

Dealing With Amalek Deuteronomy 25:17-19

I. INTRODUCTION • RR

II. TEXT

A. **Remember!**

1. Moses begins with the word, “Remember.”
2. Every teacher knows that *memory* is crucial to learning.
3. And *repetition* is essential to memory.
4. This is why when we’re in school, so much of the process of education is devoted to repetition.
 - a. we learn our *math tables & vocabulary* by repetition.
 - b. *foreign language, historical facts*, even the process of *writing*; all these become proficient through repetition.
5. What’s true for learning math tables & a foreign language is true in learning spiritual things too.
 - a. we need to be reminded of those truths that form the foundation of our faith.
 - b. a certain amount of repetition is healthy as we walk with Christ to make sure we’re staying in touch with those things that give life & substance to our faith.
6. The Apostles Peter & Paul knew this,
 - a. and it’s why in Philippians 3:1 Paul writes,
For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but ... safe.
 - b. in 2 Pet. 1, the Apostle says . . .
¹² For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. ¹³ Yes, I think it’s right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, ¹⁴ knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. ¹⁵ Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.
 - c. that last remark shows Peter had a sense what he was writing was scripture because it would endure & serve to build up believers in times to come,
 - d. something they would refer to again & again; *really*, something they *must* refer to repeatedly.
 - e. he knew his days were numbered & moved to make sure those who came after him would have what they *needed* to grow spiritually strong.
7. The same is true *here* for Moses. Deuteronomy is his last message to the Nation of Israel as they are preparing to enter Canaan.
 - a. he will not be going with them; that task will fall to his assistant Joshua.
 - b. so Deuteronomy is Moses’ last instructions to the people.
8. It’s interesting that some 40 years *before* when God first appeared to Moses & told him to return to Egypt to deliver the Jews from bondage, he’d tried to beg off the assignment by saying he was a poor public speaker & would make a weak leader.

- a. a lot has changed in 40 years as we come to Deut. & find Moses giving 3 *incredible speeches* to the people.
 - b. the man who began as a *poor speaker* has become an *excellent teacher* who understands what's necessary for people to learn.
 - c. so he begins, "Remember!"
 - d. look at the *last words* of our text in v. 19; "You shall not forget."
9. What was it they were to commit to memory?

B. Their Troubles with Amalek Vs. 17-18

17 "Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, ¹⁸ how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God.

1. Amalek was a nationless conglomeration of nomads who lived in a loose-knit society in the Sinai peninsula.
2. And they were a *parasite*!
3. Theirs was a culture of laziness that shunned honest work in favor of raiding & plundering.
 - a. they lived off the fruit of other people's labor, stealing from those who'd managed by much sweat to eek a living out of the hard earth.
 - b. they were robbers & brigands who raided the numerous caravans that traveled the roads from Asia to Egypt.
 - c. theirs was a lawless culture that attacked the border towns of the nations around them, then ran away before any real opposition could be raised against them.
 - d. for the Amalekites, might was right.
 - f. the closest thing we have today to the Amalekites that we can relate to is to think of them as a urban gang.
4. They lived in the Sinai peninsula, or what is known as the Negeb.
 - a. this was the area Israel had to pass through in their journey from Egypt to Mt. Sinai.
 - b. the Amalekites saw this as an unbelievable opportunity!
 - 1) think of it; a bunch of slaves who have no idea how to defend themselves.
 - 2) they're loaded down with the wealth of Egypt; remember that the Egyptians had heaped silver and gold on them on Passover night.
 - c. so the Amalekites began to attack Israel; not in a frontal assault;
 - d. no, they stayed true to their weasley form & harassed just the *edges* of the camp.
 - e. they attacked the stragglers and weary who'd fallen behind when the people were moving.
 - f. word quickly reached the Amalekites far & wide about the rich & easy pickings so a huge force gathered & attacked at *Rephidim*.
 - g. the battle was fierce, but Israel eventually won, her victory secured by the prayers of Moses who was assisted by Aaron and Hur.
5. It seemed like that would be the end of the Amalekites. And indeed, nothing more was heard from them for many years.

6. But Amalek was not destroyed. They simply retreated to their hiding places in the wilderness where they nursed their wounds & renewed their numbers – waiting for another opportunity to once again harass Israel.
7. Moses knew the Amalekites would be a *perennial thorn* in Israel's side & that if something was not done to end it, she could well prove to be Israel's undoing.
8. So he said to them . . .

C. End It! V. 19

19 Therefore it shall be, when the LORD our God has given you rest from your enemies all around, in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, that you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. You shall not forget.

