

"SLAYING THE AMALEKITES" – by Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs

Lesson 1 – Exodus 17:8-16.

8 Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

9 And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the head of the hill with the rod of God in my hand."

10 So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

11 And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

12 But Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur 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.

13 So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the mouth of the sword.

14 Then Jehovah said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."

15 And Moses built an altar and called its name, Jehovah-Is-My-Standard;

16 for he said, "Because Jehovah has sworn: Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

Lesson 2 (children) – Deuteronomy 25:17-19.

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.

19 "Therefore it shall be, when Jehovah your God has given you rest from your enemies all around, in the land which Jehovah 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.

Lesson 2 (adults) – I Samuel 15:1-33.

1 Samuel also said to Saul, "Jehovah sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of Jehovah.

2 "Thus says Jehovah of Armies: 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt.

3 'Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

7 And Saul attacked the Amalekites

9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them

13 Then Samuel went to Saul

16 Then Samuel said to Saul ...,

18 "Now Jehovah sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.'

19 "Why then did you not obey the voice of Jehovah?..."

23 Because you have rejected the word of Jehovah, He also has rejected you from being king."

32 Then Samuel said, "Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me." So Agag came to him delicately. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."

33 But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before Jehovah in Gilgal.

Lesson 3 – Arcana Coelestia 8593:1-2.

'And Amalek came' means falsity arising from interior evil.... Interior evil is that which resides with a person, hidden inwardly. It is concealed in his will and consequently in his thinking, not a trace of it being apparent outwardly, in his actions, speech, or face.

People ruled by this kind of evil strive by every method and skill to hide it away, to conceal it under an outward show of being honorable and righteous, and an outward show of love of the neighbor. Nevertheless, their only thought is how to inflict harm, and so far as possible to use others to inflict it, taking care to prevent anyone from seeing that they are the instigators. They also disguise actual evil so that it does not look like evil.

The greatest delight of their life is to contemplate such things and secretly try to carry them out. This is called interior evil.

[2] Those ruled by this evil do not attack the truths of faith but forms of the good of faith. They act through corrupt affections; through these they pervert good thoughts, doing so in a way almost inconceivable....

Those hellish genii never attack a person openly, or when he can offer strong resistance, but when it is seen that the person is slipping and may therefore give in. At this point they are suddenly at hand, and give him a shove so that he falls completely.

“Thus says Jehovah of Armies: ‘I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them.’” (I Samuel 15:2-3)

- **Introduction**

- A. The Lord said the Amalekites should be utterly destroyed for what they did to Israel.
 1. This is a story about a battle to the death.
 2. This is a story about fighting in temptation. It is a “winner-take-all” kind of war. Notice the powerful words that were used. It does not say scuffle or skirmish, but utterly, wholly, and completely destroy them, no survivors were to be left!
 3. So why must battling in temptation always result in all out warfare?

- **The Nature of the Amalekites**

- B. The Amalekites in the Word symbolize a particularly insidious falsity from evil that tries to infest us. This falsity from evil delights in using these tactics. Employing Subtlety & Hypocrisy, Being Ruthless & Merciless.
 1. They are subtle because they do not dare attack the truths of faith, but the goods of faith. They don’t try to directly assault the truths that you know and believe, for this might alert your conscience and tip you off as to their evil intentions. Instead they work on the good feelings inside you and try to twist, pervert, and manipulate them.
 2. We see this in the story of King Saul of Israel and King Agag of the Amalekites, about 400 years after this story. Saul had been ordered to carry out the directive given in our story, namely to completely blot out the name of Amalek. No one was to be left alive – not women, children, or even their livestock. A battle to complete destruction. (I Samuel 15).
 3. But Saul spared Agag and the best of the flocks and did not completely wipe them out. Why? Well, his reasoning was that he destroyed what was worthless, but that he saved the best of the Amalekites livestock to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. This sounds like quite a good thing to have done. A reasonable and even noble sounding gesture. The problem was that it was against the commandment of the Lord. This is the way the evil represented by the Amalekites works on our good affections and subtly twists them until we are actually acting in opposition to the Lord’s will. Thus the apparent friendship from evil as it appeals to our good affections is entirely hypocritical.
 4. We see this subtlety and hypocrisy again when Samuel comes and admonishes Saul, and orders Agag to be brought forward. It says Agag, the King of Amalek came to Samuel “*delicately*” saying “*surely the bitterness of death is past.*” (I Samuel 15:32). The meaning being roughly, you’ve won – come on can’t we all just get along! It was clearly hypocritical – he merely wanted to save his own life so that he might regroup and attack again at a later date. But Samuel did not fall for his smooth talk and carried out the commandment of the Lord and hacked him to pieces, after reminding him that he had preyed on women and children. He “blotted out” the name of Amalek as instructed.

5. The last of quality of this particular evil symbolized by the Amalekites is to be completely **ruthless or merciless**.
 - a) To fully understand the degree of this let's review the history.
 - b) Israel had just weeks earlier escaped from the Egyptians. They were not a disciplined army but a disorganized group of ex-slaves. They had been wandering around hungry in the wilderness in a desperate situation, and were grumbling against Moses and Jehovah for leading them out of safety to die. In this low state of temptation, the Lord provided them Manna.
 - c) Then they were suffering from dehydration and were literally dying for a drink, and their murmuring against the Lord increased. So, the Lord provided water for them out the rock which Moses struck.
 - d) All during this time, from the time they came across the Red Sea out of Egypt, the Amalekites had been stalking them. Picking off the stragglers, the weak, the women and children. When anyone fell back, they would swoop down from behind out of the mountains and kill and plunder them.
 - e) Now they had them trapped in the valley of Rephidim and were preparing to finish them off. The Israelites were in disarray, quarrelling amongst themselves, and challenging their leader, they were hungry, thirsty, and depressed. They seemed defenseless. Ruthless & merciless was Amalek.

