

# 1 Samuel 7 Commentary

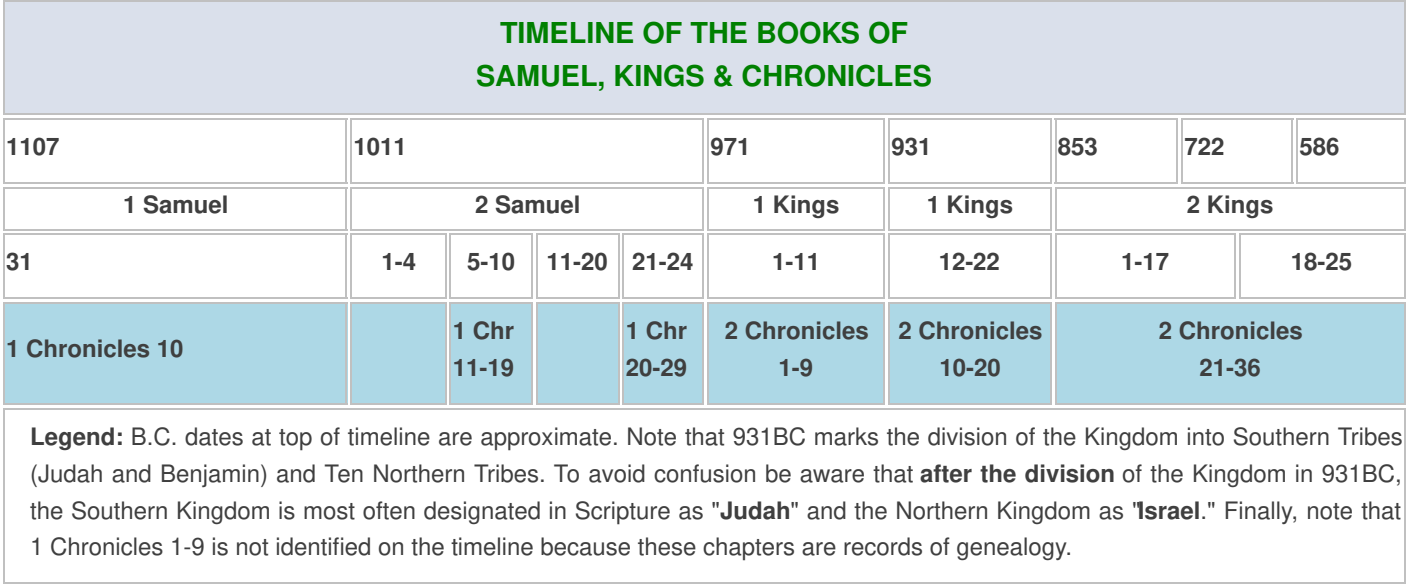
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## The Man Samuel in 1 Samuel 1-8

**1 Samuel 7:1 And the men of Kiriath-jearim came and took the ark of the LORD and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.**

BGT 1 Samuel 7:1 καὶ ῥχονται οἱ νῦδες Καριαθιαριμ καὶ νῑουσιν τὴν κιβωτὴν διαθήκης κυρίου καὶ ἐσῑουσιν αὐτὴν ἐς οὓον Ἀμιναδαβ τὴν νύτρου καὶ τὸν Ἐλεάζαρου νάτο γάσαν φυλάσσειν τὴν κιβωτὴν διαθήκης κυρίου

KJV 1 Samuel 7:1 And the men of Kirjathjearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

NET 1 Samuel 7:1 Then the people of Kiriath Jearim came and took the ark of the LORD; they brought it to the house of Abinadab located on the hill. They consecrated Eleazar his son to guard the ark of the LORD.

CSB 1 Samuel 7:1 So the men of Kiriath-jearim came for the ark of the LORD and took it to Abinadab's house on the hill. They consecrated his son Eleazar to take care of it.

ESV 1 Samuel 7:1 And the men of Kiriath-jearim came and took up the ark of the LORD and brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill. And they consecrated his son Eleazar to have charge of the ark of the LORD.

NIV 1 Samuel 7:1 So the men of Kiriath Jearim came and took up the ark of the LORD. They took it to Abinadab's house on the hill and consecrated Eleazar his son to guard the ark of the LORD.

NLT 1 Samuel 7:1 So the men of Kiriath-jearim came to get the Ark of the LORD. They took it to the hillside home of Abinadab and ordained Eleazar, his son, to be in charge of it.

NRS 1 Samuel 7:1 And the people of Kiriath-jearim came and took up the ark of the LORD, and brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill. They consecrated his son, Eleazar, to have charge of the ark of the LORD.

RSV 1 Samuel 7:1 And the men of Kiriathjearim came and took up the ark of the LORD, and brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill; and they consecrated his son, Eleazar, to have charge of the ark of the LORD.

YLT 1 Samuel 7:1 And the men of Kirjath-Jearim come and bring up the ark of Jehovah, and bring it in unto the house of Abinadab, in the height, and Eleazar his son they have sanctified to keep the ark of Jehovah.

NKJ 1 Samuel 7:1 Then the men of Kirjath Jearim came and took the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

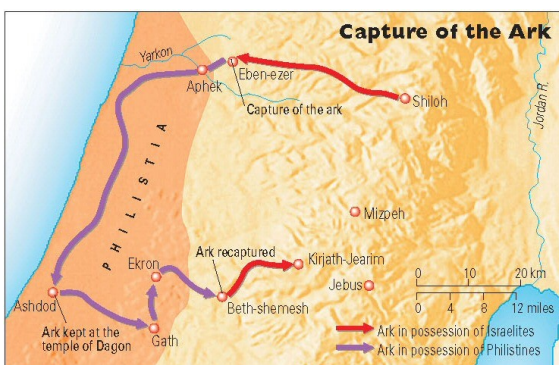
NJB 1 Samuel 7:1 The men of Kiriath-Jearim came and, taking up the ark of Yahweh, brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated his son Eleazar to guard the ark of Yahweh.

NAB 1 Samuel 7:1 So the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim came for the ark of the LORD and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, appointing his son Eleazar as guardian of the ark of the LORD.

LXE 1 Samuel 7:1 And the men of Cariathiarim come, and bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord: and they bring it into the house of Aminadab in the hill; and they sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the covenant of the Lord.

ASV 1 Samuel 7:1 And the men of Kiriath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of Jehovah, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of Jehovah.

- **Kiriath-jearim:** 1Sa 6:21 Jos 18:14 2Sa 6:2 1Ch 13:5,6 Ps 132:6
- **Abinadab:** 2Sa 6:3,4 1Ch 13:7 Isa 52:11
- 1 Samuel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## GOD'S ARK SETTLES IN KIRIATH-JEARIM

**Woodhouse** makes an interesting point - The chapter divisions usually stand at obvious literary breaks, but in a number of places, such as 1 Samuel 7, they seem incorrect. It does seem strange to put a break between 1 Samuel 6:21 and 7:1, 2. **The three verses are tightly woven together, dealing with the request to the people of Kiriath-jearim (6:21), their response (7:1), and the outcome (7:2).** However, the chapter division, if it is allowed to influence the reader, will have the effect of highlighting (a) the request to Kiriath-jearim as the end of the story of the Beth-shemeshites, and (b) the bringing of the ark to Kiriath-jearim and its long sojourn there as the immediate background to events at Mizpah that chapter 7 is about to recount. ([Preaching the Word: 1 Samuel—Looking for a Leader](#))

**And the men of Kiriath-jearim came and took the ark of the LORD and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill (gibah)** - The Ark was not returned to Shiloh, supporting the premise that it had been destroyed, a destruction that ultimately was carried out in some way (possibly using the Philistines) by Yahweh Himself (see Jer 7:12, 13, 14, Ps 78:60). The Ark remained at the **house of Abinadab** for 20 years (and then many years after that - see note on 1Sa 7:2). It was as if Israel "shelved" the Ark and forgot it and the God of the Ark for many years! Was **Abinadab** a Levite? Possibly but we cannot be dogmatic. There are other men named Abinadab in 1 Samuel (1Sa 16:8; 17:13; also 1Ch 2:13, one of Saul's sons 1Sa 31:2; also 1Ch 8:33; 9:39; 10:2), but this is all we know about Abinadab. Was the Ark literally in Abinadab's house? The text does not tell us. It does say the house was **on the hill** implying a prominent place, and possibly one of the "high places," (see discussion of [gibah](#)) that had been used for cultic worship, but more than that we simply cannot say. The text is silent.

**Abinadab**, the father of Eleazar, as stated may have been a Levite, which would have been a reason for bringing the Ark to his house. Eleazar his son is set apart for all practical purposes to function like a priest over the Ark. Given that there is no description of deaths associated with the Ark at Abinadab's house, Eleazar appears to be knowledgeable of the Levitical rules for reverentially caring for the Ark. Sadly, having the Ark of the One True God back in Israel did not cure Israel of the sin of idolatry, of the worship of false gods! So during this 20 year "spiritual hiatus" (see "[Judges Cycle](#)" below) we see that while...

The ark had been returned to Israel,  
Israel had not returned to the Lord!

What was God doing during this "spiritual hiatus"? As Spurgeon suggests, Samuel may have been ministering to some of the people from place to place, giving them the Word of God, but for most of time he was in the background, and is literally not mentioned from 1Sa 4:1b to 1Sa 7:3! In 1Sa 7:3 Samuel steps on stage to call the people to repent and return to the Lord. How tragic that Israel had fallen into such a state of defeat and disrepute because of their idolatry! Are you listening America?

**And consecrated (qadash; Lxx = [hagiozo](#) = set apart) Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD- Eleazar** had a great name, "God has helped," and it relates to another great name in this chapter - Ebenezer, stone of help. He was set apart to care for the Ark, but we do not know if he was of the line of Levi (and Aaron). Was he a legitimate priest according to Exodus 29+? We simply cannot say.

**Bergen** - No genealogical information regarding Abinadab of Kiriath Jearim or Eleazar his son is provided in the Bible; however, Eleazar is a common priestly name in the Old Testament (cf. Exod 6:23; 1 Chr 9:20; 23:21; Ezra 8:33) and it is possible both men were members of the Levitical tribe. **The fact that the ark was taken to Kiriath Jearim and not back to Shiloh** suggests strongly that the Shiloh worship center had been destroyed by the Philistines the previous fall. Further evidence is found in the fact that, though Samuel was given to the Lord at Shiloh to serve as a lifelong Nazirite, he is never associated with Shiloh after 4:1. Instead, his residence in subsequent chapters is in Ramah. Both the Books of Psalms (Ps 78:60) and Jeremiah (7:12, 14; 26:6, 9) express a tradition suggesting that Shiloh was ransacked earlier in Israelite history. It is important to note that archaeological evidence coming from the site of Shiloh seems to confirm an eleventh century b.c. destruction of the site. Cf. I. Finkelstein, "Shiloh Yields Some, But Not All, of Its Secrets," 22-41. (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

Psalm 78:58-60 For they provoked Him with their high places And aroused His jealousy with their graven images. 59 When God heard, He was filled with wrath And greatly abhorred Israel; 60 So that He abandoned the dwelling place at Shiloh, The tent which He had pitched among men,

Jer 7:12-14 **"But go now to My place which was in Shiloh**, where I made My name dwell at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. 13 "And now, because you have done all these things," declares the LORD, "and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you but you did not answer, 14 therefore, I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you

trust, and to the place which I gave you and your fathers, **as I did to Shiloh**.

Jer 26:4-6 And you will say to them, 'Thus says the LORD, "If you will not listen to Me, to walk in My law which I have set before you, 5 to listen to the words of My servants the prophets, whom I have been sending to you again and again, but you have not listened; 6 **then I will make this house like Shiloh**, and this city I will make a curse to all the nations of the earth.'"

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**Kiriath-Jearim** (07157) Qiryath Yearim or Qiryath Arim - Located about 8 miles west of Jerusalem. Means "city of forests" or "city of thickets." Also known as Kiriath-Baal (Josh 18:14,15, 15:60). One of the four chief cities of the Gibeonites (Josh 9:17); a city of Judah (Josh 15:60), evidently an ancient, Semitic "high place", hence, the name "Kiriath-Baal" (same place) ; it was one of the places on the border line between Judah and Benjamin (Josh 18:14,15; 15:11 (where it is called "Baalah"); compare 1 Ch 13:6). It is mentioned as in Judah (Josh 15:60; 18:14; Jdg 18:12), but if KIRIATH (which see) is identical with it, it is mentioned as belonging to Benjamin (Josh 18:28; in 2 Sam 6:2, Baale-judah). It concluded a deceitful treaty with the Israelites (along with Gibeon and Beer) so that Israel was not able to destroy its inhabitants (Josh. 9:17). The men were reduced to woodcutters and water carriers (Josh. 9:18-21). The city produced at least one prophet (Jer. 26:20). It was resettled by returned exiles (Neh. 7:29).

**Found in 20x/19v - Kiriath(1), Kiriath-arim(1), Kiriath-jearim(18).** - Jos. 9:17; Jos. 15:9; Jos. 15:60; Jos. 18:14; Jos. 18:15; Jos. 18:28; Jdg. 18:12; 1 Sam. 6:21; 1 Sam. 7:1; 1 Sam. 7:2; 1 Chr. 2:50; 1 Chr. 2:52; 1 Chr. 2:53; 1 Chr. 13:5; 1 Chr. 13:6; 2 Chr. 1:4; Ezr. 2:25; Neh. 7:29; Jer. 26:20

Gilbrant - The city of Kiriath-Jearim formed an alliance with the Hivite cities of Gibeon, Kephirah and Beeroth (Josh. 9:17). This coalition sent a delegation from Gibeon who successfully deceived Joshua into signing a peace treaty. Three days later, the ruse was discovered, and Joshua subjugated the Hivites to the household slave duties of woodcutters and water carriers rather than annihilation (Josh. 9:16f).

Kiriath-Jearim is later identified as occupying the western boundary of Benjamin's territorial allotment (Josh. 18:14). Later, soldiers from the tribe of Dan encamped at Kiriath-Jearim on their way to attack the Ephraimites (Jdg. 18:12). The location was then known as Mahaneh Dan, "the camp of Dan."

After the Philistines returned the Ark of the Covenant to Israel, the men of Beth-Shemesh had it taken to the house of Abinadab, in Kiriath-Jearim where it resided for the next twenty years (1 Sam. 7:1ff). With some difficulty, King David had the Ark removed from Kiriath-Jearim in order to transfer it Jerusalem. However, Uzzah was killed when he touched the sacred object, and fearful David placed it in the house of Obed-Edom instead (1 Chr. 13:5-14). Finally, David had the Ark delivered to Jerusalem and stored in the tent which had been constructed for it (2 Sam. 6:12-17; 1 Chr. 15; 2 Chr. 1:4).

Men from Kiriath-Jearim are listed as returning exiles in both Ezra's and Nehemiah's accounts (Ezra 2:25; Neh. 7:29). Elsewhere, Uriah the son of Shemaiah hailed from Kiriath-Jearim and prophesied a similar message to Israel that Jeremiah had (Jer. 26:20).

A man named Kiriath-Jearim is identified as a Calebite descendant of Judah (1 Chr. 2:50, 52f). [Complete Biblical Library](#)

**Hill** (01389)(gibah) refers to a hill but generally smaller than a mountain. Some references describe the hill as a place to worship false gods and abominable fertility cult practices as in the phrase "on every high **hill** (gibah) and under every green tree" (or similar phrase) (See Deut. 12:2; 1 Kings 14:23; 2 Kings 16:4; 2 Kings 17:10; Jeremiah 2:20; Jeremiah 17:2; Ezekiel 6:13; Hosea 4:13; 2 Chron. 28:4) See also [High Place](#) smf [What is the significance of high places in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Gilbrant** - This is the common Hebrew noun "hill," and has a common secondary meaning, referring to an open air Canaanite cultic locations.

As in English, this Hebrew noun usually refers to an elevation of sloping relief and moderate elevation (opposed to a mountain, which is characterized by sharp relief and high elevation). It refers to terrain in general (e.g., 2 Sam. 2:25). It is also used in phrases to point to notable geographic locations. Examples include "hill of the foreskins," where Joshua circumcised the males of the wilderness generation (Josh. 5:3), or hill of Ammah, where a truce was called by the commanders of David's and Ishbaal's (the son of Saul) armies (2 Sam. 2:24).

It is used parallel to mountain (har) in a number of poetic contexts. Isaiah 42:14 speaks of the restoration of Israel, that the inhabitants shall "thresh the mountains and crush them and you shall make the hills like chaff." In other contexts hills are grouped with mountains in contrast to other terrain. In the well known passage of the voice crying out in the wilderness, the voice cries, "every valley shall be lifted up every mountain and hill shall be made low" (Isa. 40:4).

**A common and significant usage of this noun is to demarcate the location of a Canaanite cultic shrine** These were usually open air sanctuaries. The couplet "on every high hill and under every green tree" appears sixteen times. It is an indictment against practicing Canaanite religion, and an apropos way to describe the sanctuary. Precisely how these high places were

constructed and what the rituals involved are not completely clear. The term [bamah](#), "high place," was probably a generic noun covering a wide variety of types of cultic structures. The building of religious structures upon elevations was a perpetual practice among ancient Near Eastern cultures. The presence of trees had to do with Asherah worship, which played a role in the practice of the religion.

The phrase is used as an indictment, as justification for Yahweh's judgment. His favor was the product of the inhabitants of the land worshiping Him alone. Once the people violated the covenant with Him by worshiping other gods, He was freed from his covenantal obligations to the people (e.g., to give them the land, etc.). The phrase underscores that the people had willfully and completely violated the covenant. It was not an isolated incident; the bulk of the population throughout the land worshiped at these shrines.

**Gibah - 70v - Gibeath-haaraloth\*(1), hill(30), hills(39).** -Gen. 49:26; Exod. 17:9; Exod. 17:10; Num. 23:9; Deut. 12:2; Deut. 33:15; Jos. 5:3; Jdg. 7:1; 1 Sam. 7:1; 1 Sam. 10:5; 1 Sam. 10:10; 1 Sam. 23:19; 1 Sam. 26:1; 1 Sam. 26:3; 2 Sam. 2:24; 2 Sam. 2:25; 2 Sam. 6:3; 2 Sam. 6:4; 1 Ki. 14:23; 2 Ki. 16:4; 2 Ki. 17:10; 2 Chr. 28:4; Job 15:7; Ps. 65:12; Ps. 72:3; Ps. 114:4; Ps. 114:6; Ps. 148:9; Prov. 8:25; Cant. 2:8; Cant. 4:6; Isa. 2:2; Isa. 2:14; Isa. 10:32; Isa. 30:17; Isa. 30:25; Isa. 31:4; Isa. 40:4; Isa. 40:12; Isa. 41:15; Isa. 42:15; Isa. 54:10; Isa. 55:12; Isa. 65:7; Jer. 2:20; Jer. 3:23; Jer. 4:24; Jer. 13:27; Jer. 16:16; Jer. 17:2; Jer. 31:39; Jer. 49:16; Jer. 50:6; Ezek. 6:3; Ezek. 6:13; Ezek. 20:28; Ezek. 34:6; Ezek. 34:26; Ezek. 35:8; Ezek. 36:4; Ezek. 36:6; Hos. 4:13; Hos. 10:8; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13; Mic. 4:1; Mic. 6:1; Nah. 1:5; Hab. 3:6; Zeph. 1:10

**Consecrated** (Sanctify, make holy) ([06942](#)) [qadash](#) means to set apart for a specific use. Removed from common use. To be holy. To show one's self to be holy. To consecrate or dedicate. To set apart a person or thing from all common or secular purposes to some religious use. Everything consecrated to God was separated from all profane use.

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**WARREN WIERSBE'S CHAPTER SUMMARY** - Chapter 7 is a study in revival. God first raised up a man, Samuel, who called the people to repentance, confession, and cleansing. Intercession was made through the blood of a lamb (a type of Calvary's Lamb), and then there was victory. These are the steps to individual as well as national revival. (Borrow [With the Word](#) - excellent resource for summarizing chapters)

#### **Cleaning up.**

The ark had been returned to Israel, but Israel had not returned to the Lord, so Samuel called them to repentance. They put away their foreign gods and then met at Mizpah to renew their covenant with the Lord. For years, God had been preparing Samuel for this strategic ministry, and he rescued the nation.

#### **Looking up.**

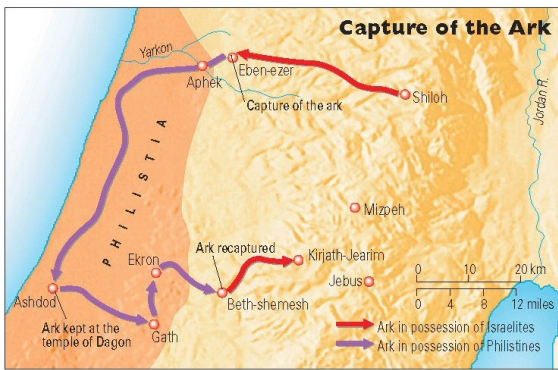
The Philistines thought that the assembly at Mizpah was preparation for war; however, Israel was not equipped for battle. But God's people use spiritual weapons to defeat the enemy (2Cor 10:3-5): Samuel prayed, and God sent the enemy back in confusion. Samuel was born in answer to prayer, and he lived in dependence on prayer.

#### **Setting up.**

Ebenezer means "stone of help." It was a memorial to God's helping His people from the beginning to that very day. Missionary Hudson Taylor had a plaque in his home that read, [EBENEZER](#) and [JEHOVAH-JIREH](#). That means, "**Thus far the Lord has helped us—The Lord will see to it.**" (ED: OR "THE LORD WILL PROVIDE") This takes care of the **past** and the **future**, so why worry about the **present**? God is in control! (ED: SEE [J VERNON MCGEE'S SIMILAR DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT](#) BELOW)

## **The Journey of the Ark of the Covenant 1–2 Samuel**

Adapted from ESV Study Bible



### Journey of First 8 Stop of the Ark

1. 1 Sam. 3:3 The Lord calls to Samuel who is sleeping in the tent of meeting, "where the ark of God was"
2. 1 Samuel 4 Philistines capture the ark (for seven months: 1 Sam. 6:1)
3. 1 Sam. 5:1–7 Philistines bring the ark to Ashdod, setting it up next to the idol Dagon
4. 1 Sam. 5:8–9 Philistines bring the ark to Gath
5. 1 Sam. 5:10–12 Philistines send the ark to Ekron
6. 1 Sam. 6:10–15 Philistines return the ark with guilt offering to Beth-shemesh
7. 1 Sam. 6:19–21 The Lord strikes 70 men for looking upon the ark
8. 1 Sam. 7:1–2 Men of Kiriath-jearim take the ark to the house of Abinadab (where it stays for 20 years)
9. 1 Sam. 14:18 Saul commands Ahijah to bring the ark to the war camp
10. 2 Sam. 6:2–5 David begins to move the ark to Jerusalem on a cart
11. 2 Sam. 6:6–7 The Lord strikes Uzzah dead for holding on to the ark
12. 2 Sam. 6:10–11 David takes the ark to the house of Obed-edom, where it stays for three months
13. 2 Sam. 6:12–17 David brings the ark to Jerusalem, and places it inside the tent he pitched for it
14. 2 Sam. 15:24–25 Zadok brings the ark to David, who commands him to carry it back to Jerusalem
15. 2 Sam. 15:29 Zadok and Abiathar carry the ark back to Jerusalem

**1 Samuel 7:2 From the day that the ark remained at Kiriath-jearim, the time was long, for it was twenty years; and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.**

BGT 1 Samuel 7:2 κα γενθη φς μρας ν κιβωτς ν Καριαθιαριμ πλ θυναν α μραι κα γνοντο εκοσι τη κα π βλεψεν πς οκος Ισραηλ πσω κυρ ου

KJV 1 Samuel 7:2 And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

NET 1 Samuel 7:2 It was quite a long time— some twenty years in all— that the ark stayed at Kiriath Jearim. All the people of Israel longed for the LORD.

