

Names of God, Pt 9 - Jehovah Nissi

Names of God Series

By Pastor Matt Morrell

sermonaudio.com

Preached on: Wednesday, October 1, 2008

Fourth Baptist Church

900 Forestview Lane North

Plymouth, MN 55441

Website: www.fourthbaptist.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/fourthbaptist

Charles Spurgeon, the highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy which can ever engage the attention of a child of God is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father.

There is something exceedingly improving to the mind in a contemplation of the divinity. It is a subject so vast that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity, so deep that our pride is ground in its infinity. No subject of contemplation will tend more to humble the mind than thoughts of God. But while the subject humbles the mind, it also expands it. He who often thinks of God will have a larger mind than the man who simply plods around this narrow globe. The most excellent study for expanding the soul is the knowledge of the godhead. Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man as a devout, earnest, continued investigation of the great subject of the deity.

Plunge yourself into the godhead's deepest sea. Be lost in his immensity and you shall come forth as from a couch of rest, refreshed and invigorated. I know nothing which can so comfort the soul, so calm the swelling billows of sorrow and grief, so speak peace to the winds of trial as a devout musing upon the subject of the godhead.

This evening, again, I call you to a musing upon the person of God. What does it mean to muse? It means to think. What does it mean to be amused? The alpha privative there, the a- negates that. It means to not think. And so if you ever go to an amusement park you are going to a non thinking place. I am not calling you to be amused, but to muse on the person of the godhead. And for this reason we have committed ourself to discover the person of God as revealed in his names.

I am grateful for pastor Dave's comments before our prayer time because what he instructed us to do is, in fact, the very goal and purpose of this entire study so that we can name and claim the character of God in prayer and in life.

However, we all stumble greatly in remembering the names of God, myself included. And so I will give you this bit of review.

The name אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem') means... thank you to the three of you that remembered that. The eternal triune creator. אֱלֹהִים (el-o-heem') is the God of Genesis chapter

number one and his name is cited some 31, 32 times. Genesis one is more about the creator, the eternal, triune creator than it is even about his creation.

The next name there יהוה (yeh-ho-vaw'). He is the... good, the self existing one. יהוה (yeh-ho-vaw') was the God who introduced himself to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus chapter three.

The next name, אל שרי (ale shad-dah' - ee), almighty God or God almighty, the one who can do anything, causing an old man and a barren woman to conceive in Genesis 18 for nothing is too hard for אל שרי (ale shad-dah' - ee).

אל שרי (ale shad-dah' - ee), Lord or master. And as our Lord and master he is good to us and we can look to him for help.

יהוה יראה (yeh-ho-vaw' yir-eh'), the God who sees or the God who provides. Genesis 22 Abraham sacrificed his only son Isaac on Mount Moriah and when Isaac asked his father, "Behold, I see the fire and I see the wood, but where is the lamb? I don't see the lamb?" Abraham answered Isaac, "God sees and God will provide himself a lamb."

יהוה רפא (yeh-ho-vaw' raw-faw'), the God who heals. In Exodus 15 Israel was three days in the wilderness and they found themselves with no water, but only bitter water at Marah and God used the object lesson of that bitter water to reveal himself as the one who would heal the bitterness of their hearts. He explained that bitterness is harbored hurt. It is not wrong to hurt, but if we harbor that hurt it becomes bitterness, a cancer that will destroy us and defile others, Hebrews 12:15.

יהוה שלום (yeh-ho-vaw' shaw-lome'), God our peace. Israel was suffering at the hand of the Midianites. Midian means... do you remember what Midian means? Strife. And Israel was confronted with strife at the hand of the Midianites, but God called and led Gideon to go up against the Midianites and God introduced himself as יהוה שלום (yeh-ho-vaw' shaw-lome'), the God of peace.

