JEHOVAH NISSI - br. Raju Krishna

A very good morning to you all, dear brethren around the world.

Greetings of peace and joy to all in the name of Our Almighty God and Our Returned and Reigning King, Jesus Christ.

I bring the love and greetings of many brethren from India and my family.

I thank our Lord for giving me the opportunity to serve His flock, and I also thank the convention committee for giving me the opportunity to serve the brethren.

Today our study is based on the verse written by Apostle Paul in *I Corin* 10:11: Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." And the title of the discourse is "Jehovah Nisi." This is partly based on the writings of our beloved Br. Charles Taze Russell (R4207 and R5285). I would like to present this as a suggestion for all the saints to ponder.

We all know the bitter experiences of Israel while they dwelt in Egypt. They settled in Egypt during the days of Joseph, but later, when the Pharaoh who lived during the days of Joseph died and other Pharaoh came, he began to afflict them with hard labour and made them slaves to Pharaoh, and Pharaoh appointed taskmasters on them who made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and brick, and in all manner of service in the field, wherein they made them serve with rigour. So that Israel may never have sufficient time to think about their God. Thus the people of Israel were vexed and cried to God for deliverance from the Egyptian bondage. The Bible says in Exodus 2:24 that God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And in due time, God raised Moses to deliver Israel out of Egyptian bondage to the Promised Land. Through 10 plagues, Moses delivered them out of Egypt to the promised land. Beforehand God had told their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob about the promised land that it was a land flowing with milk and honey yet when they came to the border of the promised land, the Israelites sent spies into the promised land to see if that land was as God had promised. 12 spies were sent, one from each of the tribes of Israel. After the spying, the promised land all the elders came with the evil report except Joshua and Caleb, saying the land is good but there are giants whom we cannot defeat, which discouraged the hearts of many. Hearing this, the Israelites decided to stone Moses, appoint a new leader, and return to Egypt. Because of their

doubts about God's promises that God would fight for them or not, God punished them and made them wander in the wilderness for 40 years, so all of them who were 20 years of age and older perished in the wilderness. Of all those who left Egypt, it was only Joshua and Caleb who entered the promised land.

In spite of all their murmurings and grumblings in their wilderness journey, God punished them but never forsook them. The clothes they wore didn't tear, and the sandals they wore were never worn out. During the day, God gave them shelter from the hot sun through clouds, and during the night, God gave them free lighting from the pillar of clouds. Every day in the morning, free food was delivered to their doorsteps. The manna, which was like wafers made out of honey, was like eating honey cake, the imagination of which brings water in our mouths. Whenever they wanted to eat meat, even that was door-delivered, and that too unlimited. Whenever there was danger, God was always ready to fight for them & fought for them. Today we are going to study the first fight of Israel after their deliverance from Egypt, which is given to us in the book of Exodus, chapter 17. We will first go through this chapter verse by verse and see what happened there, and later on we will see what spiritual lesson we have for ourselves.

So we read in verse 1: "And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim; and there was no water for the people to drink." The people of Israel had been journeying for a long time without any rest, and hence, by the time they came to Rephidim, all the water that they had was over. Rephidim was a hot valley full of granite stones, due to which the heat was more severe than they could bear. Adding to this, as all their water was over, they began to fight with Moses. See vs. 2 "Therefore, the people did chide with Moses and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? Wherefore do you tempt the LORD?"

The people of Israel soon forgot the miracle that God had done at Marah, where the bitter water was sweetened. Instead of requesting and praying to the Lord for water, as usual, they began to grumble against God and fight with Moses. Therefore, Moses said, Why do you tempt God?

Then vs. 3: "And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle

with thirst?"

Moses had been used to such experiences with these murmurs; hence, he took the matter in prayer to the Lord.

Vs4. Read as "And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto these people? They be almost ready to stone me."

What did the Lord reply to Moses? See vs. 5. "And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel."

When Moses took the rod that he used to part the red sea and smote the rock, water came out. How did the water come? Did it come like tap water? No! In Psalms 78:15–16, it says, "He claved the rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink out of the great depths. He brought streams also out of the rock and caused waters to run down like rivers." It was a river that flowed from the rock, and how will the waters be that come out of the rocks? It will be chill and pure. For the people who were thirsty, this was exactly what they wanted, and it completely quenched their thirst. They were satisfied, happy, relaxing, and rested because they were totally exhausted and weak.

