

Jehovah Nissi – The Lord is Our Banner

Ex 15-17

Introduction:

1. God saved his people at the Red Sea and destroyed the Egyptian army
2. They marched through the Red Sea on dry ground and began the journey to the promised land
3. They ran out of water in the wilderness of Shur – Ex 15:22
 - a. There was plenty of water at Marah but it was bitter water – vs 23
 - b. The people murmured against Moses and against God – vs 24
 - c. The Lord showed Moses a tree and he cast a branch into the bitter water and the waters were made sweet
4. God led his people to Elim where there were 12 wells of water and 70 palm trees and they camped there – vs 27
5. The children of Israel left Elim and traveled through the wilderness on their way to Sinai and the food ran out – Ex 16
 - a. They murmured and complained against God and Moses
 - b. God began supplying manna from heaven for the people
6. By the time the people reach Rephidim, they were out of water again – Ex 17
 - a. Again they murmured against Moses and God
 - b. By now one would think they would have learned to trust God
 - c. But they were filled with stubborn unbelief
 - d. Moses cried to the Lord and God told him to take the rod and strike a rock and water flowed out of the rock for the people and flocks / herds
7. It turned out that the big problem at Rephidim was not the lack of water, but the Amalekites – 17:8
 - a. Here there is no murmuring mentioned
 - b. What a welcome and blessed relief for Moses
 - c. They meet this trial without a whimper and they perform courageously
8. To experience trials one after the other is not unique
 - a. Trials and troubles are part and parcel of life
 - b. **Job 5:7 Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.**
 - c. We need to study these trials so that we can better deal with our own trials
 - d. Trials are opportunities for blessing and the better we respond to trials the greater the blessings will be
9. The more we can learn about how to deal successfully with trials, the better

I. The Making of the Strife – vs 8

8 Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

- The Amalekites started the conflict and Israel was drawn into the battle
- While war is terrible, sometimes a nation has to take a stand against evil powers in order to save lives

A. Men of the Attack

1. The Amalekites were descendants of Esau
 - a) *Amalek, father of the Amalekites, was the grandson of Esau – Gen 36:12*
 - b) *Esau gave such priority to the flesh that he despised his birthright*
 - c) *Those who are given over to the appetites of the flesh will not be devoted to Christ*
2. They were ever opposed to the Israelites

B. Method of the Attack – Deut 25:17

- There is nothing honorable in the way the Amalekites attacked the Israelites
De 25:17 Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; 18 How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God.
- Two things can be said about the attack – The Amalekites attacked....
 1. The Hindmost
 - a) *Amalek attacked those in the rear of the procession*
 - b) *It was a cowardly way of attacking – but evil is never known for character*
 - c) *See danger here for those who lag behind Christ*
 - d) *Remember that Peter followed Jesus “afar off” and soon denied Christ*
 - e) *Lagging behind is a good way to get picked off by the devil*
 2. The Helpless
 - a) *The Amalekites attacked the feeble, faint and weary, and the weak*
 - b) *Satan will attack us where we are weak*
 - c) *He attacked Christ in the wilderness after 40 days of fasting*
 - d) *Suffer a painful loss, when we are sick, discouraged and the devil attacks*
 - e) *Be “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might” – Eph 6:10*

II. The Mastering of the Strife – vs 9-13

- Moses’ response to this attack demonstrated the greatness of his character and ability
- Moses’ cool-headed response evidenced much wisdom in plan and procedure and showed much faith in God

A. Deputizing of Joshua – vs 9-10

9 And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. 10 So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

1. The first thing Moses did to get Israel ready to fight Amalek was to deputize a man to lead the troops
2. Moses needed a great general to oversee the military
 - a) *No leader made a better choice*
 - b) *Joshua was a man of military skill, excellent character and steadfast faith*
3. This is the first mention of Joshua in the Bible – trained / prepared by Moses

B. Drafting of Soldiers – vs 9

9 And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men...

1. Joshua was given the job of drafting men to be soldiers
2. The greater Joshua, Jesus is still choosing those to go to battle with Him

C. Decree to Fight – vs 9

9 And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight...

1. At the Red Sea, they were commanded to stand still and see the salvation ...
2. Here they are told to fight
 - a) *At the Red Sea the Israelites were in no shape to fight against Egyptians*
 - b) *Here Israel is ready to fight and they are ordered to fight*
3. Many believers reject the command to fight – “it is unchristian to fight”
 - a) *This command to fight does not mean to be contentious / fussy / feuding*
 - b) *A great evil is to be fought and it is sin to not be in the battle*

D. Duty of Moses – vs 9, 11

9 And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. 11 And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

1. Strangeness of the Duty

- a) *Human reasoning will look at Moses' duty as very strange*
- b) *"How can Moses effect the battle below by holding up the rod of God"*
- c) *"Swords / spears, chariots / horses, bows and arrows effect the battle."*
- d) *The world thinks that we are strange for believing the Bible*
- e) *The world thinks it strange to believe in creation rather than evolution*
- f) *The world thinks that our Christian lifestyle is strange*
- g) *If God orders it, it is wise to obey, no matter what the world thinks*