CSB 1 Samuel 7:2 Time went by until 20 years had passed since the ark had been taken to Kiriath-jearim. Then the whole house of Israel began to seek the LORD.

ESV 1 Samuel 7:2 From the day that the ark was lodged at Kiriath-jearim, a long time passed, some twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

NIV 1 Samuel 7:2 It was a long time, twenty years in all, that the ark remained at Kiriath Jearim, and all the people of Israel mourned and sought after the LORD.

NLT 1 Samuel 7:2 The Ark remained in Kiriath-jearim for a long time-- twenty years in all. During that time all Israel mourned because it seemed the LORD had abandoned them.

NRS 1 Samuel 7:2 From the day that the ark was lodged at Kiriath-jearim, a long time passed, some twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

RSV 1 Samuel 7:2 From the day that the ark was lodged at Kiriathjearim, a long time passed, some twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

YLT 1 Samuel 7:2 And it cometh to pass, from the day of the dwelling of the ark in Kirjath-Jearim, that the days are multiplied -- yea, they are twenty years -- and wail do all the house of Israel after Jehovah.



NKJ 1 Samuel 7:2 So it was that the ark remained in Kirjath Jearim a long time; it was there twenty years. And all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

NJB 1 Samuel 7:2 From the day when the ark was installed at Kiriath-Jearim, a long time went by -- twenty years -- and the whole House of Israel longed for Yahweh.

NAB 1 Samuel 7:2 From the day the ark came to rest in Kiriath-jearim a long time--twenty years--elapsed, and the whole Israelite population turned to the LORD.

LXE 1 Samuel 7:2 And it came to pass from the time that the ark was in Cariathiarim, the days were multiplied, and the time was twenty years; and all the house of Israel looked after the Lord.

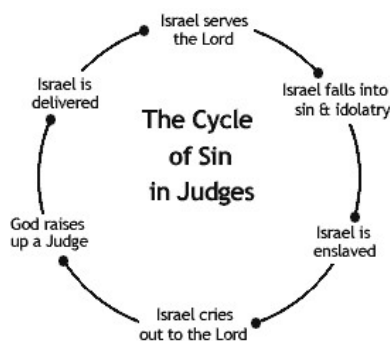
ASV 1 Samuel 7:2 And it came to pass, from the day that the ark abode in Kiriath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after Jehovah.

- **Lamented:** Jdg 2:4 Jer 3:13,22-25 31:9 Zec 12:10,11 Mt 5:4 2Co 7:10,11
- 1 Samuel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Judges 2:4+ When the [Angel of the LORD](#) spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people **lifted up their voices and wept**. (UNFORTUNATELY NOT TEARS OF REPENTANCE BUT ONLY OF REMORSE AS SUBSEQUENT APOSTASY PROVES)

2 Chronicles 7:13-14 (**A REVIVAL ROADMAP**) "If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, 14 and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.



## LANGUISHING LAMENTATION DURING 20 YEARS OF "SILENT SAMUEL"

Remember that these first chapters in 1 Samuel are at the tail end of the dark days of Judges (see [timeline above](#)) and it appears that Israel is again in a "Sin Cycle" (see above) as it was in the time of the Judges. Israel had again fallen into the sin of idolatry (cf "the Baals and the Ashtaroht" - 1Sa 7:4) and God had given them over to the hand of the Philistines ("Israel is enslaved"). And for 20 years, we find Israel lamenting after the LORD, their hearts being prepared for God's judge Samuel (cf 1Sa 7:6). Obedience to the judge would result in Yahweh granting deliverance from the Philistines (1Sa 7:13).

**From the day that the ark remained at [Kiriath-jearim](#), the time was long, for it was twenty years** - The Ark of the LORD was back in Israel, but Israel was not back with the Lord and were under Philistine domination (cf 1Sa 7:13,14). It is also notable that [Kiriath-jearim](#) did not replace [Shiloh](#) as a worship center for the nation ([Shiloh](#) was apparently destroyed by the Philistines). Furthermore, there is no mention that the **Tent of Meeting** (or Tabernacle) was at [Kiriath-jearim](#) (at least there is no text stating that fact). There is also no record of a national assembly there (see 1Ch 6:28, 31, 32). One wonders how Israel kept the annual feasts during this 20 years or if they even kept the feasts at all during this time of relative apostasy? We simply cannot tell from the Biblical text.

**Technical Note** - The Tent of Meeting is mentioned in 1Sa 2:22 and then not mentioned again until 1Ch 6:31-33 - "Now these are those whom David appointed over the service of song in the **house of the LORD**, after the ark rested there. 32 They ministered with song before the **tabernacle of the tent of meeting**, until Solomon had built the **house of the LORD** in Jerusalem; and they served in their office according to their

order. 33 These are those who served with their sons: From the sons of the Kohathites were Heman the singer, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel,"

**Twenty years** refers to the time from the Ark's arrival (1Sa 6:21) at [Kiriath-jearim](#) until Samuel's address in 1Sa 7:3. The ark remained at Kiriath-jearim for twenty years during this period preceding national revival in chapter 7. The Ark continued to remain there until David retrieved it in 2Sa 5:5; 6:2 (cf 1Ch 13:5, 6, 2Ch 1:4). Although the exact time the Ark was at [Kiriath-jearim](#) is not absolutely certain, it would have been 20 years plus 40 years of Saul's reign and part of David's reign. So it must have been there longer than 80 years (See [Wiersbe's note below](#)). After **twenty years** we see that Israel begins to turn to God.

**THOUGHT** - This is one of those passages that have caused scholars to jettison a literal reading of the text so that they can give several different interpretations. Presumably they are led to do this because they simply cannot believe the prophet Samuel is quiet for 20 years. This is another reason you dear reader always need to observe the literal text for yourself and decide based on how the Spirit is teaching you (in context), so that you are not confused by the commentators, who may have MDiv's and doctorates making you think that they are correct and you are not. John alludes to this is when he says "As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and **you have no need for anyone to teach you**; (HE IS NOT SAYING WE NEVER NEED TEACHERS!) but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him." (1Jn 2:27+) John's point is that you have as much of the Holy Spirit as any of the writers of the commentaries and if your interpretation after reading the text literally is different, you would be wise to stick with your interpretation! In summary, I think the prophet Samuel was relatively silent in Israel for 20 years.

**Spurgeon** - "It may very naturally be asked, 'Where was Samuel all that time?' I know not what he was doing during those twenty years; but I have a suspicion, I may say, I have a firm persuasion, that he was going from place to place, preaching in quiet spots wherever he could gather an audience; warning the people of their sin, and stirring them up to seek Jehovah, thus endeavouring to infuse some spirituality into their national life."

**Woodhouse on twenty years** - This is one of those points in the Biblical narrative where the passage of **a considerable period of time is noted but passed over**. The twenty years is best understood as the long period of time before the next reported event, which is presented as (in some sense) a consequence of the long time in which Israel had little or nothing to do with the ark. The next significant event, from the narrator's point of view, was this: "... and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord" (v. 2b)." ([Preaching the Word: 1 Samuel—Looking for a Leader](#))

**Woodhouse** adds an interesting note on the timing of events in this first section of 1 Samuel writing that "Apart from the seven months that the ark spent in Philistine territory (1Sa 6:1), there has been no explicit indication of the passage of time in the narrative of 1 Samuel so far. We might guess that **two or three years** passed from the birth of Samuel in 1 Samuel 1:20 to his weaning and presentation in Shiloh at the end of chapter 1. Chapter 2 seems to cover a **period of about ten years or more**, since by the time we reach chapter 3 Samuel is an articulate youth, possibly in his teens. **The events of chapters 4–6 appear to have taken place within about a year. Now, however, a twenty-year period seems to pass by in one verse** ([Preaching the Word: 1 Samuel—Looking for a Leader](#))

**John MacArthur** writes "Coupled with 1Sa 7:3, the 20 years designated the period Israel neglected God and chased after foreign gods. After those 20 years, Israel returned to the Lord." (BORROW [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Robert Bergen** - Some scholars, citing differences in vocabulary and noting that Samuel played a key role in the narratives of chaps. 1–3 but is completely absent from the following three chapters, have concluded that 4:1b–7:1 was from an originally independent source later inserted into 1 Samuel. However, vocabulary changes are to be expected with a change in topic, and Samuel's absence from this section of text can best be explained as the writer's attempt to demonstrate that Israel—with the exception of Samuel—from high priest to Kohathite to ordinary citizen, was spiritually more culpable than the Philistines. Though the Philistines would suffer for their ignorance of the Lord and his Torah, the Israelites would suffer worse for their failure to act in accordance with the spiritual enlightenment that was theirs.. (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

**Wiersbe** on the length of time the Ark was at Kiriath-jearim - The Ark remained in Kiriath Jearim for perhaps a century, for the battle of Aphek was fought about 1104 b.c., and David brought the Ark to Jerusalem in about 1003 b.c. (2 Sam. 6).....What the Ark was to Israel, Jesus Christ is to God's people today; and when He is given His rightful place of preeminence in our lives, He will bless us and work on our behalf. "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord," is the way Peter explained it (1 Peter 3:15, niv). When Jesus Christ is Lord, the future is your friend, and you can walk through each day confident of His presence and His help. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament](#))

**And all the house of Israel lamented ([nakah](#)) after the LORD** - NLT = "During that time all Israel mourned because it seemed the



LORD had abandoned them." **NIV** - "mourned and sought after." The Hebrew verb **lament** describes wailing that accompanies mourning, thus expressing their deep emotion as a nation. **Lamented** indicates that a desire for God is growing in the heart of Israel. **After the LORD** signifies the right direction of their desire and yearning was for Yahweh, for the **LORD** Himself. The Septuagint translates lamented with an interesting verb [epiblepo](#) which means to look intently or gaze upon, and then to have regard for, to pay close attention to, show special respect for, to look attentively at, with implication of personal concern for someone (in this case Yahweh).

**Keil and Delitzsch**, "The phrase, to lament after God, is taken from human affairs, when one person follows another with earnest solicitations and complaints, until he at last assents."

**Woodhouse** points out that "It is not that Israel lamented after the Lord for twenty years, but that **after twenty years they did so.**" What happened during those twenty years? No doubt we are expected to be wondering just that. The implication, to be confirmed shortly when we hear from Samuel, is that during these twenty years the Israelites had little or nothing to do with the Lord. The ark "lodged" at Kiriath-jearim, and the people lived without regard for it or what it stood for—namely, the covenant between Israel and the Lord....In other words, this period of twenty years was very much like the periods of apostasy that had recurred during the era of the book of Judges. (ED: SEE [SIN CYCLE ABOVE](#)) As on those previous occasions "they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt," and the Lord responded by giving them over to their enemies, in this case to the Philistines (cf. Judges 2:12–14). What did Israel do at the end of those twenty years? On the previous occasions Israel had typically "cried out to the Lord" (see Judges 3:9, 15; 4:3; 6:6, 7; 10:10; cf. 1 Samuel 12:10). The wording this time is different, but the sense is similar. After twenty years, Israel experienced yet another change of heart and turned yet again to the Lord, with (it seems) tears. The record is remarkably brief, but after twenty years there was the sound of wailing in Israel. ([Preaching the Word: 1 Samuel—Looking for a Leader](#))

Psalm 51:17+ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

**THOUGHT**- How often God has to let us get to the end of ourselves so that we begin to cry out to Him Who alone is able to save and to revive.

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**Lamented** (05091)(nahah) means to wail and mourn, to weep, to bemoan. While all these words mean to express grief or sorrow for something, lament implies a profound or demonstrative expression of deep sorrow and remorse as in 1Sa 7:2. In Ezek 32:18 the wailing is to be for the judgment about to strike Egypt, and in Micah 2:4 God's people are lamenting saying they are "completely destroyed" because they are rebellious and condemned.

**Gilbrant** - Along with its cognate noun nehî, "lamentation," nâhâh refers to the outward expression of sorrow or grief. It has a cognate in Syriac. Public mourning and lamentation were very much a part of Israelite culture, as well as the cultures of Israel's contemporaries. Because mourning was such a part of the culture, it is not strange to note that the prophets often wrote poetic lamentations to express grief over disastrous occasions. In two of its occurrences, nâhâh appears in such contexts.

Ezekiel 32:18 records God's telling the prophet to lament the judgment about to strike Pharaoh and Egypt. Ezek 32:2-15 is a poetic dirge concerning that event. In a judgment pronounced against Samaria and Jerusalem, the Lord said that in the time of Israel's calamity, the nations would taunt them with this mournful song (Mic. 2:4). The other use of nâhâh is in 1 Sam. 7:2, which describes Israel weeping over her sinfulness. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Nahah** - 3x/3v - lamented(1), utter(1), wail(1). - 1 Sam. 7:2; Ezek. 32:18; Mic. 2:4

**1 Samuel 7:3** Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the LORD with all your heart, **remove** the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and **direct** your hearts to the LORD and **serve** Him alone; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines."

BGT 1 Samuel 7:3 κα ε πεν Σαμουηλ πρς π ντα ο κον Ισραηλ λ γων ε ν λ καρδ μ ν μες πιστρ φετε πρς κ ριον περι λετε το ς θεο ς το ς αλλοτρ ους κ μ σου μ ν κα τ λση κα τοιμ σατε τ ς καρδ ας μ ν πρς κ ριον κα δουλε σατε ατ μ ν κα ξελεται μ κ χειρ ς αλλοφ λων

KJV 1 Samuel 7:3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

NET 1 Samuel 7:3 Samuel said to all the people of Israel, "If you are really turning to the LORD with all your

hearts, remove from among you the foreign gods and the images of Ashtoreth. Give your hearts to the LORD and serve only him. Then he will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines."

CSB 1 Samuel 7:3 Samuel told them, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, get rid of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths that are among you, dedicate yourselves to the LORD, and worship only Him. Then He will rescue you from the hand of the Philistines."

ESV 1 Samuel 7:3 And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

NIV 1 Samuel 7:3 And Samuel said to the whole house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

NLT 1 Samuel 7:3 Then Samuel said to all the people of Israel, "If you are really serious about wanting to return to the LORD, get rid of your foreign gods and your images of Ashtoreth. Determine to obey only the LORD; then he will rescue you from the Philistines."

NRS 1 Samuel 7:3 Then Samuel said to all the house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Astartes from among you. Direct your heart to the LORD, and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

RSV 1 Samuel 7:3 Then Samuel said to all the house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your heart to the LORD, and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

YLT 1 Samuel 7:3 And Samuel speaketh unto all the house of Israel, saying, 'If with all your heart ye are turning back unto Jehovah -- turn aside the gods of the stranger from your midst, and Ashtaroth; and prepare your heart unto Jehovah, and serve Him only, and He doth deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.'

NKJ 1 Samuel 7:3 Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you, and prepare your hearts for the LORD, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines."

NJB 1 Samuel 7:3 Samuel then spoke as follows to the whole House of Israel, 'If you are returning to Yahweh with all your heart, banish the foreign gods and Astartes which you now have, and set your heart on Yahweh and serve him alone; and he will deliver you from the power of the Philistines.'

NAB 1 Samuel 7:3 Samuel said to them: "If you wish with your whole heart to return to the LORD, put away your foreign gods and your Ashtaroth, devote yourselves to the LORD, and worship him alone. Then he will deliver you from the power of the Philistines."

LXE 1 Samuel 7:3 And Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do with all your heart return to the Lord, take away the strange gods from the midst of you, and the groves, and prepare your hearts to serve the Lord, and serve him only; and he shall deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.

ASV 1 Samuel 7:3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto Jehovah with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

- **return:** De 30:2-10 1Ki 8:48 Isa 55:7 Ho 6:1,2 14:1 Joe 2:12,13
- **put away:** Ge 35:2 Jos 24:14,23 Jdg 2:13 10:6
- **direct :** De 30:6 1Ch 22:19 28:9 2Ch 30:19 Job 11:13,14 Pr 16:1 Jer 4:3,4 Eze 18:31 Mt 15:8 Joh 4:24
- **serve:** De 6:13 10:20 13:4 Mt 4:10 6:24 Lu 4:8
- 1 Samuel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Proverbs 4:23+ **Watch** (IDEA IS TO GUARD ~ "POST A SENTRY" - IT IS A COMMAND ONLY POSSIBLE TO OBEY BY BEING CONTINUALLY CONTROLLED BY/FILLED WITH GOD'S SPIRIT - Eph 5:18+ - HE WAS "ALIVE AND WELL" IN THE OLD TESTAMENT!!!) over your heart **with all diligence**, For (TERM OF EXPLANATION - WHY SO CRITICAL?)from it flow the springs of life.

2 Corinthians 7:10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret,

leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Genesis 35:2 So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, **Put away the foreign gods which are among you**, and **purify** yourselves and change your garments;

Joshua 24:14; 23 "Now, therefore, fear the LORD and **serve** Him in sincerity and truth; and **put away the gods which your fathers served** beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD..... 23 "Now therefore, **put away the foreign gods which are in your midst, and incline your hearts to the LORD**, the God of Israel."

Leviticus 26:7-8 "But you will chase your enemies and they will fall before you by the sword; 8 five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword.

Deuteronomy 28:7 **"The LORD shall cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you**; they will come out against you one way and will flee before you seven ways.

## **STEPS FOR REVIVAL AND PROMISE OF DELIVERANCE**

**Then** (marks progression in narrative) - When? In context after 20 years! Grasping this time phrase is crucial to help understand the condition of Israel's heart for the previous 20 years. It is as if Samuel silent for 20 years (at least in the text) suddenly appears at a time when the nation is lamenting their distance from the LORD.

**Woodhouse** - Although the details are not given, it is as though Samuel had been waiting twenty years for this moment. Israel's tears were the sign that the time had come for them to hear the word of Samuel again. What they heard was the gospel according to Samuel. ([Preaching the Word: 1 Samuel—Looking for a Leader](#))

Spiritual victory is the necessary prelude to success in every area of life (cf. Josh. 1:8).

-- [J Carl Laney](#)

**Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel** - Notice the last time we encountered Samuel was with a similar description in 1Sa 4:1+ "Thus the word of Samuel came to all Israel (cf 1Sa 3:20+)." And so we see that 20 years earlier, at a relatively young age, the prophet Samuel had spoken the Word of the LORD (cf 1Sa 3:21+) to **ALL** Israel. He was not just a prophet in training but a prophet indeed! Sadly, it appears that all Israel largely ignored their great prophet for the next 20 years as evidenced for example by the fact that they choose to seek help from the Ark of God in 1Sa 4:3+ and not from the prophet of the LORD (as they are finally doing now in this section). One is reminded of the irony of the phrase in 1Sa 3:1 that "word from the LORD was rare in those days, visions were infrequent," because even after God had raised up His prophet Samuel (who spoke the Word of the LORD), the nation was slow to seek Samuel's voice, so that for 20 years it appears that "word from the LORD was rare!" O, the tragedy of having the Word of God so near and readily accessible and yet ignoring and neglecting it and in a sense even despising it. Woe!

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, there is a powerful lesson in Israel's neglect of their prophet and the Word of the LORD. What was the fruit Israel reaped (cf Hos 8:7)? For 20 years she was under the strong hand of the Philistines! In the same way we too can be under the strong hand of some besetting, entrenched, dominating sin because we fail to seek God in His Word. Just like the prophet Samuel was there in Israel and available (and yet was not sought by most of Israel!), the Word of God is ever available to each of us. So we must seek Him in His Word. If you are wrestling with some persistent, "pet" sin and repeatedly losing the battle, even occasionally coming under its mastery (see Ps 19:13+ and Ps 119:133+), you need to ask yourself if you are truly seeking God in His Word? If not, you have the diagnosis of your sin problem. Seek Him in His Word with all your heart and soul. He will let Himself be found by the sincerely seeking, humble, contrite heart which trembles at His Word (Isa 66:2), and He will revive such a soul just as He promises in Isaiah 57:15

For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the **contrite and lowly of spirit** (NOTE THE CONDITION) In order to **revive** the spirit of the **lowly** and to **revive** the **heart** of the **contrite**.

### **[REVIVE US AGAIN](#)**

We praise thee, O God, for the Son of thy love,  
for Jesus who died, and is now gone above.

Refrain:

Hallelujah! Thine the glory, hallelujah! Amen!

Hallelujah! Thine the glory, revive us again.

**Wiersbe** - Someone has called Samuel "God's Emergency Man," and the name surely fits. Samuel stepped on the scene when the priesthood was decayed, when the nation was defeated, and when God's glory had departed. (Borrow [Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament](#))

**Saying, "If you return ([shub/sub](#); Lxx = [epistrepho](#)) to the LORD with all your heart ([lebab](#); Lxx = [kardia](#))** - These words would seem to be Samuel's summary of the previous 20 years -- Israel's heart as a nation was distant from the LORD! Note the emphasis on **heart** in this passage. Note also the adjective "**all**"! God wants **ALL** of our **heart**, not just a portion! Samuel begins with the most critical variable, their (our) **heart**. The **IF** introduces a conditional statement. All revival flows from hearts that are broken and "bent" (humble, contrite). Samuel is spelling out the necessary steps the nation must take to experience genuine repentance. It all begins in their heart, for the idols in their heart were the heart of their spiritual problem!

Compare God's repeated emphasis on the condition of our **heart** in these passages from Deuteronomy, Israel's instructions on how to take full possession of their possessions in the Promised Land (and applicable to every believer of every age that we too might possess our possessions including every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus - Eph 1:3+, His precious and magnificent promises - 2Pe 1:4+):

Deuteronomy 4:29+ (CONTEXT IS PROPHECY OF ISRAEL IN FUTURE - cf Dt 30:2+) "But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him **IF** you search for Him with **all your heart** and all your soul.

Deuteronomy 6:5+ "You shall love the LORD your God **with all your heart** and with **all** your soul and with **all** your might.

Deuteronomy 10:12-13+ "Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to **fear** the LORD your God, to **walk** in all His ways and **love** Him, and to **serve** the LORD your God **with all your heart and with all your soul**, 13 and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?

Deuteronomy 11:13+ "It shall come about, **IF** you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to **love the LORD your God** and to **serve** Him **with all your heart and all your soul**,

Deuteronomy 13:3+ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you **love** the LORD your God **with all your heart and with all your soul**.

Deuteronomy 26:16+ "This day the LORD your God commands you to do these statutes and ordinances. You shall therefore be careful to do them **with all your heart and with all your soul**.

In regard to presenting God our whole **heart**, here is a prayer I need to pray far more than I do...

Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; **give me an undivided heart**, that I may fear your name. (Ps 86:11NIV)

**Bergen** comments that "Hophni and Phinehas had sought to bring victory to Israel by bringing the Lord's ark against the Philistines. Samuel brought victory to Israel by bringing Israel back to the Lord. In chronicling the events of this section, the narrator is careful to indicate that mighty deliverance from the Philistines came about only after Israel repented and turned wholeheartedly back to God. The movement of **Israel's heart**, not **Yahweh's ark**, brought about true freedom from Israel's oppressors." (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

**Remove** ([sur](#); Lxx - [periaireo](#) - take away from around - implying it has you encircled, ensnared!!! - in the [aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth ('ashtaroth) from among you** - The clear implication with this command is that Israel had fallen deeply into idolatry, for 20 years, since the days of the corrupt priesthood of Eli and sons (recall their immorality which was frequent in the Canaanite worship of idols)! Recall also since Eli's sons did not know the LORD, one can see how the nation turned to idolatry, for as the leaders go, so goes the nation.

