

General Church Education



Victory Over the Amalekites

Exodus 17:8-16

Lesson 11

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 3: The Lord Is Our Lawgiver

For ages 8-9 years

Victory over the Amalekites

Exodus 17:8-16

For Parents and Teachers

After their hunger was satisfied with the quails and manna, the children of Israel set out again toward Mount Sinai. Again they found themselves without water and again they murmured against Moses. They were traveling through the narrow valley of Rephidim with mountains on either side. The Lord told Moses to strike a certain rock with his rod and water poured out to quench their thirst. While still in the valley, they were attacked by the war-like Amalekites. It was their strategy to come from behind and pick off the stragglers, those who were old, sick or just plain weary from the trek.

This story pictures how we experience states of temptation immediately after being fed with new truth from the Lord. This process is necessary to “make it our own,” to make truth part of our life and not just reside in our memory. New truth is invigorating and nourishing at first but it is also given for our long term spiritual health. We can use it to overcome evil tendencies and build angelic qualities. The most important thing to remember during states of temptation is that the Lord’s power is working to combat the forces of hell that are attacking. If we keep our eyes on Him and walk in His ways, He will give us the victory. Through this process our belief in the Lord can turn into a deep trust in Him.

Ideas for Children

- Evil spirits attack when and where we are the weakest.
- Our strength to do what is right comes from the Lord.
- We can win battles against evil by looking to the Lord for help and following Him.

From the Writings

Looking above self is looking towards one’s neighbor, country, church, heaven, and so towards the Lord. Looking below self is looking towards the world and self. Looking above self is being raised by the Lord to a higher level.

The Divine Truth coming from the Lord flows into the good with the person, and by means of it He draws the person to Himself. For life which comes from the Lord is attractive or draws others to itself because it springs from love, and all love holds a power of attraction because of its desire to be joined to another so that they may be one.

“Raising one’s hands” means faith that looks upwards to the Lord and “letting down one’s hand” means faith that looks downwards, away from the Lord. Faith that looks to the Lord wins because the Lord does the fighting; for the Lord constitutes faith because it is received from Him. But faith which looks away from the Lord towards self and the world loses because then the person fights alone. *Ar-cana Coelestia* 8604, 8606 and 8608

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Words to Understand

prevail—to win the victory

utterly—completely

sworn—promised

recount—to tell in order, one by one

blot out—to remove something

remembrance—a remembering or to have something come back to your mind

In the Valley of Rephidim

Do you remember that the Israelites had been given quails and manna when they were so hungry? Soon after that they became thirsty and once again murmured and complained against Moses and Aaron for bringing them out into the wilderness. This time the Lord told Moses to take his rod and strike a certain rock to get water. The water gushed out of the rock and the people were once again satisfied. This rock was at a place named Horeb in the valley of Rephidim.

The valley of Rephidim was a narrow passageway with steep mountains on both sides. It was a good place for an attack because there was nowhere to run away. The Amalekites lived in this region. In fact, their name means “valley dweller.” Their method of attack was to sneak up from behind as groups of people were traveling through the valley. The leaders and stronger people were generally at the front of a group of travelers while those who were old or sick, youngsters or those who were tired from traveling would straggle behind. It was from behind that the fierce Amalekites attacked. The attacking Amalekites picked off the weaker ones which gave the impression that they were winning the battle which disheartened the people who were being attacked. Sometimes those being attacked would just give up.



The Israelites Are Attacked

Stories about battles appear throughout history and in many places in the Word. Today's story is about how the Israelites fought their first battle with the Amalekites who lay in wait for them. What do you think happened to the Israelites? Remember that they had been slaves in Egypt for many generations and had no real fighting skills. But they did not give up. The Amalekites had a good plan but the Israelites had a better one.

Moses picked his best warrior, a man named Joshua, to lead the fight against the Amalekites. You will hear Joshua mentioned many times because he was courageous and became a good leader. Remember the name of Joshua.

Read Exodus 17:8-16.

The Battle

Can you picture the battle in your mind? Can you picture the scene as the Israelites looked up on the hill? They saw Moses holding up his rod. This was the rod that was used to part the waters of the Red Sea. What do you think this scene brought to mind for the children of Israel? It reminded them that the Lord had protected them from the enemy Egyptians.

But the battle lasted all day long and Moses' arms became tired. He needed to sit down on a



stone and have help from Aaron and Hur to keep his hands up. We read that "his hands were steady until the going down of the sun." In this way the Israelites were able to defeat the Amalekites and send them running off in retreat.

