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John Dinzey.2025.Q4.L04. The Second-Best Option

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Question:

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Lesson 4

**October 18-24*

The Conflict Behind All Conflicts

SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Josh. 5:13-15; Isa. 37:16; Rev. 12:7-9; Deut. 32:17; Exod. 14:13, 14; Josh. 6:15-20.*

Memory Text: "There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD heeded the voice of a man, for the LORD fought for Israel" (*Joshua 10:14, ESV*).

THURSDAY

October 23

The Second-Best Option

Read Exodus 17:7–13 and Joshua 6:15–20. What similarities do you find between these two war narratives? How do they differ?

Joshua & Israel win battle when Moses hands were up
Exodus 17:7–13 7 So he called the name of the place **Massah and Meribah**, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because **they tempted the Lord**, saying, “**Is the Lord among us or not?**”

Ref: In their thirst the people had tempted God, saying, “Is the Lord among us, or not?”—“If God has brought us here, why does He not give us water as well as bread?” **The unbelief thus manifested was criminal**, and Moses feared that the judgments of God would rest upon them. And he called the name of the place Massah, “temptation,” and Meribah, “chiding,” as a memorial of their sin.. **PP 298.3**

Exodus 17:8 Now **Amalek came and fought with Israel** in Rephidim.

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

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

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

12 But Moses’ hands *became* heavy; so they took a stone and put *it* under him, and he sat on it. And **Aaron and Hur supported his hands**, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

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

The Fall of Jericho - marched around the city seven times

Joshua 6:15–20 **15** But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times.

16 And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: **“Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!**

17 Now **the city shall be doomed by the Lord to destruction**, it and all who *are* in it. **Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who *are* with her in the house**, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

18 And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

19 But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, *are* consecrated to the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord.”

20 So **the people shouted when *the priests* blew the trumpets**. And it happened when the people heard **the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat**. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

*****READ*****

The **first time Israel fought after the Exodus is recorded in Exodus 17, where the Israelites defended themselves against the Amalekites**. Israel had witnessed God’s almighty power in both afflicting the Egyptians and leading the Israelites to freedom. We have seen that God’s initial plan for Israel did not include fighting against other people (*Exod. 23:28, Exod. 33:2*). But **shortly after their deliverance from Egypt, the Israelites started to murmur on the way** (*Exod. 17:3*), even questioning God’s presence in their midst. It was at this moment that Amalek came to fight against Israel. This was not by chance. **God allowed the Amalekites to attack Israel so that they might learn to trust Him again.**

I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite

Exodus 23:27-28 27 “I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn *their* backs to you.

28 And I will send hornets before you, **which shall drive out the Hivite**, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you.

I will send My Angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite...

Exodus 33:1-2 1 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Depart *and* go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of

which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.'

2 And I will send My Angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.

*****READ*****

Without compromising His principles, God comes down to the level where His people are, continually calling them back to the ideal plan: complete and unreserved trust in divine intervention. In fact, the law of warfare (*Deuteronomy 20*) was given only after the 40 years of wilderness experience, **which was also caused by Israel's unbelief**. New circumstances demanded new strategies, and it was only then that God required Israel to completely annihilate the Canaanites (*Deut. 20:16-18*).

Besides the reality that war became a necessity for Israel, it also turned out to be a test of their allegiance to Yahweh. God did not give up on them but allowed them to witness His powers by experiencing total dependence on Him.

The participation of the Israelites in the conquest is evident from the conclusion drawn by Joshua at the end of the book. Here the Canaanites are said to have been fighting against the Israelites (*Josh. 24:11*). While the collapse of the walls of Jericho was the result of a divine miracle, the people of Israel had to be actively involved in the battle and face the stubborn resistance of the city's inhabitants.

*****READ*****

Israel's participation in armed conflict became a way to develop unconditional trust in Yahweh's help. Yet Israel was always reminded (*Josh. 7:12, 13; Josh. 10:8*) that the outcome of each battle ultimately lay in the Lord's hands, and the only way they could influence the outcome of a military conflict was through their attitude of faith, or

unbelief, toward the promises of the Lord. The choice was their own.

]]> God can defeat the idolatrous countries without the Israelites having to shed on drop of blood.

There was famine in the land & Elisha said:

REF:>>2 Kings 7:1-2 Then Elisha said, “Hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord: “Tomorrow about this time a [a]seah of fine flour *shall be sold* for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.’ ”

2 So an officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, “Look, *if* the Lord would make windows in heaven, could this thing be?” And he said, “In fact, you shall see *it* with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it.”

The Syrians Flee

2 Kings 7:3-8 **3** Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, “Why are we sitting here until we die?

4 If we say, ‘We will enter the city,’ the famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die.”

5 And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, **to their surprise no one was there.**

6 For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses—the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, “**Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!**”

7 Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact—their tents, their horses, and their donkeys—and they fled for their lives.

8 And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank, and carried from it silver and gold and clothing, and went and hid *them*; then they came back and entered another tent, and carried *some* from there *also*, and went and hid *it*.