1. The nation has an assignment. Once they've settled in the Promised Land, enjoying the Lord's blessing, they were to *finish* what they'd begun at Rephidim.
2. They were to stage a campaign of *erasing* the outlaw Amalekites.
3. This was *necessary* because it was Amalek's unalterable nature to harass Israel.
4. As long as even 1 Amalekite lived, Israel's entire safety would be in jeopardy.
 - a. I realize that sounds like an exaggeration, but it's literally true.
 - b. in the book of Esther we read of a man named Haman who persuaded the King of Persia to pass an edict allowing for the people of the empire to attack & kill any & all Jews.
 - c. Haman, it turns out, was an Amalekite!
 - d. one man came close to being the cause of the death of *every Jew* in the Persian Empire.
5. Moses understood the danger the Amalekites posed & urged Israel to not forget their need to move against them in a determined action to end their threat.

D. Saul

1. So, what happened?
2. During the time of the Judges, Amalek recovered enough strength to once again begin nibbling at the edges of Israel.
3. They became bolder & bolder until Samuel, the last Judge, handed the first king of Israel, Saul, the task of carrying out Moses' assignment to wipe out Amalek.
4. But Saul didn't follow orders.
 - a. Samuel had made it clear they were to *destroy everything* even down to the last toothpick.
 - b. but Saul decided to allow his army to keep what spoils they wanted.
 - c. and as a trophy of his victory, he kept Agag, the King of the Amalekites alive.
 - d. Samuel was *furious* at Saul's blatant disobedience, knowing that the incomplete victory had let too many Amalekites get away.
 - e. Israel was still in danger & only time would tell how the Amalekites would once again return to imperil the nation.
5. Saul learned *the hard way* how far-reaching the consequences of his disobedience would reach.

- a. because of his rebellion against God in this thing with the Amalekites, God rejected him as king & gave the throne to David.
- b. and Saul, bereft of the anointing & protection of God suffered a humiliating defeat in battle with the Philistines.
- c. in his last minutes on Mt. Gilboa, wounded by arrows, his beloved son Jonathan lying dead at his feet,
- d. Saul wanted to commit suicide lest he fall into the enemy's hands & suffer the humiliation of capture. He figured it would be better to die in battle than be taken prisoner.
- e. but he didn't have the strength to end his own life. He needed assistance.
- f. when his armor bearer wouldn't oblige, he found another willing hand . . .
- g. in 2 Samuel 1 we read,

2 . . . it happened that a man came from Saul's camp with his clothes torn and dust on his head. So it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the ground and prostrated himself. ³ And David said to him, "Where have you come from?" So he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel." ⁴ Then David said to him, "How did the matter go? Please tell me." And he answered, "The people have fled from the battle, many of the people are fallen and dead, and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also." ⁵ So David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and Jonathan his son are dead?" ⁶ Then the young man who told him said, "As I happened by chance *to be* on Mount Gilboa, there was Saul, leaning on his spear; and indeed the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. ⁷ Now when he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I answered, 'Here I am.' ⁸ And he said to me, 'Who *are* you?' So I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.' ⁹ He said to me again, 'Please stand over me and kill me, for anguish has come upon me, but my life still *remains* in me.' ¹⁰ So I stood over him and killed him, . . .

6. Because Saul did not make an end of the Amalekites, an Amalekite made an end of Saul.
7. Because Israel did not obey God & make an end of Amalek, in Esther's day, Amalek came a hair's breadth from being the end of Israel.

D. The Lesson

1. There's a lesson in all this for us.
2. As 1 Cor. 10 makes clear, the experiences of Israel from the Exodus to the Promised Land paint a picture of *our* spiritual journey.
3. So what does Amalek represent? What parallel is there between the Amalekites and our experience?
4. Amalek speaks of those little sins that nibble round the edge of our lives.
 - a. they aren't the big sins that we gain quick victory over when we first come to Christ,
 - b. they're the lesser things, the smaller temptations that don't seem all that bad in *comparison* to the major sins God delivers us from.

