

Exodus 17:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi:

Analysis

And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi—Moses' altar commemorates victory through worship. The name יהוה נִסִּי (YHWH-Nissi, 'The LORD is my banner') proclaims that God Himself is Israel's standard/ensign under which they fought. Ancient armies rallied around visible banners; Israel rallies around invisible YHWH. The altar's name teaches that worship recognizes God as source of victory. This anticipates Christ lifted up on the cross becoming the banner drawing all nations (John 12:32, Isa 11:10). The altar at Rephidim—place of thirst and warfare—shows that locations of testing become sites of worship when faith triumphs. Moses' immediate response of building an altar models giving God glory before proceeding.

Historical Context

This altar likely served for thank offerings. Its name entered Israel's theological vocabulary as declaration that YHWH goes before His people as their rallying point in battle.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does God being our 'banner' differ from human military standards or national flags?
2. What does building an altar at the place of testing teach about transforming trials into worship?

Interlinear Text

בָּנָה	וּמֹשֶׁה	אֶלְטָרָה	וְקָרָא	שֵׁם	יְהוָה הַ	נִסִּי
built	And Moses	an altar	and called	the name		
H1129	H4872	H4196	H7121	H8034	H3068	H5251

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 22:14 (Parallel theme): And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

Judges 6:24 (Sacrifice): Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovah-shalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Psalms 60:4 (Parallel theme): Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.

Genesis 33:20 (Sacrifice): And he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel.