

“The LORD, Our Victor”—Exodus 17:8-13

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Take your Bible and meet me in Exodus 17...

Many of you are looking at me with quite odd expressions this morning. You are all looking in this general area... So let me address the elephant in the room so that it doesn't remain a distraction for us. Yes, it's true, as you can see... I used a new kind of hair mouse this morning. No, actually, I shaved my beard on Halloween. I may have cried a little. My kids got a good scare the next morning. They deserved it though as it was really their idea in the first place. They had been begging me to shave my beard since they had never seen me without one. I told them that I would look just like Asher, my six-year-old son, without one. They didn't believe me. They have since repented. I now wake up each day with nightmares that end with the screams of "Brandon, the Philistines are upon you!" But, don't you worry, I am growing it back. Even as I speak I can feel the hairs breaking flesh and rising toward the dawn. My strength is returning. God is good. Someone in the first service said, "Pastor, I like my sermons like I like my beards..." I took that to mean awkwardly long, so let's get after it...

All joking aside, we are going to begin considering the final half of Exodus 17 today. The close of the chapter has some encouraging and sobering lessons for us. We will spend most of our time this week and next considering what these verses teach us about God. That should be our main question whenever we consider God's Word, but I've framed our points in a way to make it easier to grasp the answers to that central question. There are three lessons about God that I want us to see. We'll consider the first one this morning and the final two next week. This story has legs and will take us in the following week to some surprising places.

For now, let's pick things up in verse 8, where we discover that the people are still in Rephidim, the place where they grumbled against their leader and tested God. We were told at the end of the section that Moses called "*Massah and Meribah, because [Israel] tested the LORD by saying, 'Is the LORD among us or not?'*" (17:7). Then a new scene begins. But the new scene takes place in the same location and this may suggest that there is a relationship between the two sequences of events. It is probably right to see the question of verse 7—"*Is the LORD among us or not?*"—as being answered not simply in the provision of water from the rock, but in the events that occur in verses 8 and following. So let's turn our attention to those verses. May God give us ears to hear. This is God's Word...

"Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. ⁹ So Moses said to Joshua, 'Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.' ¹⁰ So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹ Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. ¹² But Moses' hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. ¹³ And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword." (Exodus 17:8-13)

This story is a bit different than the three that have preceded it. In the first three we find God demonstrating His ability to supply His people's physical needs for water and food as they journey to Mt. Sinai. This story finds God supplying their need for protection. In the first three stories, the enemies of the people were internal—their disbelief and discontent—whereas this week's text involves an external threat—the army of Amalek. In every instance, the Lord proves to be more than enough for the threats against His people.

There are several questions that confront us though when we encounter this new threat and we should address them immediately before we consider the significance this new passage. Let's begin with the questions related to Israel's new foe—Amalek. Who is Amalek?

The Amalekites were a nomadic people who settled in and around Kedesh, along the Northern region of the Sinai Peninsula.¹ It is sometimes noted that they “lived partly by attacking other population groups and plundering their wealth (cf. Judg 3:13)... [and they] had domesticated the camel and used its swiftness effectively in surprise attacks.”² It's not clear if that was the method of their attack against Israel in this instance, but, whatever it was, they do seem to take the Israelites unawares. Deuteronomy 25 gives some insight on the attack itself. It says,

“Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you came out of Egypt,¹⁸ how he attacked you on the way when you were faint and weary, and cut off your tail, those who were lagging behind you, and he did not fear God.” (Deuteronomy 25:17-18)

So clearly they were taking advantage of these weary travelers and this was a preemptive attack that involved some premeditated strategy. But why? Why attack Israel when they had not ventured into the land of Amalek or provoked them to war? They must have felt threatened in some way given their size or else enticed by the plunders they carried with them from Egypt. Perhaps they witnessed the people grumbling against their leader in Rephidim and saw this as the opportune time to crush Israel before they could reorganize. The evil one does love to take advantage of disunity among the people of God after all. Not surprisingly, then, many have wondered if the attack was owing to the people's own sin, given the place and timing of the battle.³ But no definitive answer is given in the text and all suggestions are mere speculation. The silence as to motive serves to highlight the wickedness of the act. They attacked without cause. They sought to take advantage of the vulnerable. This was a despicable act.

