

Yahweh-Nissi – The Lord My Banner/Standard

INTRODUCTION:

1. Banners, or standards, have been employed throughout history as visible declarations of authority, identification, and commitment.
 - A. Ancient armies held their banners high in battle to identify themselves and as a rallying point for their soldiers, helping them to remember who they were and what they were fighting for.
 - B. In the Olympic games, banners identify the country the athletes are representing.
 - C. College arenas/stadiums hang banners to show whose home it is, their teams' titles, outstanding players, etc., while fans wave them to show their allegiance and well as a sign of victory.
 - D. Schools and workplaces hang them in halls, etc., to remind people of certain principles that are important to the administration and the community of that establishment.
2. Banners have played a significant part among God's people as well.
 - A. In Numbers 2 God instructed Israel to make banners/standards/signs to represent the various tribes and families (Num. 2:1-2 – "The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ² "The people of Israel shall camp each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers' houses. They shall camp facing the tent of meeting on every side."").
 - B. These banners/standards were held up as Israel traveled through the wilderness.
3. Today I want to talk about how God has revealed who He is in His names. And the name to look at today is one that has to do with banners, or standards. That name is **Yahweh/Jehovah Nissi – The Lord is My Banner/Standard**. To do that I want to...
 - A. Consider the historical events behind the name. For, as we have often seen, God revealed a name for himself when His people were in a difficult situation that requires divine intervention.
 - B. Look at what this name tells us about God and what it should mean to us as His people, seeing that when God revealed these names, they spoke directly to meeting the needs of His people.

BODY:

I. The history behind the name:

- A. By God's command Israel was tested at Rephidim because there was no water. (Ex. 17:1-3).
 1. This was Israel's third test of their faith in God's providence since Egypt, being previously tested concerning water (Ex. 15:22ff.) and food (16:1ff), where God provided for them.
 2. Israel failed their test again, wondering "Is the Lord among us, or not?" (17:7).
 - a. It is easy to judge Israel, but I suspect most of us have wondered the same thing.
 - b. When things are going south for us, we want to know where God is, why He is not doing what we think He should be doing at that time!
 3. Though Israel's questioned God, **He still provided**. Yet, to remind them, the place was named Massah and Meribah for their *quarreling* against Moses and *testing* God (Ex. 17:6-7).
 - a. This failure became a notable event (Psa. 95:8-11 – "Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness, ⁹ "When your fathers tested Me, they tried Me, **though they had seen My work**. ¹⁰ "For forty years I loathed that generation, and said they are a people who err in their heart, and **they do not know My ways**. ¹¹ "Therefore I swore in My anger, truly they shall not enter into My rest."").
 - b. What a shame it would be if complaining became something that defined our lives before others and especially before God!
- B. At Rephidim Israel was tested again when attacked by Amalek, Israel's kin of Edomite, or Esau's, origin (Ex. 17:8-13).
 1. Just when things appeared to get better, war came, and Israel could not run or hide (17:8).
 2. At this point, God's mediator and leader reveals the plan of victory (17:9-10).
 - a. Israel is to be led in battle by Joshua while Moses, Aaron, and Hur go to the top of the hill with the staff of God in Moses' hand.

- b. This was no ordinary staff, being the one God used it in Egypt by turning it into a snake, to usher in the plagues, and to open the Red Sea for Israel to cross on dry land.
- c. God would now use it again as a banner held up by Moses through which He would give Israel victory over its enemies.

● 3. The staff as a banner held up by Moses made the difference (17:11-13).

- a. The battle was not won by Israel's might or skill in the valley, but by the banner of God being raised on the hill. Yet, this brings us an important thought.
- b. When we are fighting for something valuable (family, child, marriage, health, job situation, eternal destiny) we will generally respond in one of **two extremes**.
 - i. Some want to fight from the mountain, just "trusting God to fix everything."
 - ii. Others try to fight from the valley, to win by their own skills, willpower, wisdom, resources, all the while forgetting all about the mountain!
 - iii. Only when we bring the valley and the mountain together will we experience victory.
 - 1) We must **trust** in God to fix our problems, while **doing all that God commands** in dealing with those problems!
 - 2) If we spend little time praying to God about our problems or in gaining strength from reading His word to address them, we deprive ourselves of God's power.
 - 3) If we spend our time praying and reading, but do not do what God says to do to address them, we give God nothing to work with!
 - iv. It is so important that we grasp this concept, seeing that the battles fought in the valley are not just physical battles. These so very often have spiritual issues behind!
 - 1) Problems we face with our marriage, family, job, church, etc., are rarely physical only, but include spiritual issues of sin and evil at their roots.
 - 2) If we fail to consider this, our solutions will fall short of resolving them properly (Eph. 6:12-13 – "For **our struggle is not against flesh and blood**, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.¹³ Therefore, **take up the full armor of God**, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and **having done everything**, to **stand firm**.").

● C. Following the battle God commanded Moses to write in a book and recite it to Joshua (17:14, 15b).

