



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Exodus 17: 8-16

“Then Came Amalek”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee for the opportunity to again study the Scriptures. We thank Thee that the word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit and of the joints and the marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart that it is living and powerful. We thank Thee for the way in which it works, the way in which it reveals our own sins and failures, instructs us in the way of righteousness, and we ask Lord that it may do its office work tonight as we study together and trace again the history of the children of Israel as they went out of the land of Egypt and came to the promised land. We know that we too are strangers and sojourners in this earth as they were strangers and sojourners and that the lessons that Thou didst teach them through Moses and through their experiences are lessons that we too must learn and so Lord we ask for a special enlightenment tonight as we consider Thy word for Jesus sake. Amen.

[Message] A Christian life as we well know is a conflict, and our source of difficulty comes from at least three places. We like to refer to it in the way in which the Scriptures do, as the world, the flesh, and the devil.

It is a rather interesting thing to think about seaport cities and reflect upon the way in which they sometimes must defend themselves because they must defend themselves from submarines, they must defend themselves from vessels on the water, warships, and then they must also defend themselves from above as well from the airplanes. So in a sense a seaport city has threefold possibility of attack.

The analogy between the seaport city and us is true to that extent that we are of those individuals who find at least conflict from these three sources of the world, the flesh, and the devil. One sees something about here in the history of Israel because now the children of Israel are brought into conflict with the peoples about them, and one senses it immediately when we read in the eighth verse of chapter 17, “Then came Amalek.” That’s really the topic of the message for tonight. “Then came Amalek.”

Amalek was a people who were descendents of Esau, and they were a Bedouin people. They were very strong people. As a matter of fact, later on when Moses is recording the prophecies of Balaam in the last of the Messianic prophecies in Numbers chapter 24, Moses writes and when he looked on Amalek he took up his parable and said this is Balaam speaking. Amalek was the first of the nations, but his latter end shall be that he perish forever. So Amalek is an illustration of those who are sources of conflict for the people of God. Let us look now chapter 17 and we will begin with verse 8 through verse 16,

“Then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, ‘Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with a rod of God in mine hand.’ So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed, and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses hands were heavy and they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat thereon and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one

on the one side and the other on the other side and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the Lord said unto Moses, ‘Write this for a memorial in a book and rehearse it in the years of Joshua for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.’ And Moses built an altar and called the name of it Jehovah Nissi, and he said because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

If you look into New International Version you will notice immediately that the last verse is quite different from the Authorized Version text, which I have just read. The New International Version has, He said, “For hands were lifted up to the throne of the Lord, the Lord will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation” or “A hand upon the banner of Yahweh.”

Now, I will say just a word about that later on but there is a serious philological question and therefore the different renderings. It is not because the text is particularly obscured. It is just that there are different ways of rendering or translating the text and so there is a difference among the translators and their interpretation of that particular phrase.

Well, let us come back to the historical and typical setting. The historical situation is simply this, that the children of Israel are still in Rephidim, that is where they were when they complained about the water and the Lord stood by the rock and Moses moved the rock and there came water out of it in order that the people might drink. So they are still in Rephidim but we read in verse 8, “Then came Amalek.” The rock has been smitten. That suggests of course as we mentioned last week the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ and the fact that the blessings of life come from that. And then I tried to make the point, I don’t think I made it quite as well as I usually do, but I tried to make the point that the positive side of the water pouring out was illustrative of the ministry of the Holy

Spirit who is sent into the hearts of the believers as a result of what our Lord accomplished on the cross at Calvary.

Now, in verse 8 we read, “Then came Amalek” and we immediately have conflict. So we have a little series of spiritual experiences here that are designed to illustrate the realities of the life that we live. We have the rock smitten, suggesting the redemption through the Lord Jesus Christ, the water outpoured suggesting the ministry of the Holy Spirit who permanently indwells all believers. And then we are introduced to a fact that we sometimes forget and that is that the Christian life is a life of conflict.

There are lots of people who like to set forth a Christian life for us as if it is the kind of life that by means of a particular experience like praying through or like having a second blessing or some particular act of surrender to the Lord, we will be able to reach a particular plane of life on which we shall no longer have very much conflict at all and it is called by names like the victorious life or the classic experience or the surrendered life or things like that. That kind of thing is really on Scripture.

