

Jehovah Nissi: The LORD is My Banner

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[0 : 00] But if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read. The book of Exodus. Exodus chapter 17.

Exodus chapter 17. I want us to consider the second half of the chapter. But if we read again at verse 15. Exodus 17 at verse 15.

What it says there, And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-Nisi. If you're using the authorized version, you'll see that in your Bible.

Jehovah-Nisi. It means, the Lord is my banner. Saying a hand upon the throne of the Lord, the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

But particularly the words there, where it says, Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-Nisi. The Lord is my banner.

[1 : 10] Jehovah-Nisi. The Lord is my banner. Now, over the past number of weeks, we've become familiar with banners, or flags, especially following the death of our late queen, Queen Elizabeth.

Many flags, as we saw, they were all flying at half-mast throughout that ten-day period of mourning. But what I found really interesting was that the flag of the royal standard, so the flag of the royal standard, which is the flag that was draped over the queen's coffin while she was lying in state, and also during her funeral, the flag of the royal standard, it's a flag that is never lowered to half-mast, even with the death of a monarch.

And that's because there's always a sovereign on the throne. There's always a king or a queen on the throne in the United Kingdom. Because when the queen died, her sovereignty, as you know, it immediately passed on to her son, King Charles III.

Now, as you know, flags and the history of flags, I find them very, very interesting. Because for centuries, flags and banners, they've been around, they've been a symbol of warfare, they've been a symbol of representing different nations, different clans, different armies, as they went into battle, whether they were in battle on land or at sea.

And, you know, in many ways, that's what we're seeing here in this passage. Although when the Israelites defeated the Amalekites at Rephidim, Moses, he didn't hoist a flag up a flagpole. Instead, we're told that he built an altar to the Lord.

[2 : 53] Moses built an altar to the Lord, and he called the name of it Jehovah Nisi. The Lord is my banner. Jehovah Nisi.

The Lord is my banner. And I want us to think about this passage in the second half of chapter 17. I want us to think about it under three headings. Three headings this morning.

The battle, the burden, and the banner. Three simple headings. The battle, the burden, and the banner. So, first of all, the battle.

The battle. Look at verse 6. It says, Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.

And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel, and he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the Lord by saying, Is the Lord among us or not?

[3 : 52] Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. Now, as we saw last week from the first half of the chapter, by the time the Israelites came, had passed through the wilderness of Sinai and come to camp at Rephidim, they'd become what we call them as professional complainers because this is the fourth time in four chapters that the Israelites have grumbled and groaned against God and muttered and moaned against Moses.

They were professional complainers. And by this point, Moses was at breaking point. He was asking the Israelites, as we saw there in the first half of the chapter, he's asking them, Why do you

quarrel with me?

Why do you test the Lord? Moses was at breaking point. And this had such an impact and an influence upon Moses that he named this place that they're now at.

He called it Massah and Meribah, which means testing and quarreling. He called it Massah and Meribah. We see that in verse 7. And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarreling of the people of Israel and because they tested the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not?

And you know, what a question. Is the Lord among us or not? After all the Lord had done for them and all that the Lord was still doing for the Israelites, they were still questioning, Is the Lord among us or not?

[5 : 23] Is the Lord among us or not? And of course, the Lord was among them. The Lord had demonstrated and displayed to his people, to the congregation of Israel, that the Lord was among them.

Because as we read there in verse 6, that we read there that the Lord commanded Moses to stand upon the rock and to strike the rock so that water will flow out of it and give water to nearly three million people.

The Lord was among his people. And even as we saw last week, we saw that striking this rock, it foretold and foreshadowed the cross of Jesus Christ.

Because Jesus, as Paul said, when he explained this passage, he said, Christ here is the rock. He's the rock of our salvation. He's the one who was smitten and struck on behalf of his people so that he could supply them with that life-giving water of salvation.

Jesus Christ is the rock because he says to everyone, if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. So the Lord was saying to Moses in this passage, Moses, never mind all these complainers, never mind the children of Israel and their complaining, you preach Christ to them because Christ is with them and the Lord is among them.

[6 : 41] Is the Lord among them or not? Yes, the Lord is with them. And you know, like the congregation of Israel, maybe you have the same question about our congregation.

Maybe you question, is the Lord among us or not? Is the Lord among us or not? But you know, like it was for the children of Israel, the Lord is faithful to his promise.

