

JEHOVAH-NISSI*

“The LORD [Our] Banner” is He who fights for us, and for whom we wage spiritual warfare.

SCRIPTURE†	MUSIC‡
Exodus 4:1-18 Exodus 17 Exodus 17:8-16 Deuteronomy 32:1-13 1 Chronicles 29:10-19 Psalm 18:1-3 Psalm 98 Psalm 140:1-7 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 1 John 5:1-5	A Mighty Fortress Is Our God Am I a Soldier of the Cross Be Still and Know (Schram) SATB Be Strong in the Lord Be Thou My Vision (Forrest) SATB If God Be For Us (Williams) SATB O Church, Arise O God, Our Help in Ages Past O Worship the King Our Eyes Are Upon You, Lord (Bryson) SATB Soldiers of Christ, Arise Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus (Refrain) We Rest on Thee (French) TTBB



NORTHWEST VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

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* Theme corresponds well to the Sunday nearest to **Veterans Day** each November.

† Daily preparatory readings shown in **bold**.

‡ Published choral and vocal music shown in **bold**.

PRESENTING & PROMOTING THIS THEME

FLAG

The banner that Americans recognize as their own is our American flag. The flag has great meaning to a U.S. soldier – it is a symbol of victory, a motivation, and a symbol of what the soldier is fighting for. In the case of America, the flag stands for our ideals of liberty. The soldier who volunteers to serve his country realizes that his life is not his own, that he is committed to fight and die if necessary for this ideal. As Christians, the banner under which we rally is not a flag or even the ideal for which that flag stands but a Person, Jehovah Nissi. All the ideals (or principles) of the Christian life flow from Him. It is still true, however, that as His soldiers, our lives are not our own. He is our Absolute Commander, and His call is to lose ourselves in Him as we follow His commands.

SYMBOL

Exodus 17:8-16 | *A banner is a source of communication and a focal point. Flags mean a lot to specific groups. The thin blue line flag means a lot to a police officer, and the American flag means a lot to a soldier. The flag is a symbol of loyalty and sacrifice. For a soldier, the flag represents the reason they put their lives on the line. Exodus 17 describes God as our banner. Just as a soldier honors the flag as a symbol of his loyalty, the cross is a symbol for us. It represents the sacrifice Christ made for us. The Lord is our symbol of loyalty. He is our Banner.*

Exodus 17:8-16 recounts the story of Israel fighting the Amalekites. While Joshua led the people of Israel in battle, Moses stood at the top of a hill with his staff in his hand. When he raised it, Israel began to win the battle; but when he lowered it, the Amalekites started to gain the advantage. When Moses' hands grew tired, Aaron and Hur held up his arms so the staff could stay up for the rest of the battle. God gave the victory to Israel that day. After the battle, Moses made an altar and called it *Jehovah Nissi*, "The Lord is my Banner." Moses held up a staff as a banner symbol for Israel, but it was God who was the power behind it.

The word *nes*, from which *Nissi* is derived, is the Hebrew word for a pole with some kind of insignia attached. Today we call that a flag. From ancient times even until now, flags have served many purposes. Flags of varying shapes and sizes have been used to communicate over great distances. Flags are also used for identification. In the heat of battle a soldier might lose track of where he is, but the sight of his flag gives him a rallying point. A flag is also a symbol of loyalty and inspiration. As a soldier, the American flag represents the reason we put our lives on the line. The flag is a symbol of loyalty and sacrifice.

While not many of us are fighting a physical battle, we are all fighting a spiritual one. In that battle—and in all of life—the Lord Himself should be our focal point. He is the one we rally to. The sight of Him gives us courage. Just as the Lord gave the victory to the Israelites, He can also give us victory in our fight. We do not fight in our own strength, but look to the presence and power of Jehovah Nissi, the Lord our Banner. (Jillian Waycaster)

THINGS GOD USES

(This theme corresponds with an upcoming election.) Use an object lesson to introduce the theme with an unusual object (or objects) that God used in the Old Testament to accomplish His will. Examples would be the jawbone of a donkey (Samson), clay jars or lamps (Gideon), a rod (Moses), or a sling and stones (David). We recognize that God will use whatever He chooses to accomplish His will, and the instrument is insignificant. This is just as true for believers today as it was in the Old Testament. We rally around the Lord our banner, not a party banner, because we trust that He will reign regardless of what nations rise and fall and that He can and will use any instrument, including an election, to accomplish His purposes.