

EXODUS

sermon study summary

God Our Banner

Speaker: Pastor Ashwin Ramani

March 18 / 19, 2023

Today we continue our studies in the Book of Exodus; as we apply the 'Israelites' wilderness wanderings' as a parallel to our own lives, we learn about God's nature, mature in our faith and God shapes us into the 'image' of Christ. So far we have discovered that God is a healer, provider and that HE is enough. This weekend we learn another important lesson.

Satan, an intimidating enemy, attempts to derail us from God's plan for our lives. He adopts a strategy similar to that of Alexander the Great (who was an expert in psychological warfare); creating fear in our minds, Satan tries to intimidate us by persuading us he is more powerful than he actually is. Attacking when we are most vulnerable, we're taken by surprise, deflated and discouraged. In this event, we should focus our attention on God and when we recollect His power, we realize that the devil is NO MATCH for the God we serve. One of God's names in the Bible is 'Jehovah-Nissi', which means that: 'The Lord is the victorious banner over our lives'.

The Apostle Peter reminds us to constantly be alert for evil because the devil, like a lion stalking his prey in silence, pounces when least expected! As followers of Jesus we, our families, our marriages, children, culture, church and all good things are vulnerable to satanic attacks as long as we live. We must be equipped to fight at any time; praying and fighting evil go hand-in-hand, and as we depend on God the enemy will be overcome.

By holding his staff up to heaven Moses, in a posture of prayer, played the role of an intercessor – appealing to God to defend His people against the enemy. Paul, in Timothy 1:2-8, reminds us that we should pray, lifting up our hands to God in supplication. In every situation, we should seek the Lord earnestly through praying on our knees, storming the gates of heaven and asking God to pour out His Spirit, wisdom and discernment on us; these prayers play a vital role in determining the battle's outcome. Never underestimate the power of intercessory prayer through families, friends and our church! We are responsible for doing our part, and God will defeat the enemy. When we attempt to fight spiritual battles on our own, it can be exhausting. We should humbly ask for help, and permit others to stand beside us in the battle; God designed the Christian life to be "communal".

As Pastor Ashwin recounted, he attended the February 2023 'Revival' at Asbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky and witnessed God at work. People prayed for 4 days: it was not spectacular or dramatic, no firebrand preacher or amazing worship band, but the altars were crowded with young people repenting, asking forgiveness, and entering into the right relationship with God. There was singing, praying and waves of joy flooded the Chapel; the environment was spiritually charged. We need to be in community at Church, worshipping, meeting for Bible studies, prayer and fellowship.

When we call on Jehovah-Nissi we proclaim that we are Christ followers, and as we lift the name of Jesus on high and we KNOW we will overcome evil! When Jesus died on the Cross and was resurrected, He won a decisive victory over all satanic powers. As a community, let's shout out our Hallelujahs and praise the name of Jesus – HE is our banner of victory!



EXODUS

sermon study guide

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. Which sports team or event, if any, have you “raised a banner for” or cheered and why?
2. When have you seen prayer dramatically change a situation?

UP – PURSUE GOD

Read Ex 17:8-16, Deut 25:17-18 & 1 Pet 5:8.

3. Describe the role of Moses, Joshua, Aaron and Hur in this battle with the Amalekites? Why is each role important?
4. What was the strategy of the Amalekites? Of the Israelites? How does knowing the strategy of the enemy and lifting up ‘God’s banner’ transform your personal battles?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. How have you seen battles changed by you or a group engaging both in battle and prayer compared to just acting or praying?
6. After the battle Moses built an altar and called it Jehovah Nissi, The LORD is my Banner. Identify a victory that God has given you. What can you build as a visual reminder of God’s faithfulness?

THE WORD (NIV)

Exodus 17:8-16

⁸ The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. ⁹ Moses said to Joshua, “Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.”

¹⁰ So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. ¹¹ As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. ¹² When Moses’ hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. ¹³ So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

¹⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven.”

¹⁵ Moses built an altar and called it The Lord is my Banner. ¹⁶ He said, “Because hands were lifted up against the throne of the Lord, the Lord will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation.”

Deuteronomy 25:17-18

¹⁷ Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt. ¹⁸ When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and attacked all who were lagging behind; they had no fear of God.

1 Peter 5:8

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

Today’s passage calls us to both pray and fight in tandem. Take a few moments or hours to consider: is there an area in your life, in the life of a friend, or maybe something in our city and country that needs you to go to battle over? Make a battle plan, pray, begin to fight, and pray some more.

This week’s writers: | Asha Philips, David McMillin, Elsa Henderson, Gene Gibbs, Sandi Somers, Jorel Quemuel

