**The Lord is My Banner**

*Exodus 17:8-16*

**Introduction**

1. **Exodus 17:8-16** – Israel is attacked by Amalek in Rephidim, and God gives them victory.
2. This text is a powerful example and illustration of the deliverance and victory God provides, and exhorts us to put our faith in Him.
3. Context
4. Salvation from Captivity
   1. God heard the cry of His people – **Exodus 3:7-8** – deliver them, bring them to promised land.
   2. God is THE God, their God, whose name is YHWH, who would establish covenant with them, and be their deliverer and sustainer throughout all generations – **Exodus 3:14-15**
      1. “God explained that He was not only the ‘God who exists’ but the ‘God who effects His will’” (VINE)
   3. Salvation of the Lord – **Exodus 14:13, 30-31**
   4. **1 Corinthians 10:1-2** – paralleled to baptism as he is making a point of their salvation and warning them about falling short.
      1. **(vv. 3-5)** – God was not well pleased with them.
      2. Salvation is not final at initial deliverance, but faithfulness must be maintained – **cf. Jude 5**
5. Internal Conflict
   1. Complained about bitter water – **Exodus 15:24** – God made it sweet.
   2. Complained about not having food like they did in Egypt – **Exodus 16:2-3** – God gave them manna in the mornings, and quail in the evenings.
   3. Complained about thirst – **Exodus 17:3** – God brought them water from a rock.
      1. ***(v. 7) – “Is the Lord among us or not?”***
   4. **Philippians 2:12-16** – we have been added to God’s people, and He is working in us as we work out our salvation – do it without complaining!
6. External Conflict
   1. Up to this point after salvation from the Egyptian bondage, all of Israel’s conflicts were self-inflicted. God was testing their faith, and they failed to show it.
   2. Their conflict with Amalek would show that in addition to internal struggle of faith there will be external attempts to destroy them.
   3. Israel attacked by Amalek – **Exodus 17:8-16**
      1. **(v. 8)** – Amalek fought with them.
      2. **(vv. 14, 16)** – God would war with Amalek throughout all generations and blot them out as consequence of their attack. (cf. **1 Samuel 15:3)**
      3. **Severity of consequence due to severity of attack (offense):**
         1. **1 Samuel 15:2** – punishment for ambush of God’s people.
         2. **Deuteronomy 25:17-19** – attacked the weak and weary at the rear, DID NOT FEAR GOD.
            1. Seems they happened upon Israel – possibly leaving the lower regions in the beginning of summer to the mountain regions in the Arabian Peninsula (where Rephidim is) – grass greener longer because cooler temps. (see Keil and Delitzsch)
            2. When they came upon Israel they attacked. (**Exodus 17:8)**
         3. Balaam in his prophecy concerning Israel – **Numbers 24:20** – first of the nations to defy God, and His plans for His people.
         4. God’s preeminence was universally manifest as the only true God, and Israel as His people – the nations were to fear Him and obey Him.
            1. His plans with Israel were not to be resisted.
            2. These plans were divinely organized for the salvation of mankind.
   4. **Ephesians 6:10-13** – God’s plans for our transformation and salvation are heavily attacked from a spiritual enemy who knows no mercy and fights dirty.
      1. **1 Peter 5:8** – he is always seeking to devour us, and will do so in crafty, deceptive ways.
7. Jehovah Nissi – The Lord is My Banner
   1. Amalek was defeated – **Exodus 17:13**
   2. God’s promise to utterly destroy Amalek written for a memorial – **Exodus 17:14**
   3. An altar was built in honor and praise of God for His victory – **Exodus 17:15-16**
      1. ***“The-Lord-Is-My-Banner”*** – Jehovah Nissi (standard, ensign, banner)
      2. **Explanation** – **(v. 16)** – ***“Lit. a hand is upon the throne of the Lord” (NKJV fn).***
         1. Translated, ***“the Lord has sworn”*** in interpretation of the language to mean the Lord is swearing by His throne that He will war with Amalek – ***“Because He has sworn with a hand upon the throne” (LSB).***
            1. ***“it has no parallel in Scriptural usage: God swears by Himself, not by His Throne.” (Albert Barnes)***
         2. **NOTE: verse 16 explains the name given, *“The Lord is my banner,”* which is a statement from the perspective of the people.**
            1. ***“A hand upon the throne of the LORD! The LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.” (ESV)***
            2. ***“upon”*** – *‘al* – could translate to ***“towards” or “up to” (BDB)***
