

Exod 03-10-05b

We're ready to resume our study in Exodus chapter 17 and into now the last half of this chapter 17. Beginning at verse 8, Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. We talked about the fact that this place name implies rest.

And instead of resting in the promise of God, you notice we don't always rest in the provision of God. Sometimes we rest in the promise of God because provision is held up to stretch us out, to spread the field a little bit. All the runners leave the starting line at the same time.

But as the race continues, you find out who's in condition and who is the runner that is going to excel and move to the front over time and over the pressures of the race. And so we have this withholding of provision. God brings them to the place where there is a lack to see how they will respond.

And of course they completely flunk the test. God does not fail to provide. The test having accomplished its purpose of revealing what's on the inside, God goes ahead and provides for His people as He promised He would.

But it is in the time of lack, in the time of need, that the pressure is applied and what is on the inside comes out. Well, one other thing I want to point out here with regard to the elders is a parallel. And I am constantly finding connections and interweaving between our various studies in Exodus and Acts and in 1 Samuel.

And one of the things we have noticed in the early chapters of Acts is that the Lord Jesus chose apostles who would be eyewitnesses to His resurrection. And in the chapters 4, 5, and 6 that we are studying most recently, we see them delivering this testimony in Jerusalem fearlessly on the steps of the temple on Solomon's porch. And throughout their city, they proclaim, even when they are arrested, even when they are beaten, they proclaim the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Why did Jesus not stage a big production? Why did He not have thunder and lightning and all of the people of Jerusalem rushing out to the tomb? He walks out sort of like Lazarus did. A voice from heaven says, this is my beloved Son, come forth. And out He comes wrapped in His burial clothes which He sets aside and everyone sees it.

How is this accomplished? Much the same way. There are a select few who see the rock stricken, who see the life come forth from the stricken rock, and they deliver the news to the remaining congregation. This is God's pattern.

God has chosen, for inscrutable reasons of His own, to not deliver revelation to us in a heavenly fashion. He does not bring the message of the gospel through angels. He doesn't bring it through personal appearances of Christ.

Christ doesn't do like a recording artist doing personal appearances to promote the new album

or the new movie. Instead, He has committed the gospel, committed the word of truth to faithful men who are to go and communicate it from faith to faith. Those who receive it by faith are to communicate it to others of faith.

You have that pattern here, you have it in Acts, you have it throughout the scriptures. Look at the story of Cornelius. We'll be seeing that before long in Acts.

And if you want to read ahead a little bit, take a look at the story of Cornelius. An angel appears and says, you need to go see a man. But the angel does not give the message.

He says, you go see the man who will give you the message. The message comes through men. And that's what happens here.

This message of where the water is located is given to these selected elders who then go tell the remainder of the congregation. Well, now, verse 8, Amalek came. We talked a little bit about Amalek last time.

Do you remember who he is descended from? Who is his granddaddy when you go back? Esau. He is descended from Esau. And you have these distant cousins who should know the promise of the land, who should know the future and the fate of God's people.

And yet, they come and attack. Amalek was the son of Eliphaz, who was Esau's eldest son. And his mother was a concubine named Timnah.

You find this out in Genesis chapter 36. He became the head of a clan or a people group from the tribe of Esau. You find this out also in Genesis 36, verses 12 through 15.

So the Amalekites are distant cousins to the Israelites. They are under the same promise of blessing as Israel because they are also descended from Abraham. They are a nation who can be blessed through Israel.

God says to Abraham, through you all nations of the earth will be blessed. If they had been sympathetic, if they had been hail cousin well met, they could have enjoyed blessing along with Israel. But instead, they came and attacked Israel at Rephidim.

And this is, if you look at the Sinai Peninsula and think about kind of the center of it, go south a little bit, this is the area of Rephidim. Well, for one, the Amalekites are attacking the people of God. This makes God unhappy in terms of policy, in terms of what He is going to do.

What do you think is going to happen? You have family members, somebody picks on someone in your family, you get riled. You don't take it well. You pick on someone in God's family, God is not going to take that well.

