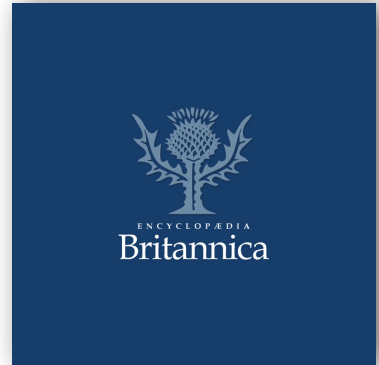


AMALEK, AMALEKITES
Judges
Encyclopedia Brintannica
and
The Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary

From *Encyclopedia Britannica*

Amalekite, member of an ancient nomadic tribe, or collection of tribes, described in the Old Testament as relentless enemies of Israel, even though they were closely related to Ephraim, one of the 12 tribes of Israel. The district over which they ranged was south of Judah and probably extended into northern Arabia. The Amalekites harassed the Hebrews during their Exodus from Egypt and attacked them at Rephidim near Mount Sinai, where they were defeated by Joshua. They were among the nomadic raiders defeated by Gideon and were condemned to annihilation by Samuel. Their final defeat occurred in the time of Hezekiah.



From *The Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary*

The Amalekites inhabited the Negev territory south of Judah (Num. 13:29). Amalek is described as “first among the nations” (Num. 24:20 [cf. 1 Sam. 27:8]); indeed, one story about it is set prior to the lifetime of its eponymous ancestor, Amalek (Gen. 14:7). The OT represents the Amalekites as descended from Esau and thus related to the Edomites (Gen. 36:12, 16). Several texts refer to “the Amalekites and Canaanites,” suggesting that the former were not considered a Canaanite people (e.g., Num. 14:45). The history of relations between the Amalekites and the Israelites is one of perpetual hostility. The Amalekites attacked the Israelites shortly after the Red Sea crossing. The outcome of the battle included a declaration of perpetual war between the Amalekites and the God of Israel (Exod. 17:8–16; Deut. 25:17–19). There were several subsequent conflicts (Num. 14:45; Judg. 3:13; 6:3, 33; 7:12; 10:12), continuing in the campaigns of Saul (1 Sam. 15:1–9) and David (1 Sam. 27:8; 30:16–20). The final chapter in the historic struggle between Israel and the Amalekites is Mordecai and Esther’s confrontation with Haman, who is identified as an “Agagite”—that is, a descendant of Agag, the Amalekite king spared by Saul (Esther 3:1; cf. 1 Sam. 15:8).

