



LESSON EIGHT

War with the Amalekites

Scripture Reading:

1 Samuel 15:7-9, 12-31

- 15:7** Then Saul struck the Amalekites from Havilah as you go toward Shur, which is opposite Egypt.
- 15:8** And he captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.
- 15:9** But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fatlings, and the lambs and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them; but everything that was despised and worthless, this they utterly destroyed.
- 15:12** Then Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning. And it was told Samuel, saying, Saul went to Carmel and has now set up a monument for himself, and he has returned and passed on down to Gilgal.
- 15:13** And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, Blessed are you of Jehovah! I have fulfilled the word of Jehovah.
- 15:14** And Samuel said, What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears and the lowing of oxen that I hear?
- 15:15** And Saul said, They have been brought from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice to Jehovah your God, and the rest we have utterly destroyed.
- 15:16** Then Samuel said to Saul, Stop, and I will tell you what Jehovah spoke to me last night. And he said to him, Speak.
- 15:17** And Samuel said, Though you are small in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? And Jehovah has anointed you king over Israel.
- 15:18** And Jehovah sent you on a journey and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.
- 15:19** Why then did you not obey the voice of Jehovah, but flew upon the spoil and did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah?
- 15:20** And Saul said to Samuel, I surely did obey the voice of Jehovah, and I went on the journey that Jehovah sent me on. And I have brought Agag the king of the Amalekites and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.
- 15:21** But of the spoil the people took sheep and oxen, the chief of those things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to Jehovah your God in Gilgal.
- 15:22** And Samuel said, / Does Jehovah delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices / As much as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? / Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, / And to heed, than the fat of rams.
- 15:23** For rebellion is like the sin of divination, / And insubordination is like idolatry and teraphim. / Because you have rejected the word of Jehovah, / He has also rejected you from being king.
- 15:24** And Saul said to Samuel, I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of Jehovah and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.
- 15:25** Now therefore pardon my sin, I beg you, and return with me so that I may worship Jehovah.
- 15:26** But Samuel said to Saul, I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of Jehovah, and Jehovah has rejected you from being king over Israel.
- 15:27** And when Samuel turned around to go, Saul seized the corner of his cloak, and it tore.
- 15:28** And Samuel said to him, Jehovah has torn the kingdom of Israel away from you today and has given it to an associate of yours, who is better than you.
- 15:29** Moreover the Eminence of Israel does not lie nor repent, for He is not a man that He should repent.
- 15:30** Then Saul said, I have sinned. Honor me now, I beg you, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me so that I may worship Jehovah your God.
- 15:31** So Samuel returned after Saul, and Saul worshipped Jehovah.

Exodus 17:8-16

17:8 Then Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

17:9 And Moses said to Joshua, Choose men for us, and go out; fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.

17:10 So Joshua did as Moses had said to him and fought with Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

17:11 And when Moses lifted his hand up, Israel prevailed; and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed.

17:12 But Moses' hands were 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 one on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

17:13 And Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

17:14 And Jehovah said to Moses, Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.

17:15 And Moses built an altar and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi;

17:16 For he said, For there is a hand against the throne of Jah! Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

QUESTIONS:**Section 1:**

1. What is the relationship between Israel and Amalek? What does the name "Amalek" indicate?
2. Use two verses references to shows that God hate the flesh and desirous to exterminate it?
3. What are the connotations of the word "flesh" in the Bible?

Section 2:

1. Use a verse to show that the flesh is enmity against God. How does this relate to Saul?
2. What is the relationship between sin, the world, Satan, and the flesh?
3. Explain this sentence. "Every aspect of our flesh, whether good or evil, is an enemy of God's authority"?

Section 3:

1. The stone that Moses sat on, what does it signify? How does it apply to us today?
2. What are the four elements that we need in order to pray on the earth today?
3. How do we practically put the flesh to death?

Section 4:

1. What Saul did in 1 Samuel 15:7-9 portrays in our experience?
2. Please illustrate using verses to indicate that to offer something to God according to our own will is presumptuous and sinful.
3. What should our attitude be in doing anything for the kingdom of God?

----- [INTRODUCTION] -----

In this message we come to a most serious, sobering matter, yet it is also an extremely crucial matter to believers who are going on with the Lord, that is, for their experience and enjoyment of Christ as the all-inclusive land and also for the possession of the good land for the kingdom of God. This is the matter concerning war with the Amalekites, which is a type of dealing with the flesh.

First Samuel 15 is a record of Saul's disobedience in his conquest of the Amalekites. Saul was anointed to be king in 1 Samuel 9 and 10. Soon after becoming king, Saul conquered two enemies: the Ammonites and the Philistines. Then he was instructed to fight against the Amalekites, but in this third conquest Saul was utterly exposed. He won the victory in the first two conquests, and in a sense, he also won the victory in the conquest of the Amalekites. However, this third conquest utterly exposed who he truly was. On one hand, he defeated the enemy, but on the other hand, something within him was fully exposed in his conquest of the Amalekites, for he was disobedient to Jehovah's word.