He is going to respond. And what happens to Amalek is a good model. Secondly, the way the Amalekites attack here, and you'll hear me, I don't know where the accent belongs.

Sometimes I call them Amalekites, sometimes I call them Amalekites. It's all the same thing. Turn with me quickly to Deuteronomy 25, verse 17.

Deuteronomy 25, 17. This is Moses reminding Israel of what we are just now studying. He is reviewing some of their history.

He is delivering to them various laws. And God is speaking through Moses here. And He says in Deuteronomy 25, 17, Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt.

How he met you on the way, and look at how he attacked. He attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary. And he did not fear God.

This is the basis for the condemnation and eventual destruction of Amalek. They came up from behind, attacked the stragglers and the weak, and when the nation was already weary, thirsty, trying to get their logistics straightened out, and he did not fear God. Therefore it shall be when the Lord your God has given you rest from your enemies all around, in the land which the Lord your God has given you to possess as an inheritance, that you shall blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

You shall not forget. He says, remember to forget Amalek. Do not forget to make Amalek forgotten.

Blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Don't forget. Don't forget to forget.

Don't forget to wipe them out so that there is no testimony in the Bible. Very soon after this, the Amalekites disappear from the pages of Scripture, and indeed they disappear from the pages of history. And it was not until recently that they found any trace whatsoever anywhere in archaeology of the Amalekites.

Scholarship up until just the last hundred years assumed that they were a mythical people, an unknown people, because they could find no trace. This prophecy was fulfilled, and it was only in excavations around the turn of the last century that they began to find a few little scraps of reference to Amalek, because God blotted their remembrance out from under heaven. Well, so we see the kind of attack that they launched here.

Now, think about this. You and I, we're going through our life here, we're trying to get our things done, we're trying to live as Christians, we're trying to remember day by day, and we forget all the time, but we struggle with this. We're trying to live a life that's pleasing in God's sight.

We're trying to keep our eyes on the future, trying to remember the kingdom and the judgment. We often are afflicted, we are often pressured, we are often stretched and tested, and we find ourselves weary. We may find ourselves a little short on water.

We look in our souls for the water of life that is supposed to sustain us and strengthen us and comfort us and encourage us in our going through of daily existence. And just about the time we find ourselves already under duress, some fresh attack comes from another quarter. And we think, I haven't recovered from the last thing.

I'm low on resources as it is. I didn't need this. I was already struggling in my work life and in my family life.

I didn't need the engine in my car to quit. I didn't need the air conditioner to clog up and put 15 gallons of water in my ceiling. I didn't need this to fail.

I didn't need that to happen. I didn't need this person to attack. Whatever it may be, we have a fresh incursion of what we would classify as evil in our lives.

We know this happens. We can remember times when this has happened. We can expect that it will happen again.

These are the Amalekites. They come in, nipping at the heels, picking up the stragglers, attacking from the rear, and throwing Israel potentially into great confusion and potentially could cause great loss, could stop this journey before it really gets fully underway by their attack. God already said, Israel is not ready to fight.

That's why I'm not taking them up by the way of the Philistines. The shortcut to the land takes them past armed border guards, army posts, outposts, garrisons, that they're not ready to fight. It's only been, what, two months.

And now, are they anymore ready to fight? Deuteronomy says, remember, you had stragglers, you were tired, you were weary, had no respect for God, had heard the stories of the plagues and discounted them, decided it was fall deraillleur. Well, back to the account in Exodus. What is going to be the response? Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

Supposedly the place of rest, they're not able to get rest. They just got the water problem solved and now an attack from the rear. Moses said to Joshua, choose us some men and go out and fight with Amalek.

Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand. We looked at this right at the end of the lesson last time. And Joshua did as Moses said to him and fought with Amalek.

Moses, Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill. So it was when Moses held up his hand that Israel prevailed. When he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

Now this is early on. When Moses first is up there, he's standing on the hill, he's got the rod in one hand. When he raises it, they prevail.

He thought, well, this is going well. I believe I'll let the staff down, let some blood back into my arm. As soon as he lets the staff down, all of a sudden, the momentum and the tide of battle

reverses and Israel begins to lose and Amalek begins to prevail.

