

## EXODUS 17:8-16 THE LORD DEFEATS THE ENEMY

After God had tested the Israelites three times and they failed three times, God was very gracious and merciful to them. He provided for the Israelites when they were thirsting and then hungry and then thirsting. They had complained each time and argued against Moses. This certainly showed the patience of the Lord. In the book of Exodus we see the nature of God. Among His attributes manifested, is patience, mercy, grace, power, sovereignty, justice, and wrath. We will continue to see more of this great God as we study Exodus. His name is Jehovah Jireh, the God who provides. He is always providing for His people.

On the journey, there are not only trials, but battles that must be fought. In this text today, God puts them to another test that is an attack from an enemy. In a few short weeks, they have experienced much in their journey in the desert. In this attack, the Israelites are in a battle for their lives, but God is once more to be depended upon, for the battle is the Lord's. The pilgrims now must be soldiers and must endure more hardship.

So it is with us today, as we battle in our own deserts, we struggle but the Lord is the captain and the battle that He appointed for us is

His. The command is trust and obey. That is our victory.

## 1. THE ATTACK OF THE ENEMY (V 8)

### A. MORE QUARRELING—THE ENEMY, THIS TIME

Ex 17:1-2 –In the previous text, Israel quarreled with Moses about no water to drink. Now, they are in a quarrel but this time they didn't start it. They find themselves in an attack from the rear. This all happened after a special blessing God had given them by having streams of water coming out of a rock. Every time it seems that things are starting to go fine, another trial happens. The battles of life are needed to help balance the blessings of life, otherwise one can become complacent and too comfortable and confident and not have the need to trust God.

### B. THE ENEMY IDENTIFIED

#### 1. THE ENEMY

These were nomadic people who came upon the Israelites.

The Amalekites were the ones who attacked. The Israelites discovered early on that they had enemies. People who line up on the side of God have enemies. Because Christians identify with Christ, His enemies become our enemies and we must fight the good fight of faith.

Amalekites can be found in—Gen 36:12, 16, Num 13:29, 14:25, 43, 45 The presence of the Amalekites is one of the causes for the Israelites to later doubt God's promises to take the land, even though the Israelites even defeat them here. They were Esau's descendants---Gen 27:41, Heb 12:16-17 Esau is mentioned as a profane person in this Hebrew text. Profane means common or unhallowed. Esau lived for the world and the flesh and despised spiritual things. In the times we see them mentioned, it is most often when they are fighting God's people. They actively stand in the way of the Israelites. Amalek was the first of the nations to fight with Israel and they kept it up for many centuries. It must have Run in the blood.

Judges 3:13, 6:3, 33, 7:12, 10:12

The Amalekites are not defeated until King Saul and then David had to finish the job later.

1 Sam 15, 1 Sam 30, 2 Sam 8:11-12

They were finally destroyed during the time of Hezekiah.

1 Chronicles 4:43

## 2. THE STRATEGY

Deut 25:17-19 This suggests that the attack was something of an ambush, falling first on the stragglers at the rear of the procession. It may be that this was a preemptive strike aimed

at destroying a potential enemy before it could gain further strength. Could the Israelites survive the threat of these desert dwellers? They were struck suddenly from behind, at the weakest place in the camp

Eph 6:10-12 They had a real physical battle, but we, as Christians fight spiritual battles constantly, many times not even knowing the battle is on. We too can be attacked from the rear, when we least expect it. Satan strikes at our weakest point when we are not ready for an assault. We must always watch and pray.

After there have been special blessings, the Lord can use the attacks to keep us from trusting in the gifts and not in the Giver.

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

## 2. THE VICTORY (VV 9-13)

### A. JOSHUA, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

This is the first mention of Joshua in the Bible but he will be mentioned 200 more times. He was born in Egypt and named Hoshea. He must have been wired for military leadership for Moses to make him general in the army.

