

THE LORD IS OUR BANNER, PT. 4 (EXODUS 17)

This will be, I'm assuming, the last in our "The Lord is our Banner" series, with part 4. Today we will look at the passage of Scripture in **Exodus 17** that initiates that phrase in the Word of God, "The Lord is our Banner". That word "banner" is the Hebrew word "nissi". So then, we have, YHWH or Yehovah Nissi, "The Lord is Our Banner", with the root of that word being "nes", & means standard or banner that basically "refers to a banner or standard that is lifted up as a **signal or rallying point**. Similarly, one day, we will have a signal or rallying point "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (**1 Cor. 15:52-53**). That is, to all those who are of Christ Jesus, to those who have believed on and received Him, to be as Jesus put it, born-again, born of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ. (**Romans 8:9**) As it is written, "[For] as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (**John 1:12-13**) That banner or standard, the signal or rallying point, is said to be "used in the context of **military or communal gatherings** [like the last trump], serving as a visible [or audible] sign to guide or unite people."¹ So, as we are called to gather together in fellowship with Christ, we are also, as we know, in a spiritual battle, together, which is most certainly why we pray together, and for one another in the name of Christ Jesus.

The Apostle Paul tells us, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but **mighty in God** for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the **knowledge of God**, bringing every thought into captivity to the **obedience of Christ**." (**2 Corinthians 10:3-5**) Paul also tells us, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles [the trickery and seducing manner] of the devil [All the ways he tries to put a wedge between us and the Lord, to hinder our fullness and completeness in our communion with God]. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." (**Ephesians 6:11-13**) Paul continued by breaking down what is the armor God in **Ephesians 6**, but the whole of the armor of God is in Christ Jesus, and what goes along with Him, His Word! Jesus, "who being the brightness of [God's] glory and the express image of His person, and **upholding all things by the word of His power**, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high"! (**Hebrews 1:3**) We can and

1 <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/5251.htm>

have victory in Jesus! We're not looking then at a physical banner above us. Jesus is our standard, our banner, as we are "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God". (**Hebrews 12:2**) As we'll see, with our passage of Scripture in **Exodus 17**, the banner over us can be similar also to that "stone of remembrance", or "eben-ezer" that the prophet Samuel set up after the Israelites pushed back the Philistines, and of which Samuel stated, "Thus far the Lord has helped us." (**1 Samuel 7:12**) That doesn't mean that WE need to set up a "stone of remembrance". Jesus is our stone of remembrance and Jesus is the banner over us, to where He is bringing us together in fellowship with Him. Jesus tells us in **John 14:6**, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." Yet we all have a place in the body of Christ. While Jesus is our banner or standard, our signal and rallying point, He uses each of us in being His "stone of remembrance" and His banner or standard.

"In a broader sense, [the banner or standard] can symbolize a divine sign or miracle, representing God's intervention or presence."² Not only are we ALL walking miracles of God, as our Creator breathed the breath of life into each of us to be a living soul, but also to all those who have been led by God's Spirit to believe on Christ and receive Him, THAT is a blessed miracle from God! His banner, His standard is in Christ Jesus, just as we are told through Isaiah, "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, **who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious.**" (**Isaiah 11:10**) That's where I'm headed, who's with me? His resting place shall be glorious, not by man's standards but by His! Jesus, in telling His disciples of what was to come, that they would be scattered and face tribulation (thlipsis=pressing in), Jesus said this, "**These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation** [repeat that as many times as you need to get it in your understanding; we're no better than the prophets, we're no better than the apostles, we're certainly not better than Christ Jesus]; **but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.**" (**John 16:33**) He has conquered sin, death, and evil. In Him we have peace, in the world we'll have tribulation! As He is the Prince of Peace, shalom/eirene, where we can have a wholeness and completeness in Christ within ourselves, with God, and even with other brothers and sisters in Christ. Jesus also said, "**All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden** [those who face tribulation], **and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My**

2 <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/5251.htm>

burden is light." (Matthew 11:27-30) It is then, important, necessary, and critical for us to have that remembrance of who we are as believers on our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus. We are children of God, heirs to His promise to be joint-heirs with Jesus, as He has inherited all things, we have eternal life in Christ Jesus, and we are, as the Apostle Peter tells us, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy." (1 Peter 2:9) Our standard or banner is in Christ Jesus as He is with us, not as a visible banner that flutters above us, but as the Word of God reveals to us and through His Holy Spirit that testifies to us, as being children of God.