Where the Lord promises in his word, where two or even three are gathered in his name, he says, there am I. There am I in the midst of them.

You want to know if the Lord is here this morning? There's two or three of us. There's four, five, and six of us gathered in his name. The Lord is among us.

And that's what we were singing about in Psalm 46. The psalmist said, God in the midst of her doth dwell. Nothing shall her remove. The Lord to her and help her will. And that right early proved.

[7 : 41] The Lord is among his people. He gathers among his people. And the congregation of Israel, they needed to be reminded that. They needed that reassurance that the Lord was with them. And the Lord was among them.

And the Lord was in the midst of them to bless them. They wanted to know that the Lord was with them because they were heading straight into a fight.

They were heading into a battle against this strong enemy. We read it there in verse 8. Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim.

Amalek was the leader of the Amalekites. And the Amalekites, they were descendants of Jacob's brother, Esau. And so in many ways, you look at this battle between Israel and the Amalekites.

This battle was a battle between two brothers. It was a battle between just two brothers. The Israelites, they were the children of Israel. They were descendants of Jacob.

[8 : 43] Jacob, you remember, he was later named Israel. And the Amalekites, they're descendants of Esau. Jacob and Esau were brothers. Therefore, the battle here is a battle between brothers.

The battle was a battle between brothers. And you know, when you actually consider the story of the Old Testament, the story of the Old Testament is a battle between brothers. You see it time and time again throughout the Old Testament.

You see it right at the beginning of the Bible. Cain and Abel, a battle between brothers. You see it with Isaac and Hagar, a battle between brothers. You see it with Jacob and Esau, a battle between brothers.

You even see it in that well-known battle that everybody knows about, the battle between David and Goliath. It's a battle between brothers. Because David and Goliath, if you trace their lineage all the way back, they were both descendants of Noah's sons, Shem and Ham.

It's a battle between brothers. The story of the Old Testament is a battle between brothers. But of course, all these battles between brothers throughout the story of the Old Testament, they're all pointing us and they're all pushing us towards the greater battle.

[10:02] The greater battle between our Savior and Satan. The greater battle between our Savior and Satan. And you know, you look at the Israelites here.

The Israelites, there's three million of them. They're journeying through the wilderness. They're pilgrims. They have no home. They're all in tents. But as this passage shows us, they weren't just pilgrims on a journey.

They also had to be soldiers on a battlefield. They weren't just pilgrims on a journey. They also had to be soldiers on a battlefield. Which should remind us, as Christians, that the Christian life isn't just the pilgrim's progress.

The Christian life is a battle on the battlefield. The Christian life is a battle on the battlefield. And you know, that's the message John Bunyan wanted to get across in his book, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. We looked at it, I think it was last year. If you haven't read *The Pilgrim's Progress*, read it. Brilliant book. If you haven't read it for a while, read it again. Spurgeon said, read it every year. But it's a brilliant book about a man called Christian.

[11:12] He's traveling from the city of destruction towards the celestial city. But if you remember in the book, there's that chapter where just before Christian leaves Palace Beautiful, he's climbed a hill difficulty, he's in Palace Beautiful, and he's just about to descend again into the valley of humiliation to meet Apollyon.

But before he descends into the valley of humiliation, he's taken into the armory. And he's shown all the armor and all the weapons that the Lord has provided for his pilgrims.

And of course, Christian's armor was all based upon Paul's description of the whole armor of God in Ephesians chapter 6, where Paul exhorts us and he encourages us, and he says, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes and the scams and the seductions of the devil. Why? Paul says, because the devil is our greatest enemy.

The God of this world is the devil. He has blinded the minds of unbelievers. He's the God of this world. In fact, the Bible describes the devil with many names.

[12:31] He's called the Diabolos, the Divider, the Deceiver, the Tempter, the Ancient Serpent. He's Satan, the Adversary.

He's the Accuser of the Brethren. He's the Father of Lies. He comes to us as an Angel of Light. He's Beelzebub. He's the Antichrist. He's the Prince of Darkness.

He's the Prince of the Power of the Air. John Bunyan described him as Apollyon, which means the destroyer, because that's Apollyon's aim, always to destroy the Christian.

That's what he wants. He wants the Christian and the Christian church to be destroyed. But what does Paul say in Ephesians 6? We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Therefore, says Paul, take up the whole armor of God. Christian soldier, go into your armory every morning and put on your armor and pick up your weapons so that you may stand firm as a Christian soldier.