In calling the nation to **remove the foreign gods** Samuel echoes God's command in Ex 20:3+ "You shall have no other gods before Me." Samuel **commands** active, vigorous, immediate, total separation from false gods, which describes anything or anyone that takes the place of the LORD God. Put away your "God substitutes!" God made us for Himself, and if He does not fill us, we are left with a spiritual vacuum that other little g gods will fill (nice houses, cool cars, money, hobbies, sports, position, ambition, other people, and the list goes on!) **Foreign gods** indicates that Israel had a veritable plethora of idols to choose from! **Ashtaroth** was a horrid goddess of fertility whose worship included such illicit, abominable sexual activities one dare not even attempt to describe them (cf Eph 5:12+)!

**THOUGHT**- Samuel's directive reminds me of the exhortation/admonition from Peter - "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain (REMOVE THEM - PUSH AWAY FROM - ONLY POSSIBLE TO OBEY BY BEING CONTINUALLY CONTROLLED BY/FILLED WITH GOD'S SPIRIT - Eph 5:18+) from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul." (1Pe 2:11+, cf 1Cor 6:18+, 2Ti 2:21, 22+)

"Anything in our lives that takes the place of God and commands the sacrifice and devotion that belong only to Him, is an idol and must be cast out. Idols in the heart are far more dangerous than idols in the temple."  
(Wiersbe)

**Bergen** - Noting Israel's godly sorrow (cf. 2 Cor 7:10+), Samuel seized the opportunity to lead Israel in a spiritual cleansing reminiscent of those instituted by great leaders in the past. He used language recalling that of Jacob (cf. Gen 35:2) and Joshua (Josh 24:14, 23) to summon the people to "rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths" (v. 3).. (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

**And direct your hearts** ([lebab](#); Lxx = [kardia](#)) **to the LORD** - lit., "establish your hearts" The **heart** of the matter is usually what's the matter with one's **heart**. The question is to what is the heart directed, to the things above or the things of this world (Col 3:2)? This second command means to get right, make ready, apply the heart and mind (2Chr 12:14, 19:3, 30:19, Ezra 7:10 = "Ezra had set his heart", Ps 78:8). It is a clear call for single-minded, wholehearted commitment to the LORD.

**THOUGHT** - Samuel's charge for single hearts, pure hearts brings to mind two old song by Craig Smith - [Single Heart](#) and [Pure Heart](#). As you listen to the lyrics of these two songs, you might ask yourself "Do the words describe my heart today?" Or do you find yourself lamenting your current spiritual state, and sensing a need for a Word centered, Spirit energized, God glorifying, Christ exalting revival? Then listen to the Man of God, Samuel, who gives us a pattern for personal revival that transcends time.

The Septuagint translates direct your hearts with the verb [hetoimazo](#) meaning to put/keep in readiness or prepare your heart ([kardia](#)). While the Spirit is not mentioned often in the Old Testament, we do well to remember that He is omnipresent and is always active. In this passage there is no way for natural fallen men on their own volition to obey the command to **direct** their **hearts** to Yahweh. The fact is that our fallen flesh does not seek the LORD, for as Paul says "THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD." (Ro 3:11+). Here in 1Sa 7:3, surely the Spirit is energizing a desire and giving the power to seek Yahweh, to **direct** their **hearts** to Him (cf Phil 2:13NLT+). But of course they still had to make a conscious, volitional choice, a choice of their will, to follow through and obey Samuel's commands.

Paul alludes to a similar pattern of idol removal and heart direction in his description of the pagan Gentiles who were converted in Thessalonica writing...

For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you **turned to God from idols** (REMOVED THE IDOLS) to **serve** (SERVE YOUR ONE, TRUE MASTER) a living and true God, 10 and to **wait** ([anameno](#) - waiting expectantly - continually = present tense - cf "DIRECTING THEIR HEART" TO YAHWEH) for His Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come. (1Th 1:9-10+)

**And serve** ([abad](#); Lxx - [douleuo](#)) **Him alone** - Don't miss the word **alone**! So **not** just serve Him, but **Him Alone**! Yahweh is a jealous God (Ex 34:14+, cf Isa 42:8) and He will not share His glory with any other so-called gods. Devotion to Yahweh is to be wholehearted (cf Mk 12:30+). Another NT parallel is from the lips of our Lord Jesus teaches that "(ABSOLUTELY) No one can **serve** ([douleuo](#)) two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. **You cannot serve** ([douleuo](#)) **God and wealth**." (Mt 6:24+)

God is far more interested in **who we are** than in **what we do**.

**THOUGHT** - There is an important spiritual principle in the order of Samuel's directives - First, get your heart right, then serve from a pure heart! I fear too many in churches have the "do" mentality without the "be" mentality. We think "What can I do for Him?," and yet we have failed to purify our hearts ("be"). God is far more interested in **who we are** than in **what we do**. When we have the order correct ("be"), we will desire to "do" out of the overflow of a heart of devotion and love for God, not to earn His favor, but to glorify His Name. Jesus commands His disciples to "**Let** your light **shine** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) before men in such a way (THAT THE LIGHT POINTS TO HIM NOT US!) that they may see your good works (VISIBLE SUPERNATURAL "Jn 15:5 WORKS"), and glorify (GIVE A PROPER OPINION OF) your Father Who is in heaven (INVISIBLE BUT "SEEN" BY OTHERS AS THEY WITNESS OUR SUPERNATURAL WORKS). (Mt 5:16+).



**Bergen** - As they got rid of their idols and embraced the Lord wholeheartedly, they could expect the Torah-promised benefits of a right relationship with the Lord, one of which was victory over enemies (cf. Lev 26:7–8; Deut 28:7).. (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

**And He will deliver** ([natsal](#); Lxx = [exaireo](#) = rescue from peril, set free) **you from the hand** ([yad](#) - hand is keyword in 1Sa 4-7 = 13x/13v) **of the Philistines** - (In accord with promises in the Pentateuch - Lev 26:7-8+, Dt 28:7+) Note that **will deliver** is a prophecy (**will** identifies it as a prophecy - be alert to "will" in Scripture as it often signals a prophetic statement) but is contingent on obedience to Samuel's commands. Clearly the implication of need to make this prophetic promise is that the nation of Israel has been under the hand of the Philistines. The question arises for how long? While we cannot be dogmatic, given the fact that Israel was soundly defeated by the Philistines in 1 Samuel 4:1-3, it is very likely that Israel had been under the hand of the Philistines for 20 years (much like God repeatedly gave Israel to their enemies in the book of Judges - Jdg 2:11, 12, 13, 14, 15+, Jdg 3:8+, Jdg 3:14+, Jdg 4:3+, Jdg 6:1+, Jdg 10:7, 8+, cf Dt 32:30+, 1Sa 12:9, 10+). In addition in Judges 13:1+ we read "Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, so that the LORD gave them into **the hands of the Philistines forty years.**" This is the last period of oppression mentioned in Judges and it occurs in the days of Samson. Jdg 13:5 says Samson "**shall begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines.**" And from the timeline below (click to enlarge) notice that Samson's judgeship overlaps the early days of Samuel's judgeship, which supports the premise that this 20 years in 1 Samuel 7 is the last portion of the 40 years in Jdg 13:1. It was not until Samuel called for national revival and the nation repented that the deliverance was completed.

Source: [Discover the Bible for Yourself](#)  
Click to Enlarge

**The hand** refers to the power of the **Philistines**, implying Israelites had been subject or subjugated to their power and authority of the Philistines. The **hand of the Philistines** is no match for the hand of the LORD! Play the up tempo spiritual song '[He Will Deliver Me!](#)'

**Woodhouse** - The gospel Samuel proclaimed that day was a simple but wonderful promise: return to the Lord with your whole heart (which will mean putting away your pagan gods and setting your heart on the Lord alone), and he will save you from your enemies and from judgment. ([Preaching the Word: 1 Samuel—Looking for a Leader](#))

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**Return** (turn away or back, bring or go back, restore) ([07725](#)) [shub/sub](#) is a common verb (over 1000x) meaning to turn, to return, to go back, to do again, to change, to withdraw, to bring back, to reestablish, to be returned, to bring back, to take, to restore, to recompense, to answer, The **Lxx** translates **shub/sub** with [epistrepho](#) which means to revert, to turn about, to turn around, to turn toward, to return and figuratively to convert. The idea is a definite turn to God in conduct as well as in one's mind as in Peter's charge to the Jewish crowd in Acts 3:19+ = ""Therefore **repent** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) and **return** ([epistrepho](#) in [aorist imperative](#)), so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;" What a reward for returning!

**Remove** (depart, take away)([05493](#)) [sur](#) basically means to change direction, to turn away, to go away, to desert, to quit, to keep far away, to stop, to take away, to remove, to be removed, to make depart. Literally of turning aside or departing from the road a person is traveling (Jdg 18:3, 15) or departing from a road or path by turning aside from the original course (Ex 3:3; Dt. 2:27; Jdg. 18:3; 19:15; Ru 4:1; 1 Sam. 6:12; 1 Ki 22:32; Jer.5:23); to step out of line militarily (1 Ki 20:39); to retreat from a path (Ge 49:10; Ex 8:27; Nu 12:10; 14:9; Dt. 4:9; Jdg. 16:19; 1 Sa 6:3; 16:14)' Used figuratively, it has to do with the moral direction someone is taking; turning from the right road. Israel turned aside from the way of their ancestors walked (Jdg. 2:17) and away from God's commands (Mal 3:7). Israel's leaders exhorted them not to turn aside from the right way (Dt.77:20; Josh. 23:6; 1 Sa 12:20, 21). To stay on course is to turn neither to the right or to the left (Dt. 2:27; 5:32; Josh 1:7; 2 Ki 22:2).

**Ashtaroth** ([06252](#)) '[ashtaroth/astarot](#) is the name of a Canaanite goddess of sex and war, a vivid representation of paganism in its most corrupt manifestations. The goddess Astarte, as she is known in Greek transliteration, figures prominently in the religious world of the ancient Near East as a mother-goddess associated with sexual reproduction as well as warfare. Modern readers miss the import of Canaanite idolatry, which included male and female cultic prostitutes in hetero- and homosexual liaisons. R. K. Harrison, after describing the gross and savage worship system of the Canaanites, concludes that "its sordid and debased nature stand in marked contrast to the high ethical ideals of Israel. The absolute lack of moral character in the Canaanite deities made such corrupt practices as ritual prostitution, child sacrifice, and licentious worship the normal expression of religious devotion and fervor. In consequence there could be no compromise between the morality of the God of Israel and the debased sensuality of Canaanite religion." See also Article from [Dictionary of Deities and Demons](#) (this resource can be borrowed by creating a free account - just your email).

**Ashtaroth - 9x/9v - Ashtaroth(6), Ashtoreth(3).** Jdg. 2:13; Jdg. 10:6; 1 Sam. 7:3; 1 Sam. 7:4; 1 Sam. 12:10; 1 Sam. 31:10; 1 Ki. 11:5; 1 Ki. 11:33; 2 Ki. 23:13

**NET Note** - The Semitic goddess Astarte was associated with love and war in the ancient Near East. The presence of Ashtarot in Israel is a sign of pervasive pagan and idolatrous influences; hence Samuel calls for their removal. See 1 Sam 31:10, where the Philistines deposit the armor of the deceased Saul in the temple of the Ashtarot, and 1 Kgs 11:5, 33; 2 Kgs 23:13, where Solomon is faulted for worshipping the Ashtarot.

**Hearts** (03824) **lebab** note that this discussion also includes the closely related noun **lebab** (03824) sometimes refers to a literal heart (Ex 28:29, 1Sa 25:37, 2Ki 9:24), but most often is used figurative to refer to what I term the "control center" of our being. Think of an Air Traffic Controller and how dysfunctional, even destructive it is when the controllers fail to function as they should. Just as a healthy human heart is at the center of the body and absolutely essential for physical life and health, so too a healthy spiritual heart (intellect, emotion, will) is at the center of one's inner being (soul) and is vital for a healthy soul, serving as the "fountain" of all moral attitudes and actions. Our spiritual heart thus controls out **actions** and our actions determine our **habits**, which in turn determine our **character**. When God measures the "worth" of a man's life He puts the measuring tape around his heart, not around his head. Be a man after God's Own heart (Acts 13:22) We must continually "post a guard" at the doorway of our heart, so that every avenue for sin's entry is blocked.

**John MacArthur** - The "heart" commonly refers to the mind as the center of thinking and reason (Pr 3:3; 6:21; 7:3), but also includes the emotions (Pr 15:15, 30), the will (Pr 11:20; 14:14), and thus, the whole inner being (Pr 3:5). The heart is the depository of all wisdom and the source of whatever affects speech (Pr 4:24), sight (Pr 4:25), and conduct (Pr 4:26, 27). (BORROW [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Serve** (enslave, worship) (05647) **abad** means to work (to cultivate, till - Ge 2:5, 15 - Lxx = **ergazomai** before the fall! Ge 3:23 after the fall, Lxx = **ergazomai**), to serve (be enslaved or hold in bondage - Ex 6:6 - Lxx = **katadouloo** = make a slave; Lev 25:38, 39 Lxx = **douleuo**)(Ge 14:4, 15:13, 14 - Lxx = **douleuo**), worship. Labor (as when Israel was in Egyptian bondage - Ex 1:13,14 but same word **abad** translated worship after redemption Ex 3:12, 7:16, 8:1, 8:20, 9:1, et al where Lxx = **latreuo**).

**Deliver** (05337) **natsal** means primarily to deliver, often by the power of one entity overcoming another. Deliverance from the hand or power (Ge 32:11, Hos 2:10). Idols and human might cannot deliver (1 Sa 12:21, Ps 33:16). Of Jacob's cry for deliverance and deliverance (preserved) (Ge 32:11, 30). Of Joseph's rescue (Ge 37:21, 22) Of Moses acting as a deliverer (Ex 2:19), of Moses returning to Egypt to deliver Israel (Ex 3:8), of Yahweh's promise of deliverance (Ex 6:6), of the Lord sparing the Israelites at the Passover (Ex 12:27), of Moses relating his deliverance by Yahweh from the Egyptians (Ex 18:4, 8, 9, 10), of deliverance of the manslayer from the blood avenger (Nu 32:25), of Yahweh delivering from Israel's enemies, (Dt 23:14, cf Dt 32:39 = "no one who can deliver from My hand," cf Josh 24:10, Jdg 6:9, Jdg 8:34, 1 Sa 7:14, ), of a woman delivering her husband (Dt 25:11), of Rahab's appeal to Israel for deliverance (Josh 2:13), of Joshua delivering Gideonites (Josh 9:26), of Phinehas delivering Israel from hand of God's judgment (Josh 22:31), of Gideon's deliverance from Midianites (Jdg 9:17), of David's cry to be delivered from his transgressions (Ps 39:8).

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#### QUESTION - [Who was Asherah / Ashtoreth?](#)

**ANSWER** - Asherah, or Ashtoreth, was the name of the chief female deity worshiped in ancient Syria, Phoenicia, and Canaan. The Phoenicians called her Astarte, the Assyrians worshiped her as Ishtar, and the Philistines had a temple of Asherah (1 Samuel 31:10). Because of Israel's incomplete conquest of the land of Canaan, Asherah-worship survived and plagued Israel, starting as soon as Joshua was dead (Judges 2:13).

Asherah was represented by a limbless tree trunk planted in the ground. The trunk was usually carved into a symbolic representation of the goddess. Because of the association with carved trees, the places of Asherah worship were commonly called "groves," and the Hebrew word "asherah" (plural, "asherim") could refer either to the goddess or to a grove of trees. One of King Manasseh's evil deeds was that he "took the carved Asherah pole he had made and put it in the temple" (2 Kings 21:7). Another translation of "carved Asherah pole" is "graven image of the grove" (KJV).

Considered the moon-goddess, Asherah was often presented as a consort of Baal, the sun-god (Judges 3:7, 6:28, 10:6; 1 Samuel 7:4, 12:10). Asherah was also worshiped as the goddess of love and war and was sometimes linked with Anath, another Canaanite goddess. Worship of Asherah was noted for its sensuality and involved ritual prostitution. The priests and priestesses of Asherah also practiced divination and fortune-telling.

The Lord God, through Moses, forbade the worship of Asherah. The Law specified that a grove of trees was not to be near the altar of the Lord (Deuteronomy 16:21). Despite God's clear instructions, Asherah-worship was a perennial problem in Israel. As Solomon slipped into idolatry, one of the pagan deities he brought into the kingdom was Asherah, called "the goddess of the Sidonians" (1 Kings 11:5, 33). Later, Jezebel made Asherah-worship even more prevalent, with 400 prophets of Asherah on the royal payroll (1 Kings 18:19). At times, Israel experienced revival, and notable crusades against Asherah-worship were led by Gideon (Judges 6:25-

## WITH ALL YOUR HEART - E F Hallock

TEXT: "If ye do return unto Jehovah with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods ... and direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only" (1 Sam. 7:3 ASV).

- I. What the heart is.
  - A. The source of evil thoughts: "And Jehovah saw ... that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5 ASV).
  - B. The source of deceit and corruption: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt" (Jer. 17:9 ASV).
  - C. The source of all evil: "Out of the heart come forth evil thoughts ..." (Matt. 15:19 ASV).
- II. What the heart should do.
  - A. Love God (Matt. 22:37).
  - B. Trust God (Prov. 3:5).
  - C. Seek God (Jer. 29:13).
  - D. Serve God (Deut. 10:12).

CONCLUSION: God says, "Son, give me your heart!" I reply, "Father, I give you my heart. 'Create in me a clean heart' " (Ps. 51:10). "With the heart we believe (Rom. 10:10 ASV).

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**TODAY IN THE WORD** In one of his most well-known books, famed psychologist Dr. Robert J. Stenberg took a unique approach to the study of the human intellect. The subjects that he and his colleagues studied were among the smartest people throughout modern history. But the focus of their study was not the mental composition that gave these great minds their genius—instead, they explored their most foolish mistakes. The book is aptly titled, *Why Smart People Can Be So Stupid*.

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## SAMUEL, THE JUDGE 1 Samuel 7:3–13 - Croft Pentz

In this chapter we see the end of forty years of oppression on the part of the Philistines. This also is one of the great revival chapters of the Bible.

- 1. DIVINE PLAN—vv. 3–6
- 2. DETERMINED PRAYER—vv. 7–9
- 3. DEDICATED PRAISE—vv. 10–12
- 4. DIVINE PUNISHMENT—v. 13

God helps those who remember Him. God leads those who remember Him. God protects those who remember Him. He strengthens those who remember Him.

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## [John Butler](#) - REVIVAL 1 Samuel 7:3

"Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." (1 Samuel 7:3).

Israel had drifted away from Jehovah-God and gone to idols, they needed a revival to get them back on the right track and in the blessing of God.

### FIRST—THE PREACHER OF REVIVAL

"Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel." True revival requires a good preacher. Samuel certainly filled the bill here. He was a good man of God. He was steadfast even when everyone else went bad. He knew the solution for revival, and he preached the kind of message that brings revival though it may turn many against you. Samuel was a faithful man of God and spoke the truth regardless of it risks.

### SECOND—THE PROOF OF REVIVAL

"If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you." Samuel would

tolerate no insincerity. The people indicated by their “lamented after the LORD” (1 Samuel 7:2), that they wanted to return to the Lord, but words are cheap. Samuel wanted proof of their desire to once again have Jehovah as their God. So he told them to put away they false gods. We may claim many things spiritually, but the proof is in our actions, not our articulation. Someone has rightly said, What you do speaks so loud, we cannot hear what you say. That is so true spiritually. Many talk a good faith but live a very poor one.

### THIRD—THE PERSISTENCY IN REVIVAL

“Prepare your hearts.” The word translated “prepare” involves consistency in it. It means to be faithful, steadfast, fixed, etc. Revival is not a temporary fix in a time of emergency to get God’s blessing. It is to be a permanent change to loyalty to God. If the revival is in your hearts it will be persistent. Too many have revival in their head but not in their heart.

### FOURTH—THE PERFORMANCE IN REVIVAL

“Serve him only.” You serve the One your worship. Jesus spoke this truth to Satan (Luke 4:8). If revival was true, the people would serve Jehovah not their false gods.

### FIFTH—THE PROSPECTS FROM REVIVAL

“He will deliver you out of the hands of the Philistines.” If the people are truly revived spiritually their prospects regarding the Philistines will be very good. We all want deliverance, but there are conditions for deliverance and Samuel faithfully declared them. Once the conditions were met, God would start working for them and in this case it would be deliverance from the Philistine army which had come up against them.

**1 Samuel 7:4 So the sons of Israel removed the Baals and the Ashtaroth and served the LORD alone.**

BGT 1 Samuel 7:4 κα̣ περιε̣λον̣ ο̣ υ̣ ο̣ Ισραηλ̣ τ̣ ς̣ Βααλιμ̣ κα̣ τ̣ λση̣ Ασταρωθ̣ κα̣ ὁ̣ δο̣ λευσαν̣ κυρ̣ μ̣ ν̣

KJV 1 Samuel 7:4 Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.

NET 1 Samuel 7:4 So the Israelites removed the Baals and images of Ashtoreth. They served only the LORD.

CSB 1 Samuel 7:4 So the Israelites removed the Baals and the Ashtoreths and only worshiped the LORD.

ESV 1 Samuel 7:4 So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the LORD only.

NIV 1 Samuel 7:4 So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only.

NLT 1 Samuel 7:4 So the Israelites got rid of their images of Baal and Ashtoreth and worshiped only the LORD.

NRS 1 Samuel 7:4 So Israel put away the Baals and the Astartes, and they served the LORD only.

RSV 1 Samuel 7:4 So Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the LORD only.

YLT 1 Samuel 7:4 And the sons of Israel turn aside the Baalim and Ashtaroth, and serve Jehovah alone;

NKJ 1 Samuel 7:4 So the children of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only.

NJB 1 Samuel 7:4 And the Israelites banished the Baals and Astartes and served Yahweh alone.

NAB 1 Samuel 7:4 So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtaroth, and worshiped the LORD alone.

LXE 1 Samuel 7:4 And the children of Israel took away Baalim and the groves of Astaroth, and served the Lord only.

ASV 1 Samuel 7:4 Then the children of Israel did put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and served Jehovah only.

- Jdg 2:11,13 Jdg 10:15,16 1Ki 11:33 Ho 14:3,8
- 1 Samuel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Judges 2:11-13 Then the sons of Israel **did evil** in the sight of the LORD and **served the Baals** 12 and **they forsook the LORD**, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among **the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them**; thus they **provoked the LORD to anger**. 13 So they **forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtaroth**. (NOTE: YOU "[GOTTA SERVE SOMEBODY](#)" - PLAY BOB DYLAN'S SONG BY THIS SAME TITLE!)

Judges 10:15; 16 The sons of Israel said to the LORD, "We have sinned, do to us whatever seems good to You; only please deliver us this day.....10:16 So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD; and He could bear the misery of Israel no longer.

1 Kings 11:33 because they have forsaken Me, and have worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the sons of Ammon; and they have not walked in My ways, doing what is right in My sight and observing My statutes and My ordinances, as his father David did.

Hosea 14:3 "Assyria will not save us, We will not ride on horses; Nor will we say again, 'Our god,' To the work of our hands; For in You the orphan finds mercy.....(14:8) O Ephraim, what more have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you. I am like a luxuriant cypress; From Me comes your fruit.

**So** - Praise God for this 'term of conclusion!' **So** is the conclusion describing the response to Samuel's commands. Israel came to a life-giving conclusion based on Samuel's words.