Now came the danger & so we read in Exodus 17 verse 8 that "Then came Amalek, and he fought with Israel in Rephidim." Who are these Amalekites & how did they attack the people of Israel? It is given in Deut 25:17-18: "Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God."

The Amalekites didn't come and attack the stronger ones from the front but came and attacked those who were weak from the back. Now, usually, while travelling in a crowd, who will be the one who lags behind? It will be the elderly, women, and children. This means the Amalekites came and attacked the weaker elderly, women, and children. This is a direct violation of war

rules. Even today, the war rules are that no one will attack women, children, or the elderly. Attacking from the back is like backstabbing, which is forbidden and shows cowardice.

In such situations, we all know very well that Moses used to pray to God for His guidance whether to fight or not and how to fight. Similarly, here, Moses prayed to the Lord to find out what the Lord's will and advice was. Then Joshua was commanded by God to go and fight with the Amalekites. See vs. 9, 10. "And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out 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 had said to him and fought with Amalek, and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill."

Joshua was commanded to fight the Amalekites, while Moses was to go up on Mount Horeb along with Aaron and Hur, lift up his hands, and pray to the Lord for the battle.

Vs. 11 tells us that "And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed." How much can Moses hold his hands up? So both Aaron and Hur, supported Moses, one of them held the left hand and the other held the right hand.

Thus, with both of these support, Moses continuously prayed, lifting his hands, while Joshua defeated the Amalekites below See vs. 12 and 13 "But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword."

God told never to forget this incident & He told Joshua and Moses to write it in a book as a memorial for ever and ever See vs. 14-16 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua, for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar and called the name of it Jehovahnissi, for he said, Because the LORD has sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." Hence, we see, brethren, that this was written in the book

so that the people of Israel would never forget about what the Amalekites did for them and that they would have a perpetual war with them. And Moses built an altar to offer sacrifices to God and called that altar *Jehovahnissi*, meaning the Lord's banner.

Dear brethren, we all know very "For whatsoever things were written aforetime, they were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort in the scriptures, might have hope" Romans 15:4.

This is also mentioned in *I Corin 10:11 "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*

So what lesson do we have in this narration? What does Egypt mean? What does Israel mean? Who does Moses represent? What does the land of Cannan mean? What does it mean that Israel walked with Moses? What does Israel's murmuring represent? And what does that rock that Moses smote and from which the water came represent? Who are these Amalekites? Whom does it represent here? We all know that for the Bible, Bible is its own dictionary, so whenever we want to decode the Bible, we need to search all the codes from the Bible itself; hence, the Bible says, here a little there a little, search the scriptures; none shall miss her mate (Isaiah 28:10, 34:16). So if we search the scriptures, God will definitely give us answers.

We all know very well that Egypt represents the world, and Pharaoh, the Prince of Egypt, represents the Prince of this world, Satan, the God of this world, and the Pharaoh's servants represent the fallen angels under the influence of the devil, whose task is to make men slaves to sin. And the people of Israel represent God's children, who are captivated by slavery. As they cried God heard their cry and sent Moses, and Moses here represents Jesus Christ, whom God sent to save God's children from the bondage of sin and death. Moses led them to Canaan, the promised land, and even so, Christ is leading all of God's children to Heavenly Canaan. As Israel followed Moses similarly, we are also following Jesus. Yet Israel murmured, grumbled, and questioned God. Similarly, sometimes we also question God regarding water, regarding so many truths like what God? when God? why God? Why there is a difference among ourselves, why someone is rich, why some are poor, why some are educated, why some are not educated, why some are happy, why some are sad, why different experiences for different