1. Hosea —Numbers 13:8 "desire for salvation"
2. Joshua—"the Lord is salvation"

3. Army---Fight tomorrow---Joshua had only one day to muster up the army to take on the Amalekites. God has already operated on the next day or tomorrow. There seems to be a connection with the plagues as in 8:23, 29, 9:5, 18, 10:4

#### B. THE HILL AND THE STAFF

Staff—symbol of power “When God’s power is at work and His blessing is in play, God’s agents succeed in His purposes.” John Oswalt  
Why was it necessary to keep holding up that staff? He had to hold that up all day, and if he didn’t they would lose.

#### C. MOSES’ RESPONSIBILITY

Intercession

Hands—total dependence on the power of God As Moses held up the staff, he was confessing total dependence on the authority and power of God. It was not Moses who had the power, or even the staff, it was God. When Moses held it up, the army prevailed and when he let his arms down, they started losing.

This resembles intercessory prayer. True intercession is very demanding.

One has to focus their total attention on God and pray without ceasing.

This is spiritual work and can take more out of one than even physical work. Prayer has been called the “gymnasium of the soul.” You must put your full heart into intercessory prayer.

#### D. AARON AND HUR

Aaron is the brother of Moses. Hur is the son of Caleb.

This is a way that God delegates authority to ministers.

God uses human agents to accomplish His purposes. It is not that He needs people to do His job, but that is the means He uses to get His will done. What a privilege it is that God would use His people to do things in His kingdom. They were called into the fellowship of partnership. They were to help Moses keep His hands up. This is a team effort. This is the way the body of Christ is to work as we are members one of another. We need each other.

It had to be great encouragement to the people to see Joshua before them in the field of battle and Moses above them on the top of the hill with Aaron and Hur helping out Moses.

Christ is both a captain of our salvation, like Joshua, and intercessor like Moses, ever living to make intercession.

Joshua was like a type of Christ in leading the people in war and being conquerors.

Victory came to them. They were soldiers who were undisciplined ill armed, and apt to murmur and complain, yet by them, God worked a great victory. Weapons formed against God's people will not prosper. God promises victory to those who will pray and use the sword of the Spirit.(Eph 6:17-18) The battle is always the Lord's

### 3. REMEMBRANCE

(VV 14-16)

#### A. WRITING IT IN A BOOK

An oath was written down for all to remember what happened here.

The memory of the Amalekites would be erased when they would be eventually exterminated. God took this oath and it is for all to know. He didn't want the memory of this event to ever perish.

Numbers 21:14

#### B. ALTAR FOR THE GLORY OF THE LORD

Moses didn't build a monument to himself, but gave all the glory to God by building an altar and naming it "The Lord Is My Banner". God helped His people yet another time. Moses wanted to praise His name for that. This was commemorated for future generations.

All of the people could testify, by sacrifice, their gratitude.

The Israelites could not boast of their own strength, but glory only in God.

Ex 24:4

The altar Moses builds here in Rephidim is his first and it shows how important altars are and how they will continue to show up throughout Exodus.

#### C. THE LORD IS MY BANNER

Banner is a military term indicating a call to arms.

#### D. GOD'S ENEMIES ARE DOOMED TO RUIN

God would contend with this wicked nation.

Israel was to look upon the Amalekites as irreconcilable enemies, doomed

to ruin. Whoever takes on the Lord in war, the Lamb will overcome.

We have here the final dilemma out of which God must deliver His people before their arrival at Mt Sinai. These stories get the people a better picture of who God is and what He expects of His people. He will reveal His holiness in the soon giving of the law.

We need to remember that the devil is our enemy(1 Peter 5:8) and he uses the world and the flesh to oppose us(Eph 2:1-3) The Israelites had been delivered from the Egyptians by the power of God, so we Christians today have been delivered from this present evil age.(Gal 1:3-4)through the victory of Christ. We are to renounce the things of the flesh and resist the attacks of the devil.

We need to know that God fights for His people. We are the apple of His eye and He will defeat all our enemies. He is our protector.