In response, Moses employs Joshua to take up arms and select some fighting men to bring the fight to Amalek the following day.⁴ This is the first time we have encountered Joshua in Bible. Given the biblical timeline, Joshua is about forty-five years of age at this moment and evidently the foremost military figure in the camp. Later he'll be called Moses' assistant (24:13) and he'll play a significant role in some the events that follow. When Moses dies, he becomes Israel's leader, who leads them into the Promised Land. The sixth book of the Bible is named after him and tells the story of that conquest.

His original name was “Hoshea” (Numbers 13:16), which comes from a word meaning “salvation.” At some point his name was changed to “Joshua,” meaning “Yahweh Saves” or “Yahweh is Salvation.” The Bible doesn't tell us when his name is changed, but some have wondered if it was changed because of this victory in Exodus 17, where Yahweh, the Lord, brings the people victory. The name “Jesus” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew name “Joshua.” So Jesus' name has the same meaning—the LORD saves. File that away in your memory bank for later.

So Joshua, in this scene, is sent off to battle and Moses tells his successor that he plans to go atop the hill that overlooks the battle with the staff of God in hand. Now, get used to this. There are a lot of battles coming in the pages ahead that have curious military strategies. In this one we will see the leader standing on a hill and lifting up a staff to help the soldiers win the battle. One could easily imagine Joshua thinking, “Wait, wait, wait... Let me get this straight. You want me to go fight a war and you're just going to stand at

a safe distance and hold up a stick! How about I hold up the stick and you go off to battle?" But that's not the kind of man Joshua was. Obediently he went off to war.

We are told that success in the battle is tied to the actions of Moses. Verse 11 says, *"Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed."* Don't miss the point here. It's not the hand of Moses that is the key, but the staff of God in Moses' hand. The staff is not mentioned in verse 11, but it is implied because just a couple of verses ago Moses told Joshua that it would be in his hand. This is the same staff that struck the rock as a picture of God absorbing the people's judgment earlier in this chapter. Now the staff is lifted as a sign of judgment against the Amalakites, just like it had been raised in acts of judgment against Egypt in the previous chapters.⁵ The staff has served as an "emblem of the power of God and the presence of God to bring judgment on Israel's enemies and deliverance for Israel themselves."⁶

When Moses raised up the staff, Israel had the advantage in battle. When the staff is lowered, the Amalekites gained the edge. The fortunes of Israel's army were tied to Moses' activity on the hill. It became quite clear then to all the Israelites that Moses needed to keep that staff lifted high. If the staff fell, Israel failed. But it's hard to hold up a hand for very long, let alone while gripping a staff and you're a man in your eighties, so eventually Moses grows tired. One can imagine Moses switching the staff between hands during the battle to conserve energy. But eventually both hands grow tired. Note the switch from the singular "hand" to the plural "hands" in verse 12. *"But Moses' hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword."*

What a wonderful picture these two companions of Moses are. Aaron is the brother of Moses. Hur is a fairly common name, but this particular Hur is said to govern the people alongside Aaron in Moses' absence later in the story (24:14).⁷ Together they serve as a reminder that we cannot wage war alone and this includes spiritual warfare. As Charles Spurgeon once said, "The more spiritual the exercise, the sooner we tire in it."⁸ Every pastor knows this well. And I am so thankful for those in this place who have lifted up my hands in spiritual battle through your prayers, help, and encouragement. It saddens me to see so many people who think they can do just as well in the Christian life without brothers and sisters to do life with in the church. It grieves the Savior most of all.

It is worth mentioning that some have wondered if Moses lifting up his hands is meant as a gesture of prayer. Elsewhere in the Bible, outstretched hands are connected to prayer (e.g., 9:27-29; Psalm 63:3, 4; 141:2; 1 Timothy 2:8).⁹ At the very least his action has an intercessory feel to it, whether he was praying as he did it or not. It was a motion of dependence. Israel needed God's help. Moses knew this and was "appealing for God to show his power by saving his people."¹⁰ Moses is not the hero here. If anything the story highlights his weakness.¹¹ God is the hero. Moses understood that the battle was the Lord's and, by extension, so would be the victory (cf. 1 Samuel 17:47).¹² Which leads to our first lesson about the Lord today...

The Lord Is the Victor for His People

The way the battle was won makes this abundantly clear. No matter how great a warrior Joshua and his men were on that day, victory in battle was tied to the staff of God and the staff was a picture of God's presence and power. The Israelites soldiers walked away that day knowing that God deserved all the glory for their victory for without His power all would have been lost. They won the day because, in answer to their question in verse 7, the Lord was among them that day. He was their Warrior. He was their Victor.