Special Help from the Lord

The children of Israel needed all kinds of special help to make this very important journey from Egypt to Canaan. They needed food and water. They needed shelter and safety from dangers. The Lord told Moses to write down the story of their journey in a special book, the book



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of Exodus, so that the people would always remember how they got from Egypt to Canaan. It was important that the Hebrews remember who gave them the victory, so the story of this battle with the Amalekites was written down and would never be forgotten.

What was the last thing Moses did? He built an altar and called it “The Lord Is My Banner.” The ancient Israelites built altars by piling up stones. They were a place to worship the Lord and give thanks for His help. Stone altars also served to remind future generations about the Lord’s help.

Do you know what a banner is? It is a piece of cloth with a design or motto on it. Soldiers would carry banners into battle to tell everyone which side they were on. By naming the altar this way, Moses was saying that the Israelites fought with the Lord’s help and were on His side.



The Rod of God

How do you think the Israelites felt about this victory? When they were attacked, they must have felt weak and unprepared for battle. They had struggled to find food and water on their journey. We can imagine how frightened they must have felt when they were attacked.

Instead of being swallowed up in their fear and therefore unable to defend and protect themselves, Moses quickly made a good two-part plan. Their best fighting men were sent into battle against the enemy. They fought hard and were not cowards. The second part is also important. Moses went up to a high place where everyone could see him. Moses held the special rod, the one that had so recently struck the rock and provided life-giving water for all the people. By this the Israelites were reminded of the great power of the Lord to provide what they needed.

This story can help us remember something important too. When we feel weak and afraid in the face of some danger, we can think about the Lord. By remembering that the Lord will always help us when we are trying to do our best to obey His truth, we will also be able to feel His power.

Discussion Ideas

- The Israelites were attacked when they were weak. When are we weak?
- This story focuses on looking to the Lord during a difficult time. Where can we turn when we are in trouble? How can songs and recitations be helpful during difficulties?

Activity Overview | Victory Over the Amalekites

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not.” Exodus 16:4

Songs

March On, March On to Victory

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-march-on-march-on-to-victory/>

Abide With Me

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-abide-with-me/>

Projects

Choose one or two activities.



- Activity 1 | Up and Down Game (Red Light, Green Light)
- Activity 2 | Find the Answers in the Word (Victory over the Amalekites)
- Picture to color—Victory Over the Amalekites (Exodus 17)

Additional Activity Ideas

- Stand with your arms up in the air. How long can you hold this pose? When you get tired try sitting down to see if it helps you hold your arms up longer. Then get someone to help you hold your arms up. How did this help you?
- What kinds of battles do you have in your own life? Sometimes we fight with our brothers and sisters, and even our parents. Or we may see others fighting. Why do people have battles? What are some of the ways in which people on both sides of a battle need the Lord?
- Build an altar out of stones.



Activity 1 | Up and Down Game (Red Light Green Light)

Experience the impact of Moses raising and lowering his rod and his arms by playing a game.

Directions

1. Find a location where there is plenty of space to run—e.g. outside, in a large hallway, or room.
2. Choose one student to be “Moses.” Moses goes to one end of the space. All others should go to the opposite end of the space, at least 20 feet (6m) away.
3. Moses turns to face the wall. When Moses raises his hands, all others move towards him. When Moses lowers his hands and turns to face the others, they instantly stop moving.
4. If Moses sees a player moving, the player must return to the starting line.
5. Play until one student reaches Moses and taps him on the back. That student now takes the role of Moses and play begins again.

Activity 2 | Find the Answers in the Word

You will need a copy of the Word to complete this activity. Read the questions. Look for the answers in Exodus chapter 17.

1. When the Israelites came to Rephidim what did they need? (verse 1)
2. What did the Israelites do against Moses? (verse 3)
3. What did the Lord tell Moses to do? (verses 5 and 6)
4. With what was Moses to hit the rock? (verses 5 and 6)
5. Who did the Israelites tempt? (verse 7)
6. Who came and fought with Israel at Rephidim? (verse 8)
7. Who was to choose men to go fight with the Amalekites? (verse 9)
8. What happened when Moses held up his hand with the rod in it? (verse 11)
9. Who helped Moses hold up his hands? (verse 12)
10. Who won the battle? (verse 13)

Answers:
1. water
2. complained
3. strike the rock at
Horeb with his rod
4. his rod
5. the Lord
6. the Amalekites
7. Joshua
8. Israel prevailed
9. Aaron and Hur
10. Joshua

