

Sermon #44 — Isaiah Series

Title: **CHRIST OUR ENSIGN**

Text: Isaiah 11:10

Subject: *Christ the Banner*

Date: Sunday Evening — February 18, 2018

Readings: *Bobbie Estes and Rex Bartley*

Introduction:

Iwo Jima Memorial — I remember the first time I was in Washington, D.C. and saw the Iwo Jima Memorial. I was just a 13-year-old boy. When I saw that memorial, with those six Marines setting the Standard, the Stars and Stripes upon the conquered ground, my very soul, even as a boy, burst with patriotism, joy, and gratitude. Those six Marines were gathered as one, rallying in one cause, around the Ensign. Every hand was united to raise the flag of our nation.

I still have a wonderful sense of patriotic joy and gratitude every time I think of that memorial and those Marines or see a copy of the picture that inspired it. But we are not here to talk about American History or to stir American patriotism, though someone needs to teach this generation of

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whining welfare babies and sit-in protesters American History and someone needs to stir this generation to some red-blooded patriotism.

There is another Banner, another Ensign that I want to talk to you about, not the Stars and Stripes, or even the Stars and Bars.

(Psalm 60:4) “Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.”

Open your Bibles to Isaiah 11:10, and read what God’s prophet Isiah tells us about **CHRIST OUR ENSIGN**, the Standard of his church. I want to raise him high before your eyes. May it please God to pour out his Spirit upon us, reveal Christ in our midst, and cause everyone here to gather round him. (Read Isaiah 11:10).

(Isaiah 11:10) “And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.”

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The Root of Jesse, of whom Isaiah speaks, is the Lord Jesus Christ, who came according to the flesh from Jesse, the father of David. As a man our Savior was a Branch which grew out of Jesse's roots (v. 1). But as God he is the Root from whom Jesse had his life and being.

Our text is a prophecy of Christ's coming into the world and of his being lifted up as and Ensign for the gathering of God's elect throughout the world unto him in saving faith. — “*And in that day,*” this blessed Gospel Age, “*there shall be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an Ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.*”

Proposition: The Lord Jesus Christ is the Ensign, the Standard, the Banner, to whom all God's elect are gathered in faith. — The Lord Jesus Christ is the Ensign of his church.

In **Exodus 17:15**, Moses built an altar to him and called it Jehovah-nissi. Our Savior is Jehovah-nissi,

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the Lord our Banner. In the majesty of his person, in the efficacy of his work, in the merit of his blood, in the perfection of his righteousness, in the certainty of his triumph, and in the glory of his second advent, Christ is the Banner of his Church. Under this Banner we fight. Under this Banner we prevail. And to this Banner we rally.

What is Isaiah's meaning? How are we to understand this prophecy of Christ's being an Ensign? An ensign is a standard, the banner, or the flag of an army. And an ensign is a standard-bearer, the soldier who carries the flag, leads the brigade, and directs the battle. Our text declares that Christ is both to his church, the standard and the standard-bearer. The Lord Jesus is our Ensign. But what kind of Ensign is our Savior? That is the question I want to answer in this message.

ENSIGN OF WAR

1st — **Christ is an Ensign for war.** An ensign is usually associated with war. The church of God has no insignia for peace in this world, because the

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church militant, the church in this world, is always at war. And Christ is an Ensign for soldiers at war.

- He is called a “*Leader and a Commander to the people*” (Isaiah 55:4).
- He is called “*the Captain of our salvation*” (Hebrews 2:10).
- And here he is called “*an Ensign of the people.*”

You see, contrary to modern religious thought, **Christianity is a warfare.** Christ and his people are warriors. He is our Captain, our Commander, and our Ensign. And we are soldiers under his command.

Our enemies are the world, the flesh, and the devil, the world and its religion, the world and its philosophy, the world and its dogma, our own flesh, and Apollyon. And **the cause** for which we are fighting is the glory of God. When you and I were baptized in the name of Christ, we enlisted as volunteer soldiers under the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. As such, we must “*endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ*” (2 Timothy 2:3) and stand fast, having our “*loins girt about with truth*” (Ephesians 6:14).

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- In the Face of Satan’s temptations
- In the Teeth of the World’s Opposition and the Charm of its Allurements
- In Opposition to the Desires, Inclinations, and Pleasures of the Flesh

Whatever the cost, let us follow after our Ensign as good soldiers of Christ (Hebrews 12:3-4; Ephesians 6:14-18).

