

Jehovah-nissi
Exodus 17: 8-16
09/13/09

“I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

For over 225 years the American flag has been the symbol of our nations strength and unity. Thirteen red and white stripes and fifty stars represent the thirteen original colonies and the fifty United States. Our flag is a symbol of and the standard by which Americans unite together. Simply stated, that standard is this; *“We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”* America is the champion for human rights in the world today.

Before the ÷Flag Actö of 1776, America had no standard around which to rally the people. Since then, the flag has been at the forefront in human rights around the world. It is loved by those who cherish freedom and liberty, it is feared by those who would assail basic human rights and it is recognized around the world as the ÷Star Spangled Bannerö of those values held dear by freedom loving people. Americans have lived under, fought for, and many have died to preserve the liberties under its banner. It is the banner under which millions of aliens, legal and illegal, seek citizenship every year and is proudly flown as the symbol of fifty, though diverse, yet united states.

There is another banner of far greater significance and influence than even our nations flag. This Banner is known around the world by men of every kindred, tongue, tribe and nation. This Banner has flown for ages and had its influence on a multitude of sinners, which no man can number. We who know God in his redemptive character as a Just God and Savior have been privileged to serve under this Banner and uphold and live by those principles it represents.

God identifies this banner for us in **Exodus 17:15** as “Jehovah-nissi.ö Jehovah in the Hebrew is ÷Lord.ö Nissi in the Hebrew is ÷my banner.ö Moses built an altar there and Israel sacrificed to ÷The Lord our Banner.ö

A banner is a communication medium. It is a means to communicate a specific message to an intended audience. Banners are of various shapes and sizes and constructed of different kinds of fabric, secured to a staff, pole or rod and stamped with a combination of letters, numbers or symbols

declaring some standard. They are flown in public for all to see what is the standard of the bearer thereof, or the one the bearer represents. Monarchs parade their banners before campaigns of war. Kings fly them in victory parades. Nations include them in their festivals and celebrations. They are ever present where the citizens gather for national events and are displayed as the standard and principles by which a nation conducts itself.

The word *ōbannerō* is only found three times in Scripture. It is the Hebrew word “*nace*,” (nissi) and means a standard, a rallying point. So the verse reads, “*The Lord is my standard, my rallying point.*” Isaiah wrote of this Banner in Isaiah 11:10. “*And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign (nace, Banner) of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.*”

Exodus 17:8-16 identifies “**The Lord our Banner**” as the standard:

- 1. To which God’s people rally. V8-13**
- 2. By which God’s promise is recalled. V 14-15**
- 3. In which God’s people rest. V-16**

- 1. To which God’s people rally. V8-13.**

The experience of Israel in these verses is steeped in shadows and types, as is most of the Old Testament. Failure to see this will result in nothing more than a history lesson and we will miss the spiritual truths revealed therein. This is an actual experience by national Israel with a spiritual application to “*the Israel of God.*” (**Galatians 6:16.**)

Exodus 16:1: “*And they took their journey from Elim, and the congregation of the children of Israel came into the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing from the land of Egypt.*” The setting for this experience of Israel is 45 days into their wilderness journey from Egypt. Israel had just been delivered by the hand of God from bondage to the Egyptians and was camped in the wilderness. God, through a series of miracles called the plagues of Egypt, had delivered Israel from the bondage in which they had been held over 400 years. From a life of misery in the brickyards of Egypt, God has delivered them to freedom from slavery to the Egyptians. This was accomplished by sprinkling the blood of a *ōLamb without blemish,ō* on the lintels and doorposts of every Hebrew household. **Read Exodus 12:13.** “*And the blood shall be for you a token, (standard) upon the houses where you are: and*

when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.” By this one act of God, the Hebrew nation was delivered from physical bondage to slavery. It is a picture and type of the deliverance from spiritual bondage to sin rendered by God the Son when he died on the cross. **Hebrews 9:22**, *“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission,”* there is no salvation. And since, according to **Hebrews 10:4**, *“It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins,”* this typified the doing and the dying of the *“Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.”*(John 1:29) By one fell swoop; Christ put away the sins of his people by his death on Calvary. **Hebrews 10:14** say’s, *“For by one offering, he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.”*

So Israel is 45 days into their freedom from bondage but they are 40 years from entered into the Promised Land. This is the setting for Exodus 17:8-13.

