

Title: The Battle Begins  
 Date: September 29, 2013  
 Text: Joshua 1:1-11  
 Place: Decatur Church of God  
 Theme: The Story

[A more detailed map of Canaan than in The Story should be made available to the people. A good Bible atlas may be consulted to get the map.]

Introduction: Have you ever faced straight on an overwhelming challenge that scared the death out of you? If so, did you confront it or retreat?

In The Story we find Israel facing an overwhelming challenge. After 600 years from God's promise to Abraham to make him a great nation, the children of Israel are ready to advance into the Promised Land. But there is a big problem. There are wicked people already living in the land and among those people are some literal giants.

\* It would be like putting Danny DeVito (5' tall) up against Wilt "the Stilt" Chamberlain (7' 1" tall).

The children of Israel are under a new leader, Joshua, and they are at Kadesh-Barnea where 40 years earlier they took a major wrong turn. Under Joshua, God tells the new generation to take the land. Joshua is told 4 times by God to "be strong and courageous." Now is the time for courage!

**I. God tells Joshua and the people three things they need to be successful.**

A. Be people of the book—the word of God.

***Joshua 1:8***

*Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do*

*everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*

1. When Achan sinned by not heeding the word of God, the people lost the battle at Ai. (Joshua 7)
2. After that loss, Joshua read the entire book of the law to the people.

***Joshua 8:34***

*Afterward, Joshua read all the words of the law--the blessings and the curses--just as it is written in the Book of the Law.*

- B. Be people of prayer.
  1. God says, “Talk to Me before you go to battle. I will be in front.”
  2. To demonstrate God going first, the Ark of the Covenant led the people. When we follow God we have 100% success.
- C. Be people who identify with God. (Joshua 5)
  1. At Gilgal all the males of Israel were circumcised as a sign of their identity with God.
  2. God says in effect, “Before you go into battle, I want all the soldiers to identify with me.”

**II. The battles begin and the land is taken. (Joshua 5-7)**

- A. God performs miracles by damming up the Jordan River and by delivering Jericho into Israel’s hands.

- B. Israel defeats 5 kings and takes the cities in the south. “the southern campaign”
- C. Israel defeats 14 kings in the north. “the northern campaign”
  - 1. The entire land is now in Israel’s control.

***Joshua 11:23***

*So Joshua took the entire land, just as the Lord had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions.*

*Then the land had rest from war.*

- 2. Joshua divides the land among the tribes of Israel. (Joshua 13-21)

**III. The two reasons God commands Israel to take the Promised Land.**

- A. Because of the wickedness of the inhabitants to the land.
  - 1. God told this reason to Abraham 600 years earlier.

***Genesis 15:16***

*In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure."*

- 2. The inhabitants practiced detestable idolatry which included using prostitutes in worship and sacrificing (burning) children to the gods.

**Deut. 12:31**

*You must not worship the Lord your God in their way, because in worshipping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the Lord hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods.*

**Deut. 20:18**

*Otherwise, they will teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshipping their gods, and you will sin against the Lord your God.*

**Exodus 34:15-16**

*"Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices. [16] And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same.*

\* But even more importantly...

- B. Because God wants to make Himself known among the nations.
1. At least 19 times in the Scriptures God declares this as His mission.
  2. To Abraham God said that all the nations of the world would be blessed. God wants all people to be in relationship with Him.

**Application:**

- Are you and are we as a church people of the word of God?
- Are you and are we as a church people of prayer?
- Are you and are we as a church identified with God through baptism?

- How are you and we as a church taking our city for God by making God known in our schools, businesses, recreation and service to the needy?
- People are God's strategy to make Him known among the peoples of the world. We are responsible to God for our city (town, village). We cannot have any "Achans" in our midst.

It is time for us to make the courageous decision and rise to the challenge that God