

God has a Name – Jehovah Nissi

6/30/24

Exodus 17:15-16

Sunday AM

I heard a story about a teenage boy who went into a local drugstore to buy candy. Oddly, he asked for it to be wrapped in 1 lb., 3 lb., and 5lb. packages. Curious, the pharmacist helping asked why. The boy explained that he had a hot date w/ a pretty girl and that after dinner w/ her parents, he was going to go out on the front porch w/ her. If she held his hand, he was going to give her the 1 lb. box. If she let him put his arm around her, he'd give her the 3 lb. box. But if she let him kiss her, he was going to give her the 5lb. box. Later that evening, when he sat down to dinner, the dad asked the boy to pray for the meal. Well... he prayed and prayed - praying for every missionary, church, and pastor he knew. When he finished, the girl said she didn't realize he was so religious. To which he replied, "I didn't know your dad was a pharmacist!"

Have you ever found yourself in a no-win situation? Speaking only for me – this is how I feel at times about our country during a political cycle – and especially after the excruciating debate on Thursday evening – that we're in a no-win situation. Whether it's a moral issue, political issue, or just a common-sense issue, more often than not, as a follower of Jesus, I'm concerned w/ our options.

In Exodus 17, I believe Moses and the Israelites found themselves in what appeared to be a **no-win situation**.

*Now Amalek came and fought w/ Israel in Rephidim. Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some men and go out, fight w/ Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill w/ the rod of God in my hand." So, Joshua did as Moses said, and fought w/ Amalek. Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And so, it was, when Moses held up his hand, 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. Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on each; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. So, Joshua defeated Amalek and his people w/ the edge of the sword. Then YHWH 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, YHWH is my Banner. Exodus 17:8-15*

**If you're just joining us**, this summer, we've been in a series on the names of God to learn about who He is and who He wants to be in our lives.

Of course, names are important b/c they identify who we are and speak to our nature/character. And like you – *husband, wife, son, daughter, friend, boss, employee* – God has many names to personify who He is and wants to be in our lives to reveal to us who God is.

Today, I want us to look at the name Jehovah-Nissi.

Here in Exodus 17, Moses is going to call God by the name of **Jehovah Nissi** – that is, the Lord is our Banner/Victory. This name serves as a reminder that ***no matter how desperate and needy we might be – the battle always belongs to the Lord and not ourselves.***

**Recap** – a renegade band of goat herders/brick masons wandered into a land where they faced a formidable enemy in what appeared to be a no-win situation.

Only unbeknownst to them, they had a powerful secret weapon on their side – **GOD!** The same God who led them out of Egypt, gave them victory at the Red Sea, provided manna/quail to eat, and provided water from a rock – was still w/ them when the Amalek attacked.

So, as the battle began, Moses lifted his staff – and so long as he held it high, this rag-tag army of commoners gained the upper hand. But whenever his arms grew weary, the Israelites would experience defeat. Seeing this unfold, *Aaron and Hur stepped in to support Moses by lifting his arms as he lifted the people before God* – and the Israelites prevailed.

**W/out a doubt**, this is a remarkable story. It was a banner moment in Moses' and Israel's life when God showed up and showed out to give victory to them in a no-win situation. *And I believe there's truth in this story for Christians today living in America.*

**NOW** – before I get started, let me be clear that the US is not Israel and thus these principles cannot be applied arbitrarily to our country. But as Christians living in America, I do think we can take solace in these truths.

I        The Battle Belongs to the **LORD**

As I look at the struggles w/in our nation, I'm often confounded by where people go in an attempt to solve these issues – and to whom they look in hopes of finding a savior or legislating a desired result.

Yet what we learn in this story (and many others) is that our God is the God of no-win scenarios – and our hope is in our dependence on Him and not on man.

**In this text**, Moses did the only thing he could do – he actively trusted in the Lord. As he went to the top of the hill to raise the rod of God, while Joshua led a group of men into battle. His staff was his banner.

**banner** – while we often think of a banner as a flag, in this case, Moses' staff was God's object lesson.

**Back in Exodus 4**, when God called Moses, to assure him that He was w/ Moses, God asked him to throw down his staff – whereupon it became a serpent. Then the Lord told Moses to pick it up by the tail – and it again became a staff. It was this staff that God used as a banner of victory over and over again thru-out Moses' leadership thru the wilderness.