The cross upon which the Son of God *“humbled himself and became obedient unto death”* (Philippians 2:8) accomplished the salvation, the redemption, and the justification of God’s elect. All the demands of God’s holy law and justice against his elect were satisfied and righteousness was established for them. They were, by that one act, translated into the kingdom of His dear Son and given an unchangeable standing of justification. Now no one can *“lay anything to the charge of God’s elect, for it is God who justified them.”* (Romans 8:33) They march under the banner of their Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. But not all Israel escaped the bondage of Egypt.

Romans 9:6. *“They are not all Israel which are of Israel.”* Not every one who calls themselves Christian, are Christians. Who, then? They are those who serve under *“Jehovah, the Lord my Banner.”* It is to this standard God’s people rally.

Are we the people of God? Does God recognize us as the people of God? Are we marching under the banner of Christ? Is his standard our standard? These are questions every serious religionist should consider. How to tell?

There are only two standards, banners under which sinners serve. There is the banner of works and the banner of grace. All of us, even God’s elect, before regeneration and conversion, rally to the banner of works. No matter how vehemently one might deny this truth, God’s testimony declares it so.

Romans 10:1-4 declares all who are ignorant of or not submitted to Christ’s righteousness imputed as all their salvation to be serving under the works banner and lost. Which is my standard, works or grace?

a. The banner of works.

V-8. *“Then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim.”* Here is recorded Israel’s first encounter with her archenemy, Amalak. Amalek was an ungodly leader of a mighty army, well trained and ready for war. The Israelites were *“the least of peoples”* (Deuteronomy 7:7) a rag-tag nation with no army and little armor to defend themselves. Remember they left Egypt 45 days earlier with little more than the clothes on their back. They were ill equipped and untrained to do battle.

Who is this Amalek, the enemy of Israel? He was grandson to and a descendent of Esau, the eldest Son of Isaac. Esau is he that sold his birthright to his brother Jacob for a morsel of meat. The birthright was that blessing from God bestowed on the first-born son in every family. The owner of the birthright was the recipient of his fathers blessing, which included a double portion of his fathers goods, the spiritual headship of the family at his fathers death, and according to Ephesians 1:3, *“All spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”* By selling the birthright to Jacob for a morsel, Esau showed his contempt for, and utter rejection of God’s salvation in Christ Jesus, the Standard to which God’s people rally. Christ’s righteousness is the sinner’s birthright. Rejecting the birthright, Esau opted for salvation by his works. Jacob sought and received the birthright at all costs, and God’s testimony in Malachi 1:1-3 of both is; *“Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated.”* In this type Esau despised the birthright; Jacob would have it by hook or crook.

Such is the case with sinners today; righteous like Jacob or *“profane fornicator”* (Hebrews 12:16) like Esau. Owing the birthright by virtue of our union with Christ or void of a righteousness that answers every demand of Gods law and justice against them and deserving of the wrath of God.

What does God require of sinners to find acceptance and favor with him? Is it not righteousness? In **Matthew 5:20**, Jesus said; *“For I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.”* Is it not perfection? In **Matthew 5:48**, God commands us to *“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.”* This means to be unchargable at the bar of Gods justice. Can I measure up to this standard in my character and conduct? No, and my inability does not negate my responsibility. So how can I stand unchargable before God: only in the Lord, my Banner, *“Jesus Christ the righteous,”* (**1 John 2:1**) the Standard to which

God's people rally. It is by this standard we shall be judged. **Acts 17:31.** *"Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."* The banner justified sinners serve under is that banner which declares Christ's righteousness imputed to be all the sinners salvation. All of the same faith of Esau and Amalek fly another banner, a banner of works.