(Hebrews 12:3-4) “For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. (4) Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”

(Ephesians 6:14) “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; (15) And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; (16) Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. (17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is

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the word of God: (18) Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

ADVANCING ENSIGN

2nd — **Our Lord Jesus Christ is an advancing Ensign.** Other ensigns retreat, but not Christ. He is ever on the move through this world, constantly advancing, gathering the spoils of his victory by the gospel.

- In our text he is said to stand, because he stands forever as an immutable Savior (Hebrews 13:8).
- But as an Ensign, like the tabernacle of old, Christ moves from place to place.

He is held forth in the preaching of the gospel. Where the gospel is preached there Christ is. When the gospel is taken away Christ is gone.

- Like the Gadarenes, many foolishly bid Christ depart from them, if not by their words as by their deeds (Mark 5:17).

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- While we are privileged to have the light of the gospel, let us take advantage of our privileges, and follow the direction of our Ensign (John 12:35-36).

(John 12:20-36) “And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: (21) The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, **Sir, we would see Jesus.** (22) Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. (23) And Jesus answered them, saying, **The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.** (24) Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.** (25) He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. (26) If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour. (27) **Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for**

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this cause came I unto this hour. (28) **Father, glorify thy name.** Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again. (29) The people therefore, that stood by, and heard *it*, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. (30) Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. (31) Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. (32) And **I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.** (33) **This he said, signifying what death he should die.** (34) The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man? (35) Then Jesus said unto them, **Yet a little while is the light with you.** Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. (36) While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.”

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GATHERING ENSIGN

3rd — **Our blessed Savior, our crucified Redeemer, is a gathering Ensign.** The purpose of an ensign is the gathering of soldiers. And the purpose of Christ our Ensign is the gathering of God’s elect from the four corners of the earth.

Through the preaching of the gospel, Christ, by his servants, says, “*Come unto me, take up the cross and follow me, whosoever will, let him come unto me.*” And when he speaks his people come (Psalms 65:4; 110:3). “*To him shall the Gentiles seek!*” (v. 12; Genesis 49:10; Isaiah 56:8).

(Isaiah 11:12) “And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

(Genesis 49:10) “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his

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feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*.”

(Isaiah 56:8) “The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather *others* to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.”

By the gospel, Christ the King of heaven invites and commands all who will to come to him. You must answer for yourself. Will you, or will you not come to Christ? Come to him now in faith...

- As Sheep to their Shepherd (John 10:28; Song of Solomon 1:7-8)
- As Doves to their Window (Isaiah 60:8)
- As Noah to the Ark (Genesis 6-8)
- As the Manslayer to the City of Refuge (Joshua 20)
- As Chicks to the Hen (Matthew 23:37)

GUIDING ENSIGN

4th — **Christ is our guiding Ensign.** The flag shows the soldiers which way to march. Their duty is to

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follow the ensign. And as our Ensign Christ is our Guide. As the cloud and the fire led Israel through the wilderness, our Lord guides his children through this world. Where would we be without our Ensign.

He guides us by his Spirit through his Word

(Isaiah 59:20-21).

- The Book of God is our Law.
- The Book of God is our Map.

(Isaiah 59:20-21) “And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. (21) As for me, this *is* my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that *is* upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and forever.”

He guides us by his example of life (1 Peter 2:21; John 13:13-14).

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(John 13:13-14) “Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am. (14) If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.”

(1 Peter 2:21-24) “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: (24) Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”

He guides us by His sovereign providence and irresistible grace (Psalm 37:23).

(Psalm 37:23) “The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.”

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SEEN BY FAITH

5th— The Lord Jesus is an Ensign held forth before all; but **he is an Ensign seen only by faith.** To the world, he is unseen. The blind cannot see him. They can see his doctrine. They can see facts concerning his life, death, resurrection, exaltation, and second coming. But they cannot see him. But those who believe see him who is invisible to the natural eye (Hebrews 11:27). — “*We see Jesus!*”

- Who He Is!
- What He Did!
- Why He Did It!
- Where He Is Now!
- What He Is Doing There!

