

12.12 Holding Up Hands (Exodus 17:8–16; Deuteronomy 25:17–19; 1 Samuel 15:2, 3)

(The teacher might combine this story with “12.11 No Water at Rephidim.”)

✓ “*Check*” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows.

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools

- “Life of Moses” Series 2 Flash-a-Cards from A Beka Book and/or pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- (optional) *Herein Is Love Commentary Series; Exodus, A Commentary for Children*, by Nancy Ganz, Shepherd Press, 2002.

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *Esau*: Jacob/Israel’s twin brother, who did not care about the things of God
- *Hur*: a leader of the children of Israel; ✓possibly the husband of Miriam, Moses’ and Aaron’s sister
- *Promised Land*: Canaan; the land promised to Abraham
- *banner*: a flag to represent a people; in today’s story it represents God

Scripture (NASB)

Exodus 17:8 Then Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim. 9 So Moses said to Joshua, “Choose men for us and go out, fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will station myself on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.” 10 Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought against Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses’ hands were heavy. Then 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. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set. 13 So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.” 15 Moses built an altar and named it The LORD is My Banner; 16 and he said, “The LORD has sworn; the LORD will have war against Amalek from generation to generation.”

Numbers 24:20 And he looked at Amalek and took up his discourse and said, “Amalek was the first of the nations, But his end *shall be* destruction.”

Deuteronomy 25:17 “Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt, 18 how he met you along the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary; and he did not fear God. 19 Therefore it shall come about when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget.

1 Samuel 15:2 Thus says the LORD of hosts [to King Saul], ‘I will punish Amalek *for* what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. 3 Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’”

Introduction/Review:

The journey from Egypt to the Promised Land was not an easy one. Traveling through the wilderness

presented several problems—no bread, no water. But God marvelously and miraculously provided for these needs.

Story:

The attack

In today's story we learn of a new type of problem for God to solve: enemies' attacking the children of Israel! Descendants of Esau called Amalekites or sons of Amalek* came upon the people, not attacking the leading edge of the huge crowd but rather the stragglers, the ones at the back of the multitude who, because they were feeble, had a hard time keeping up with the rest of the people. Can you imagine it? Attacking the ✓sick and lame. What kind of people were these Amalekites to do such a thing?! What would the people of Israel do about this attack?

The counterattack

Moses had a plan. He said to Joshua, his assistant, "Choose men for us today and go out to fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will station myself on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand."

Joshua did as Moses told him: he chose good fighting men and went out to fight against Amalek. Moses, for his part, took Aaron and Hur and climbed to the top of a hill nearby. That rod of Moses' had been used by God in other miracles. ✓Perhaps Moses lifted it up as a sign of encouragement to his soldiers that they should be courageous for God was with them. We do know this: when Moses held his hand up, Israel conquered in the battle, but when he let his hand down, Amalek was winning.

The problem

Have you ever held your hands up for a long time? After a while, muscles ache and the hands have to come down. A third-grade teacher occasionally used a punishment for her class that was similar to this: she had erring students hold their hands and arms straight out from their bodies. [Teacher, you might want to have your students do this but no longer than thirty seconds unless they wish to hold arms out longer.] As the pain increased, some students quietly wept until the teacher allowed students to put their hands down.

This was the problem Moses had. He just could not keep his hands up, for they were weary and heavy and, no doubt, achy. But he needed to keep those hands up so that the men of Israel could win the battle.

The solution

This was how the problem was solved: Aaron and Hur had Moses sit on a rock, and then they supported his hands, Aaron on one side and Hur on the other! Because Moses' arms were raised, Israel won the battle. No longer were the Amalekites stronger than Israel, and Israel conquered the enemy.

The command

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this in a book as a permanent record and recite it to Joshua: I will totally blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." What did God say would happen to the Amalekites because of their attack? [God would destroy that nation.] Other Scripture verses, given later, speak about the responsibility of the people in carrying out this command: "Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt, how he met you along the way and attacked all the stragglers at the back of the multitude who were faint and weary. *He did not fear God.* Therefore, when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies in the land which the LORD your God gives you, *you shall blot out the memory of Amalek* from under heaven. *You must not forget*" (Deuteronomy 25:17–19, emphasis added).

God is just and holy. He does not punish people who do not need punishment, but He does punish the wicked. What did God say the people should do when they got to the Promised Land? [To blot out the memory of Amalek.] How would they do this? [By warring against them until they were destroyed.] This would take a while. In fact, Moses said, "The LORD will have war against Amalek from generation to

generation.”

