

The Book of Exodus

The Battle with Amalek

Text: Exodus 17:8-16

I. The Two-Fold Battle

(Exodus 17:8-13)

- A. While at Rephidim, the people of Amalek attacked the Israelites.
 - 1. Amalek was the grandson of Esau and became one of the dukes of Edom (Gen. 36:12, 16).
 - 2. The language indicates that this attack was an unprovoked ambush (cf. 1 Sam. 15:2).
 - 3. In fact, they attacked Israel from the rear and focused their efforts on those who were weak and feeble (Deut. 25:17-18).
 - 4. In one of Balaam's prophecies, Amalek was called "the first of the nations" (Numbers 24:20).
 - a. This seems to indicate that they were the most powerful tribe in the region at the time of their attack on Israel.
 - b. It may also mean that they were the first to attack the people of God after they escaped from Egypt.
- B. Moses selected Joshua to lead Israel in the battle against the Amalekites.
 - 1. This is the first mention of the man named Joshua, the son of Nun.
 - 2. He would soon become Moses' minister (24:13).
 - 3. And, he would be chosen to lead Israel after the death of Moses.
 - 4. His actions during this battle reveal his character and faith – and give insight as to why he was chosen for such important roles.
- C. This battle was fought on two fronts – physical and spiritual.
 - 1. Joshua led the people in the physical conflict.
 - 2. They fought with physical weapons in order to subdue the enemy.
- D. Moses led the spiritual battle for Israel.
 - 1. He stood on top of the hill with the rod of God in his hand.
 - 2. When he held up his hands, Israel prevailed in the physical conflict.
 - 3. When he lowered his hands, the Amalekites prevailed.
 - 4. In time, Moses' arms became weak and he could not hold up his hands by himself.
 - 5. Aaron and Hur placed on stone on which Moses could sit.
 - a. This is the first mention of Hur (cf. 24:14).
 - b. He was the grandfather of Bezaleel, who constructed the Tabernacle (31:2-5; 1 Chron. 2:18-20).
 - 6. Then they stood, one on each side, and held up his hands.
- E. There is great symbolism in Moses' actions.
 - 1. The lifting up of holy hands symbolizes prayer (1 Tim. 2:8).
 - 2. Thus, Moses became the intercessor for Israel.
 - 3. His actions were a reminder that victory would not be won without the involvement and blessing of God.
 - 4. He was also the standard-bearer of Israel, reminding them of what they were fighting for.
 - 5. In every battle, we must fight both physically and spiritually.

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- F. The help offered by Aaron and Hur reminds us that we all need support and fellowship in fighting the enemies of God and man.
 - 1. Matthew 26:40
 - 2. Isaiah 35:3; cf. Heb. 12:12
 - 3. We ought to pray for one another (2 Cor. 1:11; Phil. 1:19; 1 Thes. 5:25; Jam. 5:16).
- G. Because of Israel's faithfulness in both aspects of the battle, Joshua caused the Amalekites to be disabled and bowed down before Israel.

II. The Punishment of Amalek

(Exodus 17:14-16)

- A. God commanded that a record of this event and Amalek's actions in instigating it be written down and kept.
- B. God commanded that Israel was to be a war with Amalek until they were utterly destroyed.
 - 1. Israel was not to forget this instruction (Num. 24:20; Deut. 25:17-19).
 - 2. When the time came, God ordered King Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:1ff).
 - 3. Saul disobeyed and was reprimanded by God.
 - 4. Finally, it was King David who destroyed the Amalekites (1 Sam. 27:8-9; 30:17; 1 Chron. 4:43).
- C. Finally, Moses built an altar which he named Jehovah-nissi, meaning, "The Lord My Banner."