And Moses says, whoa, wait a minute. He sticks the rod back up in the air in one hand and suddenly there's a fresh infusion of energy and the Israelites surge forward. There are two things we should notice in that first phase.

One is this rod in the hand being raised speaks of the same type of thing that happened when it was raised over Egypt and the enemies of the people of God were afflicted, put to flight, caused to relinquish their hold and their pressure over the people of God. The same thing is happening here. It is not by might.

It is not by power that we prevail. It's not by our strategies. It's not by our cleverness.

It's not by our wiles and our guiles and all of our manipulations that we will succeed. It is the authority of God over situations, over people that will enable us to prevail. When we forget that and we start to operate in human strength, we will sow the seeds of our own destruction.

We will create our own defeat. We looked at humility in Philippians 3 this morning and the importance of it. Strength under control.

We could respond in kind. We could meet gossip with gossip. We could meet defamation with defamation.

We could meet attack with a like attack. We could sink to the level of people who are resisting and afflicting and doing us wrong. We could get our own bag of dirty tricks to play on someone who is playing dirty tricks on us.

However, that is not the road to victory. That is the road to defeat. The Bible says, Cursed is the man who puts trust in man and who makes flesh his strength.

If you really want to achieve a victory, not just a victory now, but a victory that will last into the eternal future, let God win it. He is the Lord of hosts. He has all of the pieces of the puzzle.

He knows all of the strengths and weaknesses. He will enable us to prevail. We've got to not repeat the mistakes that Israel makes out here in the wilderness of failing to trust God when the chips are down.

Anybody can trust when things are going well. Who can trust when it looks dismal? When it looks like maybe God got busy and forgot? That's when we need to trust and we need to think. We need to operate and do what we are supposed to do.

Do our part. Notice, Moses does not stand up on the hill and say, Stand still and watch the deliverance of the Lord and raise the rod and all the Amalekites fall down dead. There is the decree of God.

There is the authority of God. There is the rod of God on the hill. But there is also Joshua and

the chosen men out there doing the work man by man, hacking with a sword.

Hack this Amalekite. Hack that Amalekite. Stab this one.

Spear that one. Crush this one's head with a rock. Line by line, squad by squad, man by man, they are out there hacking and slashing achieving the victory that God is giving them through His authority.

Now, this is a great launching place that I am going to resist the temptation to launch off into the relationship between God's sovereignty and God's destiny that He has decreed for His people and the free will and the responsibility to act, to walk, to obey on the part of God's people. We cannot sit still and say, Well, everything is going to happen the way God has decreed it. Yes, God has to decree a victory has decreed victory here, but Moses has to raise the rod.

Remember we said the message of God comes to the people of God through men that have been raised up for that purpose. They see the rock. They are shown the water and they bring the people to it.

The apostles are witnesses of the resurrection. Why doesn't Jesus just appear to each person all the way down to the present? You want to be saved? I am the risen Lord Jesus. Look at my hands.

Put your finger in the holes like Thomas. He doesn't do that. We have to take it on faith from faithful men who communicate.

Same thing as believers. Well, here, Moses must hold the rod up or the victory is not won. Yes, God has decided to give them a victory, but it is dependent on the obedience and the faithfulness of men.

Moses must be faithful to hold up the rod. If he needs help, then give him some help. But the rod must be held by a man.

The sword must be swung by a man. You and I are heirs of the promises of God for provision, for protection, for guidance, for comfort and encouragement, strength for every need, but we have got to pick up our sword. Not all of our armor is defensive.

We have the helmet of salvation. We have the shield of faith. Our feet are shod with the gospel of peace.

Our loins are girt about with truth, etc. Breastplate that deflects the darts of the wicked one. But we also have to pick up the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

And that is an offensive weapon. And we must do our part or we can obviate, we can remove ourselves from the place where God's promises are fulfilled. There is a lot of hand-wringing that goes on among believers who say, I don't understand why God is not fulfilling His promises.

Well, we have seen that the promises of God are conditional. It just makes my hackles rise when you hear people say, well, there are all these unconditional covenants and unconditional promises. All of God's promises are conditional.