There are lots of good Bible teachers in the sense that the Christian men who teach this kind of thing, but it really is on Scripture because if there is one thing the New Testament may explain to us it is that while we are to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ that is the work of the Holy Spirit and sanctification we are introduced to conflict when we are converted and we shall have a measure of conflict as long as we live on the face of this earth. That is one of the things that Paul points out so plainly in Romans chapter 7 as he describes the conflict that existed between the sin principle that dwelt in his members as he out of the power of the new nature alone sought to live in accordance with the will of God. He wound up, chapter 7 remember in the Epistle to the Romans verse 24 and verse 25, with these statements, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” So then, Paul sums up the thing, “So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin.”

Now that is set out in the New Testament as so many passages that is surprising that anyone would seriously as an evangelical seek to tell us that there is the kind of life in which there is no longer any conflict. For example, 1 John chapter 2 verse 16 speaks about the conflict that we have with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Listen to the things that John writes in 1 John 2 and verse 16, “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”

And then Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians says the flesh’s lust is against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, these two are contrary the one to the other in order that you may not do or might not do the things that you would. And Peter in 1 Peter reminds us that the devil goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. So if you are finding the Christian life to be a life of conflict, well, welcome to the Christian life, because that is the kind of life the Christian life is. But that doesn’t mean of course that we may not have experiences of victory. By trusting in the Lord just as Israel did in this instance typically so we may have experienced, but it will be victory in the midst of conflict not victory without conflict.

The enemy of Israel is described in verse 8 as Amalek. It was an unprovoked and unfriendly attack and if you were reading historical treatments of the Book of Exodus you could find some very good reasons why Amalek would want to attack the children of Israel because they were a Bedouin kind of people, they had lot of flocks, they lived over the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula and there was not a whole lot of nice, lush grass and water there to take care of a large number of people, and so when five hundred to two million, scholars not quite sure exactly how many children of Israel did come out of the land of Egypt, but let us say six hundred thousand people come into their part of the territory, well you can see that they reacted just like the people out West did when the others came out west with their sheep and with their cattle, they fought over the water rights and the other rights that one might expect. And when the children of Israel came on the scene, the children of Amalek looked out there, and they said these people are

going to get into our way, and so we have got to do something about them, and they tried to do something about them, and they accomplished a great deal because Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 25, verse 17 through verse 19, describes what they did and the Lord didn’t like it nor did the children of Israel.

Listen to what Moses says sometime later, “Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way when you will come forth out of Egypt, 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. Therefore it shall be when the Lord Thy God hath given thee rest from all Thine enemies around about in the land which the Lord Thy God giveth thee for inheritance to possess it that Thou shall blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; Thou shall not forget it.” So what they did was they hung around the children of Israel and when they saw someone who was not feeling too well who was hanging back just like herds of animals, and those that pounce upon animals that are unable to keep up with the flock, that is the way the Amalekites did, so when any of the children of Israel would fall behind they would fall upon them and kill them. So far as we know they were on camels, most people think they were, and so anybody that strayed out, anybody that was in a kind of place that they might take advantage of that is what they did. So that is Amalek.

Now remember Amalek is from Esau. If you go back to the Book of Genesis in the 36th chapter where the genealogy of Esau is given, there is Amalek. He was one of the children that descended from Esau, and the Amalekites were of course the descendents of Esau and therefore it is not surprising to read in Deuteronomy 25 that they were people that didn’t know God, so they were godless, they were irreligious, they were opposed to the Messianic program of the Lord God that seems to be the point of Balaam’s prophecies because he describes the star out of Jacob in Numbers 24 in verse 17 and then verse 19, “Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city 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.” So one gets the impression from the context there that Amalek was also opposed to the Messianic program of God. That’s not surprising if he was a godless person and if they were godless people descended from Esau that’s what you would expect.

The significance of Amalek is found in that word “fought.” Then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim. That is the attitude of the world, that is the attitude of the flesh, that is the attitude of the devil, and that is the attitude of people who are against the people of God, that is the attitude of the principle that seeks to overthrow the children of God, the flesh, and that of course is the attitude of the devil who in his power seeks to overthrow the people of God.

The Lord Jesus warned the apostles, the world hates you. In 1 Peter 5:8, I mentioned, said that Peter warned his readers that devil goeth about seeking whom he may devour, and Galatians 5:17 is Paul’s warning of the flesh lusting against the Spirit.