**The sons of Israel removed** ([sur](#); Lxx - [periaireo](#) - take away from around - implying it has you encircled, ensnared!!!) **the Baals** ([baal](#)) **and the Ashtaroth** ([ashtaroth](#)) - Note the plural of **Baal** ("baalim" - suggesting more than one idol of this group), the supreme fertility deity of the Canaanites, whose domain was the sky, from which they foolishly thought he fertilized the land! When you fall for idols, your "spiritual I.Q." also effectively falls! In ancient sculptures, Baal was depicted with a horned helmet. In one hand he grasped a club or mace and in the other a shaft of lightning or a spear with leaves. In some sculptures, he stood on the back of a bull. If idolatry were not so dangerous and deceptive, it would be comical because the beliefs border on ridiculous to absurd!

#### [You Gotta Serve Somebody](#)

-- Bob Dylan

**And served** (abad; Lxx - [douleuo](#)) **the LORD alone** - Note this is a reversal of the apostasy of Israel at the beginning of the dark days of the Judges (Jdg 2:11-13) **Alone** (Hebrew = bad; Lxx = monos - as singly existing - only) has to essential idea of alone (no competition), as a description of the ONLY entity in a class. In context it speaks of a wholehearted turn from **POLYTHEISM** to **MONOTHEISM** (cp Dt 6:4,5+).

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**Baal** (proper noun)([01168](#)) [ba'al](#) refers to the pagan god who was called by the name "**Baal**". Elijah contended with and exterminated the prophets of **Baal** (1 Ki 18:18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 26, 40). One of the more incredible mentions of Baal is Jehu's eradication of them from the northern kingdom (see 2 Ki 10:18-28). Before God would use Gideon to deliver His people from the Moabites, He first had him tear down his father's backyard altar to **Baal** (Jdg 6:25, 28, 30-31-note). As a result Gideon was named Jerrubball ("Let **Baal** contend against him" - Jdg 6:32-note). Under Gideon Israel was set free from Moabite oppression, but apparently they people were not set free from the "seed" of Baal worship in their hearts for "Then it came about, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the sons of Israel again played the harlot (SPIRITUAL ADULTERY!) with the **Baals**, and made **Baal**-berith their god" (Jdg 8:33-note)! Wow! Our hearts are more deceitful than all else and are desperately sick (Jer 17:9)! In 1 Sa 7:4 we see that "Israel removed the **Baals** and the Ashtaroth and served the LORD alone" but they must have backslide because we see their cry in 1 Sam 12:10! Beware of idols. Idols need to be radically uprooted lest they revive and return!

**1 Samuel 7:5 Then Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah and I will pray to the LORD for you."**

- **Gather:** Ne 9:1 Joe 2:16
- **Mizpeh:** 1Sa 7:12,16 10:17 Jos 15:38 Jdg 20:1 2Ki 25:23
- **I will pray:** 1Sa 12:23
- 1 Samuel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:** Samuel Man of Prayer

1 Samuel 8:6 But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge



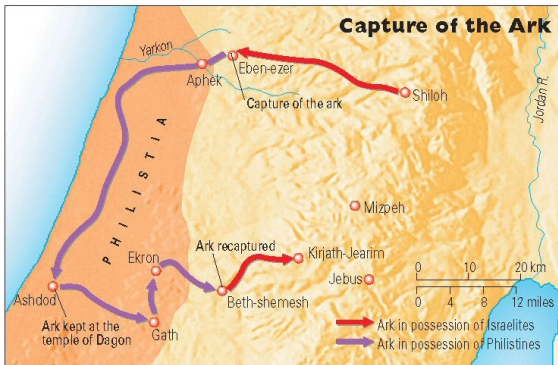
us.” And **Samuel prayed to the LORD.**

1 Samuel 12:23 “Moreover, as for me, **far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you**; but I will instruct you in the good and right way.

1 Samuel 15:11 “I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands.” And Samuel was distressed and **cried out to the LORD all night.**

Psalms 99:6 Moses and Aaron were among His priests, And Samuel was among those who called on His name; **They called upon the LORD and He answered them.**

Jeremiah 15:1 Then the LORD said to me, “Even though Moses and **Samuel were to stand before Me**, My heart would not be with this people; send them away from My presence and let them go!



**Note Mizpah/Mizpah NE of Kiriath-jearim**

## A PRAYER MEETING AT MIZPAH FOR ALL ISRAEL

**Then Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah"** Samuel next summoned the people to Mizpah, some seven miles north of Jerusalem (ON THE MAP ABOVE STILL NAMED [JEBUS](#)), and there prayed for them and offered sacrifice to the Lord on their behalf (v9). This was a common place of assembly for Israel. In the time of the Judges the elders of the tribes gathered there to decide Benjamin's fate following the murder of a Levite's concubine (Jdg 19:1-20:1, 3; Jdg 21:1, 5, 8). Later, Saul was presented to Israel as king at Mizpah (1Sa 10:17-24). It was even the capital of Judah after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (2Ki 25:23, 25).

**and I will pray to the LORD for you** Samuel summoned the nation to Mizpah for a prayer meeting! Samuel is frequently associated with prayer (1Sa 12:23). He was born in answer to his mother's prayers (1Sa 1:10-18). Samuel prayed for his nation and they defeated the enemy (1Sa 7:13). Samuel prayed when Israel defied the Lord and asked for a king (1Sa 8:6); and he prayed for King Saul (1Sa 15:11) even after God had rejected him. Someone has called Samuel "God's Emergency Man," and the name surely fits. Samuel stepped on the scene when the priesthood had become corrupt, when the nation was defeated, and when God's glory had departed. In summary, Samuel, like his mother (1Sa 1:10-16; 2:1-10), repeatedly exhibited a commitment to prayer (cf Ps 99:6; Jer 15:1).

**1 Samuel 7:6 They gathered to Mizpah, and drew water and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the sons of Israel at Mizpah.**

BGT 1 Samuel 7:6 κα συν χθησαν ες Μασσηφαθ κα δρε ονται δωρ κα ξεαν ν πιον κυρ ου π τ ν γ ν κα ν στευσαν ν τ μ ρ κε ν κα επαν μαρτ καμεν ν πιον κυρ ου κα δ καζεν Σαμουηλ το ς υ ο ς Ισραηλ ε ς Μασσηφαθ

KJV 1 Samuel 7:6 And they gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah.

NET 1 Samuel 7:6 After they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. They fasted on that day, and they confessed there, "We have sinned against the LORD." So Samuel led the people of Israel at Mizpah.

CSB 1 Samuel 7:6 When they gathered at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out in the LORD's presence. They fasted that day, and there they confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the Israelites at Mizpah.

ESV 1 Samuel 7:6 So they gathered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before the LORD and fasted on that day and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah.

NIV 1 Samuel 7:6 When they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. On that day they fasted and there they confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel was leader of Israel at Mizpah.

NLT 1 Samuel 7:6 So they gathered at Mizpah and, in a great ceremony, drew water from a well and poured it out before the LORD. They also went without food all day and confessed that they had sinned against the LORD. (It was at Mizpah that Samuel became Israel's judge.)

NRS 1 Samuel 7:6 So they gathered at Mizpah, and drew water and poured it out before the LORD. They fasted that day, and said, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah.

RSV 1 Samuel 7:6 So they gathered at Mizpah, and drew water and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah.

YLT 1 Samuel 7:6 And they are gathered to Mizpeh, and draw water, and pour out before Jehovah, and fast on that day, and say there, 'We have sinned against Jehovah,' and Samuel judgeth the sons of Israel in Mizpeh.

NKJ 1 Samuel 7:6 So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, and poured it out before the LORD. And they fasted that day, and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah.

NJB 1 Samuel 7:6 So they mustered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before Yahweh. They fasted that day and declared, 'We have sinned against Yahweh.' And Samuel was judge over the Israelites at Mizpah.

NAB 1 Samuel 7:6 When they were gathered at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out on the ground before the LORD, and they fasted that day, confessing, "We have sinned against the LORD." It was at Mizpah that Samuel began to judge the Israelites.

LXE 1 Samuel 7:6 And they were gathered together to Massephath, and they drew water, and poured it out upon the earth before the Lord. And they fasted on that day, and said, We have sinned before the Lord. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Massephath.

ASV 1 Samuel 7:6 And they gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against Jehovah. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah.

- **drew water:** 1Sa 1:15 2Sa 14:14 Job 16:20 Ps 6:6 42:3 119:136 Jer 9:1 La 2:11,18 3:49
- **fasted:** 2Ch 20:3 Ezra 8:21-23 Ne 9:1-3 Da 9:3-5 Joe 2:12 Jon 3:1-10
- **We have sinned:** Lev 26:40 Jdg 10:10 1Ki 8:47 Ezr 9:5-10 Job 33:27 40:4 42:6 Ps 38:3-8 106:6 Jer 3:13,14 31:19 Lu 15:18
- **judged:** Jdg 3:10 Ne 9:27 Eze 20:4
- 1 Samuel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Samuel 1:15 But Hannah replied, "No, my lord, I am a woman oppressed in spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the LORD.

2 Samuel 23:16 So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, and drew water from the well of Bethlehem which was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, but **poured it out to the LORD**;

Psalms 62:8 Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah.

Lamentations 2:19 "Arise, cry aloud in the night At the beginning of the night watches; Pour out your heart like

water Before the presence of the Lord; Lift up your hands to Him For the life of your little ones Who are faint because of hunger At the head of every street."

cf "We have sinned against the LORD."

## PRAYER MEETING BEGINS WITH CONFESSION

**They gathered to Mizpah, and drew water and poured it out before the LORD**, (cf. 1Sa 1:15, Ps 62:8, La 2:19): Note that this is not the **Mizpah** located 7 miles north of Jerusalem, but on the map above is the **Mizpah** located about 8 miles NE of Kiriath-Jearim. Offerings of water were very meaningful to inhabitants of semi-arid lands. The pouring of water as a sign of repentance. There was pouring out of water from the pool of Siloam within the temple area on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles in memory of the gift of water from the rock in the Exodus. We should not underestimate the importance of the fact that Israel did listen and respond to their judge Samuel for Judges 2:17 shows it was not always the case with Israel writing "Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they played the harlot after other gods and bowed themselves down to them. They turned aside quickly from the way in which their fathers had walked in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do as their fathers."

**Bergen** - When Israel "drew water and poured it out before the Lord" (v. 6), an action unparalleled in the Old Testament in an Israelite religious convocation, they evidently were denying themselves liquids as a symbolic confession that the Lord's favor was more important to them than life-sustaining water (cf. Jonah 3:7; 2 Sam 23:16).. (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

**Woodhouse on poured out** - The pouring of water and the fasting were both expressions of the people's repentance, which was also expressed there in words. The actions may be best seen not so much as symbolic rituals, but as real acts of self-denial as the people turned from their self-centered ways back to the Lord. Gordon, 1 & 2 Samuel, p. 107 suggests that the pouring out of the water before the Lord "may simply have formed part of the self-denial of the occasion as the participants solemnly proclaimed their abstention from even this necessity of life." This is not to deny that the actions would have symbolic connotations, especially when we recall such metaphors for a humble cry to God as "Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord!" (Lamentations 2:19; the parallel is suggested by Keil and Delitzsch, Books of Samuel, p. 73; Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, I & II Samuel: A Commentary, Old Testament Library [London: SCM Press, 1964], p. 67; Ackroyd, 1 and 2 Samuel, p. 66). Cf. Psalm 22:14. Hertzberg, I & II Samuel, p. 67 also draws attention to the connection between water and repentance in the "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Mark 1:4). ([Preaching the Word: 1 Samuel—Looking for a Leader](#))

**MacArthur** - The pouring out of water before the Lord was a sign of repentance. This act is repeated in 2 Sam. 23:16. (BORROW [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**TSK note** - Grotius says, that the pouring out of water means the shedding of tears; and the **Targum** reads, "And they poured out their hearts in penitence, as waters, before the Lord." Others suppose that it was done emblematically, to represent the contrition of their hearts, and their desire to wash away their past offences. But some learned men conceive that it was poured out as a libation, in token of joy, after they had fasted and confessed their sin, as they were wont to do in the feast of tabernacles. (See note on Nu. 29:35.)

**And fasted on that day and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD."** - The poured out water and poured out their hearts (see Ps 62:8, Lam. 2:19). Israel reminds me of the old Pogo cartoon (see above) "We have met the enemy and he is us!" And so Israel confesses their sin acknowledging that it is against Yahweh Himself, as all sin always is (cf Ps 51:4, Ge 39:9b)! Confession is always a great way to clear the "airways" to the throne room of God in Heaven and begin a prayer meeting! The text does not mention specific sins but we know from earlier texts that a major sin was idolatry. It is always reasonable for a prayer meeting to begin with confession of sins because Psalm 66:18 says "If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear." Proverbs 28:13+ adds "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion." The nation will soon experience tangible (even audible) "compassion" from Yahweh!

**Keil and Delitzsch** - "There" subtly emphasizes that the words were spoken at the same place where the actions were done.

**And Samuel judged ([shaphat](#)) the sons of Israel at Mizpah** ("watchtower") - Samuel the Prophet is now also identified as Israel's judge much like Eli had been (albeit not very successfully! 1Sa 4:18) Samuel would be Israel's last judge before the institution of the monarchy. As judge Samuel settled domestic disputes among the people and guided in conduct of war as in the present section.

**Woodhouse on Samuel judged** - This statement draws our attention to the contrast between Eli's failed leadership and, at this point, Samuel's effective leadership. Eli "judged" Israel for forty years, and at the end of it, all the glory had departed from Israel (1 Samuel 4:18, 22+). At Mizpah Samuel had "judged" Israel, and the glory had returned. They were God's people again. ([Preaching](#)

**Keil and Delitzsch** - "Judging the people ... [consisted] in the fact that Samuel summoned the nation to Mizpeh to humble itself before Jehovah, and there secured for it, through his intercession, the forgiveness of its sin, and a renewal of the favor of its God, and thus restored the proper relation between Israel and its God, so that the Lord could proceed to vindicate His people's rights against their foes."

**MacArthur** - At this point Samuel is introduced as the judge of Israel. His judgeship encompassed both domestic leadership and the conduct of war. The word links the text back to the last comment about Eli who judged 40 years (4:18). Samuel is shown to be the one taking over Eli's judgeship. He served as the last judge before the first king (cf. 1 Kin. 8:50). (BORROW [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Wiersbe** has an interesting note - Two considerations suggest that this meeting occurred during the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. First, the people poured out water before the Lord, which became a practice at the Feast of Tabernacles, commemorating the times the Lord provided water in the wilderness (John 7:37-39). Second, the people fasted, and this was required only on the annual Day of Atonement, which preceded the Feast of Tabernacles. **The pouring out of the water** could also be seen as a drink offering, symbolizing total devotion to the Lord, for liquids poured out can't be recovered again. See Psalm 62:8; Lamentations 2:19; Philippians 2:17; 2 Timothy 4:6. The only official fast on the Jewish calendar was on the Day of Atonement, but that didn't prevent the people from fasting at other times. The situation was critical, and the nation needed to "come clean" with the Lord. The key activity that day was their confession, "We have sinned against the Lord." God's covenant promise to Israel was that He would forgive their sins if they sincerely confessed them to Him (Lev. 26:40-45), for no amount of sacrifices or rituals could wash away their sins. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament](#))

**Bergen** - Thus at Mizpah began the ministry of Israel's most venerable judge/prophet since Moses. In his role as judge, Samuel's task was to bring Israelite society into conformity with the Lord's judgments and to mobilize the covenant people in the task of bringing God's judgments to bear on his enemies. Gordon draws parallels between Samuel's activities at Mizpah and those of Moses in Exodus 17-18.. (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

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**Judged** (08199) **shaphat** is a verb that means to judge or govern. While it frequently translated judge, this is somewhat misleading as shaphat is not typical of the modern concept of judge (as in a court of law), but is much more inclusive -- to function as ruler or governor - individuals (Jdg. 16:31; 1 Sa 7:16), king (1 Ki. 3:9); even God Himself (Ps. 50:6; 75:7) because He is the source of authority and will eventually conduct all judgments (Ps. 96:13). In a judicial sense shaphat could refer to the arbitration of civil, domestic, and religious disputes (Dt. 25:1), fulfilled by the congregation (Nu 35:24), by individual judges (Ex 18:16; Dt. 1:16), by the king (1 Sa 8:5, 6, 20) or by God Himself (Ge 16:5; 1 Sa 24:12, 15). Shāpaṭ refers to the activity of a third party who sits over two parties at odds with one another. This third party hears their cases against one another and decides where the right is and what to do about it (he functions as both judge and jury).

**Shaphat in 1 Samuel thru 2 Chronicles** - 1 Sam. 3:13; 1 Sam. 4:18; 1 Sam. 7:6; 1 Sam. 7:15; 1 Sam. 7:16; 1 Sam. 7:17; 1 Sam. 8:1; 1 Sam. 8:2; 1 Sam. 8:5; 1 Sam. 8:6; 1 Sam. 8:20; 1 Sam. 12:7; 1 Sam. 24:12; 1 Sam. 24:15; 2 Sam. 7:11; 2 Sam. 15:4; 2 Sam. 18:19; 2 Sam. 18:31; 1 Ki. 3:9; 1 Ki. 3:28; 1 Ki. 7:7; 1 Ki. 8:32; 2 Ki. 15:5; 2 Ki. 23:22; 1 Chr. 16:33; 1 Chr. 17:6; 1 Chr. 17:10; 1 Chr. 23:4; 1 Chr. 26:29; 2 Chr. 1:2; 2 Chr. 1:10; 2 Chr. 1:11; 2 Chr. 6:23; 2 Chr. 19:5; 2 Chr. 19:6; 2 Chr. 20:12; 2 Chr. 22:8; 2 Chr. 26:21

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#### **J J Knap - And Poured It Out      1 Samuel 7:6**

From of old it has been the need of the human heart to express the feelings it was full of by an outwardly-visible action. The bride appears in her white garment as an reflection of the happiness of her heart, and the sorrowing one wraps himself in the sombre colour of mourning. It is this impulse that led the gathered people at Mizpeh to the symbolical action of which the text of today speaks. The Philistines made them bow before them. Samuel urged them to turn with their whole heart to the Lord and to put away the strange gods from among them, because of which the Lord had chastised them by the hand of the Philistines. The people indeed humbled themselves, so that they unanimously confessed to have sinned against the Lord. Behold now how they symbolically presented their inner shatteredness: they drew water in a vessel, and afterwards poured it out before the Lord's countenance. Like that water disappeared upon the earth and could not be collected from it again, so had all inward stubbornness, all pride, and all strength disappeared from their innermost, now that they had been discovered to themselves. Poured out water is gone. Likewise they were helpless and had become as nothing before Him, whose anger they had kindled. No, they no longer wanted to maintain themselves before the highest Majesty. Inwardly they had surrendered before Him, who was so holy and spotless and, besides, so powerful and glorious. And now this molten and feeble soul was before Him as poured out water!

What is our humility in comparison to this? Too often we seek the strength of our confession of guilt in an accumulation of

condemning phrases under which the heart not seldom remains unbroken. This does not mean that the uttered confession of guilt should be lacking. When we remain silent, our bones turn old and we torture the soul. However, the true humiliation is not contained in the language of the lips only, but rather in the inner brokenness of the heart, of which the Psalmist sings somewhere: "Lord, I feel my strength diminish and depart; Hasten to my rescue now; Save me, Patron, Lord of lords; Comfort me in my miseries, Thou great Hearer of prayer!"

Oh, let us not be satisfied by pouring out the content of our soul before the Lord's countenance in self-accusation and supplication, no matter how indispensable it is. Let us also not be content with complaining to Him about guilt and misery, and asking Him for mercy and redemption as if this were all that was needed. Rather, let our soul itself be poured out like running water before the most high God,—in such a manner that she flows away powerlessly like water, however, to be afterwards comforted and blessed by Him.

**1 Samuel 7:7 Now when the Philistines heard that the sons of Israel had gathered to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the sons of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.**

BGT 1 Samuel 7:7 κακουσαν ολλυφοιτισυνηθροσθησανπντεςοιοισραηλειςΜασσηφαθκαιβησανσατρπαιλλοφλωντισραηλκαικουσινοιοισραηλκαιφοβθησαντιπροσπουλλοφλων

KJV 1 Samuel 7:7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.

NET 1 Samuel 7:7 When the Philistines heard that the Israelites had gathered at Mizpah, the leaders of the Philistines went up against Israel. When the Israelites heard about this, they were afraid of the Philistines.

CSB 1 Samuel 7:7 When the Philistines heard that the Israelites had gathered at Mizpah, their rulers marched up toward Israel. When the Israelites heard about it, they were afraid because of the Philistines.

ESV 1 Samuel 7:7 Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines.

NIV 1 Samuel 7:7 When the Philistines heard that Israel had assembled at Mizpah, the rulers of the Philistines came up to attack them. And when the Israelites heard of it, they were afraid because of the Philistines.

NLT 1 Samuel 7:7 When the Philistine rulers heard that Israel had gathered at Mizpah, they mobilized their army and advanced. The Israelites were badly frightened when they learned that the Philistines were approaching.

NRS 1 Samuel 7:7 When the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it they were afraid of the Philistines.

RSV 1 Samuel 7:7 Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it they were afraid of the Philistines.

YLT 1 Samuel 7:7 And the Philistines hear that the sons of Israel have gathered themselves to Mizpeh; and the princes of the Philistines go up against Israel, and the sons of Israel hear, and are afraid of the presence of the Philistines.

NKJ 1 Samuel 7:7 Now when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines.

- **afraid:** 1Sa 13:6 17:11 Ex 14:10 2Ch 20:3
- 1 Samuel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**FEAR OF THE  
PHILISTINES**



**Now when the Philistines heard that the sons of Israel had gathered to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel.** - This event harkens back 20 years to the same threat Israel experienced at Ebenezer (1Sa 4:1,2+). But now their hearts had changed so that Ebenezer ("Stone of help") would not be the place of defeat but the place of victory! **The Philistines went up against Israel** because they may have expected an attack from Israel in view of such a large gathering.

**And when the sons of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines** - Don't miss the fact that in gathering to confess and repent, the nation of Israel was hardly prepared for physical warfare which helps explain why they were fearful (contrast the situation of the Philistines fear in 1Sa 4:7+!). God had Israel right where He wanted them - in their inadequacy, for then they could experience His adequacy and He would receive the glory (cf 2Cor 12:9,10+) (IS THIS NOT A BASIC CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE? cf 2Cor 3:5-6+, 2Cor 4:7+, etc). We are also reminded of Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 "For though we walk in the flesh, **we do not war according to the flesh**, 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but **divinely powerful** for the destruction of fortresses."

Sooner or later God will bring self-sufficient people to the place where they have no resource but Him—no strength, no answers, nothing but Him.  
-- Unknown

**Woodhouse** adds "In the accounts of both of the battles at Aphek/Ebenezer (1Sa 4+) there is no indication that the Israelites were afraid of their adversary, although events proved that they had every reason to be. On this occasion we notice at least this difference in the people of Israel. They were afraid. I do not think that it is reading too much into the account to suggest that there was a new humility in Israel now. The earlier confidence can now be seen to have been presumption. They now knew better—and they were afraid." ([Preaching the Word: 1 Samuel—Looking for a Leader](#))

**Robert Bergen** offers another suggestion as to why the Philistine hornet's nest is being stirred up - In all likelihood the Philistines had forbidden the Israelites to hold public assemblies since such meetings could easily be used to mobilize the tribes for war. Thus "the rulers of the Philistines" dispatched a large military force to Mizpah "to attack them.". (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

**1 Samuel 7:8 Then the sons of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry to the LORD our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines."**

BGT 1 Samuel 7:8 κα ε παν ο υ ο Ισραηλ πρ ς Σαμουηλ μ παρασιωπ σ ς φ μ ν το μ βο ν πρ ς κ ριον θε ν σου κα σ σει μ ς κ χειρ ς λλοφ λων

KJV 1 Samuel 7:8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

NET 1 Samuel 7:8 The Israelites said to Samuel, "Keep crying out to the LORD our God so that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines!"