You cannot enter into any of the covenants and promises of God without making a decision to do so. It is a requirement. There are no unconditional covenants.

There are no unconditional promises. I will refute, defy, and crush any argument to the contrary. Just bring it to me.

All of my seminary training, all the vast weight, thousands of pounds of books I can show you where they talk about the unconditional promises. What they're talking about is that the promises of God will be fulfilled. When God says, I'm going to give Israel the land, they say, that's an unconditional covenant because it's going to happen no matter what.

Well, I've got news for you. Every promise of God is going to happen no matter what. So there's a sense in which every promise is unconditional in the sense that God is going to find a way to fulfill it.

But in the specific, is it going to be fulfilled for you? Is it going to be fulfilled for me? We choose because we can remove ourselves. We can be cut off from the people. We can be cut off from Christ.

We can be cut off from every blessing. We can be cut off from every reward, every grace, every provision by our poor choices. If we do not heed the Word of God, if we do not persevere in the test, if we do not endure suffering, we will fail to fulfill the condition and we fail to receive the fulfillment.

So, what are the conditions here for the receiving of this victory over the Amalekites? A. Moses has got to keep the rod in the air. B. Joshua and his men have got to go out there and physically kill all the Amalekites. That's their mission.

Why didn't God just slay them with the breath of His mouth? Why didn't He do it like the 186,000? You wake up one morning and they're all laying there dead. They all had heart attacks in the night. God wants us to pick up the sword and hack our way through principalities and powers and rulers in high places.

God wants us to learn by fighting the battle. You do not learn by watching the battle on TV. You do not learn by watching the battles in the Bible.

Our spiritual life does not consist in what we learn in Bible class. Our spiritual life consists in what we apply on the battlefield. We have got to go out there and get banged on the helmet.

We've got to watch the darts bouncing off our shield and our breastplate. We've got to walk around shod with the good news of the gospel of peace. We've got to pick up the sword of the

Spirit, which is the Word of God, and we have got to get busy hacking and slashing and slaying and spilling the blood of our enemies as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

That's our calling. All of us... That's the thing that I love about the Marine Corps because the philosophy of that organization is every Marine is a rifleman first and whatever else after. You are first and foremost a killing machine.

If you do logistics, if you type on a typewriter, or you draw on maps, that's fine, but your primary calling and essence of being is you are a killing machine. We've dressed you up in a green suit and we sent you to boot camp or OCS or whatever to commission you and send you forth so that you could achieve the destruction of the enemy and everything that pertains to him. That's why you wear the suit.

That's your job. Project military force ashore. That's what a Marine does.

And there's no point in typing on a typewriter if you can't pick up an M-16 and pop somebody when he needs to be shot. How many different times, how many different ways does the Bible tell us that our life is a warfare? People come to Christianity thinking this is going to be my vacation in Cancun. Once I sign up as a Christian, why, I'm going to be in the third floor of the luxury hotel and they're going to be bringing me the little drinks with the umbrella in and sunny breezes and waited on hand and foot.

The Bible says you have entered into the army of the Lord and you are equipped. You have been given armor and you can expect to be attacked. You can expect to be wounded.

You can expect to be snuck up upon from the rear like the Amalekites are doing here and you have got to go down and fight. Leadership has to hold up the authority of God and hold it high. So, Joshua did as Moses said to him and he fought with Amalek.

Moses, Aaron and Hur went up on top of the hill. This is your prophet, your priest and your king. Moses is the prophet.

Aaron is the priest. Hur is from the tribe of Judah. He is the senior officer present afloat as it were from the tribe of Judah.

He is the elder from the tribe of Judah. He is descended from Judah through a man named Caleb, not the Caleb that's going to go into the land with Joshua, but one that Caleb may have been named for earlier on. So it was, when Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed.

Notice, initially, the prophet holds up the rod all by himself. He is standing up and it is the prophet that represents the telling forth of the word of God and the authority of God and the people prevail. But you cannot operate on the prophet alone.