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I. FIRST SAMUEL 15 BEING A RECORD OF SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE IN HIS CONQUEST OF THE AMALEKITES

He conquered the enemy, yet he was altogether disobedient to God (15:7-9). We should not think that because we have done well in our service to God, we are safe or approved. In this case, Saul was apparently serving God, making war against and defeating the enemy, yet he was actually altogether disobedient to God.

Here Saul was absolutely and thoroughly exposed, and then he was given up by God and also by Samuel (vv. 14-26). We should read 1 Samuel 15 several times in order to be impressed with this record. If we read it lightly and quickly, we may not be deeply impressed. Instead, we may ask, "What was so wrong with what Saul did? He seemed to have done a good job." However, if we read carefully, we can see that Saul was utterly exposed in a few crucial points. Jehovah had definitely and clearly instructed Saul through Samuel to utterly destroy everything of the Amalekites. However, Saul spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites. He also spared the best of the sheep and oxen under the cloak of making a sacrifice to Jehovah. Then

after he won the victory in the conquest, he went to Carmel and set up a monument for himself. This was probably to celebrate his victory. He was proud of himself.

When Samuel was sent by God to confront Saul, Saul argued and reasoned with Samuel. He said, "I surely did obey the voice of Jehovah...And I have brought Agag the king of the Amalekites and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But of the spoil the people took sheep and oxen, the chief of those things...to sacrifice to Jehovah" (vv. 20-21). Samuel was very strong toward him, saying, "Does Jehovah delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices / As much as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? / Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, / And to heed, than the fat of rams. / For rebellion is like the sin of divination, / And insubordination is like idolatry and teraphim. / Because you have rejected the word of Jehovah, / He has also rejected you from being king" (vv. 22-23). Then Saul said, "I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of Jehovah and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. Now therefore pardon my sin, I beg you, and return with me so that I may worship Jehovah" (vv. 24-25). He also said, "I have sinned. Honor me now, I beg you, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me so that I may worship Jehovah your God" (v. 30). Saul was asking Samuel to help him save face. He referred to God as "Jehovah your God"; in other words, Saul considered that Jehovah was not his God but Samuel's God. Saul was fully exposed. He argued and reasoned, thinking that he had done nothing wrong.

We need to realize how subtle the flesh is. We often justify ourselves by reasoning that there is nothing wrong with what we are doing. We may say that because people are being saved by our preaching and churches are being raised up by our working, God should be pleased with what are doing. This is a most serious lesson, for it touches not only God's righteousness and holiness but also God's throne, His administration. This chapter contains an important lesson for us today.

II. IN TYPOLOGY, THE AMALEKITES SIGNIFYING THE FLESH—THE FALLEN MAN

A. Amalek, the Flesh, Being the Leading Enemy in Frustrating Us from Going On with the Lord

In typology, the Amalekites signify the flesh—the fallen man (Exo. 17:8-16). Amalek, the flesh, is the leading enemy in frustrating us from going on with the Lord (v. 8; Deut. 25:17-18). Amalek was a descendant of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob, who was the father of the twelve tribes of Israel. In other words, the Amalekites were relatives of the Israelites. They were thus closely related. However, the Amalekites were the first enemy that came to fight against Israel after they came out of Egypt. After God delivered His children out of Egypt in order to bring them into the good land, the first enemy that came to fight against them was Amalek. God did not forget this. He wanted to bring His people into the good land, to the place of His choice. Amalek was the first enemy who fought against Israel and tried to frustrate God from bringing His people into the good land.

The name Amalek means “warlike,” indicating that the flesh is warlike, destructive, and disturbing. The flesh is not always ugly; there are some good aspects of the flesh. Nevertheless, no matter whether it is the “good” flesh or the “bad” flesh, the goal of the flesh is to destroy, disturb, and frustrate God from obtaining His purpose. The flesh desires only to kill and destroy.

B. The Greatest Destroyer of the Christian Life

The greatest destroyer of the Christian life is the flesh (1 Pet. 2:11). If we look back over the last two thousand years of church history, both in organized Christianity and even among us, the cause of turmoils ultimately has been the flesh. Ambition, pride, and competition are actually different manifestations of the flesh. The flesh has destroyed many lives, many dear saints, and many dear servants of God...The flesh is not something to take lightly. It is out to destroy and to bring in frustration. If given the opportunity, it will destroy God’s people in both our Christian life and our church life. It is the greatest destroyer. It is no wonder that 1 Peter 2:11 says, “Beloved, I entreat you as strangers and sojourners to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.” Fleshly lusts war against the soul.