יהוה שמה (yeh-ho-vaw' shawm' - maw) and I just gave you... I gave you the definition there, the God who is there and for Israel the presence of God among the people was so important. And, consequently, when the glory of God departed from the temple, the people were also then deported from Jerusalem and they were devastated. However, the prophetic promise was that God was יהוה שמה (yeh-ho-vaw' shawm' - maw), the ever present God.

And this evening יהוה יסני (yeh-ho-vaw' nis-see'). יהוה יסני (yeh-ho-vaw' nis-see') means, perhaps you know, God my banner.

Now I would invite you to turn to the book of Exodus with me. I want to give you a chronological and geographical history lesson and I would like us to work through a few

of the chapters here in Exodus and follow Israel's experience. Exodus chapter number 13.

In Exodus chapter number 13, specifically verses 17 through the end of the chapter, Pharaoh let Israel go and God led his people in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, Exodus 13 verse 17.

Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, "Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt." So God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you." So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness. And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.¹

In Exodus chapter 14 Pharaoh changed his mind about letting Israel go and he pursued Israel to the Red Sea, but God parted the waters and let Israel through on dry ground. Look at Exodus 14 verse number 13.

And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."²

Verse 21.

"Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided."³

In Exodus chapter 15 Israel now celebrates God's deliverance, what salvation God had provided for them. And we read of the songs of Moses and Miriam, Exodus 15 verse one.

"Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: 'I will sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!'"⁴

¹ Exodus 13:17-22.

² Exodus 14:13-14.

³ Exodus 14:21.

⁴ Exodus 15:1.

And then verse 21.

“And Miriam answered them: ‘Sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!’”⁵

How exciting these events must have been for the Hebrew people, God’s people Israel after 400 years of bondage and slavery in Egypt, יהוה (yeh-ho-vaw’) was delivering them and fulfilling his promise to Abraham to give them the land.

And this evening I would like to take a moment and follow Israel’s journey on this map, a map that is, perhaps, familiar to you. Perhaps you have even a map like this tucked in the back of your Bible. We can quickly identify these various regions: Egypt, Sinai and Canaan.

And as we have previously learned here in Exodus 15, Israel escaped from Egypt, passed through the Red Sea and came to Marah. And you can track Israel’s journey there to Marah.

And Exodus 15 verse 22 says:

So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah.⁶

Israel found water in Marah, but it was bitter. And here God revealed himself as... help me, the God who heals, יהוה רפא (yeh-ho-vaw’ raw-faw’), very good in verse 26. You see it there at the end of the verse 26.

“For I am the LORD who heals you.”⁷

I am יהוה רפא (yeh-ho-vaw’ raw-faw’). And God then provided water for them in verse 27.

“Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters.”⁸

And you remember our study of that occasion. But then if we turn the page again to Exodus 16 God led them further into the wilderness of Sin. And we can track that there on the screen as well. But now in Exodus 16 verse one:

⁵ Exodus 15:21.

⁶ Exodus 15:22-23.

⁷ Exodus 15:26.

⁸ Exodus 15:27.

And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt. Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.⁹

Exodus 16 records how that God then provided manna for Israel. You see it there in verse four.

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you.’”¹⁰

In Exodus 17 Israel is going to travel to Rephidim and you can track that there on the screen as well.

Exodus 17 verse one:

“Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink.”¹¹

Verse seven.

“So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel.”¹²

Literally those words mean contention or tempted and contention because they had tempted or tested the Lord saying, “Is this... is the Lord not among us?”

And I don't want you to turn ahead any further in your Bibles because we are going to pause here, but in your mind I want you to know that in Exodus 19 and 20, of course, Israel met with God at Mount Sinai. The law was given and then Israel traveled to Kadeshbarnea and there in Kadeshbarnea Moses sent 12 spies into the land. And you will remember from the children's song 10 were bad and two were good. Do you remember that? But unfortunately the people of Israel believed the testimony of the 10 bad spies, rejecting the courage of the two good spies.