And pretty soon, the prophet cannot sustain this effort all by himself. It is not just the forth telling of the word of God that is going to achieve the victory. That's how you start.

That gets you going. That engages the battle. That sows the seeds of victory.

But, to sustain the battle and to win the victory, Moses needs help. Moses' hands became heavy. They took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it.

And Aaron and Hur supported his hands. Who got the stone? Who supported the word of God here? The forth teller of the word of God, the prophet. You've got the priest representative and the king representative.

This is the practical application of the word of God, is it not? The priest side, you have spiritual life and worship. On the rulership side, you have function. You have administration.

You have leadership. You have implementation. You have figuring out policies and then implementing them, right? This is all practical.

You've got to move from the forth telling and the leadership of the word to the practical implementation on the spiritual side and on the civil side and the details of daily life. And that has to undergird and support. You've got to set that word of God on a rock so that it cannot be moved and it cannot fall to the ground.

And then you've got to prop it up. You've got to coordinate. You've got to cooperate.

You have to coalesce with the word of God on the right hand and on the left and hold that authority of God high. And there's a great picture here of the way our life needs to work. I and many others have made the mistake in the past of thinking, well, if I take in the word of God and think about it and it means something to me in Bible class, that's really the heart and soul of my spiritual life.

I mean, yes, I give a nod to application, but the thing I concentrate on is intake. That's my most important thing. Take in the word of God.

The good thing about that kind of mistake is that it's self-correcting because if you take in enough of the word of God, it will rebuke and instruct and slap you around enough and you realize that you're not doing what you should. But God is going to be more pleased in the day of judgment with someone who knew five things from the word of God and applied them on a day-by-day basis than He is with someone who knew 500 things from the word of God and never really got the rubber to meet the road, never really got the vehicle moving, never really picked up the sword and swung it in battle. It would be better for us to stop having Bible class and concentrate on applying what we already know.

Some of us have had hundreds, thousands, even tens of thousands of hours of Bible class. And on that basis, why we ought to be seated on the right hand and the left of the glory of God for all eternity. But it is not the prophet alone that wins the victory.

You've got to have the priest. You've got to have the kingly tribe of Judah. The operations in

daily life, operations in the spiritual realm have to reflect, have to support, have to sustain and set on a rock that word of God.

And that's the picture we have on the hill. And you also have not one hand, but two. Moses begins with the rod in one hand, doesn't he? And holds it up.

And it's just like when he stretched out the rod over the Red Sea. It's like when he stretched out the rod over the land of Egypt. And this is the impartation.

They have a theological term I've given you before. For eruption. I-R-R-U-P-T-I-O-N It's sort of like interruption.

It's when something breaks into something. It's the opposite of a breakout. It's a break-in.

God breaks into a situation through the word of the prophet. That's the prophet holding out the rod of God. But to operate and to sustain and to complete a victory, you've got to have these other components.

And so Moses takes the rod and puts it in both hands. And the rod that was stretched out, pointed out over the battlefield, is now held up as though Moses were about to do a pull-up. He's got it in his two hands.

It is horizontal. It's like the cross piece of the cross. And you have a picture of foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus Christ with His hands raised over His head, joined by a piece of wood.

And you have in the Lord Jesus the embodiment of what these three men represent. Prophet, priest, and king. And you have the ultimate victory being won when Jesus bears our sins in His own body on the tree and defeats principalities and powers and leads captivity captive and gives gifts to men.

It's interesting to me that we know that Mary and Elizabeth were related. Mary, the mother of Jesus. Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist were closely related.

We also know that Elizabeth and her husband Zacharias are Levites. Mary, we know from the genealogical record, is tribe of Judah. So what do we know about Mary's family? It would appear that her father, a Judahite, married a woman who was a Levite.

So that in His humanity that comes to Him through Mary, Jesus has a heritage in both the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Levi. He is prophet. He is priest.

He is king. He is foremost the King of Israel, the leader represented there by Moses, the one who is the embodiment of the Word of God, the telling forth of God's eternal deity and Godhood. And He is the embodiment of what Aaron and Her each represent.