This is always the case for God's people. But the means of victory are often varied. There are times when we are completely passive, as in the battle for our salvation. We do not achieve it. We do not work for it. We do not contribute to that by our efforts. God accomplishes it fully and finally and we receive it by grace through faith. That is pictured in their deliverance from Egypt. The Lord fought for His people through each of the plagues and the Lord drowned their enemies in the sea. Israel did nothing, but watch the Lord accomplish their victory. And so Moses had said to them back in Egypt, "*Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent*" (Exodus 14:13-14). God Himself won their salvation.

And so is the pattern of our salvation always. God alone is responsible for our salvation. While we were yet sinners Christ died for us. We were dead in sin and God made us alive. He doesn't wait for us to fix ourselves up and then impart to us salvation. He comes to us in our mess, places our mess upon His Christ, and nails it to the cross. Christ's victory in His Resurrection is His people's victory. He fought the battle against the sin that would have meant our final doom. He is our Warrior. He is our Victor. And we share in the victory of His salvation by grace, through faith. We don't fight for it. We trust in Christ alone to give it freely. And so we are saved. And *only* so are we saved. (If you get that wrong, then you will misunderstand everything I am about to say).

But there are, we must recognize, more battles than the one for our justification before God. There is more than just the regeneration of our hearts when we are touched by God's saving grace. That's the start of a journey, not the conclusion. The evil one is defeated by the cross and resurrection, but he is still doing as much harm as he can in his retreat. There is still many a skirmish to be fought then in this fallen world that seeks to draw us away from the Savior and back into sin. Our sanctification is often a kind of spiritual warfare. But this time, we do not sit passively by while God works on our behalf. "[I]t is God's work to bring us out of Egypt and make us his people, but when we are delivered from bondage, although it is God's work to help us, we must be active in our cause."¹³ Hence all of the commands in the New Testament to pursue holiness, resist temptation, work out our salvation, and so on...

In this sense, the battle with the Amalekites is a kind of *type*—a true historical event that establishes a pattern that we see play out later, in this case in the Christian life. We, the Church, have been delivered from the Egypt of our sin and are currently on a pilgrimage to the land of glory. But on this journey we experience the ambushes of the evil one.¹⁴ As Peter reminds us, "[the] *adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour*" (1 Peter 5:8). So what does Peter say in the next verse? "*Resist him, firm in the faith...*" We must be ready to engage that crafty enemy. So God supplies us with the weapons of our warfare and the full armor of God. But when this is described by Paul in Ephesians 6, it is immediately followed up to "[pray] *at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication*" (Ephesians 6:18). Why? Because the armor and weapons derive their power not from the one who wields them, but from the one who provides them. God Himself making them effective in our hand and on our behalf.¹⁵ Do you see the balance?

God calls us to resist the evil one. He calls us to pick up arms and fight, not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces. Forces that tempt us to sin. Forces that hinder us from conforming more and more to Christ. Forces that distract us from experiencing Gospel-shaped lives that engage in the Great Commandments to love God and neighbor and the Great Commission to make disciples of the nations. And even in our efforts against such forces Christ fights for us and Christ provides the victory.¹⁶ But, just like in this story, that victory comes through divinely appointed means and those means often involve the activities of His people.¹⁷

The Amalekites were beaten back on that day because God ultimately brought the victory. But how? Through the sword in Joshua's hands. Through the weary intercession of Moses. Through the diligent

support of Aaron and Hur. God is the Victor, but God is a God of means. And this passage shows us a wonderful example of God working by means of His people to bring some victory to His people. If His people didn't do their part, the battle would have been lost. But the efficacy of their part was owing to God. We are reminded in this of how often we are called to "Trust God and use means."¹⁸ We are to actively engage in the means God calls us to, but labor in the knowledge that everything hinges on God showing up. God's people are often active, yet always dependent. And God gets all the glory.