[13:47] because the Christian life, it is a battle on the battlefield. The Christian life is a battle on the battlefield.

And so we see the battle. That's the first thing. Then secondly, the burden. The battle and the burden. Look at verse 8. Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim.

So Moses said to Joshua, Choose for us men and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand. So Joshua did as Moses told him and fought with Amalek while Moses, Aaron, and her went up to the top of the hill.

Now as you know, this attack from the Amalekites, Amalekites, it came immediately after the blessing of water from the rock. This attack came immediately after blessing.

But what's interesting is that when you look at the book of Deuteronomy, in the book of Deuteronomy we're told that the Amalekites, they attacked the Israelites from behind. They attacked the Israelites from behind.

[14:58] And as you'd expect, in a large group of nearly three million people, many of those who were towards the back of this group would have been elderly people.

They would have been women and young children. They were always towards the back. It was more the men and the soldiers who were towards the front. And so after this period of blessing, the Amalekites, they attack the Israelites at the back, their most vulnerable and weakest point.

And you think about it, well that's how the devil often works, isn't it? He attacks after a time of blessing. He attacks without any prior warning. He comes up behind us.

He attacks at our weakest and our most vulnerable point. Why? Because the devil knows our weaknesses. He knows we're vulnerable. He knows when we're preoccupied with other things. He even knows how to distract us with other things. He knows when we're not watching and he knows when we're not praying. That's why Moses, we're told, that's why Moses, the Lord's servant, he calls and commissions and commands Joshua to stand firm and to fight.

[16:14] He says in verse 9, Moses said to Joshua, choose for us men and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.

Now this is the first time that Joshua is mentioned in the Bible. He is going to be mentioned again and again. But this is the first time, this is the first time that he's introduced to us. And he's introduced, Joshua is introduced to us as the leader of the Lord's army and the commander in chief.

But what I always love about the name Joshua, it's a lovely name. We have a Joshua in our congregation. Joshua's name means salvation. The name Joshua means salvation.

The Greek name for Joshua is Jesus. So the Hebrew name is Joshua. The Greek name is Jesus.

And don't you find it interesting that when we're first introduced to Jesus in the New Testament, just like we're being introduced to Joshua here in the Old Testament, when we're first introduced to Jesus in the New Testament, we hear the angel speaking.

[17:26] And the angel says, call his name Jesus. Call him salvation. Why? Because he shall save his people from their sins. And what we're to see here is that Jesus is our Joshua.

Jesus is our, he's the leader of the Lord's army. He's our commander in chief. He's the captain of our salvation. He's the one who enrolls us and enlists us in his army.

He's the one who stocks and supplies all our armor. The whole armor of God. And that's what Joshua had as he went out to fight against the Amalekites.

Joshua had the whole armor of God. And you know, I can't read this passage without thinking that here's Moses.

Here's Moses, the man of God, and he's saying to Joshua, he's saying to Joshua, he's exhorting him and encouraging Joshua, go out and stand firm as a Christian soldier.

[18:26] Go out onto that battlefield and stand firm as a Christian soldier. Joshua, stand firm and put on the belt of truth to protect you against the lies and the false accusations of the devil.

Joshua, stand firm as a Christian soldier and put on that breastplate of righteousness to guard your heart from the attacks of the devil. Joshua, stand firm as a Christian soldier and put on your gospel shoes so that when you walk out into the battlefield, you're walking in the way of holiness and upon the path of righteousness.

Joshua, stand firm as a Christian soldier and make sure you take up that shield of faith that you'll be able to stand against and divert and defend against all the fiery darts of the devil.

Stand firm, Joshua. Stand firm as a Christian soldier and put on your head that helmet of salvation because the battle, it's often in the mind.

The battle is often in the mind where Satan tempts you to doubt and to deny and even to desert the Lord completely. Joshua, stand firm as a Christian soldier and have in your hand the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

[19:44] Joshua, take up the whole armor of God and stand firm as a Christian soldier. That's our call this morning.

Take up the whole armor of God and stand firm as a Christian soldier. But you know, there's one weapon in the armory of the whole armor of God which I never really noticed before.

I always knew that it was a weapon against the attacks and the advances of the devil but I never really noticed it until John Bunyan pointed it out in the Pilgrim's Progress because when Christian

was in the armory he was taken in to see the armor and he saw all the weapons that the Lord provides for his pilgrims.

