

The LORD Is My Banner

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I. The story God gives Victory (Ex 17:8-16)

Then Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim. 9 So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose men for us and go out, fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will station myself on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand." 10 Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought against Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands were heavy. Then 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 one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set. 13 So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. 14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." 15 Moses built an altar and named it The LORD is My Banner; 16 and he said, "The LORD has sworn; the LORD will have war against Amalek from generation to generation."

A. Amalek fights against Israel

B. Strategy of Moses

1. Joshua and his men will fight against Amalek.
2. Moses will station himself (pray for them) with the staff of God in his hand.

I will stand on top of the hill uses the emphatic I,
"I, for my part, shall take my stand on the hilltop."

Moses' holding the staff of God (V. 20) above his head with both hands symbolized Israel's total dependence on the power of God. When Moses lowered his hands, a picture of lack of dependence, the enemy was winning.

The staff of God (see Ex 4:20, 17:9)
"the stick that God told me to carry."
"holding this walking stick that has the power of God."

C. The battle

Israel prevails when Moses' hands are held up.

Amalek prevails when Moses lets his hands down.

D. Victory - Moses sits on a rock while Aaron and Hur supports his hands.

E. Declaration of the Lord;

"write this in a book (first time something is written in redemption history) I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."

"The LORD has sworn; the LORD will have war against Amalek from generation to generation."

F. Moses names the altar he built "The LORD is My Banner."

II. Definitions:

A. Jehovah-Nissi

"The LORD is my banner" (Ex. 17:8-15).

"Jehovah is my Signal Pole"

Moses built an altar and named it 'The Lord Gives Me Victory.'

The Lord is our banner of victory, in the battle

B. Rod (walking stick), Banners and flags 3 interchangeable Hebrew words used.

1. Moses was to stand on the hill, having his hands held high and with the staff of God in his hand. The word staff is used 252 times in the O. T. as staff, rod or tribe.

2. The flag or banner of the larger kind, serving for three tribes marching together. These standards, of which there were four, were worked with embroidery and beautifully ornamented (Nu 1:52; 2:2,3,10,18,25; SS 2:4; 6:4,10).

3. The flag borne by each separate tribe, of a smaller form. Probably it bore on it the name of the tribe to which it belonged, or some distinguishing device (Nu 2:2,34).

4. A decorated pole; used as a signal marker or signal pole used by armies

Nu 2:2-3 The sons of Israel shall camp, each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers' households; they shall camp around the tent of meeting at a distance. 3 Now those who camp on the east side toward the sunrise shall be of the standard of the camp of Judah, by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Judah: Nahshon the son of Amminadab, (SS 6:4, 10)

5. A ship's ensign, "flag staff;" (something made of fabric or cloth).

Eze 27:7 "Your sail was of fine embroidered linen from Egypt So that it became your distinguishing mark; Your awning was blue and purple from the coastlands of Elishah. (Isa 30:17; 33:23)

6. The bronze serpent for healing

Nu 21:8-9 Then the LORD said to Moses, " Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live." And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived.

Isa 33:23-24 Your tackle hangs slack; It cannot hold the base of its mast firmly, Nor spread out the sail. Then the prey of an abundant spoil will be divided; The lame will take the plunder. 24 And no resident will say, "I am sick"; The people who dwell there will be forgiven their iniquity.

7. Used prophetic or figuratively, signifying

a. God's judgment is a standard or "sign/warning"

The rebellion and death of Korah (and followers) became a warning.

Nu 26:10 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up along with Korah, when that company died, when the fire devoured 250 men, so that they became a warning.

Isa 31:9 "His rock will pass away because of panic, and his princes will be terrified at the standard," Declares the LORD, whose fire is in Zion and whose furnace is in Jerusalem.
(see Isa 5:26; 13:2; 18:3; 30:17; Jer 4:21; 15:2; 51:12, 17; Eze 27:7)

b. God's victory

Ps 20:5 We will sing for joy over your victory, And in the name of our God we will set up our banners. May the LORD fulfill all your petitions.

c. God's protection Song 2:4

SS 2:4 "He has brought me to his banquet hall, and his banner over me is love (Ps 60:4)

d. Speaking about Jesus

Isa 11:10-12 Then in that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious. 11 Then it will happen on that day that the Lord will again recover the second time with His hand the remnant of His people, who will remain, from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. 12 And He will lift up a standard for the nations and assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

e. Restoration

Isa 49:22 Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will lift up My hand to the nations and set up My standard to the peoples; and they will bring your sons in their bosom, and your daughters will be carried on their shoulders.

Isa 62:10 Go through, go through the gates, Clear the way for the people; Build up, build up the highway, Remove the stones, lift up a standard over the peoples.

Jer 4:6 "Lift up a standard toward Zion! Seek refuge, do not stand still, For I am bringing evil from the north, and great destruction.