people, and so many other questions. How did God answer all these questions? God told Moses to take the rod with him and smite the rock so that water might come out of the rock and quench their thirst. Similarly, God answered all our questions through the rock that was smitten, Jesus. Moses took the rod and smote the rock with the rod. The law is the rod. The law under which Jesus was born, it is because of the law, Jesus was smitten, and through the smitten rock, Jesus, the water of truth came out. Therefore, in 1 Corinthians 10:4, it says that "all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ." Jesus is the rock through which God draws us to the truth. In John 6:44, it says, "No man can come to me except the Father, who has sent me to draw him." It was because of the law that Jesus was crucified, and it is because of the death of Jesus that we have been able to receive the Spirit of understanding and the truth. This water quenched the thirst of Israel; similarly, the living water has completely satisfied all our questions and given us answers from the Scriptures. And in response, what did we do? The people of Israel were satisfied, rejoiced, and relaxed. Similarly, we also rejoiced and relaxed by consecrating ourselves to God. So was everything over? No! That was the beginning. When they were relaxing, the Amalekites came and attacked from behind. Similarly, many people think that if we are consecrated, that is sufficient; a seat is reserved for us in heaven. Just consecrating is not sufficient; it is only after consecration that the real battle begins. That is the time that our enemy, the Amalekites, came to attack us from behind. It is only after our consecration that the real fight for the new creature begins. Therefore, Apostle Paul said in I Corin 10:12, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.".

So, Who are these Amalekites who came and attacked the people of Israel from behind? For the Bible, the Bible is the dictionary. Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: No one of these shall fail; none shall want her mate... Here a little, and there a little... (Isaiah 34:16, 28:10).

About Amalekites, it is first given in Genesis 36:12 that "Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son, and she bore to Eliphaz Amalek." Which means Amalekite was the grandson of Esau and it is Esau, who, for one morsel of meat, sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears (Heb 12:16-17). Hence, these Amalekites represent the people who are very careless about God's blessings. As we have already read in Deut 25:17-19, they feared not God, and these were the first enemies of Israel, and these were the worst enemies, and they attacked the people from behind, as well as those who were faint and weary. These are the highlighting characters of Amalekites. Now, who does this Amalekite

represent? This is our deadliest enemy. We all know very well that the new creature has four enemies.

- 1. The World
- 2. The Devil
- 3. The Flesh
- 4. The Babylon

Among all this, which is the worst of all the enemies? The deadliest and worst of all the enemies is our flesh. Therefore, Apostle Paul says in Romans 7 chapter 18 verses, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." Our flesh is the deadliest of all enemies. We can control everything and overcome everything, but controlling and overcoming our flesh is a very difficult task. Therefore, in Proverbs 16:32, it says, "He that is slow to anger [is] better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

When does our flesh attack us? When we feel relaxed after serving the Lord, when we feel satisfied in the Lord, that is the time that the flesh attacks us, and so we read in James 1:14-15 that "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away from his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Again, we read in *Gal 5:16*, "This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." If we stop walking in the footsteps of our dear Lord by daily carrying the cross and following Him automatically, we will be pulled by the current of the flesh. This is a subtle enemy; it doesn't attack us directly but attacks us from behind when we are relaxed and at rest. So when do we feel relaxed? If we serve the Lord two or three days a week, we feel very happy and satisfied that we are pleasing to the Lord. we have done so many things for the Lord, conducted so many meetings, visited so many places, brought so many to the truth, established so many ecclesia's, and done so many other things. That is the time the flesh says, Oh! You have done many things; you need to take rest. So our flesh tells us to take a little bit rest, watch a movie, go out, spend some time with friends, watch your favourite game, etc. That is when the danger comes.

Many of the God's people in the Bible, we read, that they were careless in understanding God will. They thought that, as God was pleased with them, God would also be pleased if they made small mistakes here and there, and God would overlook them.

King Uzziah had done many good things, and God accepted all his good work. He thought God would be pleased with him even if he offered an incense on the altar, which was actually the work of a priest. But when he held the censer in his hand to burn incense, what happened? Leprosy even rose up in his forehead... and they thrust him out of the temple; yes, he himself hasted to go out because the LORD had smitten him. He was a leper unto the day of his death and dwelt in several houses, [being] a leper, for he was cut off from the house of the LORD - II Chron

26:16-21.

Even when Moses was told to smite the rock, he obeyed the Lord. But the second time, when God told him to speak to the rock, he instead smote the rock twice. Then the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them. Numbers 20: 7–12 It was just a small mistake, but yet Moses, the meekest man of all the earth, was never taken to the promised land of Canaan.

When David sought to bring the Ark of the Covenant up to Jerusalem, When the oxen stumbled, making the ark tilt, Uzzah steadied the ark with his hand, in direct violation of the divine law, and he was immediately killed by the Lord for his error.