- 1. That entry was to say that God would utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from the earth.
- 2. God was not satisfied with partial victory over this evil people. He would destroy them! That tells me that...
 - a. Sinful actions can have devastating temporal and eternal consequences (for Amalek). We must not fall prey to Satan's lie that somehow our sin will be different!
 - b. God's people are not to be satisfied with a halfway victory over sin and Satan, any more than we would be satisfied with being halfway cured of a deadly disease.
 - c. Christians must fight to *completely overcome sin*, refusing to be satisfied with any evil in our lives, seeing evil is never satisfied with holding a small place in our lives!
- 3. That is the history leading up to God revealing His name.

● **II. The name of God, Yahweh/Jehoval Nissi, revealed:**

● A. After God provided victory through Moses holding up His staff, or banner, we learn that "Moses built an altar and named it **The Lord is My Banner**" (Ex. 17:15).

- 1. By naming this altar Yahweh Nissi, "The LORD is my Banner," Moses established a memorial/reminder for Israel concerning who God is and what He did for them!
 - a. It acknowledged God's help in their plight and victory and praised Him for it.

- b. It reminded Israel, who though physically freed from Egyptian bondage were still captive in their minds, of the power and grace of their God to preserve their lives.
- 2. Reminders like this are why assembling together for worship and bible study are so important. They are like a banner, if you will, that...
 - a. Remind us of who God is, what He has done for us, and the kind of faith and obedient actions He expects of us His people.
 - b. Rally us to God and express our praise to Him for what all this means to our lives.

B. We have a banner to which we rally today!

- 1. It was foreshadowed in the bronze snake lifted up before dying Israel (Num. 21:4-9).
 - a. Here faithless Israel again spoke out against God and Moses (21:4-5).
 - i. Know that their faithlessness had already meant facing 40 years in the wilderness.
 - ii. So, if you put yourself in their place, it is not hard to sympathize.
 - iii. But God did not sympathize, seeing they called Him cruel and uncaring, spurned His grace, and desired Egypt over His redemption.
 - b. God punished them (21:6-7).
 - i. This punishment caused them to confess their sin and seek intercession.
 - ii. This should remind us of the point made earlier, that their present physical issues were not really physical at all. They were caused by their sin—their spiritual failings!
 - c. God responds and tells Moses to set up a banner, a standard, before the people (21:8-9).
 - i. This standard/banner having a bronze serpent was raised above the people.
 - ii. When those bitten looked at it, they had victory over their sin and did not die.
- 2. It was promised by the prophets.
 - a. In speaking of the coming Christ and the establishment of His kingdom (Isa. 11:9-10 – “They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰ Then in that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a **signal [banner – HCSB, NIV, NKJV]** for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious.”
 - b. Isa. 11:22, 25 – “Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I will lift up My hand to the nations and **set up My standard to the peoples**; and they will bring your sons in their bosom, and your daughters will be carried on their shoulders...²⁵ Surely, thus says the Lord, “Even the **captives** of the mighty man **will be taken away**, and the **prey** of the tyrant will be **rescued**; For I will contend with the one who contends with you, and **I will save your sons.**”
- 3. It was fulfilled in Jesus Christ! (John 3:14-15 – “As Moses **lifted up** the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be **lifted up**; ¹⁵ so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.”).
 - a. Jesus is saying that He is now God’s banner/standard to which all should look for salvation, direction, identification, etc.
 - b. If Jesus is not the focus of our lives, the standard by which we determine reality and make decisions, we can do the best we can to win...but we will still lose!
 - c. That does not mean we have nothing to do. For, the banner of Christ and our obedience of faith have to be brought together, just as was true of Israel.
 - i. Lk. 6:46 – “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and **do not do what I say?**”
 - ii. Mt. 7:21 – “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who **does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.**”
- 4. I know the battle can be wearisome and our hands become heavy under the load, but as Moses’ hand were held up by Aaron and Hur, God has provided a means for helping us hold up our hands to God. That is done through assembling together as a local church, as we are

doing this morning (Heb. 10:23-25 – “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; ²⁴ and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ **not forsaking our own assembling together**, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”).

- a. God has provided and commanded for us a special form of help and encouragement that can only be found when we are together in one place.
- b. So, I am thankful to God for providing the local church because of the special encouragement it gives us as we rally, or assemble, under the banner of Christ!

CONCLUSION:

1. We need to praise God that He cares enough to reveal Himself to us as our **Banner**, giving His Son to die for us on the cross so that as we look up to **him** we might have hope and courage in this life to gain victory for the next life.
2. That banner of Christ continues to stand before you today, calling to you to rally to Him and His grace to save you from your sins and give you hope for eternal life with Him in heaven!
3. Will you acknowledge Christ as *your* banner today and come to Him in faith, repentance of sin, confession of your faith in Him as the risen Christ, and finally by be baptized into Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins?

NOTE: Main sources for this lesson: 1) **The Power of God's Names**, by Tony Evans, Harvest House Publishers. Kindle Edition; 2) **Praying the Names of God**, by Ann Spangler. Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

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