And so Israel then spent 40 years wandering around in circles in the wilderness, all around the wilderness there until Joshua would eventually lead them into the Promised Land. And you know the rest of Israel's history.

⁹ Exodus 16:1-2.

¹⁰ Exodus 16:4.

¹¹ Exodus 17:1.

¹² Exodus 17:7.

But here we find ourselves in Exodus chapter 17 and I have given you all of this overview, perhaps this elementary history to bring us to Exodus chapter 17 verse number eight.

“Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim.”¹³

And you can look at the map and you can understand where we are at in Israel’s journey.

Verse nine.

And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses’ hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." And Moses built an altar and called its name, [יְהוָה יִסַּן (yeh-ho-vaw’ nis-see)].¹⁴

Now your Scriptures don’t say יְהוָה יִסַּן (yeh-ho-vaw’ nis-see’). Your Scriptures say, “The Lord is my banner.”

“The-LORD-Is-My-Banner; for he said, ‘Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.’”¹⁵

Who was Amalek and who were the Amalekites that warred against Israel in Rephidim. Beyond the geography lesson that I have just given you, I want to give you a genealogy lesson and we can picture it this way. Of course we begin with Abraham, the chief, great grand daddy of the Hebrew people, the patriarch Abraham who, of course, had a son named Isaac.

Isaac was blessed with two sons by the name of Jacob and Esau, very good. Jacob and Esau were blessed with some descendants. Do we know who the sons of Jacob were? The 12 tribes of Israel were Jacob, Israel. And would you happen to know that Esau’s descendants were the Amalekites. And so we have a family feud that is raging and no doubt the Amalekites thought that they could easily prevail over their enemies Israel.

¹³ Exodus 17:8.

¹⁴ Exodus 17:9-16.

¹⁵ Exodus 17:15-16.

After all, Israel was unequipped. Israel was undisciplined. Israel was simply a mass of slave laborers who had just been exiled from Egypt. The Amalekites were warriors and had home court advantage. But the Amalekites underestimated Israel's God. And they warred against each other here in Exodus chapter 17 verses eight through 16.

And we have just read the story. And Exodus 17 verses eight through 16 records Israel's conflict and the occasion for God's self revelation of himself as יהוה יסנ' (yeh-ho-vaw' nis-see').

Now if you look closely at this work of art, this painting, you can picture at the top there you can see Moses holding up his hands. And as Moses help up his rod, Israel prevailed. When Moses' hands became heavy, Amalek prevailed. And you see a banner in ancient times was not a flag, it was most often a bare pole with a shining ornament. In fact, the word for banner means to glisten and a banner was an ensign, a standard, signal, a banner stood for a cause.

And so here Moses in the sight of all of the people held up a rod, a banner, a symbol of the cause. And Moses' rod was a wonder working rod. Am I right? It was Moses' rod that brought all of the plagues on Egypt. It was Moses' rod that opened a path to the Red Sea. It was Moses' rod that brought water from a rock and so Moses holds up his rod as a banner, right? But wait and be careful. It wasn't Moses' rod.

What does verse number nine say? Look at verse number nine.

“And Moses said to Joshua, ‘Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with [what] in my hand.’”¹⁶

The rod of God, with the rod of אלהים (el-o-heem').

It was this rod or this banner, this rod of God that brought the victory. It wasn't Moses' rod as we often refer to it, but it was the rod of God. It was the banner of God. The memorial was to be written in verse number 14. The altar was built in verse 15 declaring the banner to be Jehovah, not Moses' rod.

And so what do we do with this Old Testament narrative? I want us to remember our premise, of course. We have reviewed it each Wednesday evening. God has progressively revealed himself to his people by introducing himself with and identifying himself by different names at different times. God's names were given to man by God himself during a specific time of man's need so that we might now that God is our all in all.

Consider this. The record of the defeat of the Amalekites and the revelation of God as יהוה יסנ' (yeh-ho-vaw' nis-see') is, number one, for our learning. It is for our learning.

