

## Greetings

As I was out running errands with my wife the other day I noticed so many different forms of advertisements as we drove about. There were bill boards, posters, flags and banners. They were designed to get our attention. Though they varied in many ways they had some commonalities as well. They all promoted a product, service or ideal and what affiliation they had to a particular business, organization or entity to name but a few.

I always enjoy seeing our American flag waving in the wind, and all of the great ideals it represents to us and the world. It advertises; freedom, liberty, opportunity and unity. From many we are one. A people who's land was founded on Christian principles. I really enjoyed seeing Pat O'Brien Chevrolet's Giant flag that you could see from I90, it's hard to imagine that people actually complained about it.

Flags, ensigns and banners evoke strong emotions by what they represent. On February 23 1945 Joe Rosenthal a photographer for the Associated press took a Pulitzer Prize winning photo of six marines planting a flag on Iwo Jima's highest hill after fierce fighting during WW II that ended up on the front page of most American newspapers across our land.

That photo engendered such patriotism in the land it gave the people hope that the war would soon be won. So iconic was the photo, they later commissioned a sculptor to recreate the image as a bronze statue that now overlooks the Potomac river.

Flags, ensigns and banners have represented armies over the millennia and God's people had their banner as well. The first mention of 'banner' in the bible comes from the book of Exodus when the Angel of the LORD and Moses led Israel out of Egypt.

It was right after the people complained harshly to Moses accusing him of leading them out into the wilderness to die of thirst. Fearful, Moses cried out to Yahweh and said the people were ready to stone him because he couldn't provide them with water. Yahweh gave instructions to Moses to go out before the people (because God wanted him to be the leader of his people) and while God was standing on the rock, invisible to the people, Moses was to strike the rock and the LORD would make water gush out of rock for the people to drink.

It was right after they were refreshed by the LORD that their enemies, the Amalekites who were the forerunners of the nomadic bedouins of that region, and whose blood-line has Esau as their Chieftan, their great-great... grand father (Gen.31:15-16). They were dogging Israel every step of the way. Their tactics were vial to the LORD and he remembered what they did. As Israel's; weak, aged, children and infirmed lagged behind as they traveled, Amalek would swoop in and kill them. Read:

Exo 17:8-16, "Then Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. Moses said to Joshua, "Choose men for us, and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with God's rod in my hand." So Joshua did as Moses had told him, and fought with Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed. ~

When he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side. His hands were steady until sunset. Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. Yahweh said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under the sky." Moses built an altar, and called its name Yahweh our Banner. He said, "Yah has sworn: 'Yahweh will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.'"

And you may have wondered why God said, "Esau whom I hated".

Moses learned a lot that day. He learned to trust God to provide for their physical needs. He learned that even if he appeared as unpopular with the people, God still wanted him to lead his people. Moses also learned that when the job became to physically demanding and it was evident that if he failed, Israel failed, he had good and faithful friends who would help him finish the job. And the most important thing he learned was that Yahweh would deliver them from their enemies.

Moses was commanded by the LORD to write this battle in a book for a memorial and to make sure that his soon to be successor, Joshua, understood this history. God also told Moses that he would remove the memory of Amalek from the world.

He then erected an alter and named it YAHWEH-NISSI, meaning the 'LORD is my Banner'.

Moses did not offer any sacrifice on the alter, it was more of a commemorative alter. A monument to remember this battle in which it was proved to them that it was the LORD who was fighting for them.

Picture the seen, Moses was on top of the hill, with his arms out stretched to heaven in constant prayer to the LORD for the troops to see. And just as a military banner was a focal point, or a rallying point for the soldiers to be able to see their banner still standing gave Joshua and his men the courage to fight on. Moses wrote that when ever he got tired and could not hold his hands up to God any longer, Joshua and the troops started loosing the battle to Amalek, but when Moses got help from his friends and they gave him a stone seat to rest on and supported his arms up so he could continue to pray, they won the battle.

So Yahweh was their Banner. The image of the banner was this; man's dependency on God for help with out stretched hands to heaven, and God responding to his constant prayers by delivering him from his enemies.

Do you see the amazing symbolism with this image? Moses represents all of us on a personal and or collective level. We all have our struggles, we all have our needs and we all have our enemies of some sort that we need delivering from. And if we are faithful in prayer, like the widow who wanted justice from the judge who kept petitioning him over and over and finally got it, God will answer our prayers.

And sometimes we need help from our friends. When the struggle is too hard and we no longer feel we can continue the fight, we seek out help. We ask others to help us to petition the LORD like when Aaron and Hur helped Moses.

So this amazing and loving Yahweh who was their deliverer that day, taught the Israelis to pray to him often, to look to him and his strength and to not give up, HE would give them the victory. This is the same Yahweh who is our Christ today. Isaiah gave us visions of him long ago before Jesus came as the Messiah.

Isa 11:1-12, "A shoot will come out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots will bear fruit. Yahweh's Spirit will rest on him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahweh. His delight will be in the fear of Yahweh. He will not judge by the sight of his eyes, neither decide by the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the poor, and decide with equity for the humble of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked.~

Righteousness will be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his waist. It will happen in that day that the nations will seek the root of Jesse, who stands as a banner of the peoples; and his resting place will be glorious. It will happen in that day that the Lord will set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Yahweh the Great I AM was Israel's Banner in the O.T. time, and Yahweh the Great I AM is our Christ who is our Banner today. Come to him, pray to him, trust him!