

# Victory Over Spiritual Conflict

by John A. MacMillan

---

*John A. MacMillan's sermon emphasizes the believer's authority in Christ to overcome spiritual conflicts and defend divine blessings.*

**Scripture:** John 7:37

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Christ Our Rock"

---

## Description

John A. MacMillan preaches on the spiritually significant stories of the Old Testament, focusing on the outflow from the smitten rock and the battle with Amalek in Exodus 17. He emphasizes Christ as our Smitten Rock, providing divine supply and satisfaction for our deepest longings. MacMillan discusses the need for believers to defend their heaven-bestowed blessings against spiritual enemies, highlighting the importance of relying on the power of Christ for victory in every conflict.

---

## Transcript

Among the spiritually significant stories of the Old Testament, there are none that contain deeper teaching for the individual overcomer and the whole militant Church of Christ than those of the outflow from the smitten rock and the ensuing battle with Amalek, recorded in the seventeenth chapter of the Book of Exodus.

"The Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go.

"Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel" (Exodus 17:5,6).

Christ Is Our Smitten Rock

Israel had come into a great and priceless possession. Out of the smitten rock rivers of water were flowing. They were a gift direct from the throne, abounding in life and blessing. They made possible the very existence of the people of Jehovah in the wilderness journey. The whole nation drank and was revived. There was no lack for either man or beast.

For us there is a wealth of spiritual meaning in the record. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink," the Lord still cries unto His people. Christ at Calvary is the Smitten Rock of the New Testament

Church. From His opened side flows the divine supply that satisfies every heart longing.

So abundant is the fulness of the risen and living Lord, who dispenses that heavenly grace, that there is added to the invitation a wonderful promise: "He that believeth on Me, out of his belly (from the depths of his inner life) shall flow rivers of living water."

That is to say, the believer who abides in the Rock, Christ Jesus, and drinks continually of His outpouring, becomes himself a channel of blessing to other thirsty souls (John 7:37-39; John 4:10,14).

### Defending Heaven-Bestowed Blessings

In the arid desert nothing is so vital as a supply of water. Sore conflicts frequently take place between the wandering tribes over the possession of a well or spring (see Genesis 26:18ff). It is not surprising, therefore, that the right of the people of Israel to the streams of Horeb was speedily contested.

The fierce tribesmen of Amalek sought to drive them away, that they themselves might enjoy the abundance of this new oasis. Skilled warriors, trained in desert fighting, they were far more than a match for the recently liberated slaves of Pharaoh.

Yet, untried as the Israelites were in warfare (Exodus 13:17), they must lay hold of spear and buckler, and defend their heaven-bestowed blessings. The battle in itself was a hopeless one for Israel.

Wherever divine interference lessened, as the weary hands of Moses drooped, "Amalek prevailed." There was no natural ability in Israel to conquer; their victory came alone through the power of Christ, that Spiritual Rock that followed them.

One of the hard lessons that must be learned by every seeker after the deeper life in Christ is that each new appropriation of heavenly grace and knowledge brings him often into a more subtle conflict.

In the early stages of the Christian life, when abounding peace and joy has come in to fill the heart, and the gladness of the Lord brightens all about him, his feet are "like hinds' feet," and he feels as if he were permanently established upon the spiritual "high places" (Habakkuk 3:19).

But before long he finds himself treading the Valley of Humiliation, where Apollyon must be faced, and passing thence to the dread experiences of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, where the evil ones press hard, and temptation assails with crushing force, and faith's contest with discouragement seems often a losing one.

### Accepting Our Throne Rights

As still further advancement in the knowledge of the Lord is given through the opening of the eyes of his understanding, and he finds that he has been "blessed...with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3), there comes the startling realization that the very heavenly places into which he has been introduced, are the habitat of the powers of darkness.

His acceptance of his seat with Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6) "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion" (Eph. 1:21), provides him with authority and power for full victory, so long as he maintains his place, wearing the defense armor, and wielding the offensive weapons (Ephesians 6:10-18).

But unless at this stage of progress there is received clear instruction as to the divine provision for overcoming, he is liable to spend many months, or even years, of fruitless struggle and defeat.

Nor can any believer escape this conflict, so long as he resolutely presses forward in the pursuit of true holiness and effective ministry. It is part of the training of the Lord's overcoming people. In the Kingdom Age, Christ has planned that they shall reign with Him from the heavenly places over the earth (Rev. 2:26-29; Rev. 3:21-22).

It is consequently not strange that the principalities and powers, who are to be dispossessed of the seats of authority now occupied by themselves, should savagely resist their own displacement.

These spiritual enemies oppose every forward step of the overcomer. They will seek to confuse his mind, sometimes drawing him into error, or into extravagance in doctrine. They may attack him in body, or in circumstances, or through his family or his friends.

This has been their method in every age, as illustrated in the march of the hosts of Israel toward the Promised Land. Among the children of Israel the powers of darkness subtly introduced "many foolish and hurtful lusts" (1 Tim. 6:9); they sought to seduce them by the incoming of idolatry and fornication from the nations around.