It is interesting that Pharaoh acts as a hindrance to deliverance from Egypt but when they get out of the power of Pharaoh, then Amalek, and Amalek is a hindrance to their spiritual walk. In Egypt, there was very little fighting because there was no salvation. But once the salvation comes then the fighting comes. Isn’t that interesting? Once they are saved, they are out fighting.

Now the summons to battle is issued by Moses, and it is I think rather striking. Most of the time up to this point, whenever the children of Israel are in difficulty, Moses complains to the Lord. If there is no water, he complains to the Lord, and when the murmuring takes place, he complains to the Lord, but you get a different picture of Moses here, when you read that Amalek came and then Moses said to Joshua, “Choose us out men, go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand.” Evidently, Moses now is beginning to get some idea of the power of God at his disposal. He has just taken the rod at the Lord’s behest and he has smitten the rock and out has come the water and a miraculous event.

So now, Moses is giving some evidence of faith and trust in the Lord God. This battle has both a human and a divine side because in verse 9 we read, “You choose out men, you go fight with Amalek, I will stand on the top of a hill with the rod of God in my hand.” So Joshua did as Moses had said to him and fought with Amalek, and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. I know what you are thinking. Moses said, “You go fight and I will go up on the hill.” But actually what Moses had to do was just as more significant because the whole course of the battle depended on what was happening on the hill not what was happening down below as this particular thing makes very plain.

Oliver Cromwell once said, trust in providence and keep your powder dry. There have been different forms of that, but that is what Cromwell said, and he was trying to lay stress upon the fact that there was always a divine side and there is also the side of preparedness or to put it in another way, divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

The strategy of the battle is set out in verses 11 and 12, “And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed, but Moses hands were heavy and they took a stone and put it under him and he sat thereon and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on one side and the other on the other side and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

So, Amalek is the foe and what Amalek represents it may be very difficult to say absolutely positively. I have read expositions of this incident in which it is stated that Amalek represents the flesh. I have read expositions of it in which it is stated that Amalek represents the world. Perhaps Amalek does represent the world system under the domination of Satan being descended from Esau, the godless man. That certainly suggests the world because the world is at enmity with the Lord God.

Israel of course represents the people of God and notice that the people of God are no match for Amalek without Moses. In other words, what was transpiring on the top

of the hill was absolutely essential for the success of the children of Israel. Sometimes we as Christians forget that. We think that having been saved, we can live in the power of the new life, which we possess but the New Testament makes very plain to us that while God has marvelously given us new life, the new life of itself is not sufficient for the overcoming of the world. We still need the personal presence and power of the Lord God through the Holy Spirit. That is the lesson of Romans 7 and Romans 8 that one cannot overcome the sin principle that dwells in our members by the new life imparted to us when we believe in Christ. We need the ministry of the Holy Spirit and it is through the Holy Spirit and through personal relationship with the Lord in the Spirit that we may hope for a measure of success. So, Amalek was stronger than the children of Israel when Moses was not able to lift up his hands to the Lord God.

Now it is striking to think of where Moses was and where Joshua was. Joshua was down in the valley fighting the battle but Moses is on the mountaintop. I don’t want to let our imagination run wild and particularly when we are talking about typical things because we have to remember we are just illustrating truth and sometimes you can be a little too imaginative in such things and so when I set out these things I want you to understand that I am not saying to you this is what the Bible teaches but I am just simply suggesting this is an illustration of the reality of the spiritual life.

Moses was the prophet of God. Aaron was the high priest to be. And Hur, well it would be nice to say that Hur was of the tribe of Judah, because then we would have the prophet, the priest, and the king and that would represent beautifully our Lord Jesus in his three fold office. And it would be nice to be able to press the Scriptures just a little bit and point you over to the passage in chapter 31 and verse 2 where Hur, related to Bezalel was of the tribe of Judah. But it so happens that it is not this Hur unfortunately, so we don’t really know to what tribe Hur belonged. In fact, the term itself is somewhat doubtful of meaning and so we cannot draw any lessons even from that. But we do have Moses on the mount and we have Aaron on the mount and then we have Joshua who is

certainly illustrative in his typical position of the one who is the captain of the Lord’s host because he will be the leader of the children of Israel as they go into the land taking Moses place.

