

In His Hands

Exodus 17:8-15

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A. Face Challenges (vs. 8-9):

1. They Amalek came – The Amalekites coming towards Israel was to continuously be at war against God’s people.
 - a) Amalek was a tribe, or group of fierce, rapacious nomads, much like the Bedouins of today. Though descended from Esau (Gen 36:12), they were not a part of the nation of Edom. According to Deut. 25:18, they had attacked Israel from the rear, making a cowardly assault upon the “faint and weary” stragglers. This explains the severe judgment of Ex 17:14. 9. This is the first appearance of Joshua, destined to be Moses’ great successor. 10. Hur. Jewish tradition makes him Miriam’s husband (Jos *Antiq.* III. 2.4).^[1]
 - b) That he attacked God’s people, not fearing God (*ib.* verse 18); 2. That he had no compassion on his own kindred; and 3. That he fell on them when they were already suffering affliction, and were “feeble, and faint and weary” (*ib.*)^[2]
2. Fought against Israel - This word signifies God’s call to arms to fight against Israel’s enemies. This implicitly means that when the Amalekites came to fight Israel, God was ready to pick up arms against them unlike His decision to not fight against the Philistines. God makes this decision because He knows what we can bear.
 - a) The new Christian sometimes is amazed that the Christian life is one of battles as well as blessings. Up to this point, Israel had not had to fight; the Lord had fought for them (13:17). But now, the Lord chose to fight through them to overcome the enemy.^[3]
3. Chosen – Moses commanded Joshua to carefully make a well thought out decision to find fighters that are excellent at war. It was not just anyone who wanted to fight but those who were well trained to fight. Winning the war was not based on how many men were available it was based on their ability.
 - a) Joshua appears here for the first time in the narrative, thus the first

time in the Bible. He apparently spent time during the days on the march from Egypt helping instruct the Israelites in martial skills and strategy, which we would now see their first testing in actual combat. He was surely much younger than the eighty-year-old Moses since later he became Moses' successor. In 33:11 Moses referred to Joshua as his "young assistant," which suggests that he was a right-hand man to Moses in various ways, though at this point the ability to lead the people in battle appeared paramount.^[4]

4. Chosen – In the church age we are all chosen (Ephesians 1:3-4) and have all spiritual blessings. We are blessed to be able to cloth ourselves with the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18). We can learn to fight the fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:11-12) because we have a forever present Helper (John 14:16-17; 1 John 4:4) in our moments of need.
5. Go out – Moses commanded Joshua to move forward in meeting the Amalekite advance against the Lord's people.
 - a) Many men may have begun to carry some sorts of knives or short swords, but it is hard to imagine that the Egyptians had allowed the Israelites much by way of armament while they were still in Egypt. Whatever arms the men now owned had probably been manufactured in the wilderness and may not have been of the highest quality—and almost surely not the greatest quantity.^[5]
6. Fight - The same word 'fight' used for the Amalekites advance against Israel is the same word that Moses uses for Israel to go up against the Amalekites. In other words, Joshua is commanded to God's call to arms to fight against Israel's enemies. This is the Lord's war that Joshua is commanded to fight, and Joshua does not flinch.
7. I will station myself – Moses said that he is going to stand on the "top of the hill" with a specific purpose in mind. He will fix himself on the hill as if he is an erected stature. Someone had to remain behind to be a fervent intercessor for God's people.
 - a) They had an intercessor on the mountain and a commander in the valley! Moses' role on the mountain illustrates the intercessory work of Christ, and Joshua with his sword illustrates the Spirit of God using the Word of God against the enemy (Heb. 4:12 and Eph. 6:17–18). Of course, Moses is an imperfect picture of Christ and His intercessory work, since our Lord never wearies and needs no assistance (Heb. 4:16; 9:24). Paul says that believers can "help together by prayer" (2 Cor. 1:11), which is what Aaron and Hur did. Moses had the rod of God in his hand, which speaks of God's almighty power. Moses had defeated every enemy in Egypt, just as Christ has overcome the world in mighty victory.^[6]

8. Hand – Hand signifies strength, power and a person who possesses authority. Moses decided to relinquish all that the Lord has provided him, and he is now visibly making himself totally dependent on the Lord.
9. Joshua did as – Joshua without flinching continuously labored with a creative mindset, and with a sense of ethical obligation, to find an excellent fighting force as Moses had instructed. He labored with a sense of obligation to take these men to fight against the Amalekites.
10. And fought - Joshua waged war because it was a war that the Lord would fight for them.
11. Went up – They were completely engaged to fight this war, so they ascended to the top of the hill to assist Moses as they fight. They accented the hill as if they were going to take an offering before the Lord. They collectively demonstrated their complete surrender to a full dependence on the Lord God.

