

Moses says: Show me your glory! And Moses had seen God's glory at the burning bush. He also saw God's glory, Hebrews 12 says, at Mount Sinai, and he said, "I tremble with fear." Moses was afraid. He trembled.

Israel was to shown God's glory, and it was absolutely frightening. God's wraps his glory around Mount Sinai, and there's smoke and fire and lightening and incredible thunder. The people are trembling. Moses is trembling.

For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest <sup>19</sup> and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. <sup>20</sup> For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." <sup>21</sup> Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear." <sup>22</sup> But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, <sup>23</sup> and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, <sup>24</sup> and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant... —Hebrews 12:18-24

How can we say God's glory is delightful? Moses was given access to the mountain. He came down with his face shining. He came down with joy.

He says to God, "Show me your glory!" He's introduced to the delightful glory of God." And remember when God's glory passed before Moses, that glory was described as God's goodness!

Moses said, "Please show me your glory." <sup>19</sup> And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The Lord.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. <sup>20</sup> But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." <sup>21</sup> And the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, <sup>22</sup> and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. —Exodus 33:18-22

Do you see? God's glory is the only thing worth living for! It's the only thing that is worth anything. To be outside the glory of God as a sinner, is dangerous. But to be accepted in Christ, it's a delight!

The western tribes of Israel testify to this!



## A WITNESS OF PRAISE (21:21-34)

**Joshua 22:21-29** | Then the people of Reuben, the people of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh said in answer to the heads of the families of Israel, <sup>22</sup>“The Mighty One, God, the Lord! The Mighty One, God, the Lord! He knows; and let Israel itself know! If it was in rebellion or in breach of faith against the Lord, do not spare us today <sup>23</sup>for building an altar to turn away from following the Lord. Or if we did so to offer burnt offerings or grain offerings or peace offerings on it, may the Lord himself take vengeance. <sup>24</sup>No, but we did it from fear that in time to come your children might say to our children, ‘What have you to do with the Lord, the God of Israel? <sup>25</sup>For the Lord has made the Jordan a boundary between us and you, you people of Reuben and people of Gad. You have no portion in the Lord.’ So your children might make our children cease to worship the Lord. <sup>26</sup>Therefore we said, ‘Let us now build an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice, <sup>27</sup>but to be a witness between us and you, and between our generations after us, that we do perform the service of the Lord in his presence with our burnt offerings and sacrifices and peace offerings, so your children will not say to our children in time to come, “You have no portion in the Lord.”’ <sup>28</sup>And we thought, ‘If this should be said to us or to our descendants in time to come, we should say, “Behold, the copy of the altar of the Lord, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifice, but to be a witness between us and you.”’ <sup>29</sup>Far be it from us that we should rebel against the Lord and turn away this day from following the Lord by building an altar for burnt offering, grain offering, or sacrifice, other than the altar of the Lord our God that stands before his tabernacle!”

Phinehas and his delegation were tremendously relieved. All of Israel ‘blessed God’ and ‘spoke no more of going against them in battle’ (21:33). They found out that this was not an idol altar, it was a memorial of praise to God!

**Joshua 22:30-34** | When Phinehas the priest and the chiefs of the congregation, the heads of the families of Israel who were with him, heard the words that the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the people of Manasseh spoke, it was good in their eyes. <sup>31</sup>And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the people of Manasseh, “Today we know that the Lord is in our midst, because you have not committed this breach of faith against the Lord. Now you have delivered the people of Israel from the hand of the Lord.” <sup>32</sup>Then Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the chiefs, returned from the people of Reuben and the people of Gad in the land of Gilead to the land of Canaan, to the people of Israel, and brought back word to them. <sup>33</sup>And the report was good in the eyes of the people of Israel. And the people of Israel blessed God and spoke no more of making war against them to destroy the land where the people of Reuben and the people of Gad were

settled. <sup>34</sup>The people of Reuben and the people of Gad called the altar Witness, "For," they said, "it is a witness between us that the Lord is God."

Instead of this altar being a witness of idolatry, it was a **witness of praise!** You see this is how God's glory is a protection to us. We dwell in the shadow of the Almighty (Psa 91:1) and we are protected. Praise will protect you from all harm to your soul. Now it may not protect you from harm in your body or in your circumstances. You will suffer in this life. Jesus said,

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." –John 16:33

Can you say that "in Jesus I have peace"? Can you say with Christ, "I have overcome the world" in spite of the tribulation you face? The more you praise, the more you will see God's protection in your life. The more you delight in Jesus, you are protected from the misery of idolatry. Let me illustrate it with King Jehoshaphat.