So perhaps we can say that Moses on the mount represents the resurrected Lord and that Joshua in the battlefield represents the resurrected Lord who is captain of the Lord’s host who leads the children of God. In other words, we have two aspects of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. The rod that Moses lifts up is perhaps representative of the Son of God with power and the resurrection we know is God’s great answer to the satanic world system. It is the mark of the victory of the Lord’s enterprise for when the Lord Jesus rose from the dead; Christianity rose from the dead with him. That is the assurance of ultimate victory. I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me shall not die. He shall live forever because our Lord is the resurrection and the life. So that guarantees the victory of the Lord’s work ultimately, when Jesus said, “I have overcome the world;” he was speaking proleptically of what he would do when he shed his blood on Calvary’s cross.

The resurrection is also the mark of an accomplished redemption and Paul uses it in that sense, he says you can know that your sins are forgiven by the fact that Christ has been raised from the dead and if he has not been raised from the dead then you have no assurance of the forgiveness of your sins. So the resurrection is the sign from the Lord God that the work that Christ did was acceptable to the father and accepted by him. The work was done in the blood that was shed, that is when the atonement was made, but the evidence of it is the resurrection. Then of course the fact that the Lord Jesus is at the right hand of the Father as the resurrected Lord is the guarantee of our future as well. He ever lives to make intercession for all of the people of God and he ever lives to make intercession to secure the results of the work that he accomplished on Calvary’s cross. So everything that he intended to accomplish in the blood shed he accomplishes.

Now, sometimes we speak out of two sides of our mouths and not everybody can be perfectly consistent like I am, but that we do speak inconsistently. Some of us will say, I believe in the sovereignty of God and then in the next breath, we will picture God as if he is frustrated if we don’t do something for him. Missionary appeals are often like that. If you don’t go to the mission field, the Lord will not accomplish his purposes because he is dependent upon us and if we don’t go, he will be frustrated in his purposes. But when we say he is sovereign and then when we say that we are really contradicting what we have said previously.

Those things do not go together. If he is sovereign he accomplishes his purposes. The Bible says that over and over and over again, but I don’t know why it is that we can’t under certain circumstances believe one side of that truth and then on the other circumstances we can believe the other side, but it is hard for us to bring the two together and believe in the sovereignty of God and yet, the human responsibility and yet no frustrated deity. But the fact that the Lord Jesus is at the right hand of the throne of God now is the assurance that everything is going to transpire just as it has been planned in the word of God.

We have a great God. It is so marvelous to be able to trust such a God as this and know that he will carry out his purposes. His word will accomplish that whereunto he has sent it. Do you believe that? Six people are shaken their heads. [Name redacted] is in doubt. [Laughter]

Now, the rally represents Christ as captain of the Lord’s hosts, as I have said. Joshua was present with the people constantly. This is the other side of the victory of our Lord. We think of him at the right hand of the Father ever living to make intercession for us, but let’s not forget, he says, “Lo, I am with you always.” So he is with us by virtue of the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit. So he is with us. He is also on the mountain. He tells us not to be conformed to the world. He says to make no provision for the flesh. He says to resist the devil because he is with us, and we do this in the

strength that he gives us. So we have someone who is holding up the rod with us constantly.

He don’t need anybody to prop up his arms like Moses did either, in the power of his indissoluble life, the perfection of his eternal being, he lives to make intercession for us and in us to accomplish his purposes, sanctification just as surely as justification is the work of God and will be accomplished. Do you believe that? Listen, being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.

Well, the issue of the battle is described in verse 13 and Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. That is a very interesting Hebrew word, primarily interesting I must confess because it is so rare. It means to prostrate. It is very close to the great word to annul. In other words, it doesn’t mean that they were destroyed but that their power was annulled so that the victory became Joshua’s and the children of Israel but they were not totally destroyed, that will come later.

Now that’s illustrative isn’t it of the fact that the flesh is always with us too and always will be with us as long as we are here in these bodies in which the sin principle dwells. But there is a time coming when Amalek, I mean the flesh will be destroyed and that is when we enter the presence of the Lord either at death or at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. I think that we can probably turn to Romans chapter 6 and verse 6 and say that that is largely what Paul has in mind when he writes there along these lines, this famous text, Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him that the body of sin might be, the great term is annulled, made of non-effect, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Now he does not say that henceforth we shall not have sin, he says that henceforth we should not serve sin. You see what we are promised by the death of Christ in the present

existence is that we are not the servants of sin any longer. We are not promised that we shall not have sin. In fact, Paul in Galatians 5 makes that point, too. If we walk by the Spirit; we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. He doesn’t say you will not have them but you will not fulfill them. We always have the flesh with us.