The fact that God has a continual war with Amalek reveals that God hates the flesh and desires to exterminate it (Exo. 17:16; Gal. 5:17). We need to be impressed with Exodus 17:16, which is the concluding verse of the chapter. Moses says, “There is a hand against the throne of Jah! Jehovah will have war with Amalek from

generation to generation.” Jah is a shortened form of Jehovah. There is not another instance or case of a people concerning whom Jehovah spoke such a strong word. Exodus 17 records the defeat of the Amalekites by Joshua. He fought with the Amalekites and won. Nevertheless, this did not mean that the warfare with the Amalekites was over, because this concluding verse says that Jehovah would have war with the Amalekites from generation to generation. In Galatians 5:17 Paul says, “The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” Not only in the past but also in the present this battle is ongoing, and it will continue in the coming days. It is a perpetual war. There is no “cease-fire” with the flesh. This war will continue until the Lord comes back and totally eradicates the flesh. Until then, the flesh is regrettably still with us, and it will never change. No matter how spiritual we are, how much we love the Lord, or how much spiritual maturity we may have attained to, our flesh is the same as it was before we were saved. It has not changed, and it will not change. Jehovah will continue to be at war against the flesh from generation to generation.

C. The Flesh Denoting the Totality of the Fallen Old Man, Our Entire Fallen Being

The flesh denotes the totality of the fallen old man, our entire fallen being (Gen. 6:3; Rom. 7:18a; Gal. 2:16). The word flesh in the Bible has at least three connotations. First, it refers to man’s fallen, corrupted body. Paul speaks of the body of sin (Rom. 6:6), the body of this death (7:24), and the flesh of sin (8:3). These refer to our physical body, which God created in Genesis. Then due to sin it was corrupted to become the flesh. The second definition of the flesh is the totality of the fallen old man, our entire fallen being. Before the flood came in Noah’s time, mankind had in God’s eyes become flesh (Gen. 6:3). Here flesh refers to the totality of fallen man. Not only the body, the outer part, but our entire being is flesh. The third definition of the flesh refers to the good aspects of man, as seen in Philippians 3:3-6. In these verses Paul speaks of how he served God in the flesh. There are some good aspects of the flesh that try to serve God. The flesh can do something for God outwardly. This indicates that there are some good aspects of the flesh, but this does not mean that this is acceptable to God. The flesh is utterly rejected by God, but it is not entirely bad. There is something religious in the flesh that likes to render service to God.

**D. The Flesh Being Enmity against God, the
Flesh Not Being Subject to God's Law, and
the Flesh Not Being Able to Subject Itself to
God's Law**

The flesh is enmity against God, the flesh is not subject to God's law, and the flesh is not able to subject itself to God's law (Rom. 8:7). Verse 7 says, "The mind set on the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, for neither can it be." This is a strong verse. We do not want to be God's enemy. It is one thing to be sinners by transgressing against God's righteousness and holiness. This causes God to be displeased with us. However, it is something else to be an enemy, one who is opposing God. The flesh is enmity against God. The flesh will never be subject to God's law, and it will never be able to. It has no ability to be subject to the law of God.

Saul thought that he was doing God's will, but he was actually a rebellious person. He was absolutely in the flesh. Outwardly, he was winning the victory and having a great accomplishment, but inwardly, he was God's enemy and was actually trying to establish his own empire, his own kingdom. He set up a monument to remember himself. He had no interest for God but was using God to do something for himself. Apparently, he was doing something for God, but he was actually God's enemy. Saul was constituted with rebellion (1 Sam. 15:23). This is what the flesh is. We cannot improve it or change it. It is an enemy of God, it will not be subject to God, and it cannot be. No matter how much Samuel tried to persuade Saul, Saul could not be subject to God. Some are so much in the flesh that it is impossible for them to be fully subject to God. It is hard to understand. Outwardly, Saul confessed that he had sinned and asked for forgiveness, but inwardly, he had no change. He could not submit to God. The flesh is irreconcilable with God just as Satan is. Even when Satan was in the role of an angel, he was still at enmity with God. This is most serious.

**E. The Flesh Being the Camp of God's
Enemy and the Largest Base for His Work**

The flesh is the camp of God's enemy and the largest base for his work (Gal. 5:19-21). Like every work, Satan's work needs a base, and this base is man's flesh. When Satan tries to use the world and sin to lure and distract us, he does so

from the base of the flesh. The flesh is Satan's camp. Sin, the world, and Satan are one, and they are all encamped in the flesh to carry out Satan's operation. If our flesh is dealt with, sin will be annulled, the world will be unattractive and ineffective, and Satan will be powerless. Without the base of the flesh, Satan cannot act. We need to have a fear of the flesh because it is the camp of Satan.