He saw the belt and the breastplate. He saw the helmet of salvation. He saw the shoes and the shield and the sword. But there was also one weapon called all prayer.

The weapon called all prayer which of course is a weapon that we must pick up. It's a weapon we must pick up and go out to battle on the battlefield with the weapon all prayer.

[21 : 04] Because as Paul says in Ephesians 6 we're to be praying always with all prayer. We're to be praying always with all prayer. And you know that's what's being explained and emphasized to us here with Moses and Aaron and her.

We have these three men Moses the man of God Aaron his brother Har was a son of Caleb. Moses Aaron and Har were told that they went up to the top of a hill overlooking the battlefield.

So they're seeing everything that's taking place. And what do they do? They engage in all prayer. And we know that they were praying.

We know that they were praying because it was customary for Jews to pray with their hands in the air. Maybe we should start that at the prayer meeting. Praying with hands in the air.

But we're told in verse 12 But Moses' hands grew weary so they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it and while Aaron and Har held up his hands one on the one side and the other on the other side.

[22 : 13] So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword. As Moses held he was holding the rod of God in his hand as Moses had his hands in the air Joshua prevailed.

But when Moses' arms became tired he let his arms down and Amalek were told prevailed. And you know you read it and you can think well you understand how Joshua's army were getting tired.

They were out on the battlefield. They were doing all the work. They were on the front line. But you know the fact that Moses also became tired it explains and emphasizes to us that prayer isn't easy.

Prayer is an important work in the battlefield. But prayer isn't easy. Prayer isn't easy. I think prayer is something we all struggle with whether privately or publicly.

I'll be honest with you. Praying is the thing that terrifies me when I get into the pulpit. We all struggle with prayer. Prayer isn't easy. But this passage is exhorting and encouraging us to pick up this weapon.

[23 : 32] This weapon called all prayer. And we're to be praying with one another. We're to be praying for one another. You know it's even reminding us with these three men gathering for prayer on the top of a hill.

It's reminding us about the importance of the prayer meeting. Because like Aaron and her who supported and strengthened their leader Moses they strengthened him in prayer.

Just like we're to support and strengthen one another in prayer. We're to uphold one another at the throne of grace. Because my friend it's at the throne of grace that we're promised mercy.

But more than that not just mercy we're promised grace to help in our time of need. And so I think it's important that we're praying for one another.

But even more so if you're praying for someone tell them what better encouragement to hear than someone is praying for you.

[24 : 37] So if you're praying for someone tell them that you're praying for them. Because as we see here prayer is a powerful weapon. Prayer is a powerful weapon. We're to pick up that weapon.

We're to put on the whole armor of God. But this weapon we must pick up. The weapon all prayer. And we see that through the power of prayer Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword.

And so we see the battle. We see the burden. But we see lastly the banner. The banner. Look at verse 14. Then the Lord said to Moses write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.

And Moses built an altar and called the name of it Jehovah Nisi. The Lord is my banner. Jehovah Nisi.

The Lord is my banner. Now as you know this isn't the first time that the Lord's name has been proclaimed in the book of Exodus.

[25 : 48] If you go back to chapter 15 the Lord proclaimed his name Jehovah Rapha the Lord Yurhila. But even before then in the book of Genesis we read that Abraham when he offered up his

son Isaac on Mount Moriah Abraham proclaimed Jehovah Jireh the Lord will provide.

And then later you go through the story of the Exodus and on into the other books of the Bible you see that the Lord calls his people to be holy as he is holy. And the Lord proclaims to his people that he is Jehovah Mekadesh the Lord who sanctifies you.

When the Lord calls Gideon to be one of the judges he proclaims Jehovah Shalom. The Lord our peace. When David confesses his faith something I was trying to teach the children in the school assembly on Friday morning David proclaimed the words Jehovah Rohi Jehovah Rohi the Lord's my shepherd.

Jehovah Rohi the Lord's my shepherd. We see it again when the city of Israel when the city of Jerusalem is surrounded by the enemy the people are proclaiming that they're being protected by Jehovah Sabaoth the Lord of hosts he's the Lord of the armies.

When Jeremiah discovered the righteousness of the Lord he proclaimed just with Mekshan Jehovah Sidkenu the Lord our righteousness. And when Ezekiel was given that vision towards the end of the Old Testament he's given that vision of the new Jerusalem and he concludes his prophecy with the proclamation Jehovah Shama the Lord is there.