B. The Battle is His (v. 11):

1. So it came about – Moses was completely committed to continuously, as long as it would take, hold his hands up towards heaven.
2. Held his hands up – When Moses continuously extending his hands towards heaven it was done with a confident expectation that God would take care of His people. Moses expected God to be faithful to His Word, as a result Moses had no plan to take his hands down.
3. Prevail – Israel’s superior strength and complete dominance was manifested when Moses held his hands extended confidently before the Lord.
4. Moses’s hand was heavy – The longer the war lasted is the longer Moses must keep his hands extended. The longer his hands are extending is the heavier they felt. The heaviness became so severe that Moses needed help keeping his hands extended. We sometimes get weary in well doing but we must not faint (Galatians 6:9). We must seek help from one another.
5. Steady – With the support of Joshua and Hur, Moses hands can remain extended for a certain victory over the fierce Amalekites. Teamwork provides the best results (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).
6. So Joshua overwhelmed – With Moses’s hands remaining extended steadily Joshua was able to totally weaken the Amalekites so that they can be conquered. Teamwork – Moses handles the spiritual needs of the people and Joshua took care of the physical danger before them.

C. Remember Not to Forget (v. 14):

1. Then the Lord said – Notice Moses uses ‘Lord’ here. He seems to be seeking to establish that it is the Lord, who has all authority and power, fought for them, and provided His nation this victory.
2. Then the Lord said – For the first time in this conflict the Lord verbally continuously communicates with Moses.
 - a) After Moses trusted in God’s favor for His people and took leadership, believing God at His Word, the Lord spoke.
3. Then the Lord said – Upon the act of total dependency by Moses, supported by Joshua and Hur, victory was achieved. The Lord responded on this act of faith. We must learn to wait on the Lord; it is a demonstration of our faith in Him (Isaiah 41:27-31).
4. Written – The Lord commanded Moses, when this event is compared with all the murmuring and complaining, to engrave this into the memory of the people. It is to be recorded so that it is unchangeable and binding in nature.
5. Memorial – The Word of God is a memorial to us because of the ultimate enemy we will experience, Satan. It serves as a reminder of the Lord’s power and commitment to us.
6. Recite it to Joshua – It is put in place for Joshua so that it is a fixed memorial. This is as if the Lord is setting up Joshua taking over from Moses. This would then be important because he would be the one taking them to war as they enter the Promise Land.
7. Moses built an altar – Moses himself, put time and energy into constructing and erecting an altar to sacrifice before God as an act of worship and adoration to God.
 - a) When our hearts are completely dependent on the Lord and the Lord fights for us worship is easy.
8. Called a name – Moses, following the Lord’s lead in establishing a memorial, gave a specific name to the altar. Moses seems to desire to establish a memory that sustains the Lord reputation before the people.
9. Moses said the Lord has sworn – The Lord may not stop nations from attacking His

people, but He will surely punish them for doing it. He seems to allow these attacks to expose to His people who He is, create memorable moments, establish His powerful reputation so that His people will completely surrender to Him each day and worship Him sincerely as they come to know who He is.

a) When people see the mighty hand of God supporting His people and despite that, come out and fight against that, God is not happy. If Rahab can know about the Red Sea these Amalekites should have known as well. Seems to reflect the issue of blaspheming against the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:22-32). The Pharisees saw the good work of Christ but still attributed it to Satan. Christ responded with the unforgivable sin.

^[1] Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: Old Testament* (Ex 17:8). Chicago: Moody Press.

^[2] Spence-Jones, H. D. M. (Ed.). (1909). *Exodus* (Vol. 2, p. 72). London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company.

^[3] Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Ex 17:8–16). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

^[4] Stuart, D. K. (2006). *Exodus* (Vol. 2, p. 394). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

^[5] Stuart, D. K. (2006). *Exodus* (Vol. 2, p. 394). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

^[6] Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Ex 17:8–16). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.