

The Banner

by Henry Law

The Lord is our Banner, and through Him, we can overcome our enemies and achieve victory.

Scripture: Exodus 17:15, Psalm 20:5-60, Isaiah 11:10, John 12:32, Romans 8:37, 1 Corinthians 15:57, Colossians 2:15, 1 John 5:4

Topics: "Divine Victory", "Christ Our Banner"

Description

Henry Law preaches on the significance of Moses building an altar and naming it Jehovah-nissi (The Lord is my Banner) after the victory over Amalek, emphasizing that the Lord's presence and strength ensured their triumph. He highlights the importance of giving all glory to God for victories, acknowledging that without the Lord's wisdom and power, human efforts are in vain. Law draws parallels between Jehovah-nissi and Christ Jesus as the ultimate Banner of the Redeemed, symbolizing victory in spiritual battles against Satan and fallen nature.

Transcript

"Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi." (The Lord is my Banner) Exodus 17:15

The fight with Amalek is past. He is given as the dust to Israel's sword, as driven stubble to his bow. Let mad assailants learn that no weapon formed against the Church of God can prosper. The arrow shot against the sun falls back upon the head. The oak rebounds upon the slashing hands.

But why was sure victory on Israel's side? Because the Lord was with them. He braced their courage--they were girded with strength. He frowned--the foe can no more stand. He smiled--His people can no more fall. To whom, then, shall the praise be given? Shall worms of earth in vaunting vanity ascribe it to their worth, their counsels, the leader's leading, or the soldier's might? The thought is anguish to a pious mind. Without the Lord, what is the best man's best? He only prevails when the Lord supplies the wisdom, implants the prowess, and commands the outcome. And shall not He who is the first, the last, the whole, in all success, have all the glory?

So Moses judged. He hastens to put the crown on the real Victor's head. He raises a building, not to man, but God. He adds a truthful name. He calls the altar 'Jehovah-nissi--the Lord is my Banner.' This is right. This is wise. Let God have God's place--the highest of the high. Let man have man's place--the lowest of the low. If there be baseless pretension, it is when dust claims honor, as the worker of Jehovah's works. The tool is not the worker. The pen is not the spring of thought. The laborer's spade makes not the crop to

grow. The steps towards this altar give such warning.

But the structure itself is a far brighter lesson. The Spirit shows by its new features of our precious Savior. He plainly states that the root of Jesse, David's son, is the ensign (banner) of the Redeemed. Hence, in Jehovah-nissi, faith adores Christ Jesus as its Banner. Who hears of a Banner, and thinks not of a battle-cry? Its stand is among warrior-ranks. It tells of conflicts and of struggles. It reminds of foes assaulting, and of shocks to be sustained.

And is not the believer's hope a camp? He drinks indeed deep draughts of heavenly peace, but still the hand which takes the cup holds high the sword. His calm is like the calm of Jesus, who slept while billows tossed around. Experience proves this truth. The sandals of the Gospel are bare-worn on a battle plain. Hope rears its helmet battered by many a blow. Faith shields a heart which surely rests, but rarely knows repose. The Spirit's sword is corroded by no scabbard's rust. Can it be otherwise?

Are not God's children met by an Amalek who neither dies, nor sleeps, nor spares, nor pities? This foe is Satan. His might is such, that Almightyness alone exceeds. His knowledge such, that it nears the confines of omniscience. His skill is sharpened by observance of every heart in every climate and every age. His wrath is barbed by knowing that His time is short. His hopes are plumed by slaughtered millions beneath his feet. He assails each inlet of each sense. He raises barriers before the throne of grace. No knee ever bows but his shaft flies. He aims at every worshiper in every pew--at every hearer of the sacred truth--at every reader of the Word of God--at every hand which takes the sacramental food--at every tongue which tells of Jesus's love--at every eye which sheds the tear of penitence.

But Satan has a world to aid him. He strives to slay each man by each, and all men by all. He can paint brilliant prospects. He can raise piles of wealth. He can deck honor's crown with dazzling jewels. He sets the secret ambush. He digs the fearful pitfall. Like Jael, he shows the dainty dish, but hides the hammer and the nail.

Satan also has fallen nature on his side. There is 'the body of this death.' From this there is no escape. Self cannot separate from self. And self has a traitor's hand to introduce the foe. Self murders self, when it can work its will. Such are the troops of Amalek. But let not the believer fear. Jehovah-nissi is God's pledge, that their enemies shall be put out forever.

This Banner leads to VICTORY. In earthly fight, the end is doubtful. The brave, the strong, may fall. The few may chase the many. Hostile hands may seize the standard. But they who cling to Christ must surely triumph. Before they strike one blow the day is won. They venture forth with conqueror's crowns, unseen indeed by eye of sense, but firmly fixed upon their brows. Do any ask how this can be? The Banner is Jehovah. All strength, all multitudes, are feeble nothingness before it. Believer, trust to your Leader, and go forward. He has led through countless conflicts, but He never lost a battle. He never left a follower slain. The plains, though blood-stained, have never been the grave of faith.