• **This is how this particular type of falsity from interior evil tries to act upon us.**

- C. This entire story symbolizes how these evils orchestrate their attacks. At the absolute low points in our lives. *"Those hellish genii never attack a person openly, or when he can offer strong resistance, but when it is seen that the person is slipping and may therefore give in. At this point they are suddenly at hand, and give him a shove so that he falls completely."* (AC 8593:2)
 1. Maybe we've had a run of bad luck. Nothing is going right. Where we are hungering for goodness in some form. When we are disillusioned and have lost sight of the truths we once held dear. When we are in this barren wilderness state of temptation, down in a deep valley of despair – that's when the Amalekites strike. To give you that last little push over the edge.
 2. Now the important thing to remember is that they seek to do it in such a way that you don't see it coming. It won't appear like a giant muscle-bound warrior charging you with a cry of rage to forcefully throw you over the edge. More than likely, it will appear like a friend seeking to lend you a hand and then "accidentally" letting you slip. They work by subtlety and deceit, but make no mistake they mean to finish you off.
 3. Example of a marriage falling apart. They do not assault the truths of faith directly – go commit adultery – this would be too obvious. Instead, they subtly manipulate the goods of faith. It might start by showing some kindness to a co-worker and having them respond with appreciation. Then gradually "innocent" flirtation. And so on. Until justification begins to take place "I'm really helping this other person through a difficult time – she is helping me" etc. Until suddenly in a weak moment, passion flairs up and adultery is committed.
 4. Their work is not finished there either. Now, they must make sure that you never repent of the mistake you have made. So, they work the good affections of those around, to resemble blind compassion with no thought of accountability or judgment. Pretty soon society thinks it is just an ordinary fact of life. No more serious or selfish than someone taking the biggest piece of pizza for themselves.
 5. The same type of tactics are at work in regards to promiscuity - everybody does it. The same with other lifestyles that are opposed to the Word of God, they are called alternatives. But this is using delicate speech as Agag did with Saul.

- **So How Do We Fight Back?**

D. First, we go back to basics. This is represented by the hand of Moses lifting up the rod of God over the valley. Moses symbolizes the law of God in the literal sense of the Word, and his hand lifting the rod of God over the valley symbolizes the power of those basic truths over these severe temptations of the Amalekites.

1. The 10 commandments are what we must cling to and raise up to our conscious awareness. In the above example of the slippery slope to adultery, if the one basic truth of the sixth commandment was clung to and held up it would conquer.
2. But notice Moses hands grew heavy, so Aaron and Hur had to be brought in to add additional support. Eventually, in temptation the Amalekites will try to twist the basic truths to their advantage. In the flirtation stage, they will say “You are not committing adultery”. Then additional truths of doctrine must be called to mind. ***“Whoever looks at another woman to lust for her has already committed adultery in his heart”*** (Matt. 5:28). Still more of the truths of doctrine must be called to mind, like we must *“Spurn and reject wandering lusts as an offense to the nostrils”* (CL 49). Marriage of *“one man and one wife is the precious jewel of human life and the repository of the Christian religion”* (CL 457). These truths of doctrine supporting the basic commandments are Aaron and Hur supporting the hands of Moses.
3. Lastly, we must be willing to fight for our lives. This is symbolized by Joshua, actually down in the valley swinging the sword and slaying the Amalekites. He is truth combating against the falsity of interior evil from a zeal for what is right.
4. Again remember the Lord’s words to Joshua, ***“Utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.”*** And again, to Saul he commanded, ***“Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.”*** (I Samuel 15:3). As this verse indicates, it is all out warfare and a battle to destruction. Thus, Samuel hacked Agag the king of Amalek to pieces.
5. This is why frequently in the Heavenly Doctrine, the Lord’s New Church is called *“militant”* (AC 1692). As a spiritual Church its truths are its necessary defense against the falsity of evil. Because of this fact in one place the priesthood is actually called a *“Military service...against falsities and evils”* (AE 734:14).
6. Further it even goes so far as to say that the New Church will only be established once the falsities of the former churches have been banished (AR 859; TCR 784).
7. It is definitely all out war that we must wage, because the hells don’t play nicely, and their greatest delight is to destroy what we love, our conscience, and torment us (cf. AC 1820). But it is important to qualify what love we should fight from. It cannot be from anger or revenge, for then the hells still win. It must be from zeal. A zealous passion for defending what is true and good. *“Zeal is an expression of love.... But because it does not appear as love when it manifests itself, but as antagonistic and hostile - being militant and combative against one who does injury to the love, therefore it may also be called the defender and protector of love. Every love is capable of such fury, even the most peaceable”* (CL 358).

- **Conclusion**

E. So let as be wary when we are in a weakened state and be on guard for the subtle but deadly attacks of the Amalekites for they come as a wolf in sheep’s clothing. With smooth talk and subtle lies that are a silent but deadly poison. Let us remember to cling to the basic truths of the Lord’s Word and be willing to take up arms and defend ourselves and everything that is true and good. May we do as Moses did and build an altar in remembrance and call it by the same name as he did. ***“Jehovah-Is-My-Standard”*** (Exodus 17:15). **Amen.**