            3. ***“the hand lifted up to the throne of Jehovah in heaven” (Keil and Delitzsch***)
            4. **Reflects to verse 11** – i.e. the alter in conjunction with the written memorial acts as an exhortation to the people to always follow the example of Moses in lifting the hands up to God in war against enemies, namely Amalek, in petition of faith for Him to fight for them.
      3. ***“The Lord is my banner”*** – we fight with the power of, and under the direction of the Lord, and we fight for the Lord as He fights for us **– duty, purpose, strength, confidence, victory**.
8. **The name given to the altar, Jehovah Nissi** (***“The-Lord-Is-My-Banner”***)**, makes it clear who brought victory for Israel against Amalek.**
   1. **It also makes clear that while God fights for His people, and is their power for salvation, it is incumbent upon us to appeal to Him – to petition Him to act.**
   2. **What does the account of Israel’s victory reveal about how God delivers, and grants us victory?**
   3. **What do we do to ensure that victory under the banner of the Lord?**
9. The Lord is My Banner
10. Prayer
    1. **(vv. 9, 11)** – Moses lifted his hands holding the rod of God for Israel to prevail in battle.
       1. **Exodus 4:17, 20** – a rod Moses had, which God made a symbol of His presence and power through which He delivered Israel.
       2. The Lord would command Moses to stretch forth the rod and He would perform a miraculous work – **cf. Exodus 14:16, 21** (Parting of the sea) – used in the plagues of Egypt.
          1. The rod’s connection with miraculous events was always by the direction of God.
          2. I.e. God told Moses to use the rod, and how.
       3. With Amalek, there is not instruction given by God to use the rod, but Moses takes it to the top of the hill to raise it to God.
    2. Lifting up hands was the common posture of prayer – **Psalm 28:2; 134:2; 141:2; Lamentations 3:40-42; 1 Timothy 2:8**
       1. Not a prescribed necessity.
       2. The physical act itself is not significant, but what it is associated with in the context of the OT especially is significant.
    3. “not indeed by a merely spiritless and unthinking elevation of the staff, but by the power of his prayer, which was embodied in the lifting up of his hands with the staff…As long as Moses held up the staff, he drew down from God victorious powers for the Israelites by means of his prayer” (Keil and Delitzsch)
    4. The Lord is our banner, but it is through petitioning Him in prayer that He is moved to act:
       1. **Ephesians 6:18** – praying always.
       2. **James 1:5** – asking God.
       3. **1 Peter 5:6-7** – giving our cares to God.
       4. **Luke 18:1, 8** (Parable of persistent widow) – persistence in prayer.
          1. Moses persisted, and had Aaron and Hur support his hands.
       5. **James 5:16** – it is effective.
       6. **But they fought, and so our prayers must be accompanied with acting faith.**
11. Support of Leaders
    1. **(vv. 10-13)** – Moses took with him Aaron and Hur, who helped support Moses’ hands.
    2. **Holding up someone’s hands** – rereferring to supporting them, aiding them in an important work that they are doing, especially a cumbersome work.
    3. God tells us to hold up the hands of those who lead us:
       1. **Acts 14:23** – elders appointed in every church.
       2. **1 Thessalonians 5:12-13** – we need to show them respect, honor, and support in their invaluable work.
       3. **Hebrews 13:7, 17** – we need to follow their example, submit to their rule, and see to it with what ability we have in personal faithfulness that their work is with joy.
12. The Root of Jesse
    1. The Messiah, a Root of Jesse, ***“a Rod from the stem of Jesse,”*** stands as a banner to the spiritual remnant, even including Gentiles – **Isaiah 11:10-16**
       1. **(vv. 9-10)** – in the holy mountain (church), Christ is a banner to the people, providing a resting place.
       2. **(vv. 11-16)** – He is a banner under which is deliverance, salvation, and protection and victory against enemies.
          1. **(v. 11)** – ***“the second time”*** – i.e. the spiritual remnant (beyond the mere physical remnant from captivity).
          2. The remnant of a remnant – **Isaiah 6:13**
    2. The Lord is our victory – **2 Timothy 4:17-18**

**Conclusion**

1. May we find confidence knowing that “The Lord is my banner.”
2. We should rally to Him as our banner through faith and prayer, knowing that victory over temptation, sin, the world, and death is certain in Him.
3. Through Christ we gain the victory!