Each soldier may suffer much in mortifying sin. But triumph is His portion. Is it not said, 'My sheep shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand'? Jacob had many conflicts--but his aged lips bear witness to 'the Angel which redeemed me from all evil.' David's was a struggling life, but his last song extolled a never-failing help. 'I beat them as small as the dust of the earth; I stamped them as the mire of the street.' Paul leaves earth with the shout, 'I have fought a good fight--henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' Search all hell's borders. There is not one amid the lost who really fought beneath Jehovah-nissi.

The Banner is EXALTED. It waves high. It courts the gaze of earth. 'Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.' When man fell, it was unfurled in Eden. Abel embraced it, and flew swift to heaven. Prophets and seers unfurled it more; widening hosts saw it and lived. In due time the Lord Himself appears, and plants the standard on the cross of Calvary. That was a noble eminence. That was a height which Satan could not reach. A dying malefactor discerned its clearness from the very jaws of hell, and found the gate of Paradise in dying. And from that day no sinner ever turned a longing eye to it in vain. And now the faithful preacher's voice, the toiling missionary's love for souls, and every true disciple's holy walk, uplifts it still with ceaseless zeal. In pulpits, in heathen wilds, in filthy haunts of ignorance and vice, in thronging crowds, by dying beds, in lonely cottages where sickness preys and trials vex, they cry, 'Behold Him, Behold Him!' No distance intervenes. No mists obscure. To the opened eye the beautiful Banner is both near and bright. Believer, will you not strive by every effort, at every cost, in every place, at every moment, to make the Banner more conspicuous? Live, labor, die, pointing to it. Wave it while you can raise an arm. Earn the high glory of a standard-bearer's crown.

The Banner is ATTRACTIVE. It wins a willing troop. Jacob with dying gaze beheld a thronging multitude, and he bore record, 'Unto Him, shall the gathering of the people be.' Isaiah's rapturous notes enquire, 'Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?' And He who is the Truth has pledged, 'And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.' So it has ever been--so it must be. There is a magnetic power in the uplifted cross! An influence subjugates the charmed mind. Its streaming scroll exhibits all which needy souls can need. The conscience-stricken sigh for ease. The guilty long for pardon. The weary and the heavy-laden seek repose. The Banner promises that beneath this standard everything is yours! Here is blood to cleanse; righteousness to clothe; strength to help; mercy to pity; grace for demerit; life for death; all-sufficiency for all-deficiency. The sinner sees, believes, enlists. He cannot help but listen. Opposing friends, a sneering world, and all the wiles of Satan, are weak to stop him. Thus every day and every hour the numbers swell. And angels never cease to sing, because on earth fresh converts vow, We are the Lord's. So it shall be until heaven's army is complete.

The Banner is a worthy theme of boast. Let the vile sinner be ashamed of sin. Let the weak worldling blush at this silly world. Let unbelief hang down its childish head. Let Popery mutter its base impostures in the dark. But let the believer with pure pride, exult in his high standard. Think--but thoughts fail--say, but words fail--what noble glories cluster here. Men boast of what is great and good and wise and lovely.

Greatness? it vanishes when Christ is named. He is the mighty God. He is Jehovah's equal. He is more ancient than the eternal ages. He endures when time is gone. He spoke and all worlds were. The wheels of providence subserve His will. He ever sat, and will sit, omnipotent on Omnipotence's throne. Great is the Banner. Let it be greatly praised.

Goodness? He who would learn what goodness is, must read it in the face of Christ. Is it goodness to deck nature with all things suitable to please each sense--to robe the sun with light, the air with purity, the fields with verdure, and man with faculties to enjoy? Is it goodness to look with mercy on a race undone, to lay down life to save? This is poor outline of a Savior's goodness. Believer, boldly shout, Good is the Lord.

Wisdom? It is Christ's name. All its treasures lie hidden in Him. His plans, His work, His words, are wisdom in the highest. True wisdom never was, but as a stream from the deep fountain of His mind. Believer, wave your Banner; there is no wisdom but beside these colors.

Loveliness? The Spirit, who sees Him as He is, proclaims Him as altogether lovely. He must be lovely who is God's brightness. Mark His sweet smiles of gentle grace. Who can withdraw the admiring eye? Who can restrain the adoring tongue? Beside Him the sun hangs a black orb, and nature's charms are but a withered leaf. Sweet is it now to savingly know Him. What will it be to see Him as He is? Let, then, faith's soldier cry aloud for joy; let him take up his manly boast before all heaven and all earth, Christ is a beautiful Banner, which surpasses praise, exceeds all worth, and soars above renown.

Believer, in conclusion, allow an exhorting word. In every place, in every company, boldly display your Banner. Away with weak timidities. Tread down unworthy fears. Reserve is treason. Let all who know you, know Whose you are and Whom you serve. The world would tremble, unbelief would flee, if Christian warriors would rally as a compact band, 'fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with Banners.' Take home this warning. Let no shame cloak your Banner.

O my soul, unfurl it in the eyes of all the scorn, and all the hate of all the world. Unfurl it in the face of all the threats and all the malice of all hell. Unfurl it--and all sins vanish, and conscience-accusations cease. Unfurl it--and the flames of hell curl back before it. Unfurl it--and heaven's portals open. Unfurl it--and you march to heaven's throne of victory.

You are now brought to the banqueting-house, where the Banner over you is love. The palace is in sight, where the Banner over you will be glory!

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