You can read the stories of the men in the Bible and you will find that particularly in the kings of the Old Testament. Someday I would like to hear again a series of messages on the kings of the Old Testament that I heard Robert Liddle gave many years ago. He was a man who had studied the kings for years and years and it was very illuminating to hear him expound the lives of some of the kings of the Old Testament and you know a number of them served the Lord very acceptably but then when they got old like I am they turned away from the Lord. So the flesh is always with us and we will always have our difficulty with it.

Now this is so important for the children of Israel in their early stages of their new life freed from bondage that we read in the fourteenth verse, “And the Lord said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in the book.” The Hebrew text has *basefer; busefer*, “in a book,” but *basofer* which means in the book, in the book for a memorial and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua, for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. In the book, you get the impression that already Moses is writing an account of what is happening and from this will come one of the important sources for the five books of Moses that are later ours.

Now he says write it in a book for a memorial. That suggests that this was to be a lesson to the children of Israel. In other words, they should bear it in mind because they are going to have experiences in which they need this. In fact, this is really a word that points to typology. Remember we had been saying typology is nothing more than illustrative material. So he is saying this is an illustration of what you are going to face. But now so far as the ultimate end of Amalek is concerned, the Lord God will utterly put

out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven and fulfillment of that is recorded in the Old Testament.

Can anyone tell me in what book and what chapter it is found? I didn’t expect you to know. If you would have asked me that yesterday I wouldn’t have been able to raise my hand either even though I have my notes. It is in 1 Chronicles chapter 4, verse 41 through verse 43, that book you study so often. See we are really not nearly so familiar with the Scriptures as we ought to be. We think we are Christians, we have been studying the Bible for a long time, we know the Bible, no we don’t know the Bible. We don’t study the Bible really as we should. What we read in the Scriptures then is that Israel is to be on guard against Amalek because they are going to have to fight with the world constantly.

You know that’s really the story of Israel’s existence isn’t it and even today, what is Israel experiencing today in the land? Now the nation is not a believing nation today, it is a godless nation. But they are still fighting with Esau, so that struggle is still going on and the Lord would have them remember this as the days and months and years went by that they are going to have to fight with the world because the spirit of the world is contrary to the spirit of Christianity that is so plain.

One thing I want to do this summer when I have stopped going out to Chicago, I am tired of Chicago, I tell you, I prefer the winds in Dallas to the winds in Chicago. Someone told me Dallas is windier than Chicago. Well, that may be true. But I prefer these winds down here but when I finish one of the things that I want to do is to draw up a series of messages on the philosophies of our day and the way in which the word of God sets out a solution to the experiences of life on the broadest scale but at the present I don’t have time to do that particular thing but this was designed by God to prepare them for the fact that they were in the world and they were going to have conflict.

Now the continuing warfare is described in what follows and Moses built an altar and called the name of it Jehovah Nissi, that is the Lord my banner, the Hebrew term Nes

means Banner, and Nissi means simply my banner and so Yahweh or the Lord my banner, and notice he built an altar, it doesn’t say he offered any sacrifices but ordinarily that is what you do with altars, you offer sacrifices. What this was as far as Moses was concerned was a confession of personal unworthiness and the need and hope of atonement plus gratitude because when he said the Lord is his banner, he recognizes that it is the Lord who brought victory and that they did not really win the victory, Joshua fought, and he raised his hands on the mount but the victory or the battle is the Lord.

And when he set the altar up and we expect that he offered sacrifices, he offered those sacrifices in gratitude, and he recognized even if he didn’t understand the full theology of it that the shedding of blood was necessary for victory. In other words, atonement is necessary for life and victory in the Christian life and so every altar through the Old Testament sounds out the truth that we often sing, upon that cross of Jesus when I at times can see the very dying form of one who suffered there for me and from my smitten heart with tears two wonders I confess, the wonders of redeeming love and my own worthlessness.

Now Moses probably didn’t understand all that we understand by that now but he had the sense of it and the gratitude that he expressed by erecting the altar is the kind of gratitude that is to characterize us. Oh, he is like and I have mentioned this several times, John Newton, the godless slave trader who was finally saved so marvelously, became a preacher of the Gospel of Christ and writer of some great hymns, had his favorite text, Thou shalt remember that Thou wast a bondman in Egypt and the Lord Thy God redeemed thee and he hung that text on his mantelpiece above his place where he studied to constantly remind him of that fact.