In the entire universe God's unique enemy, in a practical sense, is not Satan but the flesh (Rom. 8:7). We usually say that God's enemy is Satan, but practically speaking, God's enemy is our flesh. It is the fallen man being lived out, as typified by the Amalekites.

The flesh, the fallen man, is absolutely one with Satan and is used by Satan to fight against God (Matt. 16:23; Gal. 5:17). When Peter expressed his sympathy for the Lord in discouraging Him from going to the cross, the Lord turned to him and said, "Get behind Me, Satan!" (Matt. 16:23). At that moment, as Peter was expressing the self, which is actually a branch of his flesh, he was one with Satan.

God hates the flesh in the same manner that He hates Satan, and He wants to destroy the flesh in the same manner that He wants to destroy Satan (Exo. 17:16; Deut. 25:17-19; 1 Sam. 15:2-3). We know that Satan's destiny is to be destroyed; he will be thrown into the lake of fire. Our flesh has the same destiny. The old man was crucified by Christ on the cross, but the flesh is still very active and living. In the daily life of the believers, the flesh needs to be crucified by us. It must be eradicated.

Exodus 17:16 says that Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation. Verse 14 says, "Jehovah said to Moses, Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." For God to utterly blot out the memory of Amalek indicates that He does not even want the term the flesh to be heard. Similarly, when Moses was reviewing the law with the children of Israel, he said in Deuteronomy 25:19, "You shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you shall not forget." This indicates how serious this matter is. God does not want to see this thing perpetuated. This war has gone on for centuries and will continue to go on until the Lord returns. However, among God's children throughout the earth, few talk about, care about, or even

understand this. By the Lord's mercy,...we are seeing that God hates the flesh to such an extent.

F. With Amalek There Being a Hand against the Throne of the Lord

With Amalek there is a hand against the throne of the Lord (Exo. 17:16; 1 Sam. 15:22-23). What Amalek was trying to do was not a minor offense or wrongdoing.

Amalek tried to overthrow God's throne, just as Satan once tried to do (Exo. 17:8, 16). Actually, Amalek was "against the throne of Jah," trying to overthrow God's throne. This is not merely to cause a little trouble or to commit a small trespass; it is direct opposition and rebellion.

Like Satan himself, the flesh is against God's authority (Isa. 14:12-14). The flesh is in rebellion against God and against His throne. Whatever God does governmentally, the flesh opposes it. Isaiah 14 describes the angel who became Satan. Five times this fallen angel said, "I will." Verses 13 and 14 say, "You said in your heart: / I will ascend to heaven; / Above the stars of God / I will exalt my throne. / And I will sit upon the mount of assembly / In the uttermost parts of the north. / I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; / I will make myself like the Most High." This is Satan, and this is also the flesh. The flesh, typified by Amalek and like Satan, has a hand against the throne of God.

G. Our Flesh Being an Enemy of God's Authority and Being in Rebellion against God's Governmental Administration

Our flesh is an enemy of God's authority and is in rebellion against God's governmental administration. The flesh is most ugly because it is against the throne, the administration, and the plan of God (Rev. 4:2; 5:6; Eph. 3:11). Every aspect of our flesh, whether good or evil, is an enemy of God's authority. Whatever is of the flesh is against God's throne; it will be used by Satan, the subtle one, the enemy of God, to hinder God's purpose (2 Cor. 2:11). When we speak about the flesh, we are referring not only to the ugly things, such as the lust of the flesh and its passions, sins, corruption, and rottenness. We must also include the good parts of the flesh, such as our natural humility, kindness, and righteousness. Paul was strong in rescuing the saints from the keeping of the law, because the keeping of the law is by the flesh and promotes the flesh (Phil. 3:2-3). The Judaizers wanted to be perfected by the flesh by keeping the law, but we can be perfected only by the Spirit. The flesh

needs to be repudiated. Whatever is of the flesh is at enmity with God, is against God's throne, and will be used by Satan to hinder God's purpose. In 2 Corinthians 2 Paul speaks about forgiveness. In verse 10 he writes, "What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sake in the person of Christ." In verse 11 Paul says, "That we may not be taken advantage of by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes." Even in exercising a so-called Christian virtue, something of the flesh may be hidden. In the matter of forgiving or not forgiving, if we are not in the person of Christ, beholding His face, Satan may take advantage of us. We should not be ignorant of his schemes. Satan is working out of the base of the flesh.