The altar

After Israel’s victory, Moses built an altar and named it Jehovah Nissi, which can be translated as “The Lord Is My Miracle” What miracles had recently occurred to be a reason for calling the altar “The Lord Is My Miracle”? [The victory over Amalek; water from the rock; manna; crossing the Red Sea.]

Another translation of *Jehovah Nissi* is “The Lord Is My Banner.” To understand this name, think of a parade: At the front of the parade are the colors—the flags representing our country, our state, and perhaps a certain organization or club. Here comes a marching band. The banner in front of the band tells the name of the band.

So, how are banners and flags used? They are placed in public places to celebrate and honor occasions or people. They are labels, announcing names and images that people can recognize from a great distance. They can function as a rallying point for troops in a battle. The Israelites’ saying, “The Lord is my Banner,” was a way of identifying themselves as the unified followers of the Lord God (Ideas and actual words in this paragraph are from <https://www.gotquestions.org/Lord-is-my-banner.html>).

God is *our* banner as well as the banner of Israel. He is our Banner because we celebrate and honor His faithfulness to us just as He showed His faithfulness to Israel. God is our banner because we remember all His deeds and words given to us in Scripture. (Ideas and actual words in this paragraph are from <https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/jehovah-nissi-the-lord-is-my-banner.html>).

*Rather than thinking the Amalekites were the descendants of Esau, some say this nation began before Esau as per Genesis 14:7: “They turned back . . . and conquered all the country of the Amalekites.” This view is substantiated by the statement, “Amalek was the first of the nations” (Numbers 24:20).

Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:

“This stone [on which Moses sat] may be an emblem of Christ the stone of Israel, the foundation of his people, their prop and support, which sustains and upholds them, their Ebenezer, or stone of help in all their times of difficulty and distress”

(<https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=gill&b=2&c=17>).

“Aaron the priest may represent Christ, from whose blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and from whose advocacy, mediation, and intercession, the people of God receive much encouragement and strength in their addresses at the throne of grace”

(<https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=gill&b=2&c=17>).

- Moses’ holding up his hands is like prayer. Aaron and Hur’s “holding up hands” can be likened to our intercession for others in prayer.
- In the context of Israel’s battle with the Amalekites, we need to “hold up hands” (pray) for our soldiers in various branches of the military.

Activities:

- Play dough: staff; flag; hands
- Snack: pretzel sticks or rods
- A video of the secular story of “The Star-Spangled Banner” could be used as an illustration of a banner. Here is a link to such a video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Umg8v6DLZjs>.
- Sing “Holding Up Hands” found below or at teachingthebibletochildren.org, where an audio is available.

- On another secular note, discuss the various branches of the military. Remind the students to pray for authorities and soldiers and police, *etc.*
- Review questions: (Game: Each correct answer may be followed by waving a small American flag.)
 1. Which army came and fought against Israel? [Amalek.]
 2. Where did Amalek attack? Why? [The rear of the multitude because the people there were stragglers, probably because they were weak.]
 3. Who led the army of Israel? [Joshua.]
 4. What did Moses do? [Took his staff and went to the top of the mountain; held up his hands.]
 5. What happened when Moses' hands were lifted? [The battle went for Israel.]
 6. What happened when Moses' hand were lowered? [The battle sent for Amalek.]
 7. How was this problem solved? [Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hands.]
 8. Who won the battle? [Israel.]
 9. What did Moses build after the battle? [An altar.]
 10. What was the altar's name and meaning? [Jehovah Nissi; "The Lord is My Miracle" or "The Lord Is My Banner."]

Memory Verse[s]:

- 1 Timothy 2:1, 2a—First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority,

Handwork:

- Using paper and crayons or markers, design flags (banners) to represent students' families or "The Lord Is My Banner."