C. The staff of Moses:

The staff of Moses that turned into a serpent Exod. 4:2

Aaron's rod, use to swallow up the rods-turned snakes of the magicians in Egypt Exod. 7:12

The staff of Moses used to bring down the ten plagues upon Egypt Exod. 7:19

The staff of Moses used in parting the Red Sea Exod. 14:16

The staff of Moses, held in victory while he prayed for Israel Exod. 17:9

The staff of Moses, with which he struck a rock for water Exod. 17:6-7; Num. 20:8-11

Aaron's rod, use to demonstrate God's blessings upon him as the rod blossomed Num. 17:8

Moses and Aaron disqualified from Canaan by misusing the rod through unbelief Num 20:8-13

D. Amalek & Rephidim

1. Rephidim = the shrinking of hands

Perhaps this is why Moses declares that he would raise the rod of God (God's power) as Joshua and Israel battled the Amalekites.

2. **Amalek** = A people that lick up or exhaust; a strangler of the people; Warlike; a type of the flesh

III. Background of Amalek:

A. Amalek was the grandson of Esau Gen. 36:11-12.

Who sold his own birthright for a single meal; and when he would have inherited the blessing was rejected Heb 12:16-17. Making him a picture of the old man, obeying the lusts of the flesh. (Rom 1:24; 6:12; 13:14; Eph 2:3; 4:22; 2 Tim 2:22; 1 Pt 1:14; 2:11; 4:2-3; 2 Pt 3:3; 1 Jn 2:17; Jude 16, 18)

B. "Amalek" signifies "Warlike," (an appropriate name for the battle of lust that ever wars against the believer.

1 Pt 2:11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

C. The character of Amalek comes out clearly in the words of Moses; "He feared not God;" (Deut. 25:17-18) such is "the flesh."

D. Saul's failure to carry out God's purpose on the Amalekites utter destruction brought destruction on himself

God told king Saul to "totally destroy everything that belongs to the Amalekites" 1 Sa 15:1-3.

But Saul disobeyed, he spared Agag king of the Amalekites and the best of everything that was good (1 Sa 15:7-9)

God rejected Saul as king (this is why God chooses David to be king in Saul's place) 1 Sa 15:23-26; 28:18-19.

Later, Saul is killed in battle by an Amalekite 2 Sa 1:11-10.

E. Victory over the flesh

Rom 6 tells us to reckon and to yield, and by faith to put to death the deeds of the body.

Ro 6:11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Ro 6:13-14 ... present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Ro 6:6-7 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 7 for he who has died is freed from sin.

F. Three important things to remember about Amalek:

1) God is going to get rid of Amalek. In other words, God is going to get rid of the old nature.

2) the Lord will never compromise with the old nature. He will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

3) this conflict will go on as long as we live in this life. The flesh and the spirit will always war against each other. Only the Holy Spirit of God can give us victory.

IV. Thoughts from the experts

A. Dr. Wiersbe:

How did Israel overcome the enemy? They had an intercessor on the mountain and a commander in the valley! Moses' role on the mountain illustrates the intercessory work of Christ, and Joshua with his sword illustrates the Spirit of God using the Word of God against the enemy (Heb. 4:12 and Eph. 6:17-18).

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword ...

Eph 6:17 ...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Of course, Moses is an imperfect picture of Christ and His intercessory work, since our Lord never wearies and needs no assistance (Heb. 4:16; 9:24).

Heb 4:16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Heb 9:24 For Christ entered ... into heaven ... to appear in the presence of God for us;

Paul says that believers can "help together by prayer" (2 Cor. 1:11), which is what Aaron and Hur did.

2 Co 1:11 you also joining in helping us through your prayers ...

Moses had the rod of God in his hand, which speaks of God's almighty power. Moses had defeated every enemy in Egypt, just as Christ has overcome the world in mighty victory.

Moses alone on the mount could not win the battle, nor could Joshua alone on the battlefield: victory required both of them. How wonderful that we have the interceding Son of God who is for us (Rom. 8:34), and the indwelling Spirit of God who is for us (Rom. 8:26), plus the inspired Word of God in our hearts!

Ro 8:34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Ro 8:26 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;

Note in v. 13 that Joshua did not completely destroy the Amalekites; he "discomfited" (KJV) them; [overwhelmed (NASU) them; mowed down (RSV); crushed (NLT) them; mowed down and disabled (AMP) them; defeated (NKJV) them]

The flesh will never be destroyed or "eradicated" in this life. In 1 Sam. 15 we will see that Saul's sin was in refusing to deal completely with the Amalekites; and 2 Sam. 1:6-10 informs us that it was one of the Amalekites Saul spared that killed him! Ro 13:14 says:

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

Jehovah-Nissi means "The Lord our banner." We have our victory not through our own efforts but through Christ alone (John 16:33; 1 John 2:13-14; 5:4-5).

B. Dr. Edersheim

The rod which Moses held up was the banner of God-the symbol and the pledge of His presence and working; and he held it up, not over Israel, nor yet over their enemies, but towards heaven in prayer, to bring down that promised help in their actual contest.

This view seems implied in Ex. 17:15, and explains the otherwise obscure words of ver. 16, which we literally render: "And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi; and he said, For the hand upon the throne of Jehovah! War with Amalek from generation to generation!"

And so it ever is: Amalek opposes the advance of Israel; Israel must fight, but the victory is God's; Israel holds the rod of almighty power in the hand of faith; but that rod must ever be uplifted toward heaven in present application for the blessing secured by covenant-promise.

The following References were used in this study:

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