¹⁶ Exodus 17:9.

Romans 15:4 says:

“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”¹⁷

And God revealed himself to Israel as יְהוָה (yeh-ho-vaw’ nis-see’) during a time of great need. And God then recorded these events for us so that we, too, might know that God is our banner. And it is very clear as Moses explains in verses 14 and 15 that it wasn’t the rod of Moses. It as the banner of God.

And Israel’s experience here is somewhat analogous to the spiritual warfare in our Christian lives. Let me give you some Scriptures.

Romans 8:31 and 37.

“If God is for us, who can be against us?”¹⁸

“...we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”¹⁹

Psalm 118:6.

“The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”²⁰

1 Corinthians 15:57 says:

“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”²¹

2 Corinthians 2:14:

“Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ.”²²

And so the narrative, the record of the defeat of the Amalekites in Exodus chapter 17 is for our learning. It is, secondly, for our living. How do we appropriate or how do we apply these things to our lives? We quote Bible verses and that is good, but how does that all work out?

I want to create a contrast between Israel’s experience at the Red Sea and Israel’s experience at Rephidim in fighting the Amalekites. Consider the differences here. At the Red Sea the children of Israel, terrified at the sight of Pharaoh’s host coming upon them

¹⁷ Romans 15:4.

¹⁸ Romans 8:31.

¹⁹ Romans 8:37.

²⁰ Psalm 118:6.

²¹ 1 Corinthians 15:57.

²² 2 Corinthians 2:14.

and the way of escape barred on the every hand were commanded not to do anything, but simply stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. That is Exodus chapter 14. Israel, there is nothing you can do. Stand still and see the salvation of your God. For in the work of salvation God alone is the agent. They could do nothing to secure that salvation, but once having been delivered and introduced to a new life there appeared a warfare to be waged. They were to fight the good fight of faith which must ever be the experience of serious believer. It is not now stand still and see the salvation of God. That salvation has been accomplished by God alone. It is now choose us out men and go out and fight with Amalek, as Moses said. At Rephidim, a redeemed people were called to fight the good fight of faith.

We are called to earnestly contend for the faith. We are to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ willing to endure hardness, well pleasing to our commander. We are to put on the armor of God. And I call this our living.

However, we can't live the Christian life, wage the warfare in our own strength alone. We need help.

And you say, "Of course we need help just as Moses needed help."

Moses needed someone to lift his arms, right? And our spiritual leaders need someone to prop them up, pastors and missionaries need someone to help them. That is the moral of this story, right?

Now, it is certainly a blessing when believers come alongside spiritual leadership to encourage and to support and uphold. And I am blessed with many of you who have commented multiple times, "Pastor, man, we want to help hold up your hands when you are weary."

But know this. What was being held up in Exodus chapter 17 was not so much Moses' hands, as it was the rod of God. What was being held up was not Moses as much as it was the banner of God. And just like the ark of the covenant, the rod of God was a symbol of God's presence and when it was not held up, it was as if God's presence departed and our help and our strength is ultimately found in the presence of God, not, hear me, not in the personality of leadership, however great that leadership might be. And Moses was certainly, perhaps the greatest of human leaders. But without God's presence among us we are doomed to defeat. And that was Israel's experience in Numbers chapter 14 when they were up against the Canaanites, in Joshua seven when they fought against Ai and they were defeated. And may I make this application? In this place amongst the church family of Fourth Baptist Church, I need people to help lift my hands, but more than that, I need people to hold up the banner of God.

Do you see that picture? We so often think of Moses. We need to support Moses and he was a leader so we need to support leadership. Yes. But ultimately it is the rod of God. It is the banner of God that needs to be upheld.

And so it is for our living and, friend, in the struggles of the Christian life, in the battles of spiritual warfare that we engage in daily, I would encourage you to lift high the banner of God.

