



"You can't lead anyone else further than you have gone yourself."  
—Gene Mauch

05-Jul-19

## Flag of Our Father

With the celebration of Independence Day having just passed here in the United States, we see many displays of Old Glory flapping in the breeze as we go about our daily activities. As is customary on national holidays, many people flew the American flag in their front yards or from the side of the house. Here in South Carolina, some people mount the flag on their vehicles for all to see as they drive around throughout the year.

But lately, even the freedom to display the flag has come under attack. All across the country, local governments and homeowners' associations are telling residents that they cannot fly the American flag. A few years ago in Coventry, Rhode Island, Central Coventry Fire District Board Chairman Fred Gralinski publicly said that flying a big American flag from the back of a firetruck is un-American. What is more, it is not uncommon to see on the news the open display of people trampling on or even burning the nation's flag. The flag-desecrators claim that they are just exercising their right to free speech.

On January 1, 1776, General George Washington ordered the Grand Union flag hoisted above his base at Prospect Hill as the Continental Army laid siege to Boston. The American flag was born. It would become the standard of freedom and democracy, representing the unity of America—one nation under God—and our common cause with [hope](#) for a better tomorrow.

Through the years, the U.S. flag has gone through several changes. In a USMilitary.com article titled "This 4th of July: What does the American Flag mean to you?" Kim Lengling writes:

Today the flag consists of thirteen horizontal stripes, seven red alternating with 6 white. The stripes represent the original 13 Colonies; the stars represent the 50 states of the Union. The colors of the flag are symbolic as well: Red symbolizes Hardiness and Valor, White symbolizes Purity and Innocence and Blue represents Vigilance, Perseverance and Justice.

Old Glory does not represent the same noble standards anymore. It has taken quite a beating in the last fifty years or so, during which these values have all but disappeared.

Throughout history, flags or banners have served three purposes; 1) to identify a group; 2) to claim possession of a space or territory; or 3) to lend festivity to a celebration. Banners or flags are used as both physical and emotional rallying points. When I worked on a military base in Georgia, many mornings, I would see soldiers doing their physical training runs, and the platoons would be carrying the American flag and flags that identified their units. It was quite a spectacle. We can see similar pageantry at NASCAR races and other sporting events.

On February 23, 1945, [after three days](#) of some of the worse fighting of WWII, a detail was ordered to climb Mount Suribachi, the highest point on the small island of Iwo Jima, and raise the American flag. The commanding officer had issued the order so all the troops fighting on the beaches would be able to see it and rally to defeat the enemy. Photographer Joe Rosenthal followed the detail up the mountain in hopes of getting a picture for the papers. He moved into place just at the last moment and snapped a picture, not even sure if he had taken a usable photograph. What Rosenthal had taken in 1/400<sup>th</sup> of a second would become the most-recognized and most-reproduced photo in the history of photography.

In his book, *Flags of Our Fathers*, James Bradley writes, "The flag raising on Iwo Jima became a symbol of the island, the mountain, the battle; of World War II; of the highest ideals of the nation and of valor incarnate." One of the men involved in the operation said, "Once we raise the American flag, it will remain here for 500 years!" These men believed in the flag and the standards that it represents. According to the book, the photograph that became so iconic was of the second flag raised. The first one being too small, the commander ordered the men to find a bigger flag and replace the first one.

In the Bible, the Hebrew word for "flag," used in only a few places, refers to a reed. "Banner" and "standard," for the most part interchangeable, also appear infrequently. The banner represents the standards of the one it identifies.

In Numbers 2, each of the tribes camped in the wilderness "by his own standard, beside the emblems of his father's house" ([Numbers 2:2](#)). Each tribe had its own banner, and perhaps every major clan had its own banner too. Each one had a different design, so everyone knew where to camp or march, and if a person became separated from his family, all he had to do was look for his banner. It may have been similar to the Scottish clans' identifying tartans.

After Israel defeated the Amalekites in their first battle upon leaving Egypt, "[Moses](#) built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner" ([Exodus 17:15](#)). In this episode, [God](#) showed Moses just who was doing the fighting. When Moses' hands were raised, holding up the rod of God, Israel prevailed, but when his hands lowered in fatigue, the battle turned against them. Moses alone could not keep his arms up long enough for Israel to defeat Amalek; he had to have help. In holding up the rod, Moses was holding up God's standard, and He, not Moses, would deliver Israel. The altar acknowledged this fact, as he called it *Yahweh-Nissi*, "The-LORD-Is-My-Banner," a name of [Christ](#).

