

**God Will Lead You Through to:
“Victory Over Enemies”
Exodus 17:8 - 16**

Big Idea – God defeats our enemies when we pray and obey Him.

Exodus 17:8 While the people of Israel were still at Rephidim, the warriors of Amalek attacked them.

9 Moses commanded Joshua, “Choose some men to go out and fight the army of Amalek for us. Tomorrow, I will stand at the top of the hill, holding the staff of God in my hand.”

10 So Joshua did what Moses had commanded and fought the army of Amalek. Meanwhile, Moses, Aaron, and Hur climbed to the top of a nearby hill.

11 As long as Moses held up the staff in his hand, the Israelites had the advantage. But whenever he dropped his hand, the Amalekites gained the advantage.

12 Moses’ arms soon became so tired he could no longer hold them up. So Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side of Moses, holding up his hands. So his hands held steady until sunset.

13 As a result, Joshua overwhelmed the army of Amalek in battle.

14 After the victory, the LORD instructed Moses, “Write this down on a scroll as a permanent reminder and read it aloud to Joshua: I will erase the memory of Amalek from under heaven.”

15 Moses built an altar there and named it Jehovah-nissi (which means “the LORD is my banner”).

16 He said, “They have raised their fist against the LORD’s throne, so now the LORD will be at war with Amalek generation after generation.”

1. The enemy – vs. 8

Who was Amalek?

The Amalekites were the descendants of Jacob's brother Esau (Gen. 36:12, 16) who was "a profane person" (Heb. 12:16). The word translated "profane" ("godless") comes from a Greek word that means "a threshold"; it

refers to somebody who is accessible and can be "walked on" by anybody or anything. The English word "profane" comes from the Latin and means "outside the temple," that is, unhallowed and common. Esau lived for the world and the flesh and despised spiritual things (v. 17). Esau opposed his brother Jacob and threatened to kill him (Gen. 27:41), and Esau's descendants opposed the children of Jacob (Israel) and threatened to annihilate them.

As far as we know the Jews never had to fight any battles in Egypt, but once they were delivered from bondage, they discovered they had enemies. So it is in the Christian life. When we identify with Jesus Christ, then His enemies become our enemies (Luke 12:49-53) and we must "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). But we need the battles of life to help balance the blessings of life; otherwise, we'll become too confident and comfortable and stop trusting the Lord.

Who is our enemy?

The devil is our greatest enemy (1 Peter 5:8), and he uses the world and the flesh to oppose us (Eph. 2:1-3). Just as Israel was delivered from Egypt by the power of God, so God's people today have been delivered from "this present evil world [age]" (Gal. 1:3-4) through the victory of Christ.

We are in the world physically but not of the world spiritually (John 17:14-16), and therefore must not become conformed to the world (Rom. 12:2). We need to renounce the things of the flesh (Gal. 5:16-21) and resist the attacks of the devil (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9).

2. The strategy of the enemy – Deut. 25:17, 18

The Amalekites attacked Israel suddenly from behind, at the weakest place in the camp, for they struck those Jews who were weary and feeble and were at the rear of the march. Amalek attacked after Israel had received a great blessing in the provision of the water from the rock.

Satan and his army of demons (Eph. 6:10-12) know what our weakest point is and when we're not ready for an assault. That's why we must "watch and pray, lest [we] enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14:38).

The enemy often attacks God's people after they've experienced special blessings, but the Lord can use those attacks to keep us from trusting the gifts instead of the Giver.

It was after his victory over the four kings that Abraham was tempted to take the spoil, (Gen. 14:17-24); and after the victory over Jericho, Joshua became overconfident and was defeated at Ai (Josh. 7).

After Elijah defeated the priests of Baal, he became discouraged and was tempted to quit (1 Kings 18:41-19:18);

"Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

3. Ingredients of Victory – vss. 9 – 13

Exodus 17:9 Moses commanded Joshua, "Choose some men to go out and fight the army of Amalek for us. Tomorrow, I will stand at the top of the hill, holding the staff of God in my hand."

10 So Joshua did what Moses had commanded and fought the army of Amalek. Meanwhile, Moses, Aaron, and Hur climbed to the top of a nearby hill.

11 As long as Moses held up the staff in his hand, the Israelites had the advantage. But whenever he dropped his hand, the Amalekites gained the advantage.

12 Moses' arms soon became so tired he could no longer hold them up. So Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side of Moses, holding up his hands. So his hands held steady until sunset.