[27 : 34] The Lord is still there. So this isn't the first time that the Lord's name has been proclaimed and it won't be the last time either because throughout the Old Testament into the New Testament into the New Testament church and for centuries this name has been proclaimed and will continue to be proclaimed.

Why? As Paul said there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved other than the name of Jesus because it's at the name of Jesus that every knee will bow. It's at the name of Jesus that every tongue will confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father. This name is a wonderful name and it's a name as we were saying to the children that we must believe in our heart and confess with our mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord.

But you know what we see here is that even though Moses didn't hoist a flag up a flagpole he built an altar which was very common but he didn't build an altar to give himself glory or to give Joshua and his army glory for winning the battle.

No, Moses built an altar to ascribe and to attribute all the glory to God. Moses built an altar and proclaimed Jehovah Nisi the Lord is my banner.

[29 : 10] Jehovah Nisi the Lord is my banner. What did Solomon say about the Lord? His banner over me is love.

Jehovah Nisi the Lord is my banner. It's a declaration of victory. Jehovah Nisi the Lord is my banner. But you know the question we're all being left with today is well can you say that for yourself?

Can you say Jehovah Nisi the Lord is my banner. His banner over me is love. Can you say that the Lord Jesus Christ has won the victory over sin Satan and separation from death from death for me? Can you say today that he has defeated death conquered the grave brought life and immortality to light through the gospel for me? Can you say today Jehovah Nisi the Lord is my banner because my proclamation this morning is I believe in my heart and I confess with my mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord.

That's your banner. So can you say this morning Jehovah Nisi the Lord is my banner. The Lord is my banner.

[30 : 34] You know as I look at this passage I'm reminded of the words of the hymn writer. It's a hymn I often recited with the boys when putting on their pajamas.

Stand up stand up for Jesus you soldiers of the cross lift high his royal banner it must not suffer loss from victory unto victory his army he shall lead till every foe is vanquished and Christ is Lord indeed.

Jehovah Nisi the Lord is my banner. My friend are you believing in your heart and confessing with your mouth that this Jesus this Jesus is Lord over your life.

Jehovah Nisi the Lord is my my banner. But is he your banner? Is he your banner? Well may the Lord bless these thoughts to us and let us pray.

O Lord our gracious God speak to us we pray speak to us from thy truth there would not only be something we hear but something we act upon that as thy word says that we would not be hearers only but doers also that we would take to ourselves the whole armor of God and that we would lift up not only the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God but that we might take in our hands and

in our hearts all prayer pleading to the Lord as we go out to battle.

[32 : 15] Lord protect us we pray because we know the evil one is there to distract us to divert our attention to cause us to doubt or even to deny him. The Lord we pray that we would be like Moses and say Jehovah Nisi the Lord is my banner his banner over me is love that he is the one who has demonstrated and displayed his love towards me through his own son the Lord Jesus Christ bless thy truth to us we ask go before us we pray take away our iniquity receive us graciously for Jesus sake Amen Well we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning we're going to sing again in Psalm 46 Psalm 46 in the Scottish Psalter page 271 Psalm 46 we're singing from verse 7 down to the end of the psalm as we said

Psalm 46 is a psalm that reminds us when our world is turned upside down God is our refuge and our strength but verse 7 it gives to us one of those Jehovah names the Lord of hosts it says verse 7 which is Jehovah Sabaoth the Lord of hosts the Lord of the armies so the Lord is on our side he says the Lord of hosts upon our side doth constantly remain the God of Jacob is our refuge us safely to maintain and the psalmist wants to emphasize this to us so much so that he says it again at the end of the psalm he says in verse 11 our God who is the Lord of hosts is still upon our side the God of Jacob our refuge forever will abide so we'll sing these verses of Psalm 46 verse 7 to 11 down to the end of the psalm we'll stand to sing if you're able to God's praise the Lord of hosts upon our side doth constantly remain the

God of Jacob's our refuge so safely to maintain come and behold what wondrous words have by the Lord be brought come see what death so gracious he on the earth hath brought unto the ends of all the earth course

Nazeom nor to peace and His hope heard on way a Be still and know that I am God Among the heathen I Will be exalted in thine honor Will be exalted high

Our God who is the Lord of hosts Is still upon our side The God of King of our refuge Forever will abide The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ The love of God the Father The fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with you all Now and forevermore Amen