- c. for the guy who's been delivered from drugs & alcohol, *lust* doesn't seem like such a big deal;
 - 1) after all, he rationalizes, he's a guy, & guys are wired that way.
 - 2) maybe one day, he'll take more concerted action against lust, but for now, it seems like no big deal.
- d. for the woman who's been delivered from immorality, *envy* seems so petty; & besides, it's so easily hidden.
 - 1) she thinks, "So I find myself envying others ever now & then. So what? At least I'm not *promiscuous* anymore."
 - 2) "I'm not perfect & no one can expect me to be. I know I shouldn't be jealous but I'll worry about dealing with that later."
- 5. These temptations are like a *persistent gnat* that buzzes round your head & won't leave you alone.
 - a. at first you hardly pay it any mind. Then you half-heartedly bat at it.
 - b. eventually, it pesters you enough that you stop & make a determined effort to swat it.
 - c. and you think, "Good, Got it! Gone."
 - d. that's what Joshua & Israel thought they'd done to Amalek at Rephidim in the Exodus.
 - e. but Amalek wasn't destroyed, just defeated.
- 6. Listen to me, there's something you need to know about *your spiritual adversary*: **He doesn't give up!**
 - a. just because he's experienced a defeat, he doesn't throw in the towel.
 - b. no, he's clever; subtle. He retreats just as Amalek did, because Amalek is a picture of this *strategy* of the devil – that's the whole point here folks.
 - c. Amalek retreated, forfeiting *the battle* at Rephidim, but not yielding *the war* with Israel.
 - d. Israel made the mistake of thinking one battle *was* the war, & confident in their victory, they weren't prepared when Amalek regrouped & renewed their assault.
 - e. in the same way, the enemy of your soul will back off for a time, *using peace* as a tool to seduce you to inattention.
 - f. and when you're unprepared, he'll renew his assault.
 - g. suddenly you'll find that gnat back again, only this time it's bigger & more persistent.
- 7. A couple months ago we had a bout with mosquitoes at our house.
 - a. at first I saw a little critter flying round our bathroom, but it was tiny & it seemed like too much bother to go after; I let it alone.
 - b. I saw what I thought was the same bug for a few days, then Lynn mentioned she'd killed a number of mosquitoes recently.
 - c. the next bug I saw I quickly consigned to mosquito hell.
 - d. then we began seeing 3 or 4 a day.
 - e. we couldn't figure out how they were getting in the house.
 - f. but we became very careful to button everything up tight & to swat the little buggers every time we saw them.
 - g. mosquitoes are *notorious disease carriers* – such a tiny pest can do such massive damage!

- 1) Yellow fever, Malaria, Encephalitis
 - 2) West Nile Virus, Ebola, mosquitoes are suspected in some regions of spreading HIV.
8. What a potent picture of our adversary & this strategy he uses, not to assault us with a full-frontal spiritual attack, but with seemingly *little temptations* that just nibble round the *edges* of our moral lives.
 - a. we don't really pay them all that much attention because to be frank,
 - b. they don't seem that, well, big of a deal.
 - c. so what if we shade the truth every once in a while; *everyone does it*.
 - d. so what if we cheat here & there, *who doesn't?*
 - e. sure pride, envy, lust, coveting, being critical or fearful, aren't right;
 - f. but at least *they're not hurting anyone*.

 - g. we need to realize if we don't move with direct intent to end these things, these *little* things,
 - h. they will end up being *the very things that destroy us*.
 - i. they are *spiritual mosquitoes* that carry death.
 9. God told Israel they were to go & wipe out *every last trace* of Amalek.
 10. Samuel gave Saul the assignment. But Saul decided to obey it only part way, and *partial* obedience is in fact, *disobedience*.
 11. Saul thought to profit by his conquest of the Amalekites.
 - a. the spoils of war would bring some temporal comfort.
 - b. he was seduced by the temptation to compromise with sin.
 - c. he tried to hide what he'd done from Samuel, but Samuel wasn't fooled & Saul's sin was revealed in a very public way.
 12. And so it ever is with this strategy of the enemy.
 - a. eventually the Holy Spirit convicts us about our need to deal with these little sins & we repent & take action to end them.
 - b. but the appeal comes to *compromise*, to end the *obvious* ways the sin manifests itself,
 - d. but to allow it to live on in one corner *of our inner life*; drawing occasional comfort from it.
 - e. the woman who's sin of envy manifested itself in gossip stops spreading stories about others, but she carries on an *inner conversation* of character assassination within her own heart.
 - f. the man whose lust was manifested in using pornography stops his use of such material but retreats to an *inner fantasy* that continues to pollute his mind.
 13. All who do such need to learn the lesson Saul teaches – be sure your sin will find you out.
 - a. the sin you think is so well hidden & that you can coddle & draw comfort from,
 - b. *even now* the devil is working to expose in a *very public way*.
 - c. like Saul wanted to use the Amalekite king as a trophy of his victory, Satan wants to turn you into a trophy of his!
 - d. do what Samuel did with Agag that day – end it, here, now!
 - e. put the Sword of the Spirit to that thing that's been nibbling at the edge of

- your soul,
f. that thing that's been plundering your joy & peace in the Lord.

III. CONCLSUON

A. *Saul's End*

1. Moses gave Israel a simple & clear assignment. Wipe out Amalek.
2. Israel faltered in carrying to completion what Moses said, & as a result, because Israel didn't end the Amalekites, the Amalekites nearly ended Israel.
3. Saul, who compromised with the Amalekites & let some escape paid the ultimate price & died at the hands of one.
4. It's the nature of sin to grow & gain power, Amalek teaches us that truth.
5. That sin that seems like little more than a tiny pest today, if not ended *now* will turn into a full-grown warrior with a sword in hand & point in your very soul.