V-8. *"Then came Amalek and fought with Israel."*

Amalek was the enemy of Israel. Who is the enemy of spiritual Israel? If we would fight the enemy we must know who is he. Herein lies the problem. By nature spiritual Israel does not know who is his enemy. He doesn't know that he, himself is *"alienated and enemies in his mind by wicked works (Colossians 1:21)* from the true God. He doesn't know that he has taken sides with the enemy in open opposition to God. This is true even of those whom Christ redeemed. Though chosen of God, loved eternally by God and justified freely by his righteousness imputed alone, we all, before regeneration and conversion rallied to Satan against God. Notice the words *"fought with Israel."* He didn't say, *"fought against"* but with Israel. Though fighting in and with the camp of Israel, (a type of the church) we all by nature, in ignorance of God, stood against God and, many times each other. Those who are ignorant of God's standard of judgment judge themselves and others saved or lost by the wrong standard. This allows us to accept or reject others based on our standard, which is character and conduct. We, in our zeal to please God, revealed our enmity with God. **Hebrews 3:19** is a testimony from God that most of those in religion today and those who left Egypt in the exodus perished. *"But with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."* They, like we by nature, were Israelites in name only. At that time we were not as those in **Philippians 3:3** who, *"worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."* We worshipped and served a god of our imagination, an idol. We rallied to the banner of works.

V-8. *"They fought in Rephidim."* In the Hebrew that word means, *"resting places."* More than a specific location, rephidim's were wayside rests. Amalek caught Israel off guard. They were ignorant of the present danger. So were we. They and we were *"at ease in Zion."* (Amos 6:1)

Such is the state of every sinner by nature, even God's elect: wandering in the desert of sin and ill equipped personally to engage our enemy, the Devil. **1 Peter 5:8** warns us to, *ōbe sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*" Sinners by nature have no resources to overcome Satan's power over us. Nothing done by us, in us or through us can remove sins guilt and condemning power. By nature we don't even know we are under his power. We are as was Israel in the wilderness, rallying to the banner of works. We thought something other than Christ's righteousness imputed could recommend us to God. Such are those who serve under the banner of works.

b. The banner of grace.

But God's elect will be delivered; they shall enter God's rest. Though wandering in the wilderness of sin, unaware of their redemption by the blood of Christ, they cannot remain in ignorance and unbelief. He engaged His Ensign, His Standard, His Joshua to insure it.

V-9. God called Joshua, through Moses, a type of Mediator, to assemble his army and confront Amalek. The Hebrew for Joshua is *ōJehovah is salvation.ö* Joshua is a type of Christ. God commanded Joshua to go in the power of God and fight Amalek.

V-13. How did Joshua overcome Amalek? *“Joshua discomfited Amalek with the edge of the sword.”* The word *“discomfited”* is found several times in the Old Testament with several different meanings. It means to crush to pieces, destroy, to frighten, cause to tremble, to confuse. Here it means *ōto weaken, to disable, to prostrate, to subdue.ö* It means to render Amalek helpless to stand against Israel. Short of total annihilation, Israel was enabled to *ōprevailö* against Amalek.

The spiritual application here is this: Those whom God justified by the blood of Christ, his elect, must, and shall be made to see and receive his salvation by faith. Though redeemed by his blood, they are all by nature ignorant of this salvation. It is Satan's business to keep them in ignorance and unbelief, in bondage to fear. **Read Hebrews 2:14-15.** *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”* God will not lose one for whom Christ died. They shall be made to see in time what God purposed before time and

Christ accomplished in time at the cross for them. They shall be made to see how a holy God can be just and justify the ungodly based on the righteousness of His Son imputed and received by faith. This is why Joshua could not fail for Israel and why Christ cannot fail for his people. There was a remnant in Israel under Joshua's leadership. There is today a remnant according to the election of grace that God must have. They shall be made to enter into his rest as did those with Joshua enter the promise land. God's justice demands it. This is typified by the rod of God Moses displayed.