F. W. Boreham in one of his collections of sermons quotes a letter from Thomas Goodwin, the well-known and highly regarded Puritan preacher and he was writing a letter to his son and this is what Mr. Goodwin wrote to his son, “When I was threatening to become cold in my ministry, and when I felt Sabbath morning coming and my heart

not filled with amazement at the grace of God, or when I was making ready to dispense the Lord’s Supper, do you know what I used to do? I used to take a turn up and down among the sins of my past life, and I always came down with a broken and contrite heart ready to preach as it was preached in the beginning the forgiveness of sins.”

That is not a bad thing to do. This afternoon, when Martha was not there and I was by myself and as I was going over this and reading this thing, Well, Mr. Goodwin what you did I need to do too. So I went into the bedroom and I took a turn up and down among my sins, and I think as a result of it, my devotion for the Lord grew as I reflected on what he had done for me. Dr. Samuel Johnson, another Samuel Johnson, said, “A man, sir should keep his friendship in constant repair,” and that is especially true of our relationship to the Lord.

Now the name is, “The Lord my banner.” Moses’ interpretation, which confirms ours is an interpretation of victory. It is Moses’ way of saying, I thank my God through Jesus Christ our Lord, Romans chapter 7 and verse 25, verse 16 says, for he said because the Lord had sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation. Well perhaps, then our view is correct for hands were lifted up to the throne of the Lord. That can mean two things. That can mean that Moses lifted up his hands to the throne of God or it can be the Amalek in attacking the children of Israel was attacking that which was the apple of his eye and in a sense was lifting up hands against God’s throne in rebellion. We are not really sure what that passage means. It can mean either one or the other. That of course the sense is plain regardless of the interpretation that we take of that but he adds that he will have war with Amalek from generation to generation and then of course later on he will destroy Amalek utterly. Haman was probably of the seed of Amalek. Agag who was hewed to pieces was probably also of the seed of Amalek.

Now one last thing. What is represented by Moses lifting up his hands? Well, you know again commentators have had difficulty pinning this down precisely with certainty,

but it is one of the striking things that both the Hebrews -- that is the Jewish interpreters, not Christian interpreters -- and Christian interpreters for the most part have felt that this was a divinely intended representation of the life of prayer, and that this was the Lord’s way of telling Israel and Moses that the way of victory is through prayer.

Now he has also promised that he is going to win the battle but he has also set out the means by which his victories are to be won. They are to be won by witnessing, they are to be won by admonitions and threats, and they are to be won through prayer and teaching almost all students after you have set out the sovereignty of God and the fact that God is not frustrated sooner or later they will think, what is the point of prayer? What is the point of prayer if the victory is sure to be won?

Well the lesson is found here and in other places too. God is going to accomplish his purpose. If you don’t pray, he will accomplish his purpose, but you will lose a whole lot. Do you know what you will lose? You will lose the fellowship with the Lord that prayer involves. You will also lose the joy of participating in what God is doing and having a very real part in it. That is why we pray. Prayer is the life of fellowship. Prayer is the personal life with the Lord God. It is the walk with a friend through this pilgrim pathway that we take through this world. We are strangers and sojourners, but we have someone by our side and prayer is the marvelous privilege that we have of communion with the Lord God and through prayer he accomplishes many of his great victories.

So when we read that he constantly makes intercession for us, he expects us also to pray together with him and enjoy the fellowship with him of what he is doing in our lives so that we can say thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. May in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

And so today, we build our altars, and we praise our Jehovah Nissi as the Lord our banner, and we take admonition from the word of God that says that you are going to have a struggle with Amalek as long as you live, but we have the assurance that someone

in on the mountain praying for us and that we also may have fellowship with him through all of the experiences of life. We are surely blessed. We are surely blessed. May God help us to take advantage of the privileges that we have and may ye also cause us to experience some of the victories over Amalek that Joshua and the children of Israel experienced so many centuries ago. Let’s bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for these marvelous stories, true stories, stories that reveal the principles of everyday life that are so meaningful and so significant. We thank Thee for the way in which Thou hast called us to the life of prayer and fellowship. Forgive us Lord for so often neglecting these marvelous privileges. Guide our steps and may the Lord be our banner in 1985. Enable us in the power of the Holy Spirit to wage war with Amalek from generation to generation until we enter the presence in victory of our Lord Jesus Christ whose we are and whom we desire to serve. We pray in his name. Amen.