

BATTLE ROYALE IN THE DESERT

There have been many important battles recorded in the annals of military history. Each of these battles was so crucial to the combatants that it became the turning point in the conflict. It determined the outcome of the war. Whoever won the battle won the war.

The battle during the Normandy landing of the Allied Forces on June 6, 1944 was critical to the success of their European campaign against the Nazi army. Had the Allies been defeated and forced to retreat to the sea, the war might have been lost or prolonged. The Allies' victory in Normandy sealed the fate of the German military machine.

In the ancient days, wars between nations were led by kings. The battles that kings personally waged were always pivotal to the future of their countries. Should a king die in battle or be captured, that king's kingdom would be lost. Often, the defeated king's family members and subjects were executed or enslaved by the victorious king. So, everything was at stake whenever a royal battle was fought. Kings who lose do not live to fight another day. It was a do-or-die, winner-take-all, no-mercy, no-tomorrow proposition.

One such battle royale took place in a desert between two kings, who fought without their armies. This was the most important battle in the history of the universe. Most people refer to this encounter as the "temptations of Christ." But it was much more than that. Its outcome affected all of creation, especially the human family. The future of the human race was decided on that day. The mission of Christ on earth could not be accomplished without Him having won this battle. In fact, without His victory here, Christ could not even begin His ministry of salvation.

When Adam succumbed to the lies of Satan in Eden, he didn't just disobey God's command about the forbidden fruit. In reality, he completely disabled the human race from fulfilling God's destiny for man. In doing this, he short-circuited the rule of God's Kingdom on earth. God intended to govern earth, and still does, through man as his surrogate. In establishing such a plan, God limited His direct intervention in earthly affairs. In ruling earth, He would have to act through the agency of human beings.

Christ, who is God Himself, became a human being in order to be Heaven's human agent for restoring what Adam lost. He was sent to do what Adam failed to do. In His confrontation with Satan in the desert, He readily discerned Satan's lies and refused to be

swayed by his deceitful words. Unlike Adam, Christ successfully defended His earth dominion as man – the surrogate ruler of God.

When Satan challenged Him to prove that He was the Son of God by changing stones into bread, Christ responded by simply saying, *"I will live by the word from God's mouth. I believe that I'm God's Son because my Father just said so, forty days ago, after my baptism. I don't need any proof, I have God's word on that. And that's good enough for me. If you need proof, that's your problem, not mine."*

When Satan urged Him to jump from the pinnacle of the temple to prove that He is the Son of God and to rely on God's promise of rescue, Jesus simply said to him, *"I don't need to pass a test to know that I'm God's Son, and neither does God, especially a test from you. You already know God and what He can do, you don't need to test Him."*

And when Satan promised Christ the kingdoms of the world if he would only worship the devil, He simply replied, *"God is the only One who deserves to be worshiped because He is the sovereign King of Heaven. You don't deserve worship, you were created to serve and worship God. You are living out of God's plan and destiny for you. Besides, the earth has already been given to me since the beginning of time. This is my kingdom, it's not yours to give away."*

Jesus gained victory over Satan in their battle royale in the desert by simply staying within God's original plan for humanity. **First, He was filled and led by the Holy Spirit.** God intended for Adam to operate out of his intimacy with the Holy Spirit. **Second, He overcame through His belief and trust in God's Word.** It was Adam's unbelief in God's goodness and wisdom that caused him to be deceived by Satan. **And third, He asserted the earth dominion authority that God originally gave to Adam.** Instead of asserting man's dominion, Adam surrendered it to a false king.

By staying within God's royal plan and will for man, Jesus won and recovered what Adam lost in His battle royale with the illegal ruler and usurper of the earth kingdom. Actually, the battle was not even fair. On one side was the Son of God, a man who had been given dominion over earth to rule for the Kingdom of heaven. On the other side was a deposed and fallen angel, whose weapons are mere lies and deceit. Who would win this war is really a no-brainer!

So thereafter, Jesus could go forth, proclaiming, *"The Kingdom of God is at hand. Satan is a defeated enemy. The battle for earth dominion is over. You, too, can claim victory. I won it for you."*