It was this same staff that levied the 10 plagues upon the Egyptians, parted the Red Sea, and brought water from a rock – **ONLY the power wasn't in the staff but in God who made the staff.**

And now – in the battle w/ Amalek – it was the symbol God gave to Moses that served as a rallying point for Israel to base their trust in God for the battle.

All to teach us ONE crucial lesson – *it's not by might, nor by power, but by God's Spirit* – victory is had!

I believe the banner of God that leads us to victory today is **God's Word**. So, while the Psalmist calls us *to meditate on it day/night b/c it's a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path* – and while Hebrews tells us *it's quick/powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, capable of discerning the thoughts and intents of our heart* – **the power of God's Word isn't in the leather binding or printed pages, but in Him!**

**Meaning** – if Christians today want to have an impact on our culture for God and for good, then we must be people who are committed to knowing and living out the Word of God before a World in need of a Savior.

I'm not talking about being a bible-thumping, know-it-all Pharisee – but a people who know and live the truth of God in love pointing others to the true Jesus.

## II The Battle Requires Our PARTICIPATION

**In the same way**, Jehovah-Nissi is a symbol of God's presence/protection over His people no matter the challenges/difficulties we face in life. W/ God as our banner, even in a post-Christian society, we're reminded that the battle is not ours but His to fight – and that our participation begins on our knees – but then continues w/ our Godly actions.

So, make no mistake – Joshua and his merry band of goat herders/brick masons, didn't sit in the shade and twiddle their thumbs – NO! They went into battle.

Even though they were much weaker/inexperienced, they stood their ground and fought the good fight – yet the victory wasn't secured by human effort/ingenuity but by God's divine intervention. Jehovah Nissi went *before*, *beside*, and *behind* them. In the same way, while we're living in a Christ-less culture, we're still called to engage in G.C. and in the battle for truth and morality – yet still, only God can give the victory.

This means we do vote, lobby, and stand for the things of God in our culture – WE MUST! B/c we are in a battle for the soul of our nation, yet we do so w/ gentleness, love, and truth. Likewise, we can't ever be lured into thinking that any victory for God is b/c of what we've done and or doing. The battle belongs to the Lord. We are to be instruments of His grace/mercy in the secular culture we live in.

Jehovah-Nissi reminds us that while the victory belongs to the Lord, we are called to actively participate in the battle as we trust in Him.

## II God's People Need Each OTHER

Finally, I think it should be noted how Aaron and Hur supported Moses during the battle. They were equally essential to the victory that day as they helped to support the banner of God by supporting Moses.

**DYK** that in the ancient world, each tribe had its own banner or flag that identified them as a distinct group. However, when the Israelites raised the banner of Jehovah-Nissi, they were uniting under the banner of God Himself. In the same way, as Christians, we're called to unite together under the banner of Jesus to support/encourage one another as we walk w/ God. We may come from different backgrounds and cultures, but we're one in Christ. The banner of Jehovah-Nissi reminds us of our common purpose and identity in Christ to inspire us to work together for His kingdom and righteousness.

If we're going to see any true spiritual progress made in our nation, then Christians are going to have to stop fighting among themselves and start rallying around the love of God and the G.C. supporting one another. We're going to have to work together for that which is greater than and more important than ourselves. We have to remember we're all in this together!

The safety and prosperity of a nation, ultimately and essentially, depends on the protection and blessing of Almighty God – and the national acknowledgment of this truth is an indispensable duty that the people owe to Him. *John Adams*

**IOW** – a nation must be under God and w/ each other.

Jehovah-Nissi is more than just a name of God – it is a truth that represents His *power*, *presence*, and *protection* over His people. In times of trouble and uncertainty, we can raise the banner of Jehovah-Nissi and trust in His faithfulness and victory. His name serves to remind us that as followers of Jesus, we're called to unite together under the banner of Christ to courageously stand for what is *right*, *good*, and *Godly* as we love the lost world to the truth of Jesus.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ. *Patrick Henry*