Even in His humanity, He draws from both of those tribes. So Aaron and Her supported His hands, one on one side and the other on the other side. And His hands were steady until the

going down of the sun.

Think back now. What did we learn in Ecclesiastes about the sun? What does that represent? How many times did Solomon use the phrase this is what I have seen under the sun? Under the sun. What does the sun represent? These are the days of human history.

The going down of the sun is the end of human history. Solomon makes his observations about conditions under the sun. This is what goes on in human life before the consummation, before the judgment, and before the reconciliation of all things under Christ.

This need for us to enter into the victory of God through what God provides in the spiritual side, on the leadership side, and the Word of God side pertains throughout our lives all the way until the going down of the sun. And Joshua defeated Amalek and his people how? Edge of the sword. Joshua does his part.

He doesn't lay back and say, well men, take a break. Look at up there. Moses has got the staff up high so we're bound to win.

Their efforts are blessed when that rod is held high, but they've still got to put out the effort. So the Lord said to Moses, write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua. I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

Moses built an altar and called it by its name, the Lord is my banner. For he said, because the Lord has sworn the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation. God will fight the battle against those who resist us, against Satan and his minions and his policies.

And you find out as you go through that Amalek disappears from the pages of Scripture. Amalek disappears from the pages of history. The only reason we have any remembrance of Amalek at all is for our instruction in the Word of God.

And it is very brief. Amalek is going to go on. These Amalekites, the ones who survive, are going to decide that they've had enough of Israel.

And they're going to go on down and go to easier pickings. They're going to go down and enter into the land of Egypt and find the weaklings and the stragglers and the ones that have already been decimated and weakened by the results of the plagues. And they're going to take over that country.

And they are going to be the Hyksos, which no one could make the connection between Amalek and the Hyksos because God blotted their memory out from under heaven. And it's only in the last 40 years or so that that connection has been made. And we have a lot of things being revealed in this end time in preparation for the return of the Lord.

Well, what do we conclude from this? Every day, when we look at how things stand, we say, well, I'm a Christian. I believe in the Word of God. I attend Bible class.

I try to remember who I am and why I'm here. But how is it we are to negotiate the day, whether it's good or whether it's bad? This is a great picture to bring up before our minds. Think about those three on the hill and what they represent.

When you look up there, you see Moses. You know, the best reconstruction of the way crucifixion works is that the man is in almost a sitting position with his hands above his head, his knees are bent, and he has to straighten his legs to get enough relief to breathe. And then he sags back down.

And the posture of the Lord Jesus on the cross with His hands connected by that piece of wood is identical to what Joshua and his army would have seen when they looked up on the hill and saw Moses sitting on the stone, being upheld on the right hand and on the left by the tribe of Judah, the tribe of Levi. Where do we look for victory? As Moses is going to lift up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up. On a day of victory in battle, on a day of great things and relief, you look up on the hill and see that picture of the cross.

In a day of judgment, in a day of discipline, when the serpents are biting people and killing them throughout Israel, you look up and you see the serpent, the bronze serpent, that's lifted up. And there is life in that look. Our daily life, our daily deliverance.

What did it say in Philippians? Work out your own deliverance. Work out your own salvation. Pick up your sword like Joshua and hack and slash because God has promised the victory to those who look and acknowledge that picture on the hill.

Christ is our righteousness. He is our peace. He is our sanctification.

He is our wisdom. The song that Dan played for us last time, Jesus is all the world to me. And it is not just the world, it is the kingdom, it is everything that has any meaning in our lives is centered on that picture on the hill, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for what you have given us. We are totally undeserving.

We have no merit. We have nothing to contribute, nothing to offer. We cannot make anything of ourselves or of our lives apart from your grace and your provision.

We thank you for the illustration that you've given us in the people of Israel in these chapters in Exodus. And we pray that God the Holy Spirit will find us receptive as He impresses these truths on us so that in our challenges and in our circumstances and in our situations we will remember where victory is, what it means, whose glory it reflects, and what the calling and the purpose of our lives truly is. We pray that as a result, our Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified, that we will reflect His glory both now and in the age to come.

We pray it in Jesus' name, Amen.