UNITING ENSIGN

6th — **Our dear Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is a uniting Ensign.** It is the Ensign that unites soldiers on the field of battle. That is their point of unity. Though they are many and varied, they are united as one. They have one commander. They are engaged in

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one cause. And they have sworn allegiance to one flag.

Do you see what I am driving at? **Our great uniting point, our center of unity is the Lord Jesus Christ, our Ensign.** We all profess to be one. Let us live up to our profession (Ephesians 4:1-6). Christ is not, and cannot be, divided.

- He has united us to God!
- Christ died to make Jew and Gentile one (Ephesians 2:18-22).
- He prayed for the unity of his people (John 17:20-22).
- And his grace makes his people one (Galatians 3:27-29; Colossians. 3:10-11).

Let all who would divide God's saints be warned
(1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Proverbs 6:12-19).

(1 Corinthians 3:16-7) “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (17) If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.”

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(Proverbs 6:12-19) “A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth. (13) He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers; (14) Frowardness *is* in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord. (15) Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy. (16) These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him: (17) A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, (18) An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, (19) A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.”

EXALTED ENSIGN

7th — **Christ is an exalted Ensign.** The ensign is lifted up high above all the heads of the people, lifted up upon a pole, or set upon a high hill, or upon a high tower. And Christ our Ensign is lifted up and exalted in three ways.

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1. In the death which he died, the death of the cross (John 12:32-33).
2. In his resurrection and exaltation (Philippians 2:8-11).
3. In the preaching of the gospel (John 3:14-16).

(John 3:14-16) And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: (15) That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. (16) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

UNDER ASSAULT

8th — **Our Ensign, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Banner, is under assault.** Above all the officers and soldiers on the field, the ensign is the most constant object of attack, the man who carries the colors is in the enemies’ aim. If he falls the flag falls. If the flag falls the army is in disarray. Our enemies’ motto is,

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“Fight ye not with small or great, save only with the King of Israel.”

When our Savior was upon the earth, he was the object of Satan’s venom.

- In His Birth
- In the Wilderness
- In His Life
- In Gethsemane
- In His Crucifixion

After he ascended to heaven, Satan continued to assault our blessed Lord in the persecutions of his church.

To this day, the primary object of Satan’s attack is Christ our Ensign. Satan, the Deceiver, sets the world, secular and religious, against Christ. He knows that he has but a short time and his wrath is great (Revelation 12:12).

- The Church of God
- The Gospel of God
- The Son of God

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- His Sovereign Character
- His Blood Atonement
- His Efficacious Grace

The more vehemently the enemy attacks our Ensign, the more vehemently we must rally to him. — “The loyalty of the soldier is proved where the battle is the hottest.”

CMFORTING ENSIGN

9th — **Our blessed, ever-present Christ is a covering Ensign of comfort.** As all the soldiers on the field of battle are concerned with the safety of their flag, so the flag is a means of safety to the soldiers. As long as the flag flies, they are safe.

Christ is to his church a flag of covering and safety (Isaiah 4:5-6; 32:2). “*His banner over (us) is love.*”

(Isaiah 4:5-6) “And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon

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all the glory *shall be* a defence. (6) And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.”

(Isaiah 32:1-2) “Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. (2) And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.”

He hides his own elect in...

- The Hollow of His Hand.
- Under the Shadow of His Wings.
- In the Secret Place of His Pavilion.

CONQUERING ENSIGN

10th — **Our all-glorious Christ is a conquering Ensign.** In every warfare many ensigns are killed. Many flags are taken. But Christ is an Ensign who lives forever. His gospel is a flag that cannot be taken. **Our great ensign always has been, and ever**

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will be, Christ the Conqueror (Revelation 6:2. 19:11).

(Revelation 6:1-2) “And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. (2) And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.”

(Revelation 19:1-11) “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: (2) For true and righteous *are* his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. (3) And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. (4) And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. (5) And a voice came out of the

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throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. (6) And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. (7) Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. (8) And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. (9) And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. (10) And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (11) And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.”

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And our Savior's conquests are complete and permanent (Romans 8:37-39).

APPLICATION

We have gone forth into all the world under this banner together for nearly 38 years. — We want no other. Christ crucified is our Ensign.

- I call upon you who are yet his enemies to surrender to our Master. Will you be gathered to him?
- Come to Christ, and you will find his rest glorious.

Amen.