



Lesson 50

War with Amalek

Story Elements

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Text: Exodus 17:8-16• Setting: circa 1445 B.C. near Rephidim• Characters: God, Moses, Aaron, Hur and Joshua• Plot: The Amalekites attack Israel in their journey, but God gives Israel the victory. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key word(s) “ _____ ” (v 15)• Climax: <i>Exodus 17:11</i> <i>And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.</i> |
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Bad Blood

1. (17:8) As Israel continued their journey to the Promised Land, they were attacked by the Amalekites.
 - a. The Amalekites are descendants of Esau, and it is probable that their reason for attacking Israel was the feud that had existed between Jacob and Esau hundreds of years before. “The language implies that no occasion had been furnished for this attack; but, as descendants of Esau, the Amalekites entertained a deep-seated grudge against them, especially as the rapid prosperity and marvellous experience of Israel showed that the blessing contained in the _____ was taking effect.”¹
 - b. Preying on the _____, the Amalekites attacked the rearguard of Israel’s camp. Notice how Moses describes this event in the future:

Deuteronomy 25:17 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.

- c. In addition to preying on the weak, Amalek’s attack was motivated out of sinful rebellion against God – as pointed out in 1.a., this was aggravated by the obvious blessing of God on Israel. The Amalekites had “a malice that ran in the blood, and perhaps was now exasperated by the working of the promise towards an accomplishment.”²

Battle Stations

2. (v 9) God had led Israel in their journey away from the Philistines to protect the fledgling nation from continual warfare (cf. Exo. 13:17), but now the Amalekites made combat readiness a necessity. In response, Moses chose Joshua as Israel’s commander-in-chief.
 - a. This is the first time Joshua makes an appearance in the Bible. Not only will Joshua play a major role in Israel’s history, but he will also become an important symbol of the _____.
 - b. Moses instructed Joshua to choose men to fight for in the army of Israel and to go out against Amalek in battle the following day. Meanwhile, Moses would be on top of a hill with the _____ of God in his hand.

¹ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 60–61.

² Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 120.

3. (vv 9-10) The next day, Joshua did as was instructed, and Moses went with _____ and Hur³ to the top of a nearby hill.

APPLICATION → Why did Moses go to the top of the hill with the rod of God to pray? Could he not have prayed in the comfort of his own tent? Matthew Henry explains, “This rod Moses held up to Israel, to animate them; the rod was held up as the banner to encourage the soldiers, who might look up, and say, ‘Yonder is the rod, and yonder the hand that used it, when such glorious things were wrought for us.’⁴

4. (vv 11-13) As the battle progressed, “when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.”
- Moses’ hands were heavy from continually holding them up in the posture of _____. So, Aaron and Hur brought him a stone to sit upon, and they each held up one of Moses’ arms.
 - Because of Moses’ all-day _____, Joshua defeated the Amalekites in Israel’s first of many military victories.

APPLICATION → This story is a powerful illustration of the power and struggle in prayer. Henry remarks, “We do not find that Joshua’s hands were heavy in fighting, but Moses’s hands were heavy in praying. The more spiritual any service is the more apt we are to fail and flag in it. Praying work, if done with due intenseness of mind and vigour of affection, will be found _____, and, though *the spirit be willing, the flesh will be weak*. Our great Intercessor in heaven faints not, nor is he weary, though he attends continually to this very thing.”⁵

Banner of Jehovah

5. (v 14) After the battle, God told Moses to record the events of the day for Joshua’s sake – a sign that Joshua will one day be the new leader of Israel.
- This was to be a reminder of God’s power, the source of Israel’s victory, in the coming years when Joshua would fight against a host of enemies in _____.
 - It was to be a reminder of Amalek’s _____. The Amalekites would continue to harass the Hebrews for many, many years.
6. (v 15) In gratitude, Moses built an altar and called it Jehovah-nissi, which means, “The LORD our _____” – a reference to the rod of God, which was used to rally the troops and signal Jehovah’s continuing help.

Notes: _____

Answer Key: Key word(s): “Jehovah-nissi” • 1. a. birthright; b. weak • 2. a. Messiah; b. rod • 3. Aaron • 4. a. prayer; b. intercession → hard work • 5. a. Canaan; b. wickedness • 6. Banner

How to use this worksheet for personal Bible study: (1) Read the Bible passage given in the **Story Elements** section. (2) Read through the worksheet and try to fill in the blanks without looking at the **Answer Key**. (3) Check your answers with the key and make the necessary corrections. (Note: some answers are a matter of opinion, and often more than one answer is correct. (4) Write down your own thoughts, applications, and questions for further study in the **Notes** section.

³ Jewish tradition holds that this Hur was the husband of Miriam.

⁴ Henry, 120.

⁵ Ibid.