H. The flesh is versus kingship. Where the flesh is, there can be no kingdom of God.

For this reason, the flesh must be thoroughly dealt with before the kingdom of God can come. In Galatians 5:19-21 Paul lists several items of the works of the flesh and then says, "Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (v. 21; cf. Eph. 5:5). Nothing of the flesh will be permitted in the kingdom of God. The flesh is not allowed to enter there. Exodus 17 records Joshua's fighting with the Amalekites, which typifies our dealing with the flesh. Then chapter 18 presents a portrait of the kingdom with Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, coming to talk to him and to help him put everything in order. Before the kingdom can be ushered in, the flesh needs to be utterly dealt with. The flesh must be eradicated in us in order for us to inherit and enter into the kingdom. We need to bring all the aspects of the flesh to the Lord with consideration and prayer. We need to be deeply impressed with the significance of the flesh in all these aspects.

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III. IN FIRST SAMUEL 15:2 JEHOVAH DECLARING THAT HE WOULD PUNISH THE AMALEKITES FOR WHAT THEY DID TO ISRAEL WHEN THEY FOUGHT AGAINST ISRAEL

In 1 Samuel 15:2 Jehovah declared that He would punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they fought against Israel. Amalek fought against the children of Israel as they were journeying to attain to God's goal (Exo. 17:8-16; 1 Sam. 15:2-3). We need to see God's intense hatred of the flesh.

In the war with Amalek described in Exodus 17:8-16, Moses stood on the top of the hill with the staff of God in his hand, and Joshua went out with chosen men to fight against, and to defeat, Amalek. While Joshua Was Fighting, Moses Praying While Joshua was fighting, Moses was praying.

After Joshua defeated Amalek, God declared that He would “have war with Amalek from generation to generation” (v. 16); this shows how seriously God regarded the frustration caused by the Amalekites. This record shows that the battle against the flesh is not once for all but is a perpetual war. God will fight with the Amalekites from generation to generation.

A. Exodus 17:8-13 Showing Us How to Fight against Amalek

Exodus 17:8-13 shows us how to fight against Amalek. We have seen that God has utter hatred toward the flesh, having a perpetual war and commanding that a memorial be written that Amalek needs to be utterly eradicated, not even to be remembered. However, in this portion of Exodus 17 we are also shown the way to deal with the flesh. This is very precious and important.

B. Fighting against Amalek by the Interceding Christ and the Fighting Spirit

We fight against Amalek by the interceding Christ and the fighting Spirit (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; Gal. 5:17). Moses lifting up his hand on the mountaintop typifies the ascended Christ interceding in the heavens (Exo. 17:9, 11). Joshua fighting against Amalek typifies the indwelling Spirit fighting against the flesh (vv. 9, 13). We need to be in union with the interceding Christ in order to cooperate with the fighting Spirit (Col. 3:1-3, 5; Rom. 8:34, 13; Gal. 5:24, 17).

In Exodus 17:8-13, while engaging in battle with the Amalekites, we see three persons on the mountaintop—Moses, assisted by Aaron and Hur—and one person in the valley—Joshua, in direct combat. In this warfare Moses on the mountaintop signifies the ascended Christ. He is in the heavens at the right hand of God interceding for us. We need Christ’s intercession. Moses here also represents us as God’s people. We need to correspond to and join with Christ’s intercession. To deal with the flesh, not only do we need Christ’s intercession for us, but we also need to join in with that intercession. We can say that Moses also represents us,

because his hands were heavy—he became tired. The ascended Christ’s hands would never become heavy. He would be able to continue indefinitely.

Aaron signifies the priesthood, and Hur, who was from the tribe of Judah, signifies the kingship. They put a stone under Moses for him to sit on in order to support him. These matters signify how we participate in Christ’s intercession. While Christ is interceding in the heavens for us, as His people on the earth, we need to correspond by praying, by interceding. However, we cannot intercede by ourselves or in ourselves. The stone that Moses sat on, which signifies a solid base for our prayer life, refers to our realization that we are weak and cannot pray in ourselves or by ourselves. This is altogether something of experience. If we want to engage in this kind of prayer, we should not assume that we can pray or that we have a praying spirit and can pray with different ones all day long. If we have this kind of attitude, I am afraid that even our prayer may be something out of the flesh. Genuine prayer always issues out of the solid base of the praying persons who realize that they are not worthy and are not able to sustain prayer but that they need the Spirit to come in to sustain them.

In Romans 8:26 Paul says that the Spirit joins in to help us in our weakness by praying in us. Genuine prayer is uttered not because we are strong and able to pray but often out of weakness. We sense that our prayer is fragile and even undependable. We may pray, “Lord, I need You. Come into my prayer.” The experience described in Romans 8:26 is sweet in that the Spirit comes in to render help to us in our weakness in prayer. We do not know what to pray, but the Spirit comes in to help us in our prayer. This is the genuine prayer. In this kind of prayer we often can only groan before the Lord. Genuine prayer has as a solid base the realization that we cannot pray in ourselves and that we need the Lord as the praying One to strengthen us.