And then, finally, it is for our legacy. Exodus 17 verse 14 and 15.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." And Moses built an altar and called its name, [יְהוָה נִסִּי] (yeh-ho-vaw' nis-see') The-LORD-Is-My-Banner.²³

Turn quickly to Psalm 20.

I think an important parallel. Psalm 20 verse five.

We will rejoice in your salvation, And in the name of our God we will set up our banners! May the LORD fulfill all your petitions. Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven With the saving strength of His right hand.²⁴

And certainly we need the name of the Lord to be our banner.

I don't know the burden or the battle that you are facing this evening. But whatever it is, I would implore you to turn to the name of the Lord.

A brief story here as we conclude.

Hudson Taylor tells the remarkable story of how his rebellion in his teen years drove his mother and younger sister to fervent prayer on his behalf. After his 17th birthday his mother spent two weeks at a friend's home 70 miles away. One afternoon after lunch his mother went to her room, locked the door and got down on our knees to pray for her son's conversion to Christ. She resolved that she would not stop until she was assured the battle was won. She prayed for hours until she could pray no more and then became convinced that the victory had been won and her son would trust in Christ.

That same afternoon at home alone Hudson became bored and ventured into his father's study searching for a book to read. A gospel tract captured his attention and he picked it up thinking he might find a good story. He curled up in the corner of the room and began reading, fully intending to stop if he came to any religious parts. But he read one phrase he could not get out of his mind.

"The finished work of Christ."

²³ Exodus 17:14-15.

²⁴ Psalm 20:5-6.

Then the words of Christ on the cross came to his mind.

“It is finished.”²⁵

His struggle with religion had been that he could not seem to produce enough good works to outweigh his bad works, so he just gave up trying. Now a new question came to his mind. What was finished? Suddenly he realized the truth. The debt of his sin had been paid in full by Christ. He fell on his knees and received Christ as his Savior.

At that very moment his mother had ceased praying, assured that her son would come to Christ. She arrived home six days later. He excitedly met her at the door and said, “Mother, I have some happy news for you.”

She hugged him and said, “I know, my boy. I have been rejoicing for days in the glad tidings you have to tell me.”

Oh, what a victory was won by the Lord in the spiritual battle for the soul of Hudson.

Hudson Taylor, of course, then went on to become the founder of the China Inland Mission, bringing thousands of souls to Christ in China.

Now, that true story is not meant to suggest that if you pray for hours, that all of your unsaved relatives will trust Christ. However, I think it does illustrate the faith of a mother in going to the Lord for spiritual victory, going to God, looking to the Lord in her battle and crying out to him.

Folks, many, many times we put our hope in the savvy of a Christian counselor or we look to the solutions of a medical doctor or we hope that personality and leadership and government and the manipulation of circumstances might win the war for us.

Why don't we go to יהוה י' סנ (yeh-ho-vaw' nis-see')? And why don't we simply uphold the banner of the person of our God and let him do the fighting for us?

And in the occasion that we can no longer hold up our God before us and keep our focus fixed on him, then you know what? The enemy will prevail. And I think that is the important lesson of Exodus chapter 17.

Psalm 20.

“We will rejoice in your salvation, And in the name of our God we will set up our banners!”²⁶

²⁵ John 19:30.

²⁶ Psalm 20:5.

Let's pray.

Father God, we humbly bow our heads and hearts before you and acknowledge you to be our Jehovah Nissi, the Lord our banner. And, oh God, forgive us for lifting up anything other than your name. Lord, we recognize that it wasn't Moses' rod that worked all of the miracles in Egypt in crossing the Red Sea and bringing water from a rock or in defeating the Amalekites, but it was the rod of God. It was the banner or the ensign of God. And, Lord, I pray that Fourth Baptist Church corporately and the people of Fourth Baptist Church individually will look to you for victory in every matter and we will thank you for this in Jesus' name. Amen.