The Lord could cause a plague to exterminate the idolaters

Numbers 16:1 **1** Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took *men*;

2 and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, **representatives of the congregation, men of renown.**

3 They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, “*You take too much upon yourselves, **for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them.** Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?*”

4 So when Moses heard *it*, he fell on his face;

5 and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, “Tomorrow morning the Lord will show who *is* His and *who is* holy, and will cause *him* to come near to Him. That one whom He chooses He will cause to come near to Him.

6 Do this: Take censers, Korah and all your company;

7 put fire in them and put incense in them before the Lord tomorrow, and it shall be *that* the man whom the Lord chooses *is* the holy one. *You take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi!*”

8 Then Moses said to Korah, “Hear now, you sons of Levi:

9 ***Is it a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel,*** to bring you near to Himself, to do the work of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to serve them;

10 and that He has brought you near *to Himself*, you and all your brethren, the sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking the priesthood also?

11 **Therefore you and all your company *are* gathered together against the Lord.** And what *is* Aaron that you complain against him?”

12 And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, but they said, “We will not come up!

13 *Is it* a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you should keep acting like a prince over us?

14 Moreover you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up!”

15 Then Moses was very angry, and said to the Lord, “Do not respect their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them, nor have I hurt one of them.”

16 And Moses said to Korah, “Tomorrow, you and all your company be present before the Lord—you and they, as well as Aaron.

17 Let each take his censer and put incense in it, and each of you bring his censer before the Lord, two hundred and fifty censers; both you and Aaron, each *with* his censer.”

18 So every man took his censer, put fire in it, laid incense on it, and stood at the door of the tabernacle of meeting with Moses and Aaron.

19 And Korah gathered all the congregation against them at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then the glory of the Lord appeared to all the congregation.

20 And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,

21 “Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.”

22 Then they fell on their faces, and said, “O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and You be angry with all the congregation?”

23 So the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

24 “Speak to the congregation, saying, ‘Get away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.’ ”

25 Then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him.

26 And he spoke to the congregation, saying, “Depart now from the tents of these wicked men! Touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins.”

27 So they got away from around the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, with their wives, their sons, and their little children.

28 And Moses said: “By this you shall know that the Lord has sent me to do all these works, for *I have not done them* of my own will.

29 If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, *then the Lord has not sent me.*

30 But if the Lord creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the Lord.”

31 Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them,

32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all *their* goods.

33 So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly.

34 Then all Israel who *were* around them fled at their cry, for they said, “Lest the earth swallow us up *also!*”

35 And a fire came out from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense.

36 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:

37 “Tell Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, to pick up the censers out of the blaze, for they are holy, and scatter the fire some distance away.

38 The censers of these men who sinned against their own souls, let them be made into hammered plates as a covering for the altar. Because they presented

them before the Lord, therefore they are holy; and they shall be a sign to the children of Israel.”

39 So Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers, which those who were burned up had presented, and they were hammered out as a covering on the altar,

40 *to be* a memorial to the children of Israel that no outsider, who *is* not a descendant of Aaron, should come near to offer incense before the Lord, that he might not become like Korah and his companions, just as the Lord had said to him through Moses.

Complaints of the People

41 On the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, saying, “**You have killed the people of the Lord.**”

42 Now it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tabernacle of meeting; and suddenly the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared.

43 Then Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of meeting.

44 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

45 “Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.”

And they fell on their faces.

46 So Moses said to Aaron, “Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense *on it*, and take it quickly to the congregation and make [g]atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the Lord. The plague has begun.”

47 Then Aaron took *it* as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and **already the plague had begun among the people**. So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people.

48 And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped.

49 Now **those who died in the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died in the Korah incident**.

50 So Aaron returned to Moses at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, for the plague had stopped.

*****READ***** From Fridays’s lesson:

“God had made it their privilege and their duty to enter the land at the time of His appointment, but through their willful neglect that permission had been withdrawn. . . . **It was not His purpose that they should gain the land by warfare, but by strict obedience to His commands.**”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 392.

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Additional Notes

A new danger now threatened them. Because of their murmuring against Him, the Lord suffered them to be attacked by their enemies. **The Amalekites, a fierce, warlike tribe inhabiting that region, came out against them and smote those who, faint and weary, had fallen into the rear.** Moses, knowing that the masses of the people were unprepared for battle, directed Joshua to choose from the different tribes a body of soldiers, and lead them on the morrow against the enemy, while he himself would stand on an eminence near by with the rod of God in his hand. Accordingly the next day Joshua and his company attacked the foe, while Moses and Aaron and Hur were stationed on a hill overlooking the battlefield. With arms outstretched toward heaven, and holding the rod of God in his right hand, Moses prayed for the success of the armies of Israel. As the battle progressed, it was observed that so long as his hands were reaching upward, Israel prevailed, but when they were lowered, the enemy was victorious. As Moses became weary, Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands until the going down of the sun, when the enemy was put to flight. PP 298.4