Aaron, the high priest, signifies the priesthood, which is connected with our spirit. Prayer is not something that we dream up or know what to say. Instead, prayer must be an utterance that is released from our spirit. The spirit is something of the priesthood. We need the strengthening of the priesthood for our prayer. Our spirit needs to be strengthened.

We also need the kingship, which requires that we submit ourselves to God. We should not pray rebellious prayers—prayers that express our rebellious views—demanding that the Lord do this and that for us. We need to submit ourselves under God’s kingship and headship. Hur is needed along with Aaron. We also need a stone to strengthen and support our intercessory prayer.

One of Hur’s descendants was a skillful craftsman for the building of the tabernacle (Exo. 31:2-5). This means that the assistance of Aaron and Hur not only involves the priesthood and kingship; it also indicates that we must pray with a view toward the building of God’s dwelling, the church. Our prayer should not be directed toward ourselves or others but toward God’s building.

We need to remember these four elements, which are very meaningful. We need the stone as our support, which is the realization of how needy and weak we are. We also need the strengthening of the priesthood, represented by Aaron, and the kingship, represented by Hur. Furthermore, we need to pray with a view toward the building of God. In this way our prayer will be in union with the interceding Christ. While Christ is praying in the heavens, we are praying on the earth with these four elements, joining with Him in oneness to fight against the flesh.

C. In the Battle against Amalek, Our Needing to Cooperate with the Lord by Praying and by Putting the Flesh to Death

In the battle against Amalek, we need to cooperate with the Lord by praying and by putting the flesh to death (Luke 18:1; 1 Thes. 5:17; Rom. 8:13; Gal. 5:24). When we pray, we are one with the interceding Christ (Rom. 8:34). When we put the flesh to death, we are one with the fighting Spirit (Gal. 5:17). On the one hand, we must pray with Christ; on the other hand, we must slay the flesh by the fighting Spirit (v. 24). Crucifying the old man was God’s responsibility; crucifying the flesh is our responsibility (Rom. 6:6; 8:13; Gal. 5:24).

The crucifying of our old man was accomplished by Christ two thousand years ago, as stated in Romans 6:6. However, in Galatians 5:24 we are told that we need to crucify the flesh. Also, Romans 8:13 says that we need to put to death the practices of the body. It is not Christ, but we, the believer, who need to crucify the flesh. When we see the old man being lived out, we need to

crucify it. However, we cannot crucify it by our own energy or our own will. We need the power of the Spirit. It is not you and I fighting directly against the flesh but the fighting Spirit, as typified by Joshua fighting against the Amalekites. We need to apply the Spirit to put to death the practices of the body (v. 13). The application of our dealing with the flesh is in this way. While the three persons were on the mountaintop, Joshua was in the valley engaging in the battle directly against Amalek. Here, Joshua signifies the fighting Spirit. Jesus as our Joshua is the fighting Spirit engaging in the direct battle against the flesh.

We need to be praying and even to have unceasing prayer. Actually, whenever we are not praying, we are automatically in the flesh. Only by praying unceasingly can we be delivered from the flesh. We may be able to defeat or overcome our flesh once. This is like Saul making one conquest. However, just as men have to shave their face every day because the hair grows back again and again, we cannot rely on one time of overcoming the flesh. This is why Paul says that we need to pray unceasingly (1 Thes. 5:17). Our prayer needs to be continual in order for us to be in oneness with the interceding Christ. We also need to exercise the spirit and live in the spirit in order to allow the fighting Spirit to slay the flesh in us.

In application, we must first see that Christ has already crucified the old man on the cross. That is an accomplished fact. We must stand with this fact. Second, upon seeing this fact, we need to acknowledge it and agree with it, saying, “Yes, Lord, my old man was crucified with You on the cross, and in my old man I am worthy only to be crucified, terminated, and buried.” We need to acknowledge, agree with, and stand with what Christ accomplished as a fact. Along with this accomplishment, we need to exercise our spirit. When we see the flesh trying to rise up, we should not try to deal with the flesh by ourselves but should turn to the spirit and allow the Spirit with the effectiveness of its killing power to be applied to the flesh. Hence, we need to see the fact, acknowledge and agree with the fact, and then apply the fact by applying the Spirit, that is, by letting the Spirit execute its killing power on the flesh.

**IV. GOD COMMANDING SAUL TO
“STRIKE THE AMALEKITES” AND TO
“UTTERLY DESTROY ALL THAT THEY
HAVE” AND NOT SPARE THEM, BUT
HIS NOT OBEYING JEHOVAH’S
COMMAND**

God commanded Saul to “strike the Amalekites” and to “utterly destroy all that they have” and not spare them, but he did not obey Jehovah’s command (1 Sam. 15:3-9). Saul killed the Amalekites, but he spared Agag the king and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good (vv. 7-9). Now we come to the matter of Saul’s disobedience to God’s charge and the consequence of his disobedience.