These were just minute, small mistakes, but they were very serious in the sight of God. God of Israel never compromises with sin & disobedience.

If we are like any of the above, then these are signs of spiritual degradation, and our prayer might be like that of a pharisee who prayed to God, telling about his righteousness. God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men [are], extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice a week, and I give tithes of all that I possess. But a publican also prayed. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as [his] eyes unto heaven but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner. Among these two, who was justified? The publican rather than the pharisee. Similarly, how should our hearts be after doing all the work of the Lord? We should say, "We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." Luke 17:10 says that it is only of His grace, and just His grace is sufficient for us.

The other way of the flesh attacking us is to stop ceasing to keep our consecration vow; what happens is that automatically the flesh pulls us out of the narrow way. We're all naturally created for this earth, which itself is a natural magnet, and as metal gets pulled to the magnet, similarly, our flesh pulls towards the world away from God. This gravitational pull is always there. If we simply cease to walk spiritually, then naturally, all the earthly things will pull us back into the world. This flesh attacks, just like an enemy attacks the fortified fort at night when they are all sleeping.

The other way of attacking through the flesh is to make good appear bad

and bad appear good. And simply fight for unimportant things and make it feel like we are fighting for righteousness sake. What did Jesus say? "Iniquity shall abound, and the love of many shall wax cold." Mat **24:12**. As the closing of the door to the high calling gets nearer and nearer, many shall fall. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, because the sifting process will happen rampantly where the brother shall betray the brother to death and the father the son, and children shall rise up against [their] parents and shall cause them to be put to death. Mark 13:12. Hence, it is not our duty to fight with flesh and blood. In Revelation 22:11-12, it says, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. ... My reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. We should work out our own salvation, not that of others, with fear and trembling. This Lord permits us to see if we are faithful or not.

Another way of flesh attacking us is a misapplication of the scriptures. For example, in Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to [his] purpose." Some people misunderstand the concept of offering their body as a living sacrifice to God and think that not doing work to earn their daily bread is a sacrifice, while actually they are lazy and forget the scripture, which says, "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." I Tim 5: 8. And justify themselves by thinking that this is working for their good. Some don't even come to church and would be occupied in the world, yet they think that Oh! this is working for their good. Still, some do not read the Bible, but have time to spend on social media and think that all these things are working for good. When opportunities are given, they sit quietly, miss all the opportunities, and justify themselves, saying that everything will work out for good. If this continues, then tomorrow they might lose the crown or might even go to a second death. If they go to the second death just because they did nothing nor worked out their salvation, is it really for good? No, God has called us to be of the little flock, not of the great multitude. So we should try to overcome our flesh; the crown is to him that overcometh... even as Jesus also overcame and is set down with Father on his throne. Rev. 3:21.

What was the advice that God gave regarding the Amalekites? In Deuteronomy 25:17–19, God tells us to remember what this deadly enemy did. So let us be careful about what this enemy did to us, and what is he

doing now? What all can he do in the future? This is what God actually told the first king of Israel, Saul; he was told to destroy all the Amalekites, not to spare any of them, neither the children nor the old ones or the animals. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all [that was] good, and would not utterly destroy them; but every thing [that was] vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly. I Sam 15:9. When Samuel came and questioned him, he said yes, I have done God's will, ambition, pride, ego & hypocrisy had blinded him. Even when Samuel would correct him, he would not listen. So what happened was that King Saul's kingdom was taken from him and given to David. So similarly, we should destroy all our Amalekites, small, great, old, children, women, everything that is there, destroy everything? But we try to destroy some bad things in us, like telling lies, using bad words, cheating, etc. But do we kill our ambition, pride, ego, jealousy, anger, and politics? We say these things are required to serve the Lord better, or people will misuse us. These are things we need to kill at any cost. If we don't kill, what will happen? We see what happened to King Saul. He was rejected from being king; similarly, we will also lose our kingship. "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Rev 3:11

King Saul didn't destroy the Amalekites; hence, God permitted the Amalekites to kill King Saul. Similarly, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13). Therefore, we should crucify our flesh daily, carry the cross daily, and follow Jesus. Jesus also said that he who loses his life for my sake shall save it, and he who saves his life for my sake will lose it (Luke 9:24). Then what should I do? How do we fight this Amalekite?