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Exodus 17:1-7 (Water from the Rock)

Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin [ciyn: "seen"], **according to the commandment of the Lord**, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." So Moses said to them, "Why do you **contend** with me? Why do you **tempt** the Lord?" [As we'll see, it wasn't just because they complained of thirst] And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, "Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!" And the Lord said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. So he called the name of the place Massah [to test] and Meribah [to strive/contend with], because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

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God did not punish the Israelites this time, as it seems as though that was a lesson to be learned. God is teaching us that same lesson. Jesus addressed that very topic for us in **Matthew 6**. "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even

Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." (**Matthew 6:25-34**) We are then continuing to put our trust in Christ as our Good, our Great, our Chief Shepherd, as He is our Way and Truth and Life, as He continues to build His eternal kingdom to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells **with you** and will be **in you**." (**John 14:15-17**) Right after that Jesus said, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." (**John 14:23**) The Apostle Paul in Romans 2:4 reminds us of the goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering of God and that by His goodness we are led to repentance, to then live according to His will and His Ways, in His Truth, and in our new life in Christ Jesus. We are loving Jesus as He first loved us, gave His life for us, taking our sins against God upon Himself. (**John 3:16-17**) And we are then not just learning of Him but from Him, personally. The apostles were given, and now so have we been given, by Jesus, His Great Commission, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to **observe all things that I have commanded you**; and lo, **I am with you always, even to the end of the age**." (**Matthew 28:18-20**) Combine that with the Great Commandments of God to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength and mind, and then also loving our neighbors as ourselves (**Mark 12:30-31**) gives us the phrase that we are "sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Christ Jesus", of course, as we are led by Him and learn from Him! We are walking in His Ways, according to the fruit of the Spirit of "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." (**Galatians 5:22-23**) The Apostle John tells us, "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (**1 John 3:16**)

Our seeking God and His kingdom and Righteousness is then in us sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Christ Jesus as we personally have fellowship with Him and spend time with Him in His

Word. He promises us that He will never leave us nor forsake us. (**Hebrews 13:5**) The Apostle Paul says then, "We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, **now is the day of salvation.**" (**2 Corinthians 6:1-2**) Each and every day, really every moment we are to be seeking the kingdom of God and His Righteousness as today is the day of our salvation as He is presently building His eternal kingdom one person after the next, so to speak. From faith to faith. "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." (**Romans 1:17**)

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Exodus 17:8-13 (Victory over the Amalekites)

Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. 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." 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. And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 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. So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

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There are two main themes to that story. The first is, as it is written about David, in confronting Goliath, the giant of the Philistines, he said, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, **whom you have defied**. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand...then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for **the battle is the Lord's**, and He will give you into our hands." (**1 Samuel 17:45-47**) Looking at that same concept from the New Testament Scriptures, the Apostle Paul tells us, "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord." (**Romans 12:19**) That doesn't mean we idly sit by and hope that God does something. We take it to Him in prayer. "Let your gentleness [fruit of the Spirit] be known to all men. **The Lord is at hand** [near]. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (**Philippians 4:5-7**) The second theme in that story is that they were all working together as God led them to victory.

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the folks at Ephesus said, "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we **all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the **truth in love**, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the **edifying of itself in love.**" (**Ephesians 4:11-16**)

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Exodus 17:14-16 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-Lord-Is-My-Banner; for he said, "Because the Lord has sworn: the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

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If only the Israelites had known, as they were complaining to Moses that God had led them out of Egypt just to kill them with thirst, that God was willing and able to satisfy their thirst and that a great victory was right around the corner. We too are promised, those who are in Christ Jesus, that we have the victory already! "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith."—in Christ Jesus! Just as God was leading the Israelites to the "Promised Land", so too is He with us, to where we all have that hope of saying, "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love." (**Song of Solomon 2:4**) Yet more than just saying, "Praise the Lord, I made it", the Apostle John wrote to us, saying "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." [You ever see a bride and bridesmaids getting ready before a wedding? They're all fiddling with one another, helping one another get just right for the wedding. We're helping one another to be His beautiful bride.] And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." (**Revelation 19:9**) Are you ready? Is Jehovah Nissi over you? Are you helping others in the love of God in Christ Jesus? Praise the Lord, our God reigns!