There is a wonderful sermon by Spurgeon, different from the one I quoted moments ago, that he preached back in 1891, called, "Both Sides of the Shield," so named because of his opening illustration. He begins the sermon with this paragraph:

"In trying to understand the truth of God we are in great danger of being one-sided. One man catches at part of a truth, and says, 'That is it, and that is the whole of it.' Another man lays hold of another side of truth, and he says, 'This is the whole of it;' and straightaway there arises a contention between them. They are like the men who quarreled as to the material of which a certain shield was made. One of them said that it was a golden shield; the other was equally sure that it was a silver one; whereas, it so happened that it was gold on one side and silver on the other. So they fiercely wrangled when they might very well have been agreed if they had known a little more. Most truths have two sides, and it is well to try to see both of them. Nearly every doctrine in the Word of God is balanced by some other doctrine, and many of the differences among the people of God have arisen from the undue stress which has been laid on one aspect of truth, while the other side has been altogether neglected. This danger very frequently besets us. For instance, some see the sovereignty of God, and are so carried away with that sublime truth, that they deny the responsibility of man; they thus both wrest the doctrine they do know, and fight against the doctrine they do not know. Others can see the universality of the gospel invitation and with large hearts can urge all men to turn unto God and live, but they have never seen the speciality of this redemptive work of Christ, and so fail to understand the eternal purpose of God to save His chosen people. Running away with half a truth, they are like men that go through the wilderness wearing only one shoe, and they become lame in one foot, and that makes them limp all over. It does not matter which foot it is that is lame; the man is a cripple if either foot is thus afflicted."¹⁹

A bit later in the sermon, he goes on, very brilliantly, to observe that, in verse 9, Moses calls the rod, "*the staff* of God," but in verse 5, God referred to the same instrument as "your staff" (the ESV and most English versions obscures this, but the Hebrew does indeed call it "your" staff). The same staff is called both God's and Moses'. So which is it? Both. Two sides of the shield. This serves as another subtle reminder that even when Moses is the one who wields it, the power still ultimately comes from the Lord. The text may sometimes speak of "Moses' staff" but it must not be forgotten that ultimately the staff, and the power it signifies, comes from the Lord. Moses is just an instrument wielding another instrument. He knows this. So not surprisingly, Moses calls it "the staff of God" (17:9), giving God the glory. Spurgeon continues,

"Let us learn, from these words of Moses, that instrumentality is not to be decried or despised, for God uses it; but the instrument must never be allowed to usurp the place of God, for it must be always remembered that it is *God* who uses it. The axe must not exalt itself against him that cuts with it, but, when there are trees to be felled, it would be folly to throw the axe away. The net must not be made a god that we may sacrifice to it, but it would be idle to go fishing without a net. Use your agencies and your instrumentalities to the very fullest extent, but understand that it is God that works in you, and God that works by you, if anything is accomplished that is worthy of record."²⁰

That brother could preach! If this is true (and it is), then the means that God calls us to must not be neglected. There are times to wait and times to work. We must pray and preach. We rest in God's work for

our salvation. And we obey His directives as we walk in faith. But God's people often fail to recognize when the situation calls for the kind of balance evidenced in this story and the result is either a people too independently active, as though success hinged on what they can manufacture by their own effort, or else too passive, as though God in every instance wants only for us to trust and do nothing while we wait for His intervention. Christians have always struggled at this point. Even in Spurgeon's day. He continues,

“Unfortunately, in our work for God, we generally fall into one of two blunders. Either we get a lot of machinery, and think that we shall accomplish everything by that, or else we are like some whom I have known who have confided so much in prayer, that they have done nothing but pray. Prayer is a downright mockery if it does not lead us into the practical use of means likely to promote the ends for which we pray. I have known friends take medicine when they have been ill, and never pray about their sickness. There are some others who pray about their sickness, but never take the proper medicine. They are both wrong. You must have Joshua, and you must have Moses, too, in the time of trial. Go before God with your sickness, but if there is an appointed means that has been made useful to others, use it, for God will bless you by the use of means. Try to see two sides of a thing. Do not trust exclusively to either one or the other. It is a very heinous fault to trust the means without God; but, though it is a much smaller fault to trust in God, and not use the means, yet still it is a fault. Practical prudence will lead you to do both. It gives to Joshua his sword, that he may make it red with the blood of the enemy, and it gives to Moses his rod, that he may go with it up to the top of the hill, and hold it up there in the sight of the people, that all may know that the battle is the Lord's, and that He will deliver the enemy into their hands. God make you wise in these things, and enable you to use both the rod of God and the sword of man!”²¹

But this story is not just instructive in helping us to live the Christian life. It is, like every other story in the Bible, a story that points us to our need for Christ. It helps us to turn our gaze to another hill where the instrument of God was lifted up by the hand of another mediator and enemy of God's people destroyed. That hill was Calvary. That hand was pierced. And that enemy was sin and death and Satan.