They incited them to murmuring and distrust of the providence of Jehovah; or they openly and fiercely attacked them, as through the Amalekites.

In the same manner today, by both inward and outward means, "the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11), are directed to the rendering fruitless of the life and service of the individual Christian and of the aggressive church.

Many an earnest pastor weeps before the Lord because of coldness or disunion in his congregation. The successful evangelist is disturbed by some deadening influence creeping into the atmosphere of his meetings, by which his liberty of spirit is hampered, and by which souls are hindered from coming to the Saviour.

In many cases prayer does not seem to touch the difficulty, even when long continued. Even prayer itself seems to be lifeless and God afar off.

At times the enemy strikes back swiftly when some special effort is aimed against him. Workers break down, sickness weakens the frame, spiritual purpose slackens, and discouragement throws a pall of darkness that depresses every effort for the Lord. Such experiences are far from uncommon, as many will testify.

#### The Significance of Moses' Rod

"Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand.

"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. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

"But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

"And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword" (Exodus 17:8-13).

What is the significance of the Rod as it appears in the ministry of Moses? The usual interpretation is that it symbolizes prayer.

But there is no mention of prayer in the incident before us, and in a somewhat similar case (Ex. 14:15,16), the Lawgiver is sharply told that the time is past for calling on God, and that definite action is needed.

There is a richer and more powerful meaning: the rod symbolizes the authority of God committed to human hands. By it the holder is made a co-ruler with his Lord, sharing His throne-power and reigning with Him (Rev. 3:21-22).

#### Made Kings And Priests Unto God

It is a vision that staggers the faith of many. But it is a Scriptural revelation of divine truth that is repeated in many places and in many forms. The overcoming saint is made a king and priest unto God (Rev. 1:6), that he may reign on earth (Rev. 5:10).

He is given authority over the nations (Rev. 2:26ff), co-operating with the risen Christ. He sits with the exalted Lord in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:20; Eph. 2:6), which is the center of the authority of the universe.

In this position of privilege he is enthroned with Christ "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:15-23; Eph. 2:1-6).

This is meant to be a present experience of faith, though its full development will be reached in the age which is before us. Let us not dishonor the Word of God that reveals these things, by the unbelieving attitude that it means less than it has clearly stated.

#### Sustained Resistance To The Foe

All through the day, "until the going down of the sun," Moses held out the rod over the valley in which Israel strove with Amalek. His holding out of the rod was a demonstration of the authority committed to him over the unseen forces which drove forward the Amalekites, and which operate behind every battle (see Daniel 10:13,20).

Not in the visible, but in the invisible, lies the secret of success or failure. Over the spirit-foes of Israel, which sought to thwart the purpose of God, and to hold back His people from the land of their inheritance, Moses exercised the authority vested in him as the representative of Jehovah.

By his sustained resistance to these mighty principalities and powers, their ability to aid the Amalekites was nullified. And as the sun went down, the beaten tribesmen sullenly withdrew.

The principle holds in every conflict between the people of God and their enemies. Where redeemed man is concerned, the Heavenly Father calls him into a ministry of authority with His Son, Jesus Christ, the

rightful Ruler of earth.

In the Old Testament, some remarkable instances occur, such as that of Joshua at Ajalon (Josh. 10:12), or that of Elijah (1 Kings 17:1), where the prophet boldly declared that "there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

In these past ages, however, the authority was limited to a few select souls, upon whom the Holy Spirit came for special ministries. But the New Testament saints of the heavenly places include all who are raised up with Christ, and who have accepted the death of the cross, and the burial of the tomb, that they may attain unto the resurrection of which Paul speaks (Phil. 3:11).

For them there is a fellowship with the Risen Christ in a larger sense than others know. To them the powers of darkness yield wherever their authority is exerted. (Read 1 Corinthians 12:27,3:9; John 17:18,14:12; 1 John 4:17; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Acts 1:8; Luke 10:19; Mark 16:15-18).

#### A Hand Lifted Up Upon The Throne

"Jehovah hath sworn," reads one translation, "Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation" (Exodus 17:16).

The first clause is not correctly translated. "A hand is lifted up upon the throne of Jehovah," the Hebrew reads. The lifting up of the hand is a form of affirmation or oath, and from this comes the rendering, "Jehovah hath sworn."

The meaning is to be found in the action of Moses. Lifting up his hand holding the rod, he took authority in the name of Jehovah over the foes of God's people. In his capacity as the representative of Jehovah he was exerting the authority of the throne when he lifted up his hand.

It was a declaration of divine judgment to be executed upon Amalek and upon the demon-powers who energized those cruel warriors in the enmity against Israel.

So today every consecrated hand that lifts the rod of the authority of the Lord against the unseen powers of darkness is directing the throne-power of Christ against Satan and his hosts in a battle that will last until "the going down of the sun," that is, until life's day is ended.

Paul prayed (Eph. 1:17) that "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him (Christ)" might be granted to the saints to whom he wrote.

Thus would the eyes of their understanding be opened to see their full relationship to the risen and exalted Christ. Let us cry unto God this same petition for ourselves and for all the people of the Lord.

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-a-macmillan/victory-over-spiritual-conflict/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**