CSB 1 Samuel 7:8 The Israelites said to Samuel, "Don't stop crying out to the LORD our God for us, so that He will save us from the hand of the Philistines."

ESV 1 Samuel 7:8 And the people of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines."

NIV 1 Samuel 7:8 They said to Samuel, "Do not stop crying out to the LORD our God for us, that he may rescue us from the hand of the Philistines."

NLT 1 Samuel 7:8 "Don't stop pleading with the LORD our God to save us from the Philistines!" they begged Samuel.

NRS 1 Samuel 7:8 The people of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, and pray that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines."

RSV 1 Samuel 7:8 And the people of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry to the LORD our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines."

YLT 1 Samuel 7:8 And the sons of Israel say unto Samuel, 'Keep not silent for us from crying unto Jehovah our God, and He doth save us out of the hand of the Philistines.'

NKJ 1 Samuel 7:8 So the children of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for

us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines."

NJB 1 Samuel 7:8 They said to Samuel, 'Do not stop calling on Yahweh our God to rescue us from the power of the Philistines.'

NAB 1 Samuel 7:8 and said to Samuel, "Implore the LORD our God unceasingly for us, to save us from the clutches of the Philistines."

LXE 1 Samuel 7:8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry to the Lord thy God for us, and he shall save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

ASV 1 Samuel 7:8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

DBY 1 Samuel 7:8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry to Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

- **Cease** : etc. Heb. Be not silent from us from crying, 1Sa 12:19-24 Isa 37:4 62:1,6,7 Jas 5:16
- 1 Samuel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Psalms 20:7 Some boast in chariots and some in horses, But **we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God.**

Psalms 99:6 Moses and Aaron were among His priests, And **Samuel was among those who called on His name**; They called upon the LORD and He answered them.

### ISRAEL PROMPTED TO ASK FOR INTERCESSION

**Then** - When? What prompted their request for Samuel to intercede? Fear of the enemy. When fear drives us to Jehovah, that is a good response. What a contrast with their response to the Philistines in 1Sa 4:3+ "Let us take to ourselves from Shiloh the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that it may come among us and deliver us from the power of our enemies." Now they go to Samuel to go to the God of the Ark in intercession! What a difference 20 years has made in Israel's response to the Philistines! And note that in both situations the outcome that Israel hoped for was the same - deliverance, victory! But now with a repentant, humbled, renewed, God focused mindset they have come to understand that victory is in the hand of the LORD, not the Ark of the LORD!

**The sons of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry to the LORD our God for us-** It is notable that this is the first record of Israel "crying out" for deliverance even though the Philistine rule was the longest (40 years)! This is the response that the Lord wants. His people must look to Him as the only Source of deliverance. In Jeremiah 15:1, Moses and Samuel are cited as men of prevailing prayer. Don't miss Israel's use of the possessive pronoun "OUR," for now in view of their confession and repentance and return, they can truly claim Him as "our God" (which they did not do in 1 Samuel 4)!

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, this same principle applies to our lives -- if you are immersed in sin (secret or open), don't think that just because He has promised never to leave you or forsake you, you can claim His power and presence in your life without first confessing and repenting! But once you have come clean with Him, then you can truly cry out to "your God" for deliverance from your enemies! God's children when they are obeying their Father can expect Him to answer their cry for help!

**Bergen** - Prophets were attested as individuals who had a special relationship with Yahweh. Thus, during times of distress prophets were regularly sought out to deliver up efficacious prayers in behalf of individuals and nations. Cf. Gen 20:7; Num 11:2; 21:7; Jer 37:3; 42:2-4.. (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

**That He may save** ([yasha](#): Lxx - [sozo](#), - save, deliver) **us from the hand** ([yad](#) - hand is keyword in 1Sa 4-7 = 13x/13v) **of the Philistines** - Their prayer request was not general ("Lord bless us") but specific ("Lord save us"). The Israelites did not want to engage in battle unless Samuel was praying for victory. This is a good principle to practice beloved because our warfare is spiritual not physical! (2Cor 10:3-5+) In contrast to the debacle at [Aphek](#) (1 Samuel 4:1-2+), the Israelites did not seek the Ark of God but the God of the Ark! They now wanted to depend solely on the power (**hand**) of God accessible through prayer. Now Israel had a proper understanding of deliverance mediated by a godly man (Samuel praying) but ultimately by the [strong hand](#) of the omnipotent [LORD of Sabaoth \(of hosts or of the armies\)](#).

The salvation here is primarily physical deliverance from the Philistines, but it is surely also a picture of spiritual salvation; and both

the word **save** ([yasha](#)), and the concept of salvation are very prominent in 1 Samuel. The name “Joshua” (Yehoshua) in the OT and “Jesus” ([Iesous](#)) in the NT come from this word and mean “**Jehovah is salvation**.” When we cry out to the Lord to save us from our sins, Jehovah Who is Salvation will deliver us.

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**Save** (deliver, help) ([03467](#)) [yasha'](#) (See also [yeshua](#) from which we get our word "Jesus") is an important Hebrew verb which means to help, to save, to deliver. The root in Arabic is "make wide" which underscores the main thought of yasha' as to bring to a place of safety or broad pasture in contrast to a narrow strait which symbolizes distress or danger. **TWOT** adds that the concept of "wide" "connotes freedom from distress and the ability to pursue one's own objectives. To move from distress to safety requires deliverance. Generally the deliverance must come from somewhere outside the party oppressed. In the OT the kinds of distress, both national and individual, include enemies, natural catastrophies, such as plague or famine, and sickness. The one who brings deliverance is known as the “**savior**.” Thus [yasha'](#) connotes protection that produces freedom from a present danger (2Sa 22:3, Job 5:4), salvation or deliverance in a religious sense (Ps 51:12), a title of God (Savior - 2Sa 22:47; 1Chr 16:35; Ps 18:46; Ps 24:5; Ps 25:5; Ps 27:9; Ps 65:5; Ps 79:9; Ps 85:4; Isa 17:10; 62:11; Mic 7:7 Hab 3:18), victory as an act or a result of conquering (2Sa 22:36; Ps 18:35) It is notable that almost 20% of the uses of yasha' are found during the dark days of Judges (dominated by the heart attitude of Jdg 21:25), which surely speaks of the undeserved lovingkindness of God!

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### **F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily - 1 Samuel 7:8 Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God.**

Samuel was famous for his prayers. They are repeatedly referred to in the brief record of his life. In the Psalms he is spoken of as the one “who called upon God’s name.” Indeed, he fought and won Israel’s battles by his strong intercessions. Mary of Scots said that she dreaded the prayers of John Knox more than the battalions of the King of France. So his people were accustomed to think that if the prophet’s hands were held out in importunate prayer, their foes must be restrained.

In the Life of Mr. Reginald Radcliffe, one who contributes a reminiscence interjects a remark which deserves to be carefully pondered:— “The great secret of the blessing which came from God to the awakening of whole districts, the quickening of Christians, and the salvation of multitudes, was prayer, continued, fervent, believing, expectant. There was never anything striking in the addresses; but through communion with the living Christ, the word came forth with living and life-giving power. Often would the forenoon be spent in continuous prayer.” This may well convict some of us of the cause of our failure. We have expected the Lord to thunder and discomfort our Philistines, and with a great deliverance; but we have ceased to cry unto the Lord.

Ye that are the Lord’s remembrancers, cease not to cry unto Him. If the judge avenged the unfortunate widow, shall not God avenge His own elect, who cry day and night? It is recorded of our Lord that He prayed early and late, and all night. He prayed when He was about to be transfigured; for His disciples; in the Garden of Gethsemane; and for His murderers. How much more do we need to “pray without ceasing”!

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### **The Power of Prayer**

Do not stop crying out to the Lord our God for us, that he may rescue us. 1 Samuel 7:8

Today’s Scripture & Insight: 1 Samuel 7:7–14

One day, when I was deeply concerned about the welfare of one close to me, I found encouragement in part of the Old Testament story of Samuel, a wise leader of the Israelites. As I read how Samuel interceded for God’s people as they faced trouble, I strengthened my resolve to pray for the one I loved.

The Israelites faced the threat of the Philistines, who had previously defeated them when God’s people didn’t trust in Him (see 1 Samuel 4). After repenting of their sins, they heard that the Philistines were about to attack. This time, however, they asked Samuel to continue praying for them (7:8), and the Lord answered clearly by throwing their enemy into confusion (v. 10). Though the Philistines may have been mightier than the Israelites, the Lord was the strongest of them all.

When we ache over the challenges facing those we love, and fear the situation won’t change, we may be tempted to believe that the Lord will not act. But we should never underestimate the power of prayer, for our loving God hears our pleas. We don’t know how He will move in response to our petitions, but we know that as our Father He longs for us to embrace His love and to trust in His faithfulness.

Do you have someone you can pray for today? By: Amy Boucher Pye ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Father God, the way You hear and answer my prayers amazes me. Strengthen my faith, that I will always believe in Your goodness and love.

Share your prayer request or pray for others at [YourDailyBread.org/prayer](http://YourDailyBread.org/prayer).

God hears us when we pray.

**1 Samuel 7:9 Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it for a whole burnt offering to the LORD; and Samuel cried to the LORD for Israel and the LORD answered him.**

BGT 1 Samuel 7:9 καὶ λαβὼν Σαμουὴλ ῥῆνα γαλαθῆν ἡν ἴνα καὶ ἡ νεγκεν αὐτὴν λοκατωσὶν σὺν παντ τὴν λατρίαν καὶ βῇ ἡσεν Σαμουὴλ πρὸς κριὸν περὶ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ πένθησεν αὐτὸς ὁ κύριος

KJV 1 Samuel 7:9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him.

NET 1 Samuel 7:9 So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. Samuel cried out to the LORD on Israel's behalf, and the LORD answered him.

CSB 1 Samuel 7:9 Then Samuel took a young lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. He cried out to the LORD on behalf of Israel, and the LORD answered him.

ESV 1 Samuel 7:9 So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. And Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him.

NIV 1 Samuel 7:9 Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it up as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. He cried out to the LORD on Israel's behalf, and the LORD answered him.

NLT 1 Samuel 7:9 So Samuel took a young lamb and offered it to the LORD as a whole burnt offering. He pleaded with the LORD to help Israel, and the LORD answered him.

NRS 1 Samuel 7:9 So Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD; Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him.

RSV 1 Samuel 7:9 So Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD; and Samuel cried to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him.

YLT 1 Samuel 7:9 And Samuel taketh a fat lamb, and causeth it to go up -- a burnt-offering whole to Jehovah; and Samuel crieth unto Jehovah for Israel, and Jehovah answereth him;

NKJ 1 Samuel 7:9 And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. Then Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him.

NJB 1 Samuel 7:9 Samuel took a sucking lamb and presented it as a burnt offering to Yahweh, and he called on Yahweh on behalf of Israel and Yahweh heard him.

NAB 1 Samuel 7:9 Samuel therefore took an unweaned lamb and offered it entire as a holocaust to the LORD. He implored the LORD for Israel, and the LORD heard him.

LXE 1 Samuel 7:9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it up as a whole-burnt-offering with all the people to the Lord: and Samuel cried to the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him.

ASV 1 Samuel 7:9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering unto Jehovah: and Samuel cried unto Jehovah for Israel; and Jehovah answered him.

DBY 1 Samuel 7:9 And Samuel took a sucking-lamb, and offered it as a whole burnt-offering to Jehovah; and Samuel cried to Jehovah for Israel, and Jehovah answered him.

- a **suckling**: 1Sa 7:17 6:14,15 9:12 10:8 16:2 Jdg 6:26,28 1Ki 18:30-38
- **cried**: Ps 50:15 99:6 Jer 15:1 Jas 5:16
- 1 Samuel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Psalm 99:6 Moses and Aaron were among His priests, And Samuel was among those who called on His name; They called upon the LORD and He answered them.

## SAMUEL'S SACRIFICE AND INTERCESSION ANSWERED BY YAHWEH

**Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it for a whole burnt offering** (['olah](#); Lxx = holokautosis = "holocaust" whole burnt offering - see related word [holokautoma](#)) **to the LORD** - According to Lev. 22:27, no animal could be sacrificed until it was at least eight days old. There is a touch of irony in this offering for the offerings of Hophni and Phinehas (1Sa 2:17+) were part of the reason for God's wrath against Israel! Recall that one of the basic functions of the [burnt offerings](#) was to make atonement, Moses declaring "He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf." (Lev 1:4+; cf 2Sa. 24:25; Job 1:5; Job 42:8)

**Bergen** - Samuel's appeal to the Lord included a blood sacrifice of a "suckling lamb" as a "whole burnt offering to the Lord" (v. 9, restatement in v. 10)—an undertaking usually carried out by an Aaronic priest—and a wholehearted prayer "to the Lord on Israel's behalf.. (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

**And Samuel cried to the LORD for Israel and the LORD answered him.**(Ps 99:6): God heard Samuel's prayers, and the people knew it (1Sa 7:8; 12:19) and so did the Philistines for they too heard God's answer in the form of thunder from Heaven! So before the Israelites even began to fight, the Lord thundered against the Philistines, and they were routed before the Israelites (cf 1Sa 2:10; 2Sa 22:14, 15). Beloved, to wait on God is not a waste of time. Samuel took time to intercede for the people (1Sa 8:6, 21, 22).

**Woodhouse** observes that "This is an extraordinary moment. In the story that 1 Samuel tells, this is the first time that the Lord has acted positively toward Israel or an Israelite since 1Sa 1:19 when he heard and answered Hannah's prayer and Samuel was born! Now, after all these years, he heard and answered Samuel's prayer, and Israel was delivered." ([Preaching the Word: 1 Samuel—Looking for a Leader](#))

**Burnt offering** ([05930](#)) ['olah](#) rom ['alah](#) = to ascend and thus the picture of *going up* in smoke) refers to a whole burnt offering (one which *goes up* in smoke), which was voluntary, was understood as a sacrificial gift to God, resulting in a pleasing aroma acceptable to Jehovah (Lev 1:9). The presenter laid hands on the sacrifice which many feel signifies they saw the animal sacrifice as their substitute. The blood was sprinkled on the altar (Lev 1:6) When this offering was properly carried out (including a right heart attitude not just a "going through the motions," [which was not pleasing to God - Jer 6:20, Jer 7:21, 23, 24, see David - Ps 51:16-17-[note](#)] not just an external "work," but an internal submission and obedience to Jehovah), they made atonement and were acceptable before Jehovah. The total burning indicated (or should have indicated) total consecration of the presenter's heart and soul and life to Jehovah.

**1 Samuel 7:10 Now Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, and the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day against the Philistines and confused them, so that they were routed before Israel.**

BGT 1 Samuel 7:10 καὶ ὡς ἔσχετο ὁ Σαμουὴλ ἡ ἀνθύστακτον τῆς ὁλοκαυτώσεως καὶ οἱ φιλισταῖοι προσέγγοντες πρὸς τὴν Ἰσραὴλ καὶ βρῆθησαν ὁ κύριος ὡς φωνὴ μεγάλῃς ἐπὶ τοὺς φιλισταῖους καὶ συνέχθησαν καὶ πταίσαντες ἔστησαν ἔμπροσθεν τῆς Ἰσραὴλ

KJV 1 Samuel 7:10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.

NET 1 Samuel 7:10 As Samuel was offering burnt offerings, the Philistines approached to do battle with Israel. But on that day the LORD thundered loudly against the Philistines. He caused them to panic, and they were defeated by Israel.

CSB 1 Samuel 7:10 Samuel was offering the burnt offering as the Philistines drew near to fight against Israel. The LORD thundered loudly against the Philistines that day and threw them into such confusion that they fled before Israel.

ESV 1 Samuel 7:10 As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel.

NIV 1 Samuel 7:10 While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel



in battle. But that day the LORD thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites.

NLT 1 Samuel 7:10 Just as Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines arrived to attack Israel. But the LORD spoke with a mighty voice of thunder from heaven that day, and the Philistines were thrown into such confusion that the Israelites defeated them.

NRS 1 Samuel 7:10 As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel; but the LORD thundered with a mighty voice that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion; and they were routed before Israel.

RSV 1 Samuel 7:10 As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel; but the LORD thundered with a mighty voice that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion; and they were routed before Israel.

YLT 1 Samuel 7:10 and Samuel is causing the burnt-offering to go up -- and the Philistines have drawn nigh to battle against Israel -- and Jehovah doth thunder with a great noise, on that day, upon the Philistines, and troubleth them, and they are smitten before Israel.

NKJ 1 Samuel 7:10 Now as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the LORD thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel.

- **thundered** : 1Sa 2:10 12:17 Ex 9:23-25 Jdg 5:8,20 Ps 18:11-14 77:16-18 97:3,4 Rev 16:18-21
- **confused**: De 20:3,4 Jos 10:10 JdG 4:15 5:20 Zec 4:6
- 1 Samuel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

1 Samuel 2:10+ "Those who contend with the LORD will be shattered; **Against them He will thunder in the heavens**, The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; And He will give strength to His king, And will exalt the horn of His anointed."

## GOD ANSWERS WITH THUNDER FROM HEAVEN

**Now Samuel was offering up the burnt offering ('olah) and the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel** - This might have caused a touch of trepidation and angst, but Samuel continues his act of worship to Yahweh.

**But** - This a dramatic and well-timed term of contrast. The strong enemy was drawing near, but God was about to show up!

**The LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day against the Philistines and confused(hamam; Lxx = sugcheo/sugchunno) them, so that they were routed before Israel**- In a literal manner, the Lord did to His enemies what Hannah had prophesied in her prayer (1Sa 2:10). The thunder is especially significant since it was Baal whom the Canaanites thought to be the god of the thunderstorm. Only the Lord is God! It is interesting to recall that when the Ark came into the camp of Israel, they shouted so much that the ground shook (1Sa 4:5) and this outcry caused the Philistines to fear (1Sa 4:6), and motivated them to even greater courage. Here the LORD "shouts" with great thunder and causes confusion. Note the contrast with 1Sa 4:2 where Israel was **defeated before the Philistines** and not the latter were **defeated before Israel** (1Sa 7:10ESV)! As Woodhouse says "In chapter 4 God was acting in judgment against his apostate people. In chapter 7 he was acting in deliverance of his repentant people." ([Preaching the Word: 1 Samuel—Looking for a Leader](#))

**Confused** (02000) [hamam](#) means to make a noise, move noisily, confuse, throw into commotion. "The basic meaning of this word seems to be "to give attention to" in the negative sense, that is, "harass," "trouble," often with the purpose of creating panic." Of the 13 uses below God is the subject in 10 verses. Of these, five times the object is Israel's enemy whom God strikes with panic for their sake. (See 1 Sa 7:10; Ex 14:24; Ex 23:27; Josh 10:10; Jdg 4:15; and also 2 Chr 15:6 with a more general subject.) Thus it denotes an important aspect of holy war. The verb is used parallel to "scatter" in 2 Sa 22:15; Ps 18:14, and Ps 144:6 (parallel passages). God uses arrows and lightnings to trouble his enemies. (Some would translate hāmam as "set in motion" referring to the arrows and lightning.) The word is also used to indicate the effect of a cart wheel on grain (Isaiah 28:28). But some make wheel the object and translate "set in motion." The word describes God's treatment of the Israelites over forty until they died in the wilderness. He made sure of their death (Dt. 2:15). Other subjects of this verb are: Nebuchadnezzar, against Jerusalem (Jeremiah 51:34), and Haman

## **[James Butler](#) - VICTORY OVER THE PHILISTINES 1 Samuel 7:10**

“As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistine drew near to battle against Israel; but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel” (1 Samuel 7:10).

Samuel had led Israel in a spiritual revival. The revival was followed by an attack by the enemy, the Philistines, who were a constant pain in the neck for the Israelites. But being right with God has its advantages and the Philistines were defeated by unique Divine providence.

### **FIRST—THE REVERENCE OF ISRAEL**

“Samuel was offering up the burnt offering.” Revival had affected the religious practices of the Israelites. They were no longer worshiping their idols but are worshiping Jehovah as the “offering up the burnt offering” indicates. True worship will involve an offering and the offering is called a sacrifice which says true worship will see sacrifice for the Lord by the worshipers. By the looks of the offering place many in our churches need revival.

### **SECOND—THE RAID ON ISRAEL**

“As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle.” When there is spiritual improvement, the devil will see to it that there is opposition. The Israelites were being revived and Samuel making an offering was part of the fruit of the revival. Satan had had enough of this spiritual revival. It was affecting his work, and so he sent the Philistines to do his dirty work. When we get right with God, the enemy often counters by sending us trouble. The more you grow spiritually the more animosity from the enemy you will experience. However, do not let that discourage you, as God will work mightily for you, as the thundering evidences, which we will see more about in our next point.

### **THIRD—THE RUMBLING FOR ISRAEL**

“But the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them.” Satan may stir up animosity against you, but God will more than compensate you because of your spiritual revival. Here, God worked in a storm and that so upset the Philistines that they were unable to fight the Israelites effectively. God can use any means He wishes to defend His people. God can even make the “wrath of men” to work to His glory (Psalm 76:10). We may not see how God can help us, but do not worry about that, be more concerned about being right with God.

### **FOURTH—THE ROUTING BY ISRAEL**

“They were smitten before Israel.” Getting right with God (which was a result of the revival) gave Israel the great help from God (which they had hitherto not had) and they were able to rout the enemy. The Philistines were “subdued” (1 Samuel 7:13) by the Israelites. If you are having trouble overcoming evil in your life, try getting right with God. It will help you rout the devil.

**1 Samuel 7:11 The men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and struck them down as far as below Beth-car.**

- 1 Samuel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **YAHWEH GIVES TOTAL VICTORY**

**The men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and struck them down as far as below Beth-car** - When the LORD is fighting for you, there is no question about the outcome of the battle. Note again the stark contrast with the first battle when “the Philistines fought and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent; and the slaughter was very great, for there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers.” (1Sa 4:10)! What a difference confession, repentance and intercession make!

**Bergen** - Because the peoples of the ancient Near East believed that every military combat involved a conflict being played out on two planes, the human (terrestrial) and the divine (atmospheric), any unusual meteorological phenomenon during a military operation would naturally be interpreted as evidence of a deity at work (cf. Josh 10:11; Judg 5:4, 20–21). The loud, unexpected thunder was immediately understood by the Philistines as a bad omen, and it “threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites.” Emboldened by their enemies’ flight, the newly rededicated soldiers of the Lord “rushed out of Mizpah and

pursued the Philistines, slaughtering them along the way to Beth Car" (v. 11),. (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

**Wiersbe** - Whenever God's people depend on their own plans and resources, their efforts fail and bring disgrace to God's name; but when God's people trust the Lord and pray, He meets the need and receives the glory. A man or woman of prayer is more powerful than a whole army! No wonder King Jehoash called the Prophet Elisha "the chariots and horsemen of Israel" (2 Kings 13:14), a title Elisha had used for his mentor Elijah (2 Kings 2:12 and see 6:17). Do we have such men and women of prayer today? ([Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament](#))

**1 Samuel 7:12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us."**

BGT 1 Samuel 7:12 καὶ λαβὼν Σαμουὴλ λίθον ναὶ καὶ στήσεν αὐτὴν ἐν μέσσοις Μασσηφὰθ καὶ ἐν μέσσοις τῶν παλαιῶν καὶ κλέσεν τὸ νομῶτα τοῦ Ἀβενεζερ λέγων βοήθητός ἐστις ὁ κύριος ἕως νῦν ὅθεν βοήθησεν ἡμῖν

KJV 1 Samuel 7:12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

NET 1 Samuel 7:12 Samuel took a stone and placed it between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Up to here the LORD has helped us."