13 As a result, Joshua overwhelmed the army of Amalek in battle.

Here is first mention of Joshua in the Bible, but he will be named 200 more times before Scripture ends. He was born in Egypt and named Hoshea, which means "salvation." Later, Moses changed his name to "Joshua—Jehovah is salvation" (Num. 13:8, 16), which is the Hebrew equivalent of "Jesus" (Matt. 1:21; Heb. 4:8). He knew the rigors of Egyptian slavery and must have had an aptitude for military leadership for Moses to make him

general of the army. He became Moses' servant (Ex. 24:13; 33:11; Josh. 1:1), for God's policy is that we first prove ourselves as faithful servants before we can be promoted to being leaders (Matt. 25:21, 23). Joshua had only one day to rally his army and get them ready for the attack, but he did it.

Victory over Amalek involved 3 elements:

1. Power of God in heaven,
2. Skill of Joshua and the army on the battlefield,
3. Intercessory prayer of Moses, Aaron, and Hur.

God could have sent angels to annihilate the enemy (Isa. 37:38), but He deigns to use human instruments to accomplish His purposes. Joshua and his army would trust God and fight, Moses and his associates would trust God and intercede, and God would do the rest. In this way, God's people would grow in faith and God's name would be glorified.

It was customary for the Jews to lift up their hands when they prayed (Pss. 28:2; 44:20; 63:4; 134:2; 1 Kings 8:22, 38, 54; 1 Tim. 2:8), and since Moses held the staff of God in his hands, he was confessing total dependence on the authority and power of Jehovah.

It wasn't Moses who was empowering Joshua and his army; it was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, "the Lord of Hosts." As long as Moses held the rod up in his hands, Israel prevailed; but when he brought his hands down, Amalek prevailed.

We can understand how Joshua and the army would grow weary fighting the battle, but why would Moses get weary holding up the rod of God? To the very day of his death, he didn't lose his natural strength (Deut. 34:7), so the cause wasn't physical. True intercession is a demanding activity. To focus your attention on God and "pray without ceasing" (1 Thes. 5:17) can weary you as much as strenuous work. Like Epaphras, we must be "always laboring fervently" in our prayers (Col. 4:12) and not just casually mentioning our requests to the Lord.

Samuel M. Zwemer, missionary to the Muslim world, used to call prayer "the gymnasium of the soul," and John Bunyan wrote, "In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without heart." To put your full heart into intercessory prayer will cost you, but it will also bless you. Joshua couldn't have succeeded without Moses, but Moses couldn't have prevailed without the support of Aaron and Hur. Not everybody can be a Moses or Joshua, a D.L. Moody or Billy Graham, but all Christians can be like Aaron and Hur and help hold their hands as they obey God. God is looking for people who will share in the battle and the victory because they continue steadfastly in prayer (Rom. 12:12; Isa. 59:16).

There's also a reminder here that our Savior ever lives in heaven to make intercession for us as we fight the battles of life, and His strength never fails (Hebrews 7:25).

The Holy Spirit within also intercedes for us and guides us in our praying (Rom. 8:26-27). God promises victory to those who will pray and wield the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17-18).

God is looking for intercessors – Isaiah 59:16

4. People need reminders – vss. 14 – 16

Exodus 17:14 After the victory, the LORD instructed Moses, "Write this down on a scroll as a permanent reminder, and read it aloud to Joshua: I will erase the memory of Amalek from under heaven."

15 Moses built an altar there and named it Yahweh-nissi (which means "the LORD is my banner").

16 Moses said, "I lifted my hands toward the LORD'S throne. The LORD will fight against the Amalekites forever."

Moses didn't build a monument to himself or to Joshua, or even to the victorious army of Israel. Instead, he was careful to give all the glory to God for Israel's victory by building an altar and naming it "The Lord is my Banner." In Egypt, he had probably seen the various divisions of the army, each identified with one of their many gods, so he lifted a banner to honor the only true God.

Moses also gave the reason for this memorial: "For hands were lifted up to the throne of the Lord" (v. 16), referring to Moses' intercession on the hill. God had answered prayer and helped His people, and Moses wanted to praise His name.

But Moses also put an entry into the official book of records that Israel should contend with Amalek until that nation was completely destroyed.

Israel fought them again at Kadesh-Barnea but was defeated (Num. 14:45); Gideon conquered them along with the Midianites (Judges 6:33). King Saul failed to obey God and exterminate the Amalekites, so he lost his crown (1 Sam. 15) and was himself killed by an Amalekite (2 Sam. 1:1-16).

David defeated the Amalekites who raided his camp (1 Sam. 30), and when he became king, finally subdued them (2 Sam. 8:11-12).

During the reign of Hezekiah, his armies annihilated the few Amalekites who still remained.

God's judgment of the Amalekites teaches us that you can't attack the throne of God and get away with it.

Deuteronomy 25:17 starts with the word "Remember"

Deuteronomy 25:19 ends with words "Do not forget."

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