But there are important differences between the two stories. Moses spread out his hands to dispense the judgment of God. Jesus spread out His hands to receive the judgment of God on behalf of sinners. Moses, in his weakness, demonstrated that we needed an even greater mediator. Jesus, in His glorious resurrection proves to be that chosen Mediator, who in the words of Hebrews, “*always lives to make intercession*” for His people (Hebrews 7:25).²² He's a better prophet than Moses and a better warrior than Joshua!

And, just for good measure, since I've quoted from Spurgeon so much today (and am indebted to his insight so much for my understanding of this text), I may as well close our sermon with his words.

“I think that I see our Joshua now, sword in hand, chasing our adversaries, and I turn my eyes upwards, and see our Moses, rod in hand, pleading for His people. Let us see Him in both capacities, and thank God that Christ is all...all the shadows melting into one great substance. Glory be to His name! Believe in Christ in heaven, and trust Him with your prayers. Believe in Christ on earth, range yourself on His side, and rest assured that no foe will be able to stand against Him. He is on the battlefield today, and in the thickest of the fray, when His own people are driven back, and His adversaries begin to rejoice, friends and foes alike shall yet prove the power of His almighty arm...God bless you, if you are His people! If not, all is wrong. Oh, may you now trust the living Christ! He is here, ready to hear your cry for mercy; He is there in glory, ready to plead your cause. He waits to be gracious to sinners here below; He waits in heaven till His enemies shall be made His footstool. May you bow before the silver scepter of His mercy, that you may not be broken in pieces by the iron rod of His justice, and may the Lord be with you all! Amen.”

Let's pray...

¹ Genesis 14:7; Numbers 13:29; 14:25, 43; cf. John H. Walton, Victor G. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 92.

² Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus* (NAC; Nashville: B&H Publishers, 2006), 393. “Not only did the Amalekites attack Israel at Rephidim, but a year later they attacked them again at Hormah, when the Israelites had been driven out of southern Canaan and were on the run after their foolish attempt to enter the promised land in spite of God’s command through Moses that they could not (Num 14:43-45).” *Ibid.*

³ E.g., “...this assault was the result of Israel’s sin, for it is significantly put after the strife of Massah and Meribah, ‘Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.’ The point is this; persecution may come to you from evil men, distinctly from them, and it may be their wicked free will which makes them assail you, and yet, at the same time, it may be your sin which lies at the bottom of it, and because you have erred, they have been permitted, and even appointed, to bring trouble upon you... When they had chided with Moses, and murmured against God, ‘Then came Amalek.’” Charles Spurgeon, “Both Sides of the Shield” (No. 2233), May 14, 1891, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (Pasadena: Pilgrim, 1970).

⁴ One might wonder why the judgment is delayed until “tomorrow,” but it should be noted that this fits with the pattern we have seen repeated regularly in Exodus. Judgment often came “tomorrow” (8:23, 29; 9:5, 18; 10:4). See Tim Chester, *Exodus For You* (Denmark: The Good Book Company, 2016), 132.

⁵ E.g., Exodus 7:15-19; 8:5, 6, 17; 9:3, 15, 22; 10:22; 14:16, 21, 26, 27.

⁶ David Strain, “The LORD Is My Banner,” a sermon preached on April 19, 2015, to First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, MS, accessed as on November 5, 2017, at the following website: <https://www.fpcjackson.org/resource-library/sermons/the-lord-is-my-banner--2>.

⁷ It should be noted, however, that it is disputed whether or not he should be distinguished from the grandfather of Bezalel, who helped build the tabernacle (31:2; 35:30; 38:22; 2 Chronicles 2:19, 20).

⁸ Charles Spurgeon, “January 24, Evening” in *Morning and Evening* (Updated Edition; Grand Rapids: Discovery House, 2016), 55.

⁹ Standing is also often a posture of prayer in the Bible (1 Samuel 1:9-11; 2 Chronicles 20:5, 6).

¹⁰ Philip G. Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God’s Glory* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 461.

¹¹ John Calvin writes that Moses could not “boastfully commend his own zeal in praying, but is rather the public witness and proclaimer of his weakness, that the glory might be entirely attributed to the gratuitous favor of God.” John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses*, Calvin’s Commentaries (Edinburgh; repr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 2:293.

