

## Israel's Battle with Amalek

*Exodus 17:8-16*

### Introduction

1. Israel's battle with Amalek shortly after the exodus from Egypt is memorable.
2. The record of this battle was preserved by God for our learning (**cf. Romans 15:4**).
3. There are various points that can be made concerning the events of this great battle.

#### I. Israel's Battle with Amalek

##### A. Time

- a. "The attack occurred about two months after the Exodus, toward the end of May or early in June, when the Bedouins leave the lower plains in order to find pasture for their flocks on the cooler heights." (Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Exodus 17:8)
- b. Israel's victory against Egypt – **Exodus 14:28-31**
  - i. This victory was magnificent. To such a degree that it spread throughout the surrounding lands.
  - ii. **Cf. Joshua 2:8-11** – Rahab tells the spies that the people of Canaan heard about the victory in the Exodus.
  - iii. This was not an isolated, quiet event:
    1. **Psalm 106:8** – to make His power known.
    2. **Joshua 4:21-24** – memorial after crossing the Jordan – that the peoples of the earth will know.

##### B. Place

- a. **Exodus 17:8** – Rephidim on the way to Mount Sinai.
- b. "The Amalekites had no doubt come to the neighbourhood of Sinai for the same reason for which, even in the present day, the Bedouin Arabs leave the lower districts at the beginning of summer, and congregate in the mountain regions of the Arabian peninsula, viz., because the grass is dried up in the former, whereas in the latter the pasturage remains green much longer, on account of the climate being comparatively cooler." (Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Exodus 17:8-13)
- c. With one nation coming upon another nation, both in search for resources, there is bound to be conflict.

##### C. People

- a. However, this was no mere advancement of the Amalekites in a dispute over pasture for the flocks.
- b. **Exodus 17:14** – The Lord's pronouncement upon Amalek had a greater reason behind it than a mere dispute over land.
  - i. **Cf. Numbers 24:20** – Amalek stood as the first of the Canaanites to challenge what they knew to be THE NATION OF JEHOVAH. (Balaam's prophecy concerning Israel)
  - ii. **Cf. Deuteronomy 25:17-19** – The way they sought to destroy Israel shows not only their cowardice, but their disdain for God.

##### D. The Battle

- a. Men chosen to fight:
  - i. **Exodus 17:8-9, 13** – Moses told Joshua to take men to stand against Amalek and fight. Ultimately they were successful, and won “with the edge of the sword.”
  - ii. Israel had to do their part, and fight against Amalek. (Contrast with the victory over Egypt.)
- b. Moses with the rod of God:
  - i. **Exodus 17:9-13** – Moses did not go to fight, but went upon a hill, and with the rod of God ensured victory for Israel.
  - ii. Rod of God – **Exodus 4:1-5, 17** – God’s choice of medium through which His power and presence would be associated with Moses.
    - 1. **Exodus 4:20** – called the rod of God.
    - 2. **Exodus 14:16** – used in the Exodus to part the sea.
  - iii. When the rod was lifted, ISRAEL WAS SUCCESSFUL, but when it was lowered THEY BEGAN TO LOSE. SO AARON AND HUR supported Moses’ hands as he sat on a rock, thus they gained the victory.
- c. A memorial made:
  - i. **Exodus 17:14-16** – The victory was ascribed to the Lord, as it should be, and memory was ensured.
  - ii. The nation of Israel would go on to establish many memorials of Jehovah according to His commands.

## II. Applications

### A. The Efficacy of Prayer

- a. **Exodus 17:11** – With the rod of God in his hands, Moses lifted his hands so that Israel would gain victory.
  - i. “The act represents the efficacy of intercessory prayer – offered doubtless by Moses – a point of great moment to the Israelites at that time and to the church in all ages.” (Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Exodus 17:11)
  - ii. “He himself [Moses] went with Aaron and Hur to the summit of a hill to hold up the staff of God in his hands, that he might procure success to the warriors through the spiritual weapons of prayer.” (Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Exodus 17:8-13)
  - iii. **Cf. 1 Timothy 2:8** – pray lifting up hands. (Not necessary in prayer, but a custom of prayer seen in the Bible.)
- b. Connection of the rod of God with prayer on this occasion:
  - i. The rod of God for Moses, and all who experienced the signs accomplished by God through Moses, represented the power of God.
  - ii. All other signs performed using the rod were specifically instructed by God.