Saul and the people’s sparing the best part of the things that they should have utterly destroyed portrays the fact that, experientially, we treasure the good aspects of our flesh, our natural life, and do not wish to destroy them. It is easy to recognize the ugly, corrupting parts of the flesh. We reject and condemn those. However, we need to remember that there are also good aspects of the flesh, such as our natural love, kindness, humility, zeal for God’s work, and ability to serve God. We may view these natural things, which are in the realm of the flesh, as something that we should keep, as Saul did in keeping King Agag and the best of the sheep and oxen under the cloak of offering them as a sacrifice to God. It may seem that anything that is offered to God is good. *Christians* often consecrate themselves, their time, and their energy to the Lord to move somewhere, to do something for God, to preach the gospel, or to read the Bible. This is honorable, but we need to consider who is doing the consecrating; is it our good flesh, or is it the Lord operating in us? This is a very sobering matter, and it is not easily discernible. There are many needs, and we may seem to have the ability and a feeling to respond to them. However, we should first consider before the Lord: “Is it me, or is it You, Lord? Is it the flesh, or is it the Spirit?” Amalek and the children of Israel were relatives; they were very close. Similarly, we often cannot easily differentiate whether something good is of the flesh or of the spirit. Merely to say that we are sacrificing something to Jehovah is not sufficient; we also need to check the source.

**A. We Do apart from God’s Grace and apart
from Depending on Him and Trusting in
Him Being of the Flesh**

Whatever we do apart from God’s grace and apart from depending on Him and trusting in Him is of the flesh (Phil. 3:3-4). For example, this is our case if we arrive at a point where we think that we are able to preach the gospel because we have been doing it for many years and are good at it. We may think that we know exactly what words to use to touch people’s hearts. Instead of such confidence in the flesh, we should humble ourselves and pray, “Lord, without You, I am like an unbeliever. I need You.”...It is not difficult to recognize the negative, ugly parts of the flesh, but it is not as easy to recognize the good parts of the flesh and to condemn, judge, and repudiate them for being the flesh.

Every aspect of the flesh, whether good or evil, is in opposition to grace and God’s kingdom and keeps us from enjoying Christ; therefore, we must hate every aspect of the flesh and be absolute in destroying the flesh (Rom. 8:13; Gal. 3:3; 5:2-4). It is possible to read the Bible in the flesh, to pray in the flesh, and to preach the gospel in the flesh. While Paul was in prison, in Philippians 1:15 he wrote, “Some preach Christ even because of envy and strife.” In verse 17 he said, “The others announce Christ out of selfish ambition, not purely, thinking to raise up affliction in my bonds.” We cannot use the end to justify the means, saying that what we are doing is for God when we are acting in and by our flesh, which is enmity against God.

God did not want Saul to use the best of the cattle as a sacrifice to Him (1 Sam. 15:15). Anything presented and sacrificed to God that has its source in the flesh is evil in His sight (v. 19).

To offer something to God according to our own will is presumptuous and is sinful (Gen. 4:5; Matt. 7:22-23). Some presume that because they offer something to God, He must accept it. This was the case with Cain. Genesis 4:3 says that he brought an offering to Jehovah, but verse 5 says that Jehovah had no regard for his offering. Cain offered according to his religious view, bringing the produce of the land. At that time fallen man needed to shed the blood of animals to make a sacrifice to God (v. 4; 3:21). Cain sacrificed to God not in God’s way but according to his religious concept, and this was Cain’s presumptuousness, which was abhorrent to God.

Matthew 7 speaks of the Lord's servants giving an account when the Lord returns. Verses 22 and 23 say, "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, was it not in Your name that we prophesied, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name did many works of power? And then I will declare to them: I never knew you. Depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness." Knew in verse 23 means "approved." Such ones' work is in and according to their flesh.

We all need the Spirit to shine into us. We should pray, "Lord, show me the flesh. I do not want to be ignorant about this." This is a serious matter.

B. Saul's Disobedience Exposing Him as Being a Rebel against God and an Enemy of God

Saul's disobedience exposed him as being a rebel against God and an enemy of God (1 Sam. 22:17).

Saul was utterly rebellious toward God; he had no subordination to God, nor did he take God as his King and Head. When Samuel came to confront Saul, Saul even called God "Jehovah your God" (15:30). This indicates that Jehovah was not Saul's God; he wanted to do something for someone else's God. He was actually in rebellion against God, carrying out what he thought was necessary according to his way.

He was constituted with rebellion, which is as evil as the worship of idols (v. 23). We want to be constituted with the truth and with the divine life, not with rebellion. Our constitution is expressed automatically; it is not something that we determine to do. Rebellion can be one's constitution. Even when we act nicely, our constitution may still be one of rebellion.

