

Together we've been studying the names of God. Why do we study the names of God? God's names teach us about God's nature and who He is. Knowing who He is helps us understand how He wants to help us and love us each and every day.

This week we are looking at Jehovah Nissi. Today's study is going to get your hearts pumping. *[Grow your voice in volume and excitement]* Get ready, get set, for the meaning of Jehovah Nissi. It means—drumroll please—the Lord is ... MY ... BANNER! *[Kids should be looking at you like you're crazy right now.]* What? Does the word *banner* not make you cheer and jump up and down? Let's get into our story, and see if this name Jehovah Nissi makes you cheer in the end.

We're in Exodus chapter 17. The Israelites are being led by God through the wilderness. A few weeks ago we talked about God's name of Yahweh that means "I am." Do you remember who God talked to through the burning bush? *[Moses]* God was going to be everything the Israelites needed to be freed from slavery to the Egyptians. The word Exodus reveals to us the big exit of the Israelites from Egypt.

God is leading the Israelites to the land He'd promised them. That's why we call it the promised land. But one morning they open the flaps of their tent to blink in the sunshine, and a friend runs up with horrible news. This is news that makes the parents' eyebrows furrow in worry and makes the kids cry because they're scared. The Amalekites are preparing to attack the Israelites. If they win the attack, they will kill lots of people and steal everything they own. The Amalekite soldiers have trained for years. They've experienced battles before. They've had older family members tell them stories of what they did in battles. And the Israelites? They've been a slave nation for 400 years, which means they have never had to pick up a sword. Their family members never fought anyone and never told stories of what to expect.

Based on what you know about Moses, what do you expect Moses would respond to this? Moses knows God's name. He knows God's nature. He has seen Yahweh do miracles. Moses picks up his staff.

This staff is the same piece of wood God turned into a snake when Moses was telling Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. It's the same staff God used in one of the plagues. It's the same staff God told Moses to extend over the Red Sea when the Egyptians were chasing the Israelites, and the Red Sea parted before their eyes.

Moses told Joshua to take the sword and lead the battle. Moses was going to use the staff. He held it in his hands, both hands, and he lifted it above his head like a banner or flag for the Israelites to see. He stood above the people where they could see him, and Joshua prepared them to fight. Moses with his staff was a signal to the Israelites of who they were, but it was more importantly a reminder of who God has been to them. He was lifting their eyes to the God who has saved them before who will never forsake them.

I'm going to give you a challenge. While I read, let's see how long you can stand with your arms above your head like Moses did in this battle against the Amalekites. Ready, go!

Verse 11 says Moses had this incredible sight. When he stood with his staff lifted, the Israelites' line of fighters would advance and beat the Amalekites. But when he put his arms and staff down because he was tired, the Amalekites would push through the line. How are your arms feeling? *[celebrate however long your kids hold up their arms]* I told you this lesson would get your heart pumping! Ha!

This is the only story like this in the bible. God is wanting to teach the Israelites something very powerful. If we want to win this battle, we are going to have to look to God and trust in Him.. As hours passed and the people continued to fight, Moses' arms ached. Aaron and Hur—who is a him—brought Moses a rock so he could sit down They stood beside him and held up his arms. And the slave nation who had never fought a battle won over these experienced fighters.

Moses built an altar and called it Jehovah Nissi, the Lord is my banner. Do you think why Jehovah Nissi is worth cheering about now? He's worth celebrating and turning our eyes and hands to, just like Moses.