

AMALEK

THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE
FLESH, SPIRIT

By Arlen L. Chirwood

To see the true place and significance of the Amalekites in Scripture and to properly understand the typology involved different places where these people are mentioned, one needs to go back and look at Esau as a progenitor of the Amalekites. And it matters not that the Amalekites existed as a nation prior to this time, for the Amalekite nation is seen existing *apart from change* throughout its history, whether before or after the days of Esau's grandson, Amalek (though little is revealed about the Amalekites prior to Esau's progeny).

Esau is really the only link which Scripture provides to trace the origin of the Amalekites. They appeared during the days of Abraham apart from a reference to their origin. And, the fact that they were associated with Esau at a later point in time from their original appearance, must be looked upon as by Divine design, for a particular reason.

It is within the person of Esau that characteristics are seen which depict *the true nature* of the Amalekites (within a spiritual frame of reference), allowing that which God has for man to see in passages such as Ex. 17:8-16 to become self-evident.

Rights of the Firstborn

Esau, *a man of the world*, was the firstborn son of Isaac. He looked upon matters — particularly matters pertaining to his birthright (his rights as firstborn, the main thing singled out in Scripture about Esau) — as *the world* viewed them rather than as God viewed them. It is said of Esau that he “despised his birthright” (Gen. 25:34).

The Septuagint (Greek version of the O.T.) uses a word for “despised” which means that Esau regarded

his birthright as *a paltry possession*, as something *insignificant* or *of little value*. He regarded his birthright as *practically worthless*. And, Esau, looking upon his birthright after this fashion, sold his rights as firstborn to his twin brother, Jacob, for a single meal of “bread and pottage of lentils.” He sold his rights as firstborn to satisfy his hunger, to satisfy a fleshly gratification.

The account of Esau selling his birthright and not realizing its value until it was too late forms the fifth and final major warning in the Book of Hebrews (12:16, 17). This account in Hebrews chapter twelve forms the apex toward which all things in the book move. The preceding four warnings have to do with different facets of the overall teaching pertaining to the birthright; and chapter eleven, the chapter on “faith” leading into chapter twelve, forms both a summation for the preceding warnings and an introduction for the final warning, tying everything together with the thought of *faithfulness to one's calling*.

Esau looked upon matters from the vantage point of *the world*. He saw things from a *fleshly* perspective rather than from a *spiritual*. And it was only at a time when it was too late that he gave thought to the spiritual, allowing him to see the birthright in its true light.

Thus, “Esau” typifies *the fleshly man*; and his brother, “Jacob [actually, ‘Israel’],” typifies *the spiritual man*. This would be after a similar fashion to the way Ishmael and Isaac are set forth in preceding Scripture.

(Referring to a more specific part of the type, the name, “Jacob,” has to do with *the fleshly [or natural] man*; and the name, “Israel,” has to do with *the spiritual man* [cf. Gen. 32:28-30; Ps. 147:19, 20; Isa. 9:8]. Note, for example, that the separate creation performed by God in Isa. 43:1 [establishing a second creation within mankind, leaving two creations, Jew and Gentile] had to do with “Jacob,” not with Israel. Thus, this creation, because it was of *the natural man*, could be passed on through procreation.

Also note in Luke 1:32, 33 that Christ's future reign is to be over “the house of *Jacob*,” and it is to last “forever [Gk., *eis tous aionas* (‘with respect to the ages’ — not only the Messianic Era but also all the succeeding ages comprising eternity)].” This verse, referring to *the natural man*, reveals that the Israelites will not only reside in natural bodies on this present earth throughout the Messianic Era but also on the new earth throughout the eternal ages as well [in complete

keeping with the type body Lazarus possessed when he was raised from the dead, foreshadowing the future resurrection of Israel (John 11:6, 7, 43, 44)].

Seeing how Scripture presents Esau in connection with the rights of the firstborn is *the key* to correctly understanding the various spiritual lessons inherent in the different places where the Amalekites are mentioned, for this is exactly the fashion in which they appear in Scripture. The main thing marking the Amalekites would be that of *possessing the mind of Esau toward the things of God, particularly those things concerning the rights of the firstborn*. And, during Moses' day, they are first seen in Scripture setting themselves in opposition to *God's firstborn son, Israel* (Ex. 4:22, 23).

In the type, Israel was called out of Egypt to inherit the rights of the firstborn, within a theocracy, in another land. This was the direction toward which all things surrounding Israel moved (Ex. 15:1-18).

But, *then Amalek appeared and stood in the way*, seeking through any means possible to stop Israel at this point in the journey, short of the goal of the nation's calling.

In the antitype, every Christian is a “child” of God, or “son,” as seen in Heb. 12:5-8, *awaiting the adoption, to be followed by a realization of the inheritance belonging to firstborn sons*. And this inheritance has to do with another land (*heavenly*, rather than earthly [cf. Eph. 1:11-14; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 3:1]). This is the direction toward which *all things* in the lives of Christians are presently moving, whether Christians know it or not (most don't).

And Amalek, the man of flesh, is presently making his appearance — attacking, exactly as in the type (though *the light* now exists, *the darkness* remains [cf. Gen. 1:3-5; II Cor. 4:6]). And Amalek will seek, through every means possible, to stop Christians short of the goal.

In this respect, the man of flesh, typified by Amalek, is presented in Scripture as one whose main goal centers around *opposing those called to inherit the rights of the firstborn*. He is the one who *stands in the way*, seeking through every means possible to prevent individuals from coming into a realization of the inheritance to which they have been called.