Esau

Hur

Promised Land

banner

Jehovah Nissi

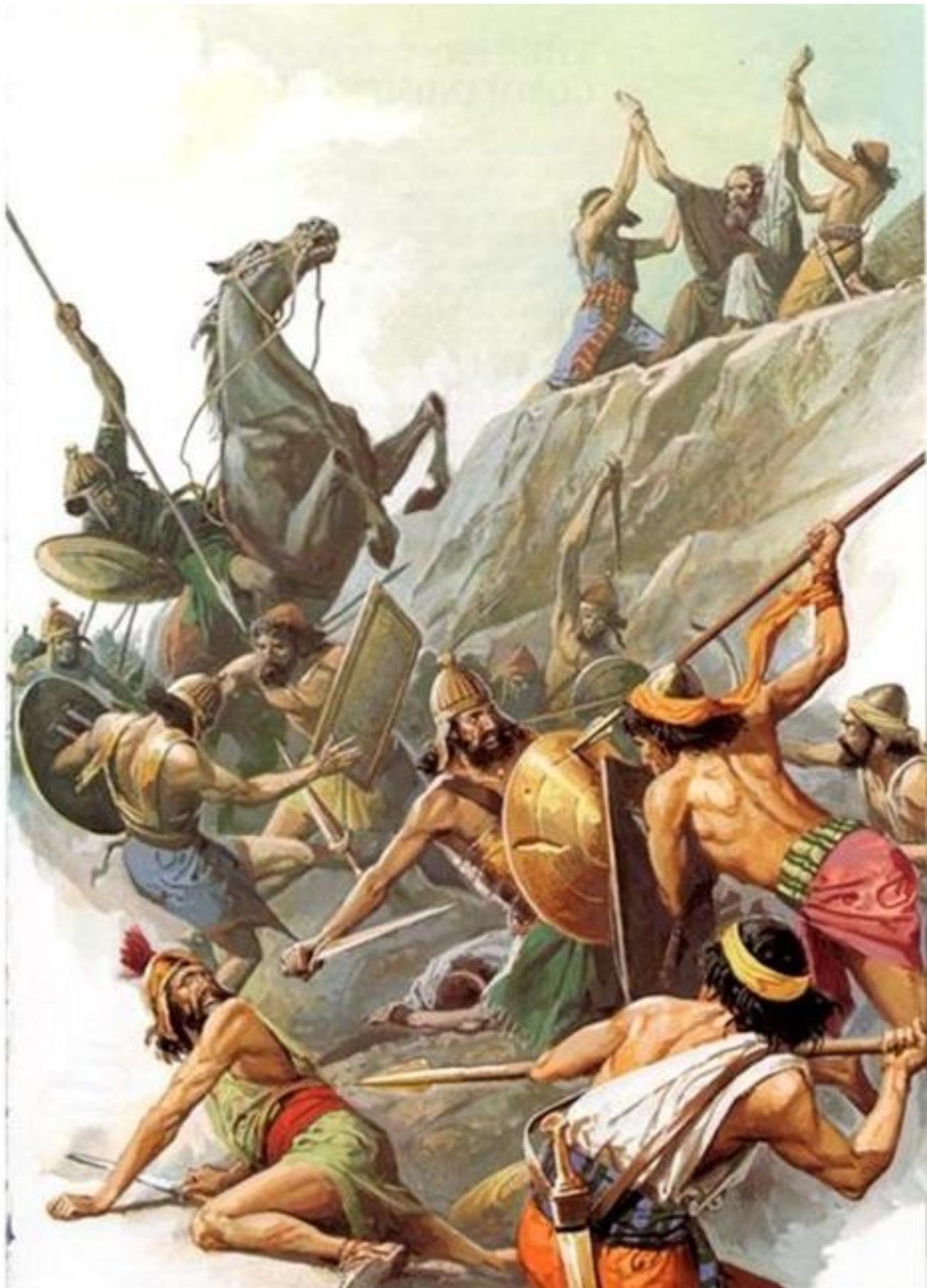






Photo of the original flag that inspired the writing of “The Star-Spangled Banner”
(<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-story-behind-the-star-spangled-banner-149220970/>)

Air Force

Army

Coast Guard

Marines

Navy

Holding Up Hands

This song teaches the names of the United States military branches.

Marilyn Alexander

1. The A - mal - e - kites fought the fee - ble in Reph - i - dim one
 2. Mo - ses got tired, he just could not hold up his hands an - y

4
 day. When Mo - ses held his hands up high, the bat - tle went his way.
 9 more; So Aa - ron and Hur sat him down and then held up his hands as be - fore.

14
 Hold - ing up hands, Hold - ing up hands; Pray for those who fight. Hold - ing up hands,
 18
 Hold - ing up hands. The Lord will al - ways do right. When fight in the Air Force, in the
 21
 Ar - my, in the Coast Guard, in the Mar - ines, in the Na - vy. Hold - ing up hands,
 Hold - ing up hands. The Lord will al - ways do right! The Lord will al - ways do right!

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Actions: For first refrain, raise hands. On second stanza, lower hands slowly. On final refrain, students hold the raised hands of other students.