First Samuel 15:22 and 23 are very serious verses. I have loved these verses from my youth, and they have given me much warning, speaking, and preservation. Saul thought that because he had saved the best for Jehovah to sacrifice to Him, He must be happy with this, but Samuel said, "Does Jehovah delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices / As much as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? / Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, / And to heed, than the fat of rams. / For rebellion is like the sin of divination, / And insubordination is like idolatry and teraphim. / Because you have rejected the word of Jehovah, / He has also rejected you from being king."

Saul's repentance was not genuine or thorough but only a small apology. He wanted to briefly confess, be forgiven, and be allowed to move on. We can compare his repentance with that of David. After David committed his great sin, he wrote Psalm 51, which shows what kind of person David was. He wrote, "You do not delight in sacrifice; / Otherwise I would offer it; / You take no pleasure in burnt offerings. / The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; / A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise" (vv. 16-17). In contrast, Saul was presumptuous to think that his sacrifice must be pleasing to God. He was altogether constituted with rebellion, which is a kind of idolatry. The word teraphim in 1 Samuel 15:23 refers to idols of vanity. Saul was not worshipping God but an idol of vanity.

C. Saul Did Being as Evil as Contacting an Evil Spirit for the Purpose of Carrying Out the Intention of That Spirit, Not God's Intention

What Saul did was as evil as contacting an evil spirit for the purpose of carrying out the intention of that spirit, not God's intention (1 Sam. 15:23). His rebellion caused him to be in contact with demons. Rebellion is like the sin of divination, which is witchcraft and contact with demons...Some who participated in the dissenting and rebelling against the Lord's way were in contact with demons. Some of the things they were able to do, to write, and to speak were demonic. They were energized by demons. The capacity that they suddenly had was incredible. We need to be fearful. When we are disobedient to God's charge, we open the door to idols of vanity and even to demons.

All rebellion is a matter of presumption, a matter of daring to do things without God. According to the dictionary, presumption is "an unwarranted, unbecoming, or impertinent boldness." It is more than simply assuming something but involves a kind of boldness that is impertinent, unwarranted, and unbecoming. Saul was presumptuous. He was bold. First Samuel 15:13-15 says, "Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, Blessed are you of Jehovah! I have fulfilled the word of Jehovah. And Samuel said, What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears and the lowing of oxen that I hear?" Saul was presumptuous to think that he was pleasing God.

V. SAUL LOSING HIS KINGSHIP BECAUSE HE DID NOT UTTERLY DESTROY AMALEK

Saul lost his kingship because he did not utterly destroy Amalek (vv. 26, 28). This was the result. He had been anointed as king in chapters 9 and 10, but because of his rebellion, he lost the kingship in chapter 15. Although he continued to rule, as far as God was concerned, his kingship had ended.

A. If We Are Not Absolute in Dealing with Our Flesh, We, like Saul, Losing Our Kingship

If we are not absolute in dealing with our flesh, we, like Saul, will lose our kingship (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10).

The account of Saul's disobedience is a warning, indicating that we should not do anything in the kingdom of God by our flesh; in everything we must crucify our flesh and faithfully exercise our spirit to follow the Lord, who is the life-giving, consummated Spirit indwelling our spirit and who is one with us (1 Cor. 15:45; 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:22; Gal. 5:16, 25). God's intention for all His children is for us to be a kingdom of priests; our destiny is to rule with Christ. However, rebellion will cost us our kingship; it will frustrate and hinder us from entering into God's kingdom.

When Amalek is dealt with, the kingdom of God immediately comes in (Exo. 18:1-26). The kingdom of God denotes the authority of God by which all things are made subject to God (Mark 1:15; John 3:3, 5; Rev. 11:15; 12:10; Dan. 2:44). Because the flesh is versus the kingship, the flesh must be thoroughly dealt with before the kingdom of God can come in (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Eph. 5:5). The kingdom of God cannot coexist with Amalek. When the flesh is dealt with, the kingdom will spontaneously be with us.

B. If We Follow the Lord's Word to Utterly Destroy the Flesh and Live and Walk according to the Spirit, Our Having the Kingship and Being in God's Kingdom

If we follow the Lord's word to utterly destroy the flesh and live and walk according to the spirit, we will have the kingship and will be in God's kingdom (Rom. 8:4; 14:17; Gal. 5:19-21; 2 Pet. 1:5-11).

As long as the flesh is with us, the coming in of kingdom will be frustrated. We are living in a time that is at the threshold of the kingdom age. I hope that by the Lord's mercy and grace we

will be the people who usher in the kingdom age. However, the kingdom cannot come in unless the flesh is eliminated...May the Lord grant us mercy for this.