### *King Jehoshaphat's Protection of Praise*

Remember in 2 Chronicles 20, a great multitude was coming against King Jehoshaphat. When he sought the Lord, he was told to send out the singers of Israel. God says to them:

Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the Lord will be with you." <sup>18</sup>Then Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the Lord, worshiping the Lord. <sup>19</sup>And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the Lord, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice... <sup>22</sup>And when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed. – 2 Chronicles 20:17-20, 22

The tribes west of Jordan understood the power of praise. How easy it is to forget the Lord. Praise is a protection for your soul.

### **A WITNESS TO COMMITMENT**

The altar had not been built for offering sacrifices, but rather as a visible reminder that these two and a half tribes were part of Israel (vv. 21–29). S. G. DeGraaf writes of the two and a half tribes, "They had been afraid that the two communities, separated by the Jordan, might become estranged from each other, and that the tribes to the west of the river might someday refuse to allow the eastern tribes to participate in the service of the Lord at Shiloh."

We are family. We are on the same pathway. We are going to the same destination. We are going to spend the next billion years together. This is especially a challenge for those living in close quarters: brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, parents and children. You are family. This is also for the church. We are God's forever family.

Connect on an eternal level. We can't just have commonalities around sports and politics or hobbies. Fine and well, but that is not the substance of Christianity. Our fellowship is around Christ. We are connected through the Holy Spirit.

## A WITNESS TO INCARNATION

Not only are we family, but we are to incarnate Jesus to our forever family, and to the world. Jesus came first in the incarnation. It's Christmastime. The Word became flesh. We are to incarnate him to those around us.

This is the essence of holiness. To be holy is to be separated unto God for his use and purposes. We are not called to the comfortable life but to the incarnational life. Jesus was obedient to God even if it meant crucifixion. That's us. Our focus can never be on my own comfort, my rights, my worthiness of respect.

There has been so much pride in my heart that I've been repenting of. Whenever there is anger or anxiety, I have to chase it down to the idol of pride. I'm worried that people don't respect me. I'm angry that I don't get the respect or love I think I deserve. I track it down, and I have to confess my pride until the anger and anxiety go away. The anger and anxiety are trying to rip the unconquerable God off his throne.

So we are to incarnate the divine love of Christ to those around us.

### *Incarnation Requires Humility*

Joshua 22 serves as something of a handbook for God's people of all ages on the matter of dealing with misunderstandings. Don't assume! How often we think we know the motives of our brothers and sisters in Christ, and how often we are wrong! Instead of passing judgement on others' motives, we would do well openly and honestly to speak to them about any of their acts that concern us. A little honest talking often prevents a lot of heartache!

Peter Jeffery perceptively writes,

Innocent actions can be misconstrued, exaggerated and blown up out of all proportion. Sometimes we misrepresent the action of a fellow believer because we do not like that person and are only too glad for an opportunity to criticize. That is evil and wicked. Sometimes we misrepresent an action because we disagree with it. That is dishonest because the motives can be right even when the action is wrong.

The Israelites were too quick to misconstrue and much too quick to be ready to fight, but we must pay tribute to them that before they did anything they sent representatives to talk with their brethren. When they came face to face and talked the whole business through the problems were resolved.<sup>3</sup>

### *Incarnation Requires the Spirit's Peace*

We are not naturally people of peace. We come into this world with a sinful nature that puts us at odds with God and often at odds with others. But our God is a God of peace. Through the redeeming work of his Son, the Lord Jesus, God brings us into a state of peace with himself. He also gives us peace within. The people of God are, therefore, to be people of peace, and any failure in that area is a denial of the gospel we profess to revere. Nothing so

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Jeffery, *Overcoming Life's Difficulties: Learning from the Book of Joshua* (Wyoming, MI: Evangelical Press, 2007).

hinders the progress of the gospel as lack of peace among God's people, and nothing so promotes it as warm-hearted unity.<sup>4</sup>

### *Incarnation Requires a Willingness to Fight*

In order to gain peace, we have to be willing to fight. I don't mean fight against your spouse or a church member. I mean fighting for your family and your church and your culture. Stand up and be counted!

### **Conclusion**

You are either under God's shalom or under his curse. The children of Israel wanted to remain under God's shalom—his blessing. After all the conquering of the Canaanite nations, Joshua 22 might seem like a strange way to wind down the book, but it's not. It's perfect. They were to literally be willing to die for the glory of God and his blessing. That's how important it is. Life is miserable without God's blessing! Can you say with David that having God's blessing on your life, knowing his love and peace and righteousness, is better than the best that life can give me?

Your steadfast love is better than life..." –Psalm 63:3

What else can we say? He is worthy! There is nothing better than the blessing of God's presence, and nothing worse than to be outside of his blessing.

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<sup>4</sup> Roger Ellsworth, *Opening up Joshua*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2008), 105–108.