- iii. However, during the battle with Amalek, God gave no such instruction concerning the rod.
  - iv. MOSES' ACTIONS WERE TAKEN BY FAITH, AND WITH THE CONFIDENCE OF PRAYER.
  - c. We too, should understand the efficacy of prayer – **James 5:16-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17**
- B. Perseverance and Persistence
- a. **Exodus 17:12c** – The battle lasted until the going down of the sun.
    - i. Moses knew he needed to keep the rod of God elevated – as well as Aaron and Hur.
    - ii. The persevered through the day and gained the victory.
  - b. Especially in prayer – **Luke 18:1-8** – Part of our faith associated with prayer is that we understand God answers in HIS TIME. DON'T GIVE UP.
  - c. In life lived for Jesus – **Romans 5:3-5** – We must persevere to the end.
- C. The Support of Those in Roles of Authority
- a. **Exodus 3:10** – God chose Moses to be the leader of Israel.
    - i. God delivered and led Israel through Moses.
    - ii. Moses interceded before God on behalf of Israel on multiple occasions – typifying Christ.
  - b. **Exodus 17:9** – Moses' intention in going to the hill was to make intercession to God on behalf of the nation during the battle.
    - i. **(v. 10)** – He INITIALLY took with him Aaron and Hur – NOT AN AFTERTHOUGHT.
    - ii. Perhaps he anticipated the need for support.
  - c. **Exodus 17:10-13** – Aaron and Hur held up the arms of Moses during the battle – MOSES NEEDED SUPPORT.
  - d. The Lord has placed certain men in roles of authority and leadership – cf. **Ephesians 4:11-12**
    - i. These men need cooperation from the brethren, and support to continue upholding the banner of faith.
    - ii. When there is not support – **Hebrews 13:17** – Greives them, and does not profit you.
  - e. THIS COULD BE SAID FOR ANY ROLE OF LEADERSHIP – Husband and wife, Parent and child, etc. (Those in authority and leadership roles need support in their efforts for God, as do all of us.)
- D. Spiritual Weapons vs Carnal Weapons
- a. **Exodus 17:11, 13** – the scripture says they defeated Amalek with the edge of the sword, but ultimately the victory was due to the intervention of God.
    - i. If God was not with them they would have failed miserably.
    - ii. COMPARE TO WHEN ISRAEL DEFEATED JERICHO, AND THEN FAILED TO DEFEAT AI BECAUSE SIN WAS IN THE CAMP.
  - b. Remember David's words to the Philistine champion – **1 Samuel 17:45**

- c. Especially in our spiritual endeavors, we must understand that the spiritual weapons of God are what will ensure victory – NOT CARNAL WEAPONS – **2 Corinthians 10:4-6** – weapons mighty in God.
  - d. **Ephesians 6:10-13** – we need the panoply of God for victory against Satan.
- E. The Presence of God
- a. **Exodus 17:7** – Right before the battle with Amalek the Israelites questioned the Lord's presence.
    - i. The testing of the Lord is never acceptable. It does not exhibit faith.
    - ii. Israel was foolish in testing God – such would be their ultimate downfall.
  - b. What is interesting is the fact that when they doubted God's presence, HE WAS THERE ALL ALONG – **"O YOU OF LITTLE FAITH, WHY DID YOU DOUBT?" (Matthew 14:31** – Jesus to Peter when he sank.)
  - c. It was obvious that the Lord was with Israel during the battle, else they would have lost.
  - d. We must remember, and never doubt that the Lord is with us if we are faithful to Him – **2 Timothy 4:16-18** – Paul at his defense.
- F. Victory in the Lord
- a. **Exodus 17:14-16** – At the Lord's command, Moses made a memorial that ascribed the victory to the Lord.
  - b. VICTORY IS IN THE LORD – **cf. 1 Corinthians 15:56-57** – speaking as though the victory is already won – THAT BECAUSE IT IS SURE!
  - c. We must always give credit where credit is due – **cf. 1 Corinthians 15:10** – Paul, ascribing his success to God's grace.
  - d. **1 Corinthians 4:7** – what do you have that you did not receive.
  - e. **1 Corinthians 15:58** – We must have confidence of our victory in Jesus, and continue faithfully.

### Conclusion

1. Much can be learned from Israel's battle with Amalek.
2. Let us learn from the inspired record.
3. We should persevere in prayer, realizing its efficacy, support those in leadership roles of authority, rely upon the weapons of God, understand God is with us, and have the confidence of victory in Jesus.