¹² “Moses discovered that prayer is more powerful than the problem (cf. Eph 3:20-22; 6:18-20).” Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Exodus* (Christ-Centered Exposition; Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), 111.

¹³ Charles H. Spurgeon, “War with Amalek” (No. 712), *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (Pasadena: Pilgrim, 1970), 12:534.

¹⁴ Ryken, 458, 459.

¹⁵ “Success in standing against the devil’s schemes and the onslaughts of the adversary depends not just in putting on the full armour of God, but in wearing it with on-going prayer.” John L. Mackay, *Exodus: A Mentor Commentary* (Ross-Shire, Great Britain: Mentor: 2001), 307.

¹⁶ “If the nations are to be subdued to Christ, His church must exert all her power. All her power without Him is nothing, but He chooses to use her power, He will have the whole of it brought into use before He gives the blessing.” Spurgeon, “Both Sides of the Shield.”

¹⁷ But I think we must be cautious at this point because we sometimes fail to see the subtleness of the battles waged all around us. It’s easy for us, when thinking of spiritual warfare, to think, pray, and act in reference to big picture matters like the direction of our country or the state of the American church. All of these things matter, of course, but there’s a lot more to it than that. C. S. Lewis once wrote a book called, *The Screwtape Letters*, which contains several fictitious letters written by a demon named Screwtape to his nephew Wormwood, a demon in training, on how to lead a new Christian, referred to as “the patient,” into sin and away from God. It’s very insightful. Lewis shows his keen awareness of the subtle tactics the devil employs against us. As Peter Enns put it, “The battle is all around us, and is waged in many unexpected and barely perceptible ways: the friendships we keep, fear of the future, the words we use with our spouses and children that show our self-centeredness, our avoidance of prayer, the corruption of simple pleasures that God has given us, and so forth... But it is precisely here that we must remember the larger picture. The *daily* battles to be won must be seen within the context of the *cosmic* battle that Christ has already won. We see this in principle already in Exodus 17:8–16: The protracted battles between the Israelites and the Amalekites (17:16) must be seen in light of their initial, crushing defeat (17:13) and the fact that their ultimate annihilation is never in doubt (17:14). Again, the analogy of D-Day and V-Day is apt. We battle against spiritual powers today not simply with the belief that victory is in sight, but that the victory has already in principle been truly achieved by Christ, our warrior.” Peter Enns, *Exodus* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 361, 362.

¹⁸ Strain, “The LORD Is My Banner.”

¹⁹ Spurgeon, “Both Sides of the Shield.” He concludes the sermon with another helpful analogy to make a similar point: “So, you see that though two things may look contradictory, they are often both really true, and are both different sides of one shield. Try, then, to always see both sides of every truth revealed in the Scriptures. Divine truths often resemble tramcars, which travel upon two lines of iron, and yet the two lines make but one tramway. The lines are parallel, and do not touch each other. How could the car travel if they did? This is the truth of God; it is but one truth, but it has two sides which run parallel to each

other. Do not try to join them, nor take them up, and make them cross each other, but travel along them till you come to the great terminus above.” Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid. Similarly, Iain D. Campbell writes, “The two actions, therefore, are important: it is as important that Joshua fights with the sword as that Moses should wrestle in prayer. Neither would be effective without the other. The battle does not depend ultimately on Joshua’s skill as a swordsman; but neither is it won apart from Joshua’s engagement. Similarly, Moses’ prayer is nothing without the practical service of Joshua, who remains dependent on Moses’ intercession, even although he cannot see him or hear him beyond the din of battle.” Iain D. Campbell, *Opening Up Exodus* (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 71-72.

²² “*Christ is pleading for us.* He is not here; He is risen, and He has ascended to the right hand of God, even the Father, and there He is making intercession for His people. It is because He intercedes for us that we win the victory. Cannot your faith’s eyes see Him now, on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in His hand, with all power given to Him in heaven and in earth, pleading with authority before the great throne of Jehovah? Here is the secret of our strength. He never fails; He never needs to sit down upon a stone; nor does He need any to hold up His hands because they grow weary. No, blessed be His name, He pleads and prevails from generation to generation, and will continue to do so until He shall descend from heaven a second time to complete the victory of His people! In His mediation is our confidence.” Spurgeon, “Both Sides of the Shield.”