CSB 1 Samuel 7:12 Afterward, Samuel took a stone and set it upright between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, explaining, "The LORD has helped us to this point."

ESV 1 Samuel 7:12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, "Till now the LORD has helped us."

NIV 1 Samuel 7:12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far has the LORD helped us."

NLT 1 Samuel 7:12 Samuel then took a large stone and placed it between the towns of Mizpah and Jeshanah. He named it Ebenezer (which means "the stone of help"), for he said, "Up to this point the LORD has helped us!"

NRS 1 Samuel 7:12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Jeshanah, and named it Ebenezer; for he said, "Thus far the LORD has helped us."

RSV 1 Samuel 7:12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Jeshanah, and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, "Hitherto the LORD has helped us."

YLT 1 Samuel 7:12 And Samuel taketh a stone, and setteth it between Mizpeh and Shen, and calleth its name Eben-Ezer, saying, 'Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us.'

NKJ 1 Samuel 7:12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us."

NJB 1 Samuel 7:12 Samuel then took a stone and erected it between Mizpah and the Tooth, and gave it the name Ebenezer, saying, 'Yahweh helped us as far as this.'

NAB 1 Samuel 7:12 Samuel then took a stone and placed it between Mizpah and Jeshanah; he named it Ebenezer, explaining, "To this point the LORD helped us."

LXE 1 Samuel 7:12 And Samuel took a stone, and set it up between Massephath and the old city; and he called the name of it Abenezzer, stone of the helper; and he said, Hitherto has the Lord helped us.

ASV 1 Samuel 7:12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us.

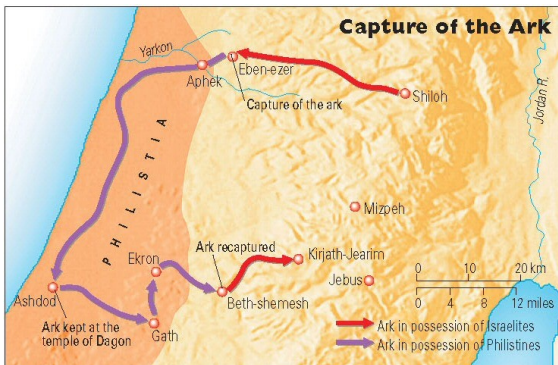
- **took a stone:** Ge 28:18,19 31:45-52 35:14 Jos 4:9,20-24 24:26,27 Isa 19:19
- **Ebenezer - Stone of help** - 1 Sam 4:1 1 Sam 5:1 1 Sam 7:12 Dt 33:26 Heb 13:5-6 Heb 2:18
- **Hitherto** (KJV): Ps 71:6,17 Isa 46:3,4 Ac 26:22 2Co 1:10
- 1 Samuel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Genesis 28:20-22 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear, 21 and I return to my father's house in safety, then the LORD will be my God. 22 "This **stone**, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

Genesis 35:14 Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He had spoken with him, **a pillar of stone**, and he **poured out a drink offering on it**; he also poured oil on it.

Joshua 4:9 Then **Joshua set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan at the place** where the feet of the priests who carried the ark of the covenant were standing, and they are there to this day.



Location of Mizpah south & east of Ebenezer near Apher  
Therefore this appears to be a different Ebenezer in 1Sa 7:12

## LORD HONORED AT EBENEZER THE STONE OF HELP

Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen (see [possible location](#)), Samuel followed Joshua's practice of commemorating the victories of God for His people with stone markers (Joshua 4). This is the same place Israel was soundly defeated in recent past (1 Sa 4:1). While it may not be the same Ebenezer, the name is the same, and yet Israel suffered defeat because they failed to confess their sins. At this Ebenezer event, they confessed their sins and called upon God of the Ark, not the Ark, and God gave them a resounding victory over their strong enemies. Keep in mind that the Philistines very likely had iron chariots and iron weapons (cf 1Sa 13:5). The odds, humanly speaking, were very much against Israel, but God plus one is always a majority! The victory at Ebenezer was so decisive that the Philistines made no more attacks against the Israelites during Samuel's judgeship.

**Bergen** - The location of **Shen** (Hb. haššēn = "The Tooth"; LXX, Syriac "Jeshanah") is unknown, but the Hebrew name implies that it was a jagged rock outcropping rather than a settlement.. (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

and named it Ebenezer ([eben](#) + [ezer](#)), saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped ([azar](#); Lxx = [boetheo](#) - come to the aid of) **us**." - Eben-ha-Ezer = (ha = definite article) = "Stone of the Help" **NLT** = "Up to this point the LORD has helped us!" HOW? He answered Samuel's prayer with thunder and this resulted in confusion among the Philistines and led to a rout by Israel. (1Sa 7:10) The memorial stone would therefore be a reminder that Yahweh had helped them this far with the implication that He would continue to help them if they would trust and obey Him.

The verb [boetheo](#) is used in Hebrews 2:18+ "For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of ([boetheo](#)) those who are tempted." This verb is from two words meaning "to cry" ([boe](#)) and "to run" ([théo](#)) giving us the picture that Jesus is (willing and) able to run to our side and give us aid when we cry out to Him!

**THOUGHT** - Ebenezer should be to us a "memory jogger" so when you sing [Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing \(haunting Celtic version\)](#), remember your Ebenezer! When (not "if" but "when") you are being tested/tempted, do you call out for Ebenezer? Jesus is our "Ebenezer" our Stone of Help, the Rock of our salvation, Who will run to our side and give us aid **WHEN** we cry out ([boe](#)) to Him. [Cry out to your Heavenly Father](#).

**Woodhouse** - While it is possible, it seems unlikely that this **Ebenezer** is the same as the Ebenezer of 1 Samuel 4:1. That location seems too far north. Giving this memorial stone the name of the earlier locality, however, and drawing attention to the meaning of the name underlines the reversal that had taken place. The earlier Ebenezer had a terribly ironic name. At "stone of help" Israel had not been helped! Now, however, the new Ebenezer stood as a testimony to the Lord's help, which was once again enjoyed by Israel. ([Preaching the Word: 1 Samuel—Looking for a Leader](#))

**Bergen** - Uncertainty exists whether the Ebenezer mentioned in 4:1b is an anachronistic reference to the site where Samuel's monument was erected or whether there are two different geographic locations named "Ebenezer." In either case, the writer seems to be drawing deliberate contrasts between the narratives of chaps. 4–6 and 7:3–13. All that was lost through sin in the first Ebenezer event was restored through repentance in the second.. (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** - A different location from the one mentioned in 1Sa 4:1 and 1Sa 5:1. The name functions as the literary knot for the two ends of this unit (see note on 4:1).(BORROW [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**J. Vernon McGee comments:** The name **Eben-ezer** means "**stone of help**." "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." It was also a **stone of remembrance**, looking back to the past. It was a **stone of recognition**, a stone for the present. It was a **stone of revelation**, a stone for the future. "Hitherto [up to this point, up to the present time] God has helped us." It is customary for us to look back over the past. Remember what the Lord said through Paul to the Philippians: (Php 1:6). Friend, has God brought you to this point? Is He leading you today? Is He guiding you? If He has, you can say, "**Hitherto has the Lord helped me**." Since He has helped you up to this moment, He will continue to do that. God has given us memories so that we can have roses in December. As memory plays on the keyboard of the past, I am sure that all of us can say, "**Hitherto hath the Lord helped us**." Joshua could say, "... as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Jos 24:15). David could say, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed form the hand of the enemy" (Ps 107:1-2). I personally want to say that oh, the Lord is good! He is the One who has helped us and will help us. A businessman said sometime ago, "You know, the use of time might be likened to the terminology of banking. **Yesterday is a canceled check, tomorrow is a promissory note, but today is cash. Spend it wisely.**" Do you recognize God in your life? That is what Samuel meant by that Eben-ezer stone. It was a stone of revelation. It not only meant "hitherto," it also meant "henceforth." "The Lord is my shepherd," said David; then looking into the future, "I shall not want" (Ps 23:1). Someone once said, "I am very interested in the future because I expect to spend the rest of my life there, and I want to be reasonably sure of what kind of a future it is going to be." "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Ro 8:28). Dr. R. A. Torrey always said that Ro8:28 was a soft pillow for a tired heart. We all need an Eben-ezer stone. I trust that you have one in your life.

**THOUGHT-** Ebenezer was also a stone of remembrance, looking back to the past. It was a stone of recognition, a stone for the present. It was a stone of revelation, a stone for the future.... We all need an Eben-ezer stone. I trust that you have one in your life.

### [Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing](#)

Here I raise mine Ebenezer:

Hither by Thy help I'm come;

And I hope by Thy good pleasure

Safely to arrive at home.

Jesus sought me when a stranger

Wand'ring from the fold of God;

He to rescue me from danger

Interposed His precious blood.

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**Eben** (058) (eben) is a feminine noun meaning stone and is used with both literal (most uses are literal) and figurative meanings. **Eben** is found in the name Eben-ezer 3x in the OT (1Sa 4:1; 1Sa 5:1; 1Sa 7:12)

**Robert Alden** on **eben** - In its first occurrence, 'eben refers to precious stones (Genesis 2:12). The usual meaning of 'eben hashshōham is "onyx stone," although "cornelians" (NEB), lapis lazuli (Torah and NAB), and others appear here and the half dozen other places where these two words come together. Our English word "sapphire" reflects the Hebrew sappîr. This occurs with 'eben in Ezekiel 1:26 and Ezekiel 10:1. An indication that the stone is valuable is the word millu'îm, which basically means "full." But the derived meaning is "consecrated." Notice this combination in Exodus 25:7, where it means a jewelry "setting," and elsewhere. Sometimes yeqārâ meaning "precious" or "costly" modifies it (2 Samuel 12:30 et al.). In 1 Chron. 29:2, which includes several of the above combinations, the modifiers pûk and riqmâ, translated in the KJV as "glistening" and "of diverse colours," appear. Others have "antimony" and "colored" (RSV), "coloured" and "striped" (JB), "carnelian" and "mosaic" (NAB). In Proverbs 17:8 is found the expression 'eben hên, which is literally stone of grace" and is usually rendered "precious" or the like. Isaiah 54:12 has two additional word combinations, 'eben 'eqdâh and 'eben hêpeş: "carbuncles" and "pleasant stones" (KJV), garnet" and "jewels" (NEB), "crystal" and precious stones" (JB). Ezekiel (Ezekiel 28:14, 16) speaks of the "fire stone." From the context (especially Ezekiel 28:13 with its 'eben yeqārâ), this easily translated expression probably refers to a stone which



sparkles. Even today diamonds are frequently described as fiery.

A second major category is "stone" used in the natural state. Genesis 11:3 is the first usage of the word as building material. Jacob used a stone pillow (Genesis 28:11) and Moses sat on a stone (Exodus 17:12). Stones were used to cover wells (Genesis 29:2-3) and seal caves (Joshua 10:18). Stones also served as pillars or cairns (Genesis 31:45-46). Naturally, stones were used for throwing (Leviticus 20:2) and slinging (Judges 20:16).

The word "stone" is used as a title for God (Genesis 49:24, cf. *šûr* "rock"), and for the Messiah (Isaiah 28:16).

Stones were made into tablets for writing, as for the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34:1), or into bowls (Exodus 7:19). From stone the images of false deities were carved (Deut. 28:36). The phrase "hewn stone" (*'eben gāzît*, Exodus 20:25) refers to stones which were dressed or squared off.

The word *'eben* is used to denote the characteristics it possesses. Exodus 15:5 refers to its weight and Exodus 15:16 to its motionlessness. Elsewhere its commonness is noted (1 Kings 10:27). Job refers to its strength (Job 6:12) and firmness (Job 41:24 [H 16]). Akin to this last reference is Ezekiel's allusion to a "stony heart" (Job 11:19).

Stones were used for weights (Leviticus 19:36), although the denominations or counterparts are imperfectly known to us. Note the "royal stone" of 2 Samuel 14:26 (KJV "king's weight").

The word refers to "hailstones" (e.g. Joshua 10:11), and to "limestones" (Isaiah 27:9; KJV "chalkstones").

The word "stone" appears in place names. The best known (mostly from the hymn "Come, Thou Fount") is "Eben-ezer" (Heb *'eben hā'ēzer*, 1 Samuel 7:12). There is also the "stone of Bohan" (Joshua 15:6, JB, translated "stone of Bohan" in KJV and "Eben-Bohan" in NAB), and the "stone of Zoheleth" (1 Kings 1:9, KJV; translated "Serpent's Stone" in RSV, "Slippery Stone" in the Berkley Version, and "Sliding Stone" in JB). The word *azel* (1 Samuel 20:19) connected with stone" may be a preposition or adjective, not a proper name.

Note that if an altar was built with stones, they were to be undressed stones, doubtless to make impossible the engraving of idolatrous representations on them (Exodus 20:25; Deut. 27:5). ([TWOT online](#))

**Ezer** (05828) *'ezer* is a masculine noun which means help, support. It can also refer to a helper or one who assists and serves another with what is needed. For example in the first OT use where Moses records "Then the LORD God said, *"It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper"* (*'ezer*: LXX = [boethos](#)) *suitable for him.*" (Ge 2:18) **Ezer** refers to aid or assistance that is given, whether material or immaterial. It is often Jehovah Who helps His people. Jehovah is called the shield or protection of Israel's help ([Dt 33:29](#)). The Septuagint translates this word group most often with [boáo](#), [boetheo](#), [boethos](#), all conveying the general idea of running to the aid of one who cries out for help. The Lord as Israel's chief **Helper** (Ex 18:4; Dt 33:7; Ps 33:20; Ps 115:9, 10, 11). Israel spurns Jehovah's **help** in (Ho 13:9)

**Ezer - 21v - help(18), helper(2), helpers(1).** Gen. 2:18; Gen. 2:20; Exod. 18:4; Deut. 33:7; Deut. 33:26; Deut. 33:29; Ps. 20:2; Ps. 33:20; Ps. 70:5; Ps. 89:19; Ps. 115:9; Ps. 115:10; Ps. 115:11; Ps. 121:1; Ps. 121:2; Ps. 124:8; Ps. 146:5; Isa. 30:5; Ezk. 12:14; Dan. 11:34; Hos. 13:9

**Helped** (05826) *'azar* means to protect, aid, help, succor, support, give material or nonmaterial encouragement. **Azar** often refers to aid in the form of military assistance and in many instances refers to **help** from Jehovah as illustrated by the uses below. Webster says to **help** means to aid, to assist, to succor (see below), to lend strength or means towards effecting a purpose. To relieve; to cure, or to mitigate pain or disease. To remedy; to change for the better. The [Septuagint](#) translates *'azar* most often with the word group that includes [boáo](#), [boetheo](#), [boethos](#), all conveying the general idea of running to the aid of one who cries out for help (e.g., see He 2:18+ which uses [boetheo](#)) which is similar to the English word **succour** (from Latin *succurrere* = to run up, run to help) means literally to run to and so to run to to support, to go to the aid of, to help or relieve when in difficulty, want or distress; to assist and deliver from suffering; as, to succor a besieged city; to succor prisoners. **Azar** is first found in the Old Testament in Jacob's deathbed blessing describing God's help to Joseph: "From the God of your father who **helps** (*'azar*, LXX = [boetheo](#)) you, and by the Almighty who blesses you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb." (Ge 49:25).

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## C H Spurgeon - Morning, December 29

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." —1 Samuel 7:12

The word "hitherto" seems like a hand pointing in the direction of the past. Twenty years or seventy, and yet, "hitherto the Lord hath helped!" Through poverty, through wealth, through sickness, through health, at home, abroad, on the land, on the sea, in honour, in



dishonour, in perplexity, in joy, in trial, in triumph, in prayer, in temptation, "hitherto hath the Lord helped us!" We delight to look down a long avenue of trees. It is delightful to gaze from end to end of the long vista, a sort of verdant temple, with its branching pillars and its arches of leaves; even so look down the long aisles of your years, at the green boughs of mercy overhead, and the strong pillars of lovingkindness and faithfulness which bear up your joys. Are there no birds in yonder branches singing? Surely there must be many, and they all sing of mercy received "hitherto."

But the word also points forward. For when a man gets up to a certain mark and writes "hitherto," he is not yet at the end, there is still a distance to be traversed. More trials, more joys; more temptations, more triumphs; more prayers, more answers; more toils, more strength; more fights, more victories; and then come sickness, old age, disease, death. Is it over now? No! there is more yet-awakening in Jesus' likeness, thrones, harps, songs, psalms, white raiment, the face of Jesus, the society of saints, the glory of God, the fulness of eternity, the infinity of bliss. O be of good courage, believer, and with grateful confidence raise thy "Ebenezer," for—

He who hath helped thee hitherto  
Will help thee all thy journey through.

When read in heaven's light how glorious and marvellous a prospect will thy "hitherto" unfold to thy grateful eye!

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### **Robert Morgan - Ebenezer February 8 - [From this Verse](#)**

Witty, warm, full of wisdom, F. W. Boreham's books are collectors' items. [In The Other Side of the Hill](#), Boreham, who pastored in New Zealand and Australia, tells of growing up in England.

In the dear old home at Tunbridge Wells, there hangs a text. It is only a scrap of paper, cut from the corner of a penny almanac; and yet, if something had to go, I fancy the finest pictures in the house would be sacrificed to save it. It reads:

Hitherto Hath The Lord Helped Us \*

It has been there for more than thirty years; but I remember, as though yesterday, the day it appeared. We boys had a dim consciousness that things were going hardly with father and mother. He looked anxious and worried; her eyes were often red and swollen. Then one day the newly framed text made its appearance on the wall. It was as if the weather had cleared up; the fog had lifted; father and mother were happier. We mustered courage to ask some explanation.

[Mother said:] "You know your father and I had a great trouble, and we feared a much heavier one. On Tuesday of last week, I had to drop my work, pick up the baby, and walk up and down the kitchen feeling I could endure it no longer. In pacing up and down, I paused in front of the sheet-almanac on the wall. The only thing I saw was the text in the corner. It was as if someone had spoken the words: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." I was so overcome I sat down and had a good cry; and then I began again with a fresh heart and trust. When father came home, I told him about it, and he cut out the text with his penknife and hung it where you now see it. \*\*

As long as he lived, F. W. Boreham never forgot the power of that lesson.

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### **G Campbell Morgan - Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.—1Sam. 7.12**

A dark period of twenty years is passed over without detailed record. It would seem that for all that time Israel was suffering oppression under the power of Philistia. There was no definite centre of worship; for while the Ark was resting in the house of an individual, the Tabernacle was probably dismantled. During this period Samuel passed from youth to man-hood, and now approached the hour of his definite leadership. This was ushered in by the lamenting of the people after God. Of this Samuel took advantage, calling them to return to Him and put away all strange gods. At Mizpeh by a direct Divine intervention the power of Philistia was broken, and her cities were restored to Israel. Samuel erected an altar, and called it Ebenezer. In connection with this, he uttered this great word: "Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us." The significant word is "Hitherto." It included all the experiences through which they had passed, not the victories only, but the discipline and suffering also. This man of clear vision recognized the government of God, and its beneficent purpose and method. Through chastisement God had brought them to lamentation after Himself; through such lamentation, to the condition in which it was possible for Him to deliver them. This is ever so. To look back honestly, is to see that God has always been acting for our highest welfare, even through the dispensations which have been those of calamity and sorrow. The light of that backward look should be allowed to fall upon the present, and give us confidence for the future. ([Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible](#))

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### **James Smith - EBENEZER 1 SAMUEL 7:12**

The circumstances connected with this “stone of help” are suggestive of the way into spiritual victory. There was—

1. Conscious Need. “All ... lamented after the Lord” (v. 2).
2. Confession Made. “We have sinned” (v. 6).
3. Separation Demanded. “Put away strange gods ... serve Him only” (v. 3).
4. Substitution Acknowledged. “Samuel took a sucking lamb” (v. 9).
5. Deliverance Wrought. “The Lord thundered ... and discomfited” (v. 10).
6. Testimony Given. “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us” (v. 12).

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### James Smith - EBENEZER 1 SAMUEL 7:12

#### I. The Way to it.

1. CONFESSION. “We have sinned” (v. 6).
2. CONVERSION. “Return unto the Lord” (v. 3).
3. CONSECRATION. “Prepare your heart and serve Him only” (v. 3).

#### II. The Manner of it. It was through—

1. SACRIFICE. “A lamb for a burnt offering” (v. 10).
2. INTERCESSION. “Samuel cried unto the Lord.”
3. JUDGMENT. “The Lord thundered” (v. 10).

#### III. The Influence of it.

1. Look UP. “The Lord hath.”
2. Look BACK. “Hitherto.”
3. Look BEYOND. “He hath” and He will.

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### [Streams in the Desert](#) - “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.” (1 Samuel 7:12.)

THE word “hitherto” seems like a hand pointing in the direction of the past. Twenty years or seventy, and yet “hitherto hath the Lord helped us?” Through poverty, through wealth, through sickness, through health; at home, abroad, on the land, on the sea; in honor, in dishonor, in perplexity, in joy, in trial, in triumph, in prayer, in temptation—“hitherto hath the Lord helped!”

We delight to look down a long avenue of trees. It is delightful to gaze from one end of the long vista, a sort of verdant temple, with its branching pillars and its arches of leaves. Even so look down the long aisles of your years, at the green boughs of mercy overhead, and the strong pillars of lovingkindness and faithfulness which bear up your joys.

Are there no birds in yonder branches singing? Surely, there must be many, and they all sing of mercy received “hitherto.”

But the word also points forward. For when a man gets up to a certain mark, and writes “hitherto,” he is not yet at the end; there are still distances to be traversed. More trials, more joys; more temptations, more triumphs; more prayers, more answers; more toils, more strength; more fights, more victories; and then come sickness, old age, disease, death.

Is it over now? No! there is more yet—awakening in Jesus’ likeness, thrones, harps, songs, psalms, white raiment, the face of Jesus, the society of saints, the glory of God, the fullness of eternity, the infinity of bliss. Oh, be of good courage, believer, and with grateful confidence raise thy “Ebenezer,” for,

“He who hath helped thee hitherto  
Will help thee all thy journey through.”

When read in Heaven’s light, how glorious and marvelous a prospect will thy “hitherto” unfold to thy grateful eye. —C. H. Spurgeon.

The Alpine shepherds have a beautiful custom of ending the day by singing to one another an evening farewell. The air is so crystalline that the song will carry long distances. As the dusk begins to fall, they gather their flocks and begin to lead them down the mountain paths, singing, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. Let us praise His name!”

And at last with a sweet courtesy, they sing to one another the friendly farewell: “Goodnight! Goodnight!” The words are taken up by the echoes, and from side to side the song goes reverberating sweetly and softly until the music dies away in the distance.

So let us call out to one another through the darkness, till the gloom becomes vocal with many voices, encouraging the pilgrim host. Let the echoes gather till a very storm of Hallelujahs break in thundering waves around the sapphire throne, and then as the morning breaks we shall find ourselves at the margin of the sea of glass, crying, with the redeemed host, “Blessing and honor and glory be unto him that sitteth on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever!”

"This my song through endless ages,  
Jesus led me all the way."

"AND AGAIN THEY SAID, HALLELUJAH!" (Rev. 19:3, R. V.)