And how is Amalek to be defeated? That's what the account of the Israelites' encounter and battle with Amalek in Ex. 17:8-16 is about. This section of Scrip-

ture reveals how the man of flesh is to be defeated, so that redeemed individuals can be *victorious* in the present warfare, allowing them *to one day realize the rights of the firstborn, in another land, within a theocracy.*

Slay Amalek, Or...

Either *slay Amalek*, as the Lord commands, or *Amalek will, in the end, rise up and slay you.* This is a teaching graphically set forth in the Books of I and II Samuel (*cf.* Num. 14:42, 43; 20:2-21).

Saul, the first king in Israel, was told by Samuel,

“Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have...” (I Sam. 15:3).

But Saul rendered incomplete obedience. He spared Agag, *the king* of the Amalekites; and he saved *the best* of Amalek’s possessions — the sheep and oxen “to sacrifice unto the Lord,” along with the fatlings, the lambs, and everything that appeared *good in his sight* (I Sam. 15:7-15).

This resulted in the Lord, through Samuel, rejecting Saul as king over Israel (I Sam. 15:16-28). And in later years, because Saul had not previously carried out the Lord’s command concerning Amalek, an Amalekite appeared and slew Saul after he had been mortally wounded in a battle with the Philistines.

The account of Saul’s death in I Sam. 31:1-6 and the account given to David by the Amalekite who killed Saul in II Sam. 1:2-10 must be compared to see and understand exactly what occurred. Saul had been mortally wounded in battle, he fell on his sword in an attempt to kill himself, but he failed in the attempt. An Amalekite then appeared; and, responding to Saul’s question, “Who art thou?”, he said, “*I am an Amalekite*” (II Sam. 1:7, 8).

Then Saul said,

“Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me” (II Sam. 1:9).

And the Amalekite, relating the story to David, said,

“So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: *and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm...*” (II Sam. 1:10).

Saul, in the beginning, had been commanded to slay Amalek. But he didn’t. And, in the end, after Saul had “fallen,” Amalek not only *slew him* but *stripped him of his regality.*

That is the central point in the Old Testament to which the warning in Rev. 3:11 relates:

“Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, *that no man take thy crown.*”

Either *slay Amalek now*, as the Lord commands, or *he will bring you down and, in the end, rise up, slay you, and take your crown.*

And the “crown” has to do with *the regal part of the rights of the firstborn.* It has to do with occupying a position with Christ in the coming kingdom, for only crowned rulers will ascend the throne with Christ and realize the other two aspects of the birthright (being not only *kings* but *priests* [*king-priests*], and receiving *a double portion of all the Father’s goods* as co-heirs with the “King of kings, and Lord of lords”).

Means and Length of the Battle

In the account of the battle with Amalek in Ex. 17:8-16, Moses, accompanied by Aaron and Hur, ascended a nearby hill while the Israelites fought with Amalek in the valley below. And during the battle, as long as Moses held “the rod of God” high in his hand, the Israelites prevailed. But when he lowered the rod (a sceptre [Ex. 4:20-23]), Amalek prevailed (vv. 10, 11).

There would be a dual type in relation to Moses holding the sceptre on the top of the hill. Though Christ, fulfilling one part of the type, would need no help, Christians, fulfilling the other part of the type, *would* need help. And Aaron and Hur can be seen in the second part of the type.

One part of the picture concerns Christ fighting the battle on the Christians’ behalf, and the other part of the picture concerns Christians engaged in the battle as well. And Christians grow weary in the battle and need help from fellow-Christians also engaged in the battle. Christians are to help one another in this respect.

That’s what Heb. 10:23-25 is about. We are told to “hold fast the profession of our faith [*lit.*, ‘the confession of the hope’] without wavering”; and we are told to associate ourselves with other Christians *of like mind* to encourage, exhort, and pray for one another, “and

so much the more,” as we “see the day approaching.”

It is, at times, a lonely and weary battle in the place of exile; and Christians have been exhorted to help one another in the race of the faith. They are exhorted *to encourage one another and help one another hold the sceptre high* as each goes forth, *properly arrayed*, to combat the enemy with *the Sword of the Spirit* (Eph. 6:10-18).

And the battle, after this fashion, is to be fought “until the going down of the sun” (v. 12), which can only depict a battle lasting *the entire duration of the Christian life.* Christians are in the race of the faith for the long haul, and the battle exists throughout the entire course of the race.

When Moses began to grow weary in the battle, Aaron and Hur not only helped hold his hands up but they also placed a stone under Moses so that he could sit, though still holding the sceptre high. And, through Aaron and Hur’s help, Moses was able to continue after this fashion for the entire duration of the time. Scripture reads, “...his hands were steady until the going down of the sun” (v. 12).

The “stone” upon which Moses sat itself pointed to *the kingdom of Christ*, to which the “rod,” the sceptre, he held pointed (Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45). Then, beyond that, Moses, Aaron, and Hur had gone up to the top of a particular hill — “the hill”; and the word “hill,” as “mountain,” when used in a symbolic sense in Scripture, signifies *a kingdom* (Isa. 2:2-4). Typically, they fought the battle from the top of a particular kingdom as they held up the sceptre.

Everything about realizing victory in the battle against Amalek centers around one thought — *taking one’s eyes off the things pertaining to the present kingdom under Satan and fixing them on the things pertaining to the coming kingdom under Christ.*

In the words of Gen. 19:17,

“...*escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.*”

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