The book of Isaiah refers to banners in a few places. In [Isaiah 49:22](#), God says, "Behold, I will lift up My hand in an oath to the nations, and set up My standard for the peoples." God makes an oath, promising to raise a standard or banner to which the people can rally. In a similar way, the similar metaphor of a beacon, God says, "I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles" ([Isaiah 42:6](#)).

To this we should add Isaiah 62, a prophecy of Christ's work with His church, called here "Zion" and "Jerusalem." In the first several verses, God shows His love for His people, giving them a new, righteous name (verse 2) and depicting them in royal terms (verse 3). He is so pleased with His church that He marries her (verse 4).

Then in verse 10, He says, "Go through, go through the gates! Prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway! Take out the stones, lift up a banner for the peoples!" We saw who the Banner is in [Isaiah 49:22](#), Christ Himself! If His "Holy People" ([Isaiah 62:12](#)) look to Him, rally to Him, they will find their way to salvation (verse 11). That is the "work before Him"—He is drawing His people to Himself. He is working with us now, bringing us up to His standards, to lift His Bride up as a banner for all peoples of the earth to see in His Kingdom!

Christ is our Standard, our Banner. He is the Flag of our Father in heaven, the Standard we all strive to emulate and uphold before [the world](#).

- Ronny H. Graham

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## World News Highlights

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=TApaCuf>

Activist Post 08-Jan-19

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=Czqh6Do>

Phys.org 01-Jul-19

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=pgE6Aqg>

The National Post 02-Jul-19

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=Oyu5VgS>

KTVZ 27-Jun-19

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=zT2NZXu>

Reuters 05-Jul-19

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=C3sH9Qz>

The New York Daily News 01-Jul-19

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=V8Xdbd0>

Gallup 02-Jul-19

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=MotENJB>

The Jerusalem Post 01-Jul-19

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=FzO68uN>

Prophecy News Watch 02-Jul-19

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## New Transcripts

**[1020c: Dissatisfaction](#)**

Given by Martin G. Collins on 20-Nov-10

**[1022c: Casuistry and Fanaticism](#)**

Given by John W. Ritenbaugh on 04-Dec-10

**[1495c: The Alarmists' Hoax](#)**

Given by Martin G. Collins on 29-Jun-19

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## Prayer Requests

New prayer request updates have been posted for the following people:

[Jerry Biles](#)

[Becki Burgess](#)

[Marcos Gonzalez](#)

[Hayden Jones](#)

[Laura Pearson](#)

[Rosalie Ridge](#)

[Musonda Sakala](#)

[Tiffany Schulte](#)

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## From the Archives: Featured Sermon

**[Christ Our Standard](#)**

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

If we don't see the concrete proof of Christ working in us, we are on thin ice. Head knowledge of God's truth is useless unless it is transferred to action. Spiritual growth (Hebrews 5:13-14) happens when our senses (sense of judgment and reason) are exercised. God will only accept children who follow Christ's example and conduct their lives by His high standards.

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## From the Archives: Featured Article

**[Taking Our Lead From God](#)**

by Staff

In the world, it is common practice to use whatever means necessary to grasp the brass ring, but such selfish ambition should be absent from the church. In light of the example of Korah, have we allowed ourselves to be led by men or are we really following God?

## Featured Audio Schedule

### Friday Night Bible Study

The next Bible Study will be **Matthew (Part 8)**, given by **John W. Ritenbaugh** on **Friday 05-Jul-19**. The Bible Study will be continuously available from **6:00 pm Friday** until **12:00 pm Saturday (EST)**.

### Daily Audio Programs

Hear previous sermons, sermonettes, and Feast of Tabernacles messages, **Sunday through Friday**. [Available from the homepage.](#)

Date	Title
Sunday 07-Jul-19	Grapes of Wrath
Monday 08-Jul-19	Letters to Seven Churches (Part Five): Thyatira
Tuesday 09-Jul-19	Liberty Through Self-Control
Wednesday 10-Jul-19	Don't Lose Heart!
Thursday 11-Jul-19	Letters to Seven Churches (Part Three): Smyrna
Friday 12-Jul-19	How Can We Develop True Patience?

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