The people of Israel had no experience of war; they could not fight themselves, so they prayed to the Lord for guidance, and God did guide them. It is the same guidance that God is giving us today. We can't fight alone; we need help from Christ. Moses went up on the mount, lifted up his hands, and prayed for the people. Whenever his hands were lifted, the Amalekites were defeated, but whenever his hands were let down, the Amalekites won the battle. Similarly, now Christ has gone to heaven, seated upon the Father's right hand, and is praying for us. You might all wonder, How is this possible, brother? Actually, we should pay for Christ, but how can Christ pray for us? Yes! Let us read Romans 8:34. "Who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us," When Moses stopped praying, Israel lost. Similarly, does Christ stop to pray for us? Yes! When does Christ stop to pray for us? When we are

not walking properly after the spirit, that is the time we lose the victory; without him, we can't do anything. If we are obedient, then we will be able to fight, which means that Christ is interceding for us. If Christ has to intercede for us, then we need to try to fight our battle, and the Lord will help us. The Lord needs our willingness & support to fight the battle. Sometimes the requests are made to pray for the brethren, while actually the brethren themselves wouldn't be interested and would be living a worldly life. Would such a prayer be of any use to them? No, not at all. If our prayers have to be answered, then we need to overcome and thus support the Lord, and only then can God work in us. Sometimes Moses got tired and his hands were let down, so Aaron and Hur, two of them, supported Moses hands.

What do Aaron and Hur represent? Aaron was the brother of Moses, and Hur was the brother-in-law of Moses. Aaron means elevated, and Hur means **noble.** These two things supporting Moses represent the two characters that should be in us the most elevated and nobel, which God likes very much. Which is this character that God likes very much? This is the same character that God actually saw in Jesus, because of which Jesus was anointed above all his fellow angels. This is given to us in *Hebrews 1:9*. "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, [even] thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Jesus loved righteousness and hated iniquity. When did Jesus love righteousness? Though it brought much disadvantage, our Lord loved righteousness. When did Jesus hate iniquity? Though it brought much advantage, our Lord hated iniquity. When the Pharisees and the Sadducees violated God's commandment, he called them a brood of vipers. He didn't condemn only the Pharisees and the Sadducees, but when one of his own disciples did things that were not pleasing to God, Christ said, Get behind me, Satan. Christ loved righteousness at any cost and hated iniquity at any loss. Because of this, God lifted him high and anointed him with the oil of gladness above His fellows. Similarly, if we have this beautiful character, we can get God's grace and mercy, fight, and win over the flesh.

Joshua, through whom the battle was won, was later given the opportunity to be the deliverer of the whole of Israel. Similarly, if we are faithful in little things, then God will give us the opportunity to be faithful in greater things, even to rule with Christ.

After this victory, Moses built an altar called Jehovah Nissi, meaning **the banner of the Jehovah** altar in olden days was actually a sign of gratitude to God. For example, in the 12th chapter of Genesis, Abraham built an altar

in honour and gratitude to God. Moses built an altar because this was the first war and the first victory for Israel over its enemies. They were not prepared and didn't have any arms, swords or spears yet God gave them the victory. Realising our unworthiness and God's grace, we should build an altar and sacrifice to God all our time and talents, etc. God said this war with the Amalekites would be from generation to generation (Exodus 17:16). Similarly, our warfare with our flesh is not for one day, a few years, or any particular date. It is a life-long process. But in Numbers 24:20, it says that the later end of the Amalekites shall be that he perish forever. Similarly, one day we will see that our flesh will be totally destroyed, and God will give us a divine body on the divine nature.

Why did God permit the enemy Amalekites to attack Israel? Because Israel had no experience to fight, this was an experience to fight the future battles; thus, God prepared them for the future battles. Similarly, when we have some fights in our lives our God is preparing us for some battles and strengthening us for the future. So let us be thankful to God for such experiences.

Amen.

May the Lord add His blessing to the understanding of His holy words.

I once again thank My Heavenly Father, our Lord, and Saviour Jesus Christ for this opportunity and the convention committee for giving me the opportunity to serve His flock.

I also thank the translator brethren, for translating the Lord's words in various languages.

If anyone has any questions, you can ask me.

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God bless all Till We Meet Again