

YHWH Nissi

יְהוָה נִסִּי

YHWH Is My Banner

Pronounced **Yä-wá' Nis-see'**, the compound name "YHWH Nissi" appears only once in the Old Testament.

Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is my Banner (YHWH Nissi).
(Exodus 17:15 *parenthetical text added*)

Etymology

The word "nissi"/"nissîy" ("נִסִּי") derives from two Hebrew words:

- The noun "nes" (nês) ("נֵס"), which means "**banner**", "**pole**", or "**standard**".
- The verb "nasas" (nâsas) ("נָסַס"), which means "**to gleam** from afar, "**to be conspicuous** as a signal", or "**to raise a beacon**".

Where does the single word "nissi" appear in Scripture?

In battle, opposing nations would fly their own standard at each of their respective front lines to give their soldiers a feeling of hope and a point of focus. Moses had built the altar to memorialize that YHWH was Israel's banner under which they had defeated the Amalekites.

Combined with GOD's personal name, "YHWH", the name becomes "**YHWH Is My Banner**". This is what YHWH is to us: a banner of encouragement to give us hope and a focal point.

In addition to the single employment of the compound name in Exodus 17:15, the single word "nes" is translated in English Bibles as **banner**, **sign**, **standard**, or **pole** in 20 verses.

But for those who fear you, you have raised
a banner (nes) to be unfurled against the bow.
(Psalm 60:4 *parenthetical text added*)

He lifts up a banner (nes) for the distant nations,
he whistles for those at the ends of the earth.
Here they come, swiftly and speedily!
(Isaiah 5:26 *parenthetical text added*)

"Their stronghold will fall because of terror; at the sight of the battle
standard (nes) their commanders will panic," declares the LORD (YHWH),
whose fire is in Zion, whose furnace is in Jerusalem.
(Isaiah 31:9 *parenthetical text added*)

See *also* Numbers 21:8-9, 26:10; Isaiah 11:10,12, 13:2, 18:3, 30:17, 33:23, 49:22, 62:10; Jeremiah 4:6,21, 50:2, 51:12,27; Ezekiel 27:7.



Depending on which Bible translation/version you're using, the verb "nasas" is translated "**ensign**", "**banner**", or "**jewels** in a crown" in one verse.

The LORD (YHWH) their God (Elohim) will save his people
on that day as a shepherd saves his flock. They will
sparkle in his land like jewels (nasas) in a crown.
(Zechariah 9:16 *parenthetical text added*)

What is the significance of the name "YHWH Nissi"?

To say, "*YHWH is my Banner*" is to say YHWH is our Leader, our Commander in Chief. We fight under YHWH's direction and in defense of His name and His truth. And although we must don our armor and stand in the battle (Ephesians 6:11-17) in the same way as Joshua and Israel's army had done, it is by **YHWH's** strength and in **His name** that we conquer and gain the victory.

In Israel's case, this was the first battle they would fight after their miraculous delivery from bondage in Egypt. Prior to this, YHWH had fought their battles and provided for them. Just as a parent protects, nurtures, trains, and comforts their child until they can take care of themselves, YHWH had lovingly intervened, provided their food and water, and fought their battles. All the while, they were learning that the GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was **faithful** and **more than sufficient** (El Shaddai) for their every need.

- He led them out of Egypt with great signs and wonders (Exodus 7:14-13:17; Acts 7:36).
- He brought them through the Red Sea on dry land and swept Pharaoh's army into the sea (Exodus 14:13-29).
- He brought forth water out of the rock at Horeb (Exodus 17:6; Numbers 20:11), fed them with manna and quail in the desert (Exodus 16:1-35; Numbers 11:31-32), healed their diseases (Exodus 15:26), and even preserved their clothing and sandals so that none wore out for 40 years (Deuteronomy 29:5)!

The sheep now had to become warriors!

The function of miracles is to lead us to a state of faith in which miracles are not necessary. YHWH had fought for Israel, and now Israel would learn to fight for YHWH.

The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim.
(Exodus 17:8)

- 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 (Elohim).
(Deuteronomy 25:17-18 *parenthetical text added*)

There is no indication that the Israelites provoked the Amalekites in any way. It would appear that the Amalekites attacked Israel merely through the hopes of plunder. Or, as sons of Esau, brother to Jacob (Israel), perhaps it was due to generations of increasing anger and hostility over what Esau saw as Israel cheating him out of his rightful heritage. Whatever their reason, in a most cowardly manner, the Amalekites had attacked the rear of the camp, killing all those who were faint and weary before taking their spoils.



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 (Elohim) in my hands." (Exodus 17:9 *parenthetical text added*)

Moses' staff—which once had herded sheep in the wilderness—had become the rod of YHWH by which He executed severe judgments upon Egypt, parted the Red Sea, and brought water from a rock. Now, this symbol of all YHWH's dealings on Israel's behalf would be raised toward Heaven in prayer and to remind them that YHWH was the source of their help, the only One on whom they could depend.