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**Robert Hawker** - DID Samuel do this? Was that servant of the Lord, who lived not to see Christ in the flesh, so full of faith in the coming Saviour, and in the experiences of Jehovah's faithfulness in what was past, that he set up his Ebenezer? Surely, my soul, thou wilt blush to be outdone by the prophet, when thou hast not only seen the day of the Son of man completed, but felt his power. Oh, my soul! let thine Ebenezer be Jesus! Let the stone thou settest up, be indeed the Rock of ages. Yes, my soul! set up Jesus indeed, in all places, at all times, upon all occasions. And oh, Lord! do thou by thy blessed Spirit set up thyself in my heart, and enthrone thyself there, and reign and rule there forever. Surely, my soul! Jesus is thine every day Ebenezer; for he not only hath hitherto helped, but he doth help, and will help, and be himself thine Help, thy God, thy Portion, thy Jesus, for evermore.

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### **James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - EBENEZER 1 Samuel 7**

If in the past we have been faithful, we will now have much cause to be thankful. Before Ebenezer comes—

1. Contrition—"Israel lamented after the Lord" (v. 2).
2. Confession—"We have sinned against the Lord" (v. 6). After this there had to be—
3. Conversion—"Return unto the Lord" (v. 3).
4. Separation—"Put away the strange gods" (v. 3).
5. Consecration—"Prepare your heart unto the Lord, and serve Him only" (v. 3). These steps are always sure to lead up to Ebenezer: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." This "Stone of help" has many tongues.

I. Ebenezer Speaks of Redemption. "Hitherto." This points us back to the bondage of Egypt—to the slavery of sin—to the hole of the pit whence we have been dug (Exod. 12:12, 13; Eph. 2:12, 13).

II. Ebenezer Speaks of Preservation. "Hitherto hath." The Lord thee keeps. He kept them by His mighty power, and guided them by the skilfulness of His hands (Psa. 78:72). While walking through the dark shadows in the valley of life we need fear no evil (Psa. 23:4). He keepeth the feet of His saints, and their way too (Prov. 2:8). May the prayer of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 be fulfilled in us!

III. Ebenezer Speaks of Answered Prayer. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped." "Samuel cried unto the Lord, and the Lord heard him" (v. 9). The rain comes down according to the vapour that ascends (Job 36:27). The incense was put upon burning coals. Prayer must ascend from a burning heart. "Whatsoever ye ask believing." Every believing prayer will yet have its store of testimony.

IV. Ebenezer Speaks of Victory. While Samuel offered the Lamb, the Lord discomfited the enemy (v. 10). This was indeed victory through the Lamb. We, too, must overcome through the Blood of the Lamb (Rev. 12:11). It is when the Lamb of God is lifted up in presence of the ungodly that the Lord thunders with the voice of conviction.

V. Ebenezer Speaks of Divine Faithfulness. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us"—helped us all the way. Not one good thing hath failed (Joshua 13:14). He is faithful that hath promised. His promises, like the barrel of meal, waste not (1 Kings 17:16). He that hath begun the good work will perform it (Phil. 1:6).

VI. Ebenezer Speaks of Testimony. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." This is a noble, God-honouring confession. They give Him all the praise. What have we that we have not received? Yet not I, but Christ in me (Gal. 2:20). What have we done worth doing that He hath not wrought in us? (Phil. 2:13). "To God be the glory, great things He hath done."

VII. Ebenezer Speaks of Encouragement for the Future. The Lord who hath blessed us "hitherto" will also bless us henceforth and for ever. He who hath delivered, and doth deliver, WILL YET deliver (2 Cor. 1:10). "Be of good cheer" and "have faith in God."

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### **Ebenezer**

Samuel took a stone . . . and called its name Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the Lord has helped us." —1 Samuel 7:12

Today's Scripture: Psalm 42:1-5

In Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, the central character is Ebenezer Scrooge. As a boy, I enjoyed watching the old black-and-white version of that movie with Alastair Sim portraying Scrooge. Sim did a phenomenal job presenting the heartless, miserly, self-centered Scrooge. I still look in the television schedule each Christmas to learn when I can watch that particular rendition of Dickens'

tale.

Years of watching the travails of Scrooge have spoiled something for me though—the name “Ebenezer.” I have associated it with Scrooge, but its original meaning was light-years away from that. In 1 Samuel, following a decisive battle with the Philistines, the Israelites erected a stone as a reminder of the Lord’s help in the battle. They named that stone Ebenezer, which means “Stone of Help,” to remind people of how God rescued them from their enemies (7:12).

What a contrast! A name that I had come to associate with man’s selfishness can actually serve as a reminder of the readily available help of God. As we move through life, may we focus on the faithfulness of the Lord and not the selfishness of man. Let’s look to Him as our true Ebenezer—our help in the challenges of life. By: Bill Crowder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God’s faithfulness we’ve known throughout the years,  
His oneness with us in our joys and tears;  
So many times the Lord has helped us through,  
Has answered prayer and given strength anew.  
—F. Hess

Our only hope here below is help from God above.

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## **Crazy Horse**

Samuel took a stone . . . and called its name Ebenezer, saying, “Thus far the Lord has helped us.” — 1 Samuel 7:12

Today’s Scripture: 1 Samuel 7:3-12

In 1876, the Sioux leader Crazy Horse joined forces with Sitting Bull to defeat General Custer and his army at Little Bighorn. Not much later, though, starvation caused Crazy Horse to surrender to US troops. He was killed while trying to escape. Despite this sad conclusion to his life, he became a symbol of heroic leadership of a threatened people.

Today in the Black Hills of South Dakota, he is commemorated with a monument being carved into a mountain—the [Crazy Horse Memorial](#). When complete, it will be 641 feet long and 563 feet high. It will show Crazy Horse riding a galloping horse, pointing the way to his people.

Thousands of years ago, the prophet Samuel used a much smaller memorial stone in a significant way. In the midst of a crucial battle with the Philistines, Samuel called out to God on Israel’s behalf. The Lord answered his prayer (1 Sam. 7:10). In gratitude, Samuel set up a stone “and called its name Ebenezer, saying, ‘Thus far the Lord has helped us’” (v.12).

Samuel has set an example for our spiritual journey. We too can use tangible reminders of God’s faithfulness to help us worship and serve Him. It’s good to remember “thus far the Lord has helped us.” By: Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

- Putting It Into Practice
- Keep a spiritual journal and record God’s blessings.
- Write answers to prayer in your journal.
- Tell a friend what God has done in your life.

Gratitude is the memory of a glad heart.

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## **By God’s Help**

Thus far the Lord has helped us. — 1 Samuel 7:12

Today’s Scripture: 1 Samuel 7:2-12

The word Ebenezer in the hymn “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing” refers to a time when the people of Israel were trying to regain the close relationship they once had with God. Their spiritual leader, Samuel, told them that if they would abandon their foreign gods and return to the Lord wholeheartedly, He would deliver them from being oppressed by their enemy, the Philistines (1 Sam. 7:2-3).

When the people turned from their sin, God gave them victory. In response, “Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, ‘Thus far the Lord has helped us’” (v.12).

When we sing, “Here I raise my Ebenezer; hither by Thy help I’ve come; and I hope, by Thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home,” we are reminded that in our times of need we can always turn to God to find forgiveness and help. Whatever we have done, wherever we have wandered, He will receive and restore us by His grace.

A small stone on a desk or shelf can be our own Ebenezer—a powerful, visible reminder that by God’s help we have come this far in life, and He will see us through to the end. By: David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing  
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
Call for songs of loudest praise.  
—Robinson

Because God is with us, we need not fear what is ahead of us.

**1 Samuel 7:13 So the Philistines were subdued and they did not come anymore within the border of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.**

BGT 1 Samuel 7:13 καὶ τῆς νίκης κερძοῦν τοὺς φιλισταίους καὶ οὐ προσελθεῖν εἰς τὸν Ἰσραὴλ καὶ γενθῆς κερζοῦν τοὺς φιλισταίους πᾶς τῆς ἡμέρας τοῦ Σαμουὴλ

KJV 1 Samuel 7:13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

NET 1 Samuel 7:13 So the Philistines were defeated; they did not invade Israel again. The hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

CSB 1 Samuel 7:13 So the Philistines were subdued and did not invade Israel's territory again. The LORD's hand was against the Philistines all of Samuel's life.

ESV 1 Samuel 7:13 So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

NIV 1 Samuel 7:13 So the Philistines were subdued and did not invade Israelite territory again. Throughout Samuel's lifetime, the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines.

NLT 1 Samuel 7:13 So the Philistines were subdued and didn't invade Israel again for some time. And throughout Samuel's lifetime, the LORD's powerful hand was raised against the Philistines.

NRS 1 Samuel 7:13 So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel; the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

RSV 1 Samuel 7:13 So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

YLT 1 Samuel 7:13 And the Philistines are humbled, and have not added any more to come into the border of Israel, and the hand of Jehovah is on the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

NKJ 1 Samuel 7:13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they did not come anymore into the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

NJB 1 Samuel 7:13 So the Philistines were humbled and no longer came into Israelite territory; Yahweh oppressed the Philistines throughout the life of Samuel.

NAB 1 Samuel 7:13 Thus were the Philistines subdued, never again to enter the territory of Israel, for the LORD was severe with them as long as Samuel lived.

LXE 1 Samuel 7:13 So the Lord humbled the Philistines, and they did not anymore come into the border of Israel; and the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

ASV 1 Samuel 7:13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more within the border of Israel: and the hand of Jehovah was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

- **subdued:** Jdg 13:1
- **did not come anymore:** 1Sa 13:1-5
- **the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines** 1Sa 14:6-16,20-23 17:49-53 28:3-5 31:1-7
- 1 Samuel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ISRAEL'S ENEMY HUMBLLED UNDER HAND OF YAHWEH

**So the Philistines were subdued** ([kana](#); Lxx = [tapeinoo](#)) **and they did not come anymore within the border of Israel. And the hand** ([yad](#) - hand is keyword in 1Sa 4-7 = 13x/13v) **of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.** The Philistines did continue to come against Israel from time to time (one example is 1Sa 9:16) but never with any measure of success in the days of Samuel. The Septuagint uses [tapeinoo](#) to translated subdued, a word which literally means lower or make low (like leveling of a mountain) and figuratively meant that the Philistines were humiliated and assigned to a lower position (so to speak). They were humbled by the strong **hand of the LORD**. (See Hand of the LORD) The time phrase **all the days of Samuel** would seem to refer to the time that Samuel was the exclusive leader over Israel (before the kings took over rule), because certainly there was warfare with the Philistines in the reigns of Saul and David. In fact in 1Sa 9:16 we read of Saul "he will deliver My people from the hand of the Philistines." The implication is that the Philistines were beginning to rise up against Israel again. Once Saul became king, the Philistine threat was never far away (1Sa 14:52) and it fact it would be the Philistines who were responsible for his death (1Sa 31:1-2).

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**Subdued** (humbled) ([03665](#)) [kana](#) is a verb which has the basic meaning of being lowly, meek. In the OT there are two main senses in the OT, the most common meaning to subdue (akin to "political humiliation") and the second meaning to humble oneself (Lev 26:41, 1 Ki 21:29 twice, 2 Ki 22:19, 2 Chr 7:14, 2 Chr 12:5-7, 12:12, 30:11, 32:26, 33:12, 19, 23, 34:27, 36:12). In regard to nations being subdued Judges 3:30+ says "So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land was undisturbed for eighty years." But then we see that they power to subdue is from God for Judges 4:23+ says "So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the sons of Israel." This is a wonderful truth and comforting thought for all God's people living in a world where evil seems to be out of control, but it is not out of control because God is sovereign and in control and as Paul says "And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you." (Ro 16:20-note)!

**Kana** is is often used of a person falling on his knees in subjugation or humiliation. In Lev 26:41 **kana** is used of the Lord's humbling an uncircumcised, prideful heart. Kana is used to mean subdue in the context of defeating Israel's enemies (Dt. 9:3; Jdg. 3:30; 4:23; 8:28; 1 Chr. 17:10; 18:1; 20:4). It is used of humbling oneself as well (1 Ki. 21:29 see comment below). The key to the Israelites' success after failure was to repent and humble themselves before the Lord (2 Chr. 7:14). The Lord challenges Job that only He can humble and crush the wicked in due time (Job 40:12).

**Kana - 32v - becomes humbled(1), done(1), humble(4), humbled(12), humbled yourself(3), subdue(4), subdued(11).** Lev. 26:41; Deut. 9:3; Jdg. 3:30; Jdg. 4:23; Jdg. 8:28; Jdg. 11:33; 1 Sam. 7:13; 2 Sam. 8:1; 1 Ki. 21:29; 2 Ki. 22:19; 1 Chr. 17:10; 1 Chr. 18:1; 1 Chr. 20:4; 2 Chr. 7:14; 2 Chr. 12:6; 2 Chr. 12:7; 2 Chr. 12:12; 2 Chr. 13:18; 2 Chr. 28:19; 2 Chr. 30:11; 2 Chr. 32:26; 2 Chr. 33:12; 2 Chr. 33:19; 2 Chr. 33:23; 2 Chr. 34:27; 2 Chr. 36:12; Neh. 9:24; Job 40:12; Ps. 81:14; Ps. 106:42; Ps. 107:12; Isa. 25:5

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**Hand** ([03027](#)) [yad](#) is a feminine noun meaning hand and figuratively meaning strength. **Hand is "the terminal part of the arm used to perform functions of man's will."** Yad is employed literally of man's hand which does normal work functions (Genesis 5:29), good or bad (Genesis 4:11). The law of *lex talionis* ("hand for a hand") is a penalty involving destruction of bodily parts for bodily parts harmed by another

Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament.

The metaphorical use of yad, יָד, covers a wide range of the concept of "power." In this respect there is no essential difference whether the word is related to God or humankind. יָד is used about 200x in connection with God, in most cases combined with the name Yahweh, and rarely combined (about 13x) with a form of El or Elohim (1 Sam 4:8; 5:11; 2 Chron 30:12; Ezra 7:9; 8:18, 22, 31; Neh 2:8, 18; Job 19:21; 27:11; Ps 10:12; Eccl 2:24; 9:1). The theological metaphor of God's hand (comp. arm) seems to have its roots in Israel's experience of God's redeeming them from slavery in Egypt. In the Exodus reports the outstretched arm of God and of Moses play a decisive role (Exod 3:20; 4:17; 6:1 [2x]; 7:19; 13:3). יָד can be used metonymically to describe God's mighty acts, either for the salvation or for the judgment of his people: "the great power (הַיָּד הַגְּדוֹלָה) [of] the LORD" (Exod 14:31; cf. Deut 34:12 with Moses as subj.; Ps 78:42). "God's good hand" protected the Israelites returning from the Exile (cf. Ezra 7:9; 8:22; Neh 2:18). But God also swings his hand of judgment over his people or over other peoples (יָד הַיָּגוּר, e.g., Isa 19:16; Zech 2:9 [13]), lifts up his hand (יָד הַיָּגוּר, Isa 49:22; to swear, Deut 32:40; Ezek 20:5) or stretches out his hand (יָד הַיָּגוּר)



לַיָּד, Exod 7:5; Isa 14:26–27; Jer 6:12; יָד only being used in a negative connotation). His punishing hand is heavy on Israel's enemies (1 Sam 5:6, 11). "The work of his hands" testifies to God's creating power (Ps 19:1; Isa 48:13; 64:8).

- See 4-5 page discussion of imagery of HAND in [Dictionary of Biblical Imagery](#) (online)
- See article The Hand of the LORD

**Ralph Alexander** has a helpful discussion of hand as used idiomatically -

**Significant theologically is the manifold way in which the word "hand" is employed idiomatically.** These idioms arise from the versatility of the hand. The phrase "into (or "under") someone's hand" conveys authority involving responsibility, care, and dominion over someone or something. One may be under the custody of this authority. In the Amarna letters, the Canaanite gloss ba-di-ú means "in his hand." Mankind is to have the rest of creation "under his dominion" (Genesis 9:2). Sarah's authority over Hagar (Genesis 16:6, 9), Joseph's over Potiphar's house (Genesis 39:3-8), that of Moses and Aaron over Israel (Numbers 33:1), and David over Aram (1 Chron. 18:3) are all expressed by this phrase. Yahweh is to have authority over our lives. We place our hearts and spirits into his care, sovereignty, and judgment (Psalm 31:5, 15; [H 6, 16]; 2 Samuel 24:14). Moreover, this idiom portrays "victory over someone" when one is "delivered into one's hands." Deliverance, on the contrary, is described as being "delivered out of one's hands." Often Yahweh promised Israel that he would "deliver her enemies into her hands" (Genesis 49:8; Joshua 6:2) and that he would deliver Israel "out of her enemies' hands" (Exodus 3:8). Refuge cities provided "deliverance" for the innocent slayer "from the hand" of the revenger of blood (Numbers 35:15).

**The hand symbolized "power" or "strength"** (Deut. 8:17). Deut. 32:36 described Israel's loss of power by saying "their hands were gone." Moses' hand was poignantly used to portray power in the plagues against Egypt (Exodus 10:12-25). The most notable use of this metaphor is its conveyance of God's power. 1 Chron. 29:12 declares that in Yahweh's hand is power and might (cf. Psalm 89:13 [H 14]). His hand is not "short" (or "weak") (Isaiah 59:1), but mighty. A predominant demonstration of his power was his deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Exodus 13:3-16; Numbers 33:3). All the world witnessed Yahweh's power through this event (Joshua 4:24). His hand created the world (Psalm 8:6; Psalm 95:5) and works truth and justice (Psalm 111:7). He upholds and guides the righteous with his hand (Psalm 37:24; Psalm 139:10). He continually lifts up his hand on our behalf (Psalm 10:12). A corollary idea is that of "ability" to accomplish a task. The phrases "hand reaches" or "hand finds" denote the ability to do or obtain something (Leviticus 14:21-32).

**"Possession" is a common function of the hand.** Therefore, "in one's hands" often bears that connotation. The Ishmaelites had Joseph in their possession ("hands," Genesis 39:1). Yahweh declared that he would take David's kingdom from his son (1 Kings 11:12, 31-35).

**"Submission" is indicated by the phrase "to give one's hands under" someone else.** Solomon's officials "submitted" to him (1 Chron. 29:24). Yahweh exhorted Israel to "submit" to him and not rebel.

**"To stretch out the hand" conveys two ideas.** It expresses the "attacking" of an object (Joshua 8:19, 26); second, it describes the psalmist's yearning for the Lord (Psalm 143:6).

**"Putting one's hand to" something expresses "work" and the activity in which that person is involved (Deut. 2:7; Deut. 30:9).** "Strengthening the hands" is helping someone (cf. Jonathan helping David, 1 Samuel 23:16).

**Obstinate rebellion is described by the phrase "high hand" (Numbers 15:30).** Contrarily, the same expression conveyed God's mighty deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Exodus 14:8). "Shaking the hand" symbolized God's warning and destruction of judgment (Isaiah 10:32; Isaiah 19:16). Contempt is likewise visualized by this symbol (Zeph. 2:15).

**"Laying hands on" has four basic connotations.** First, this phrase was employed to depict killing (Genesis 37:22, 27). Second, it was used in the ritual ceremony of blessing (cf. Genesis 48:17). Third, commissioning for a specific office or task was normally accompanied by the laying on of hands (cf. Moses' inauguration of Joshua and Acts 13:1-3). Fourth, the important theological concept of substitution was continually portrayed through the laying of hands upon a sacrificial animal. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest transferred the nation's sins to the goat ("substitution"), by laying his hands upon the goat. Individuals depicted their sins as transferred to and borne by the sacrificial animal through this expression (Exodus 29:10-19; Leviticus 1:4). Ultimately this figure was fulfilled in Christ's bearing of our sins upon the cross (Col. 2:14).

**The "uplifted hand" expressed several nuances.** First, it symbolized prayer as one lifted up his hands toward the sanctuary (Psalm 28:2). Second, the uplifted hand periodically accompanied a public blessing (Leviticus 9:22). Third, it was common for one to lift up his hand in an oath. When Abram vowed not to take spoils of war, he lifted up his hand to the king of Sodom. Another means of expressing a vow was to place the hand under the thigh of the other person as Abram's servant did when swearing that he would be faithful to Abram's charge (Genesis 24:2, 9). The most significant vows of scripture are those anthropomorphically

made by God. The oath most remembered in the scripture by this accompanying sign is God's unconditional and eternal covenant promise to make a nation from Abram and bless the world through that nation, Israel (Genesis 12:1-3; cf. Exodus 6:8; Numbers 14:30). God also swore to avenge the blood of his servants (Deut. 32:40).

**Consecration was depicted by the idiom "fill the hands."** Some suggest that the sense of filling means the hands were full and had no time for other business, though others think that "filling" was with a sacrificial portion since this phrase was predominately used in the commissioning of priests (Exodus 29:9-35; Exodus 16:32). Ritual cleansing was portrayed by "washing the hands" (Leviticus 5:11), making the person ritually righteous (2 Samuel 22:21). This symbolic action also denoted "absolution from guilt" (Deut. 21:6-7: cf. Matthew 27:24).

**To give to one was to "open the hand"** (Deut. 15:8, 11), whereas to "shut the hand" was to withhold (Deut. 15:7). God opens his hand to satisfy the desire of every living thing (Psalm 145:16).

**One who "slacks his hand" (or withdraws his hand) "gives up" (Joshua 10:6);** the slothful "buries his hand in a dish" (Proverbs 19:24). The silent places the "hand to the mouth" (Proverbs 30:32).

**"Hand" is interestingly employed to mean an "ordinance" (Ezra 3:10) or a "monument"**(cf. ritual stelae at Hazor) used perhaps to establish a covenant or as religious commemorations (1 Samuel 15:12; Isaiah 56:5). The Law was symbolically placed on the hand of the Israelite to remind him of its centrality in life (Deut. 6:8). The instrumentality of giving ordinances and God's word was expressed with "by the hand of."

Perhaps the joining of hands led to the use of yād to denote "axles" which held the wheels of the molten sea together (1 Kings 7:32-33) and the "stays" (tenons) to fasten the boards of the tabernacle or temple (Exodus 26:17-19; 1 Kings 7:35-36). The hand hanging at the side most likely precipitated the use of yād for "side, coast, or border" (Exodus 2:5; Numbers 2:17; Numbers 34:3). The spreading of the hands denoted "space" (Genesis 34:21), while "hand" also meant "part" or "time" (Genesis 43:34; Genesis 47:24). A different root, ydd, "to love," may be the basis for translating yād "penis" in the context of Isaiah 57:8, 10 (cf. UG 19: no. 1072). (From [TWOT](#) online)

**Over 1400 uses in OT - here are the uses in First Samuel - Note that "hand" is keyword in 1 Samuel**

**4-7** - 1 Sam. 2:13; 1 Sam. 4:8; 1 Sam. 4:18; 1 Sam. 5:4; 1 Sam. 5:6; 1 Sam. 5:7; 1 Sam. 5:9; 1 Sam. 5:11; 1 Sam. 6:3; 1 Sam. 6:5; 1 Sam. 6:9; 1 Sam. 7:3; 1 Sam. 7:8; 1 Sam. 7:13; 1 Sam. 7:14; 1 Sam. 9:8; 1 Sam. 9:16; 1 Sam. 10:4; 1 Sam. 10:7; 1 Sam. 10:18; 1 Sam. 11:7; 1 Sam. 12:3; 1 Sam. 12:4; 1 Sam. 12:5; 1 Sam. 12:9; 1 Sam. 12:10; 1 Sam. 12:11; 1 Sam. 12:15; 1 Sam. 13:22; 1 Sam. 14:10; 1 Sam. 14:12; 1 Sam. 14:13; 1 Sam. 14:19; 1 Sam. 14:26; 1 Sam. 14:27; 1 Sam. 14:37; 1 Sam. 14:43; 1 Sam. 14:48; 1 Sam. 15:12; 1 Sam. 16:16; 1 Sam. 16:23; 1 Sam. 17:22; 1 Sam. 17:37; 1 Sam. 17:40; 1 Sam. 17:46; 1 Sam. 17:47; 1 Sam. 17:49; 1 Sam. 17:50; 1 Sam. 17:57; 1 Sam. 18:10; 1 Sam. 18:17; 1 Sam. 18:21; 1 Sam. 18:25; 1 Sam. 19:3; 1 Sam. 19:9; 1 Sam. 20:16; 1 Sam. 21:3; 1 Sam. 21:4; 1 Sam. 21:8; 1 Sam. 21:13; 1 Sam. 22:6; 1 Sam. 22:17; 1 Sam. 23:4; 1 Sam. 23:6; 1 Sam. 23:7; 1 Sam. 23:11; 1 Sam. 23:12; 1 Sam. 23:14; 1 Sam. 23:16; 1 Sam. 23:17; 1 Sam. 23:20; 1 Sam. 24:4; 1 Sam. 24:6; 1 Sam. 24:10; 1 Sam. 24:11; 1 Sam. 24:12; 1 Sam. 24:13; 1 Sam. 24:15; 1 Sam. 24:18; 1 Sam. 24:20; 1 Sam. 25:8; 1 Sam. 25:26; 1 Sam. 25:33; 1 Sam. 25:35; 1 Sam. 25:39; 1 Sam. 26:8; 1 Sam. 26:9; 1 Sam. 26:11; 1 Sam. 26:18; 1 Sam. 26:23; 1 Sam. 27:1; 1 Sam. 28:15; 1 Sam. 28:17; 1 Sam. 28:19; 1 Sam. 30:15; 1 Sam. 30:23;

**Norman Geisler** - 1 SAMUEL 7:13—Were the Philistines expelled once and for all, or only temporarily?

**PROBLEM:** This verse says that “the Philistines were subdued, and they did not come anymore into the territory of Israel.” However, only a few chapters later (9:16; cf. 10:5; 13:5, 17) they were repeatedly fighting the Philistines.

