

# ***The Story Adult Study Guide***

For the Week of October 20, 2019

## **Chapter 7: “The Battle Begins”**



Key Events: Joshua appointed leader, the Israelites enter the promised land, the conquest of Canaan, Joshua’s farewell speech and death

Key Character: Joshua (see *The Story* page 488 for character descriptions)

Bible Reference for this Chapter: Joshua 1-2, 6, 8, 10-11, 23-24

1. In the death of Achan and in the saving of a foreign woman we see two characteristics of God. What are they?
2. The prostitute Rahab played a part in Israel’s conquest of Jericho. (pages 90-91) In Matthew 1:5 (*“Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse”*) what was another role she played in God’s plan. By using this woman, what does that tell us about God?
3. People may find the warfare and loss of life in chapter 7 quite disturbing. How was the conquest of Canaan the Lord’s holy war fought for spiritual reasons?
4. Soldiers engaged in battle face fear. Soldiers who are victorious in battle may become full of themselves and arrogant. How did God conduct the Canaanite campaign to curtail both fear and arrogance?
5. The Israelites destroyed the royal cities of the Canaanite nations as God commanded. (page 99) What is the point behind the destruction of these cities?

6. "Then the land had rest from war." (page 99) How would you define the term *national stability*? What positive and negative impact does stability have on gospel ministry?
  
7. In Joshua's farewell speech, he proclaims, "But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." (page 101) What does this commitment mean for Christian families in the context of our world today?
  
8. Christians on earth are enlisted in the Church Militant. What does this mean?
  
9. Upper Story = God is present and working in the world to bring about the salvation of souls. Lower Story = God is present and working in my life every day to strengthen my faith in his plan and promises. Please share messages of personal comfort, hope, and encouragement you received from chapter 7.

### Prayer Suggestions

- Pray for a strong faith to resist the temptations and idols of this world.
- Pray for a renewed commitment to God's Word and a desire to read and study it daily.

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## Chapter 7 - Study Guide Helps

1. God's holy justice against unbelief and His loving grace for repentant sinners are both in the nature of God. This should be a warning to us should we turn away from God and a comfort when we return and trust in Him.
2. Matthew chapter 1 lists the genealogy of Jesus, and verse 5 states, "Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was **Rahab** . . ." Rahab married Salmon from the tribe of Judah, and she was in the family line leading to David and eventually to the Savior. Hebrews 11:31 notes that Rahab had faith in God's gospel promise. The fact that God called this non-Israelite prostitute to faith and used her in his plan of salvation is a testimony to God's desire that "all people be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). Christ's work of redemption is for all people. God wants us to reach out to all with the gospel.
3. The book of Joshua does not address itself to the ethical question of war as a means to attain human ends. The warfare must be understood in the context of God's plan of salvation unfolding in the Old Testament involving divine grace and judgment. It is the story of how God at one stage in the history of redemption reconquered a portion of earth from the powers of the sinful world. God commissioned Israel to take this land in his name out of the hands of the idolatrous Canaanites. The Lord's triumph testified to the world that the God of Israel is the one true living God, while providing a physical/geographical location for God's plan of salvation to play itself out. War is a terrible consequence of sin; however it pales in comparison to the eternal condemnation for those who reject God.
4. God was directly involved in the conquest of Canaan. God devised the battle plans and used his power to miraculously win victories in the face of overwhelming human odds. God's repeated instructions, "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous" were reinforced in a huge way on the battle field. Since the battles were won in such incredible and almighty ways, the Israelite soldiers couldn't take credit for themselves but had to give all glory to God.
5. The destruction of the royal cities served a number of purposes: 1) destruction was an act of God's justice and judgment on the unbelieving and idolatrous Canaanites; 2) destruction reinforced God's instructions to the Israelites to "fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness"; 3) these cities couldn't become a spiritual stumbling block for the Israelites if they lived there – the idol temples, altars, etc. would be destroyed; 4) destruction marked a new beginning – the land/royal cities would no longer be the home of heathen people and idolatry, but the home of God's people and worship of the true God.
6. Definitions of national stability may vary. A basic component of stability in a nation involves protection and security from outside invasion, and a civil society for people to live out their lives in peace and order. God's institution of government is intended to provide these benefits through the establishment of a military, a police force, laws, a judicial system, etc. National stability may be expanded to include benefits like a sound economy, job security, an education system, healthcare, a welfare system, human rights, a culture of good ethics and values, etc. Positive impact on gospel ministry: a peaceful, secure and law-abiding society facilitates sharing the gospel without persecution and interference. Negative impact: material blessings can be an obstacle and distraction to gospel preaching; humans tend to focus on their physical welfare and not their spiritual welfare.
7. The commitment Joshua stated involves diligently reading and studying God's Word and worshipping the Triune God. Dedication to the Word of God is one of routine and regularity in our daily lives. Furthermore, this commitment involves faithfully following his Word and putting it into practice. In a family setting, the parents take the lead in this endeavor and they bring up their children in the training and nurture of the Lord. All this runs counter to the way our world is today. A commitment such as this requires the power of the Holy Spirit, who builds us up through Word and Sacrament.
8. Church Militant refers to the spiritual warfare Christians are engaged in on a daily basis – we battle the devil, the world, and our sinful nature. Ephesians 6:12: *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm.* This warfare is real and it carries eternal ramifications. Like the Israelites, God and his power carry us in this battle. We "put on the full armor of God" – the gospel in God's Word and the Sacraments. (Ephesians 6:10-18)
9. Answers will vary. Consider/discuss elements of chapter 7 that relate to our daily walk of faith.