- ¹ I lift up my eyes to the mountains-- where does my help come from?
- ² My help comes from the LORD (YHWH), the Maker of heaven and earth.
(Psalm 121:1-2 *parenthetical text added*)

Suddenly, this seemingly ill-equipped group of former slaves and shepherds—with YHWH as their Commander—had experienced their first decisive victory and drawn their first inspiring breath of freedom and strength! They were transitioning from a **passive reliance** on YHWH to an **abiding confidence** in Him!

Moses built an altar and called it The LORD (YHWH) is my Banner (Nissi).
(Exodus 17:15 *parenthetical text added*)

How does that apply to us today?

It is through much tribulation that we enter the kingdom of heaven. That is not to say that we strive to attain righteousness, for we **are** the righteousness of YHWH in Christ Jesus. Rather, the trials in the Christian's life—much like the Amalekites' attacks on Israel—are numerous, varied, unexpected, and often come in rapid succession.

We are in a constant spiritual and moral battle with many enemies—Satan, poverty, sickness, emotional conflicts, and even prosperity. Just as the Israelites had to conquer Amalek or be destroyed, we too must conquer these enemies as they seek continually to stop or destroy us.

The memorial that Moses built acknowledged that the Israelites had fought and gained the victory, not by their own valor or might, but under the **banner of YHWH**. The **glory** of victory was His and **His alone**.

Since YHWH does not change (Malachi 3:6) and Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8), we are assured that YHWH Nissi continues to fight the Amalekites in our lives as He did for Israel. In fact, His Word tells us that His battle with Amalek is an eternal one.

He said, "Because hands were lifted up against the throne of the LORD (YHWH), the LORD (YHWH) will be at war against the Amalekites from **generation to generation**."
(Exodus 17:16 *emphasis and parenthetical text added*)

In order to be successful in this conflict, however, we must combine physical activity **and** prayer. Joshua fought the Amalekites on the field of battle while Moses fought their false gods on the hill in prayer. It is imperative that earnest prayers should be made to YHWH for His presence and power to go with us in our spiritual battles. Just as Moses had to climb the mountain to pray, we must remember that prayer is not passive, but is often an uphill **work**.



Thankfully, we do not battle in our own strength. Jesus Christ is both our Joshua and captain of our salvation **and** our Moses who ever lives making intercession for us.

In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered.
(Hebrews 2:10)

Therefore he is able to **save completely** those who come to God through him, because he always lives to **intercede** for them.
(Hebrews 7:25)

Jesus Christ is our Standard Bearer and our Intercessor. He is **YHWH Nissi!**

Meditation

Like Moses, whose hands and arms grew heavy, we are often impeded by weaknesses consequent to our limited human frame.

Jesus told His disciples, "**the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak,**" (Matthew 26:41) because He understood that it is easy for us to grow weary in our religious devotion. No amount of physical strength can overcome the everyday infirmities inherent to our flesh. However, we learn from Moses—who supported Joshua and Israel's army and whose own arms were supported by Aaron and Hur—that holy companionship is helpful and needful during those times of spiritual and moral conflict.

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.
(Ecclesiastes 4:12)

Two are better than one, three are better than two, and so on. We must diligently endeavor to hold up the hands of those who minister among us and to bear one another's burdens. One person's strength or energy assists another in their weakness.

It was the sustaining and permanent energy of not one man, but **three** together on the mountain, who assured Israel's decisive victory.

- 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.
(Exodus 17:11-13 *emphasis added*)

Even the strongest arms will fatigue and fail when extended for a long period. The more spiritual our service to YHWH, the more likely we are to weaken under the weight of it. There is no indication that Joshua became weary in the battle, only



that Moses' hands were heavy in praying. In other words, prayer can hardly be said to be an easy or passive work!

Thankfully, this work, too, is not done without Divine assistance. Jesus Christ is our Heavenly Intercessor who never grows weary, but who continually intercedes on our behalf before YHWH's throne.

For there is one God and **one mediator**
between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus,
(1 Timothy 2:5 *emphasis added*)

Who then is the one who condemns? No one.
Christ Jesus who died--more than that, who was raised to life--
is at the right hand of God and is also **interceding for us**.
(Romans 8:34 *emphasis added*)

For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands
that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself,
now to **appear for us** in God's presence.
(Hebrews 9:24 *emphasis added*)

While we must be diligent to support one another's efforts in prayer, it is consoling to know that Jesus' hands never grow weary with pleading! As we hold up one another's hands in the battle, Jesus Christ continues to intercede for us and also to hold up our hands!