Exodus 17:9-12. This rod is a rod of judgment and justice. It typifies the holy character of a holy God. It is the standard by which a holy God judges the guilty and justifies the ungodly. This is the same rod whereby Moses wrought miracles and wonders among the Egyptians in the exodus. To the ungodly Egyptians it wrought judgment. To the Israelites it wrought deliverance. Under the blood of the Lamb, it wrought salvation to spiritual Israel. **Read Isaiah 11:1-5.** This Rod is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. **Psalm 85:10** declared this Rod (Christ) to be where *"mercy and truth are met together, where righteousness and peace have kissed each other."*
V-13. Joshua overcame Israel's adversary with the edge of the sword. Our Joshua overcame Satan by the word of his mouth.

According to Hebrews 4:12, the sword, *"the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edge sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intent of the heart."* Three times in the wilderness of testing at the beginning of his ministry our Lord confronted Satan with these words: *"it is written."* In Luke 4:4 Jesus told Satan; *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."*

God's elect, (and only they, who are enemies by nature) are overcome by the word of God preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Romans 1:16-17** declares the *"Gospel to be the power of God unto salvation, for there in is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith."* It is to declare God to be both just and justifier. He's just to punish the wicked and just to save the ungodly. According to 2 Corinthians 2:16, this Rod, this standard, this gospel is a *"savour of life unto life and a savour of death unto death,"* When Christ is lifted up in the preaching of the gospel, as Moses lifted up the rod, he will, as he promised in **John 12:32**, *"draw all men unto me."*

The Lord, our Banner is the standard:

1. To which God's people rally. V8-13

2. By which God's promise is recalled. V14-15.

Based on the successful campaign of Joshua against Amalek, God instructs Moses to record in a book the events experienced. This shall be a memorial (reminder) of Joshua's victory over Amalek and God's promise to remove the remembrance of Amalek from the earth. And what does Amalek represent, those who rally to the banner of works, those who reject the birthright of Christ, the firstborn over his household and his righteousness as the whole of salvation. This is the enemy we fight daily. This is the enemy who stands daily to accuse us before God. This is the sin that so easily doth beset us. (Hebrews 12:1-2) But God's elect remember. Even today we "*rehearse it in the ears (hearing) of Joshua*" when we preach the promise of salvation conditioned on Christ and his righteousness imputed alone. We preach it because we believe our Joshua has gotten the victory over Satan ("*Joshua fought*) Amalek and we believe it to be the sinner's only hope. The Lord our Banner is the standard, (the banner of grace) by which the promise is recalled. We gather together each Sunday to worship our God by holding forth **Christ our Banner** as a reminder that He is coming for his church, those who "*look for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.*" (Titus 2:13) The Lord our Banner is the standard to which **God's people rally**, by which **God's promise is recalled**, and

3. In which God's people rest. V-16

"For he said, because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." In each successive generation, God will, through the preaching of the gospel, call out his elect from every kindred, tongue, tribe and nation. He shall not fail to bring one for whom our Joshua overcame by the blood of his cross, to a saving knowledge of his finished work for them. They shall enter God's rest and take up the banner of Joshua, the banner of grace, the gospel and fight the fight he fought. They shall enter into his rest from all their labors because: The Lord our Banner is the standard to which God's people rally. He is the Banner by which God's promise is recalled and He is the Banner in which God's people rest.

"I pledge allegiance to "Jehovah-Nissi," the Lord our Banner and to his church, the blood bought Bride. One Head, one Body, under God, indivisible, with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Peter 1:8) Will you fly his banner? Will you hold high his standard? Is Jehovah-nissi your altar? *"We hold these truths."*

By Winston Pannell