2. Significance of the Duty

- a) *We do not all have the same duty in God's army*
- b) *Some are generals, some are foot soldiers*
- c) *Some have jobs away from the frontlines of battle*
- d) *Moses' duty was just as important as Joshua's*

3. Symbolism of the Duty

- *Moses standing on the hill holding the rod symbolized prayer and power*

a) *Prayer*

- (1) *Moses hands got tired holding up the rod*
- (2) *Prayer is hard work – the right kind of prayer is strenuous / exhausting*
- (3) *We do not find that Joshua's hands were heavy in battle, but Moses' hands were heavy in prayer*
- (4) *Moses watched over the battlefield as he prayed – prayer must be fed by knowledge*
- (5) *This is why we read missionary letters and have a missionary of the week – so you will have needed knowledge to pray*
- (6) *When Moses held up the rod – Israel prevailed in the battle – when we pray we prevail in the battle*

b) *Power*

- (1) *Moses' action in holding up the rod symbolizes divine power*
- (2) *The need for divine power in the battle against Amalek is evident*
- (3) *The Amalekites were the most powerful group on the Sinai Peninsula and the Israelites needed God's help*
- (4) *We must train diligently for our duty, but we still need God's power*

4. Supporters of the Duty

12 *But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.*

- a) *Moses' hands became heavy and Israel would lose the battle when Moses' hand dropped down*
- b) *Aaron / Hur went to support Moses' hands*
- c) *Aaron and Hur helped Moses accomplish his God-given duty*
- d) *Many hinder others from doing their God-given duty*
- e) *A word of encouragement may be all that is needed to help someone do their God-given duty*

E. Discomfiting of Amalek – vs 13

13 And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

1. Israel gained a tremendous victory over Amalek at Rephidim
2. Rephidim would be a bright spot on the map for Israel – God gave them water from the rock and defeated Amalek there

III. The Memorials of the Strife – vs 14-16

- Israel did 4 things after this battle to remember it

A. Recording of the Strife – vs 14

14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

- This is the first mention of writing in the Scripture and is a significant one
 - The Hebrew says, “Write this in *the* book”
 - It is clear that a book existed in which Moses recorded significant events
 - Moses is divinely commanded to record this victory in the book
1. This book was either some kind of journal that Moses kept
 2. Moses might have used his journal later when writing the Pentateuch
 3. In some inspiration God gives Scripture writers knowledge they did not have before
 4. Other Scripture uses the common knowledge - the writer knows about the events and is inspired by God to put them in the writing
 5. God superintends, controls and guides the recording of it so that which is said is exactly what He was said and how he wants it said

B. Rehearsing of the Strife – vs 14

14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

1. Moses was to be Joshua’s history teacher
2. History is important and we should learn from history
3. Moses was to especially instruct Joshua because he would be the next leader of the children of Israel
4. From time to time, God wanted Joshua to hear the account again
5. Much of my teaching is rehearsing what you already know – we call it review or a refresher course

C. Revelation from the Strife – vs 15-16

15 And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi: 16 For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

- What made this altar significant was the name given to it
1. Jehovah-nissi = Jehovah is our banner – Nissi means something lifted up or something seen from afar
 2. The banner / flag was a rallying point and gave direction during a battle
 - a) *The banner was used to signal the army and communicate with commanders*
 - b) *It was also used for identification in the camp. Different tribes and families had certain banners.*

3. Beloved, the Lord is our banner.
 - a) *Jesus Christ is to be our rallying point.*
 - b) *We are to be identified with Him as His ambassadors and be lifting Him up in our lives by pointing others to Him.*
 - c) *We are to be in communication with Him, seeking His direction in prayer, heeding His Word, and the leading of His Spirit.*
 - d) *Our directions are to come from God. His promise is to guide us if we will follow Him.*
 - e) *He is our source of strength and victory.*
4. The Banner Inspired
 - a) *Francis Scott Key demonstrated how much a banner inspires when he wrote, "The Star Spangled Banner"*
 - b) *After a night of ferocious fighting, Key could still see the flying American flag in the dim, pre-dawn light.*
 - c) *It was such an inspiration to him that he wrote our national anthem*
 - d) *But no banner inspires like God's banner*
5. The Banner Identified
 - a) *The flag you serve under tells who you are, what you believe and what your loyalties are*
 - b) *The American flag stands for freedom and opposition to tyranny*
 - c) *God's banner represents God, Jesus, the Word of God, truth, purity, holiness, the gospel etc.*
6. The Banner Instructed
 - a) *The banner leads the way – it goes before the troops*
 - b) *Once, in the Civil War, the flag-bearer got way out in front of the troops. Someone yelled to the commander to tell the flag-bearer to come back to the troops. The Commander told the soldiers catch up to the flag.*
 - c) *Many Christians need to catch up to the Jehovah-nissi banner*