

"The Battle with Amalek"

Exodus 17:8-16

Introduction: This morning in our study of the life of Moses we looked at Exodus 17:1-7 and it was in these verses that Israel faced the test of no water. While they were drinking the water there came another major test for Israel. They experienced their first attack and battle.

I. The Attack

Notice Exodus 17:8

They were attacked by a group of people known as the Amalekites. Now there are many ways to study the passage before us tonight. I however want to see this battle as a picture of what happens in the life of the believer. Let us begin by looking at some background on Amalek.

1. The History of Amalek.

We need to begin by looking at where Amalek came from. We must first go back to Genesis 25.

Genesis 25:22-27

²² And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.

²³ And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

²⁴ And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.

²⁵ And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.

²⁶ And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.

²⁷ And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

Esau is a picture of the sin nature in the believer. He was the first born and he favored the world. We have two natures as believers. We have the sin nature which was first born

and we have the Divine nature which we received when we were saved. These two natures battle constantly within us just as the boys struggled in the womb of Rebekah. Now let us get back to Amalek. Where did he come from?

Genesis 36:12

¹² And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son; and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek: these were the sons of Adah Esau's wife.

Amalek was the grandson of Esau. Therefore, Amalek is a picture of the sin nature or the flesh just as Esau was. Let us get back to Exodus 17. The Amalekites were descendants of Esau and they are a picture of the flesh/sin nature.

Here in Exodus 17 this is the very first battle which Israel faced, and it is also true in our lives after we were saved the very first battle which we experienced was the battle with the flesh. Let us notice something else that is said about Amalek.

Numbers 24:20

²⁰ And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever.

Here would be a day when Amalek would no longer exist. In the same way there is coming a day when our sin nature will no longer exist.

1 Corinthians 15:51-53

⁵¹ Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

When we get our glorified body, we will no longer have the sin nature to battle with. The new body will have no sin nature. It will be gone forever.

There is more to be known about the attack of Amalek on Israel.

Deuteronomy 25:17-18

¹⁷ Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt;

¹⁸ How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God.

Amalek came upon Israel from behind and attacked those who were faint and weary. Amalek attacked those who were the furthest from Moses and the pillar of cloud and fire.

Application:

There is a valuable lesson here that we must not miss. The further a believer drifts away from the Lord the more likely he or she is to fall prey to the desires of the flesh. It takes self-discipline to stay in the Word and to maintain a steady prayer life and if we neglect this we begin to grow cold and we become spiritually weak and weary which makes us more likely to give into the desires of the flesh. The flesh is constantly desiring to sit upon the throne in our hearts and to rule over our lives. The closer we walk to the Lord the stronger we are in our spiritual walk.

We need what Paul prayed for when he prayed for the believers at Ephesus.

Ephesians 3:14-16

¹⁴ For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

¹⁵ Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

¹⁶ That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

We need that inward strength, and this comes by walking close to our Lord. Notice the promises in Isaiah 40.

Isaiah 40:29-31

²⁹ He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

³⁰ Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

³¹ But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Isaiah 41:10

¹⁰ *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: **I will strengthen thee**; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

Now let us get back to Exodus 17.

II. The Victory over Amalek

Notice Exodus 17:9

Here we see that Joshua was to choose out men to fight. Moses made the choice to go to battle the following day. Why wait? Why not attack right then? The reason is because Israel was tired and weary. They needed rest for the battle.

Application:

It is so important in our lives that we know when we need rest and then we step away to get the rest we need. We all know that when we are rested, we do much better in the battles with the flesh. The problem in our society today is that people are so busy, and many are burning the candle at both ends. When we get run down and weary, we are far more likely to give into the desires of the flesh.

Psalm 127:1-2

Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

² *It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: **for so he giveth his beloved sleep.***

But there is something even more important in our battle with the flesh.

Notice Exodus 17:9-13

There is a beautiful picture here that we need to see. Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. As long as Moses held up his hands Israel prevailed but when his arms grew heavy and his hands came down Amalek prevailed. It took the help of Aaron and Hur as they stood on either side of Moses and helped him hold up his hands. It was then that Israel prevailed over Amalek and Joshua discomfited them with the edge of the sword.

This is a picture of the cross. When Jesus was crucified, He was crucified on a hill with two other men. One on His right and the other on His left. This is the picture we see as Moses, Aaron and Hur stood on top of the hill. Moses had his arms outstretched just as Jesus did when He was crucified on the cross.

The picture and the lesson for us here is that it is only the cross that can defeat the sin nature. The sin nature can never be bludgeoned into submission. If the flesh is placed under the law or any set of rules made by man, the flesh will only resist more, and sin will become even more evident. Let us notice what the law does when placed over a person.

Romans 7:5-13

⁵ For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

⁶ But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

⁷ What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

⁸ But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

⁹ For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

¹⁰ And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

¹¹ For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

¹² Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

¹³ Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

When people are placed under the law the sin nature will automatically oppose it and sin will be manifest as the sin nature rebels. Therefore, the sin nature cannot be tamed and be made to submit by the law. Let us notice as Paul continues.

Romans 7:15-19

¹⁵ For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

¹⁶ If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

The more Paul tried in his own strength to break sinful habits the more he failed. This is the very place many believers are at in their lives today. What is the answer?

The answer is THE CROSS. The flesh will only bow to the cross.

Romans 6:6-12

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

There are some vital keys in these verses.

1. We were crucified with Christ.
2. Our sin nature was stripped of his power by the cross.
3. NOW we are free from sin.
4. We are to "reckon" this to be true, which means we are to BELIEVE this to be true.
5. We are no longer enslaved to sin because the cross has taken away the power of the flesh.

Conclusion:

Notice Exodus 17:13

Let us be sure to notice that Amalek was not destroyed. The same is true in our lives. We are equipped to be victorious over the flesh, but he will not be destroyed until we die, or we get the glorified body.