**SOLUTION:** There are two ways to explain this difficulty. One is that it may simply be a strong idiom, not to be taken as excluding all future incursions on their land by the Philistines. In other words, “they came no more” for some time. Or, it could simply mean that “they came no more” at that time. A third possibility is that “they came no more” to occupy and dwell in the territory of Israel, which would not exclude them coming back to fight again and again.

1 Samuel 7:14 The cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even to Gath; and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. So there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

BGT 1 Samuel 7:14 καὶ πέδθησαν αὐτοὶ λαβόντες ἅλλοι φυλοὶ παρὰ τὴν οὐρανὴν Ἰσραὴλ καὶ πῶκαν αὐτοὺς τῷ Ἰσραὴλ πρὸς τὸν ἄλκο καὶ τὸν ποτόν· καὶ Ἰσραὴλ ἐλάνθη καὶ οὐκ ἔλαβεν ἑαυτὸν ἐκ τῶν ἁλλοφύλων καὶ ἐνέστη ἐναντίον Ἰσραὴλ

καὶ ὤμωσαν τὸ Ἀμορραῖον

KJV 1 Samuel 7:14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

NET 1 Samuel 7:14 The cities that the Philistines had captured from Israel were returned to Israel, from Ekron to Gath. Israel also delivered their territory from the control of the Philistines. There was also peace between Israel and the Amorites.

CSB 1 Samuel 7:14 The cities from Ekron to Gath, which they had taken from Israel, were restored; Israel even rescued their surrounding territories from Philistine control. There was also peace between Israel and the Amorites.

ESV 1 Samuel 7:14 The cities that the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath, and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites.

NIV 1 Samuel 7:14 The towns from Ekron to Gath that the Philistines had captured from Israel were restored to her, and Israel delivered the neighboring territory from the power of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

NLT 1 Samuel 7:14 The Israelite villages near Ekron and Gath that the Philistines had captured were restored to Israel, along with the rest of the territory that the Philistines had taken. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites in those days.

NRS 1 Samuel 7:14 The towns that the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath; and Israel recovered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites.

RSV 1 Samuel 7:14 The cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath; and Israel rescued their territory from the hand of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites.

YLT 1 Samuel 7:14 And the cities which the Philistines have taken from Israel are restored to Israel -- from Ekron even unto Gath -- and their border hath Israel delivered out of the hand of the Philistines; and there is peace between Israel and the Amorite.

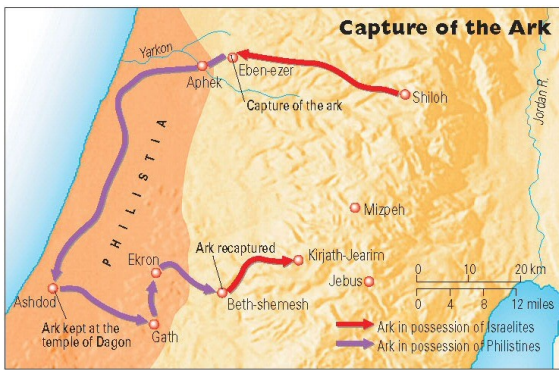
NJB 1 Samuel 7:14 The towns which the Philistines had taken from Israel were given back to Israel, from Ekron all the way to Gath, and Israel freed their territory from the power of the Philistines. There was peace, too, between Israel and the Amorites.

NAB 1 Samuel 7:14 The cities from Ekron to Gath which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to them. Israel also freed the territory of these cities from the dominion of the Philistines. Moreover there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

LXE 1 Samuel 7:14 And the cities which the Philistines took from the children of Israel were restored; and they restored them to Israel from Ascalon to Azob: and they took the coast of Israel out of the hand of the Philistines; and there was peace between Israel and the Amorite.

ASV 1 Samuel 7:14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the border thereof did Israel deliver out of the hand of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

- **peace:** De 7:2,16 Jdg 4:17 Ps 106:34
- 1 Samuel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



See Ekron and Gath for new borders

## YAHWEH RESTORES LAND AND PEACE

The cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored ([shub/sub](#); Lxx = [apodidomi](#)) to Israel, from [Ekron](#) even to [Gath](#); and Israel delivered ([natsal](#); Lxx = [apodidomi](#)) their territory from the hand ([yad](#) - hand is keyword in 1Sa 4-7 = 13x/13v) of the Philistines - Ekron and Gath were major cities of Philistia and now were Israel's western border (See map above). In the previous passage we see **the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines** which explains why **Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines**. Israel took the land back, but they were enabled to do by the hand of God (Man's responsibility, God's provision).

So (term of conclusion) **there was peace** ([shalom](#); Lxx = [eirene](#) from eiro = join together what has been separated) **between Israel and the Amorites** - The Amorites were the Canaanites who Israel had failed to eradicate and occupied the hills west of Israel between the Jordan Valley and the coastal plain. The point is that the fruit of confession and repentance included victory, deliverance, restoration of land and **peace** with their former adversaries. Israel had not experienced this shalom for a very long time!

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, we need to ponder the beautiful fruit from Israel's confession and repentance and apply it to our Christian lives. Indeed, as Paul says these OT stories happened as examples (1Co 10:6, 11+) and also that we might have hope (Ro 15:4+). So perhaps as you read this section, you are experiencing the heavy (Fatherly disciplining) hand of the Lord (Hebrews 12:5-10+). What happened to Israel after her confession and repentance is what can occur in your life, which should give you hope (Ro 15:4+) that you will experience the peaceful fruit of righteousness in your life (Heb 12:11+), not to mention the fact that Yahweh might restore the years that the locusts have eaten, depending on your individual circumstances. These truths should encourage you to rejoice in the discipline (cf (Heb 12:11a+), Jas 1:2-5+), knowing that the Lord desires bring forth good fruit in your life.

**Woodhouse on restored and peace** - This is what God did for Israel. They could hold their heads high again—not because of their virtue or strength (don't forget the last twenty years)—but because of what the Lord their God had done for them. ([Preaching the Word: 1 Samuel—Looking for a Leader](#))

**Restored** (returned, brought back, restore) ([07725](#) [shub/sub](#) is a common verb (over 1000x) meaning to turn, to return, to go back, to do again, to change, to withdraw, to bring back, to reestablish, to be returned, to bring back, to take, to restore, to recompense, to answer, to hinder.

**Delivered** ([05337](#) [natsal](#) means primarily to deliver, often by the power of one entity overcoming another. Deliverance from the hand or power (Ge 32:11, Hos 2:10). Idols and human might cannot deliver (1 Sa 12:21, Ps 33:16). **In the Psalms natsal is often a cry for deliverance** (in form of a command). It is sometimes deliverance from enemies (wicked, persecutors, aliens), but also from fears (Ps 34:4), troubles (Ps 34:17, 54:7), afflictions (Ps 34:17), transgressions (Ps 39:8), blood-guiltiness (Ps 51:14), from death (Ps 56:13), from the mire (Ps 69:14), deliver the needy (Ps 72:12), sins (79:9), from the snare (Ps 91:3), out of distresses (Ps 107:6), deliver my soul (Ps 120:2), out of great waters (Ps 144:7). In the Septuagint, in the Psalms natsal is translated most often with [rhuomai](#) (snatch from danger), but also with [sozo](#) (to save, deliver) and [exaireo](#) (to take up, deliver).

**Peace** ([07965](#) [shalom](#) from [salam/salem/shalam](#) = to be safe, sound, healthy, perfect, complete ([1Ki 7:51](#), [Neh 6:18](#))) signifies a sense of well-being and harmony both within and without - Completeness, wholeness, peace, health, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquility, prosperity, fullness, rest, harmony; the absence of agitation or discord, a state of calm without anxiety or stress.

The root meaning of **shalom** is to be whole or sound and this leads to translations that speak of completeness, wholeness, well-being, welfare and peace. **Shalom** also includes the idea of vigour and vitality in all dimensions of life. In short, **shalom** speaks of holistic ("holy") health for our souls and spirits.

**Boice** - Shalom is a large, embracing word for the good that comes to the one God favors.

**Guzik** - The Hebrew word is **shalom**, which is more than the cessation of hostility - it is God's word for wholeness and goodness and **total satisfaction in life. This is the abundant life Jesus promised!** (John 10:10)... shalom... is the gift of precious well-being... it is the establishment of a lasting, righteous, good. (Commentary on Nu 6:24-26) ([Commentary](#))

**Kenneth Hemphill** notes that **shalom** "means much more than the cessation of violence and hostility. There is a considerable difference between peace and a truce. It is glorious good news that Jehovah is peace... The idea behind the word shalom is wholeness and harmony in relationship with God. Peace is the deepest desire and need of the human heart. When you find yourself wondering where is the blessing of God's presence in your life, you need to remember that He is Jehovah Shalom. He desires to bring peace if you will simply return to Him. (Borrow this excellent little book and read it devotionally and it will rock your world beloved - [The Names of God- Ken Hemphill](#) - highly recommended)

**Shalom in 1 Samuel - 2 Chronicles** - 1 Sam. 1:17; 1 Sam. 7:14; 1 Sam. 10:4; 1 Sam. 16:4; 1 Sam. 16:5; 1 Sam. 17:18; 1 Sam. 17:22; 1 Sam. 20:7; 1 Sam. 20:13; 1 Sam. 20:21; 1 Sam. 20:42; 1 Sam. 25:5; 1 Sam. 25:6; 1 Sam. 25:35; 1 Sam. 29:7; 1 Sam. 30:21; 2 Sam. 3:21; 2 Sam. 3:22; 2 Sam. 3:23; 2 Sam. 8:10; 2 Sam. 11:7; 2 Sam. 15:9; 2 Sam. 15:27; 2 Sam. 17:3; 2 Sam. 18:28; 2 Sam. 18:29; 2 Sam. 18:32; 2 Sam. 19:24; 2 Sam. 19:30; 2 Sam. 20:9; 1 Ki. 2:5; 1 Ki. 2:6; 1 Ki. 2:13; 1 Ki. 2:33; 1 Ki. 4:24; 1 Ki. 5:12; 1 Ki. 20:18; 1 Ki. 22:17; 1 Ki. 22:27; 1 Ki. 22:28; 2 Ki. 4:23; 2 Ki. 4:26; 2 Ki. 5:19; 2 Ki. 5:21; 2 Ki. 5:22; 2 Ki. 9:11; 2 Ki. 9:17; 2 Ki. 9:18; 2 Ki. 9:19; 2 Ki. 9:22; 2 Ki. 9:31; 2 Ki. 10:13; 2 Ki. 20:19; 2 Ki. 22:20; 1 Chr. 12:17; 1 Chr. 12:18; 1 Chr. 18:10; 1 Chr. 22:9; 2 Chr. 15:5; 2 Chr. 18:16; 2 Chr. 18:26; 2 Chr. 18:27; 2 Chr. 19:1; 2 Chr. 34:28;

#### 1 Samuel 7:15 Now Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

- **judged:** 1Sa 7:6 12:1 25:1 Jdg 2:16 3:10,11 Ac 13:20,21
- 1 Samuel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### SAMUEL THE PROPHET AND ALSO THE JUDGE

**Now Samuel judged ([shaphat](#)) Israel all the days of his life.** His function was twofold—civil and military. As civil judge, he did what Moses did—judged “between one and another,” and made them “know the statutes of God, and his laws” (Ex 18:16). As military judge, he did what Othniel, Ehud, Barak, and Gideon had done before him—organized and marshaled the people for effective resistance to their oppressors and led them to victory.

Samuel had a ministry as prophet and judge, traveling from city to city to minister to the people and settle their disputes. He was the last of the judges and the first of the national prophets. (Moses’ prophetic office was of a different nature.) It is sad to see that Samuel’s sons did not follow in their father’s godly walk (8:5). Perhaps he was too busy with the affairs of the nation to train them. Eli had made a similar mistake.

**THOUGHT** - These events show us the importance of a godly home. The nation fell into sin and defeat because Eli had neglected his home; but God saved the nation because of the prayers of a godly mother (Hannah) and her God-given son. As go the homes, so goes the nation. But unfortunately a godly home is not a guarantee that the children will make godly choices (cp godly Manoah & his wife & incorrigible Samson Jdg 13-16).

**John Woodhouse** adds that "Samuel's “judging” was presumably like the judging we have seen in this chapter: calling Israel to wholehearted devotion to the Lord alone and to put away pagan ways, interceding for them, offering sacrifices for their sins, as well as a more general administration of justice. In other words, with the enemy defeated, Samuel's job was to lead Israel in righteousness....**First Samuel 7 has brought us to a climactic moment in the story that this book has to tell. It is a high point in the history of Israel, when Israel became again what Israel was meant to be....**Israel's great need was a leader who would bring them back to God. They needed a leader who would lead them in righteousness. They needed a Samuel. And God gave them Samuel! ([Preaching the Word: 1 Samuel—Looking for a Leader](#))



1 Samuel 7:16 He used to go annually on circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpah, and he judged Israel in all these places.

- **On circuit:** Heb. and he circuited, Jdg 5:10 10:4 12:14 Ps 75:2 82:3,4
- 1 Samuel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Bethel

Gilgal

## SAMUEL'S ANNUAL CIRCUIT JUDGING ISRAEL

He used to go annually on circuit to [Bethel](#) and [Gilgal](#) and [Mizpah](#), and he judged ([shaphat](#)) Israel in all these places - See map of Samuel's circuit. [Bethel](#), the "House of God," was where Jacob had his famous dream (Ge 28:10-22). [Gilgal](#) was where the Israelites had first camped after crossing the Jordan River to conquer Canaan (Jos 4:19, 20) and was about one mile from Jericho. When he was at [Bethel](#), the tribe of Ephraim ([See this map for boundary of Ephraim](#)) and all the northern parts of the country could attend him; when at [Gilgal](#), the tribe of Benjamin and those beyond Jordan could have easy access to him; and when at [Mizpah](#) (see [Mizpah map above - toward the south](#)), he was within the reach of Judah, Simeon, and Gad.

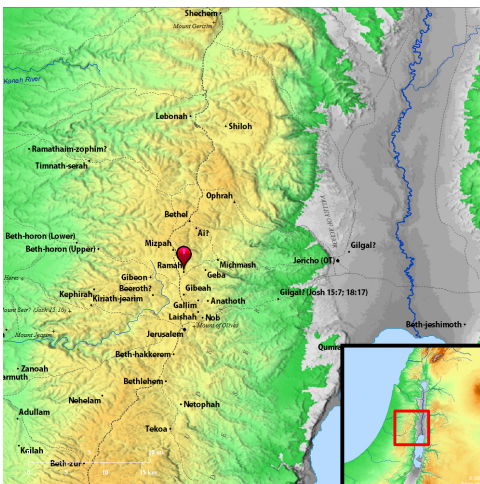
[Norman Geisler](#) - 1 SAMUEL 7:15—Did Samuel judge Israel all his days, or only until Saul was anointed king?

**PROBLEM:** In this verse, we are informed that "Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life." However, Samuel lived after Saul was anointed king (1 Sam. 8:5; 12:1; 25:1).

**SOLUTION:** Samuel only gave up his civil authority to Saul, not his spiritual authority. Under Israel's monarch there was a separation of power. Kings were forbidden to perform spiritual functions (cf. 2 Chron. 26:16–23), and the prophets no longer had political authority. Even so, the prophets, with their direct revelations from God, were a continual moral check on those in political power.

1 Samuel 7:17 Then his return was to Ramah, for his house was there, and there he judged Israel; and he built there an altar to the LORD.

- **his return:** 1Sa 1:1,19 8:4 19:18-23
- **he built:** 1Sa 11:15 Ge 12:7,8 33:20 35:7 Jdg 21:5 1Ki 18:30-36
- 1 Samuel 7 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Location of Ramah

## SAMUEL RETURNS TO RESIDE AT RAMAH AS JUDGE

**John MacArthur** points out that "The first major division of the book (1Sa 1:1-7:17) ends with Samuel returning to Ramah to judge the people. Ramah was about five miles north of Jerusalem." (BORROW [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))



Then his return was to [Ramah](#), for his house was there, and there he judged ([shaphat](#)) Israel; and he built there an altar ([mizbeah](#)) to the LORD - Why would he build an altar? The most obvious reason is for worship, a place to offer sacrifices. Another reason is that there was now no altar at Shiloh which had apparently been destroyed..

**Woodhouse** - First Samuel 7 has brought us to a climactic moment in the story that this book has to tell. **It is a high point in the history of Israel, when Israel became again what Israel was meant to be.** The chapter has displayed the kind of leader that Israel actually needed. Their need was not for a great military hero or genius. God had demonstrated unambiguously that he could deal with their enemies without such a champion. Their need was not for a brilliant political giant who could organize the nation efficiently. Israel's need could not be met by management abilities. Israel's great need was a leader who would bring them back to God. They needed a leader who would lead them in righteousness. They needed a Samuel. And God gave them Samuel! As we read on into chapter 8 we will see that the lessons of this moment were not remembered well in Israel. But we should pause and see that we learn them. If we have learned well from Israel's experience, I hope that we can see how these chapters point us clearly to the leader we need. He is the one sent by God to bring us back to God, to intercede for us, to lead us in righteousness. The Lord Jesus Christ is the leader of whom Samuel was a faint shadow. What a great day it was for Israel when God gave them Samuel! What a brilliant day it is for those of us who have Jesus as our Lord! ([Preaching the Word: 1 Samuel—Looking for a Leader](#))

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**Altar** (04196) [mizbeah](#) from **zabach** = to slaughter for sacrifice or for food) is a masculine noun that is frequent in the OT (338x) and describes the place of sacrifice where offerings were made to a deity. The first use in Ge 8:20 describes the altar built by Noah as his first act after he survived the flood. Abraham is associated with an altar in Ge 12:7,8; 13:4, 18; Ge 22:9. Not surprisingly the majority of OT occurrences are in Leviticus (88x in 72v and Exodus is not far behind - 61x in 53v). The first offering by Cain and Abel does not mention a specific altar (Ge 4:3).

OT altars had several meanings beyond their most common association with blood sacrifice, including as a monument set up in the presence of God (cp Ge 12:8, 26:25), as a place of refuge (Ex 21:14), and as a table for a deity (Ezek 41:22, Mal 1:7). Pagan altars were to be destroyed (Ex 34:13).

Some altars were named - JACOB'S altar at Shechem = EL THE GOD OF ISRAEL (Ge 33:20), MOSES' at Rephidim = THE LORD IS MY BANNER (Ex 17:15) Gideon's in Ophrah = THE LORD IS PEACE (Judges 6:24). Some OT altars are illegitimate - sacred pillars (Ex 34:12, etc), high places (2Ki 23:15).

**ALTARS** - Built by Noah, Gen. 8:20; Abraham, Gen. 12:7, 8; 13:18; 22:9; Isaac, Gen. 26:25; Jacob, Gen. 33:20; 35:1-7; Moses, Ex. 17:15; 24:4; Balaam, Num. 23:1, 14, 29; Joshua, Deut. 27:4-7; Josh. 8:30-32; Reubenites and Gadites, Josh. 22:10, 34; Gideon, Jdg. 6:26, 27; Samuel, 1 Sam. 7:17; Saul, 1 Sam. 14:35; David, 2 Sam. 24:18, 19; Elijah, 1 Kin. 18:31, 32.

## Samuel the Prophet

### F B Meyer

#### VI The Work of Reconstruction (1 SAMUEL 7:2)

Be still and strong,  
O Man, my Brother! hold thy sobbing breath,  
And keep thy soul's large window pure from wrong!  
That so, as life's appointment issueth,  
Thy vision may be clear to watch along  
The sunset consummation—lights of death!  
—E. B. BROWNING.

WHILST the events described in the last chapter were in progress, Samuel was giving himself to the great and noble work of reconstruction. As soon as our flesh is lacerated, or our bones broken, Nature begins to pour out her reparative forces to renew the broken tissues, and so rebuild the ruined temple. As it is in physical life, so in spiritual there are always holy and gentle natures that are charged with the Divine work of bridging over the roaring torrent of revolution, and of rearing new continents of order from the weltering ocean waste by which the previous land had been engulfed. Blessed work, indeed, is this, like the work of the Almighty, who, when the earth was without form and void, began to build in the midst of her the habitable places for man's existence.

To this Samuel devoted the twenty years that followed directly on the fatal field of Aphek. The Philistine invasion seems to have

somewhat subsided from its first triumphant outburst, and to have retired from the occupancy of the interior portions of Israel. He was thus able to pursue his quiet and unobtrusive toils for his fatherland, free from the zealous supervision and opposition to which, otherwise, he must have been subjected.

He seems to have taken up his abode in Ramah, so intimately associated with his earliest days. Here were his headquarters, where young men gathered to him, and were formed into the earliest of the schools of the prophets, and where also he married, and became the father of two sons. Their names are suggestive of their father's piety and walk with God, the name of the one being Joel—"Jehovah is God," and of the other Abiah—"Jehovah is my Father." Amid the general disturbance of the religious life in which he had been nurtured, with the Ark in one place and the remnants of the Tabernacle in another, with the discontinuance of the sacred rites and feasts, which had been so great an assistance to piety in former years, Samuel nevertheless was able to walk with God, and to preserve a devout religious life. Probably this is why God permits from time to time so great a shaking of the things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken, the unseen and eternal, may be more clearly defined and more eagerly sought unto. In this present age, we have heard Him saying, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn"; we have seen theories of inspiration rudely assailed, churches menaced with destruction, ancient creeds ruthlessly questioned; but out of it all true religion is destined to emerge in undiminished lustre, as gold from the purifying furnace. In the meanwhile let us say with Samuel, Jehovah is God and Jehovah is my Father. Let us hold fast, above all, to the unchanging love of our Father, who loves us with a love with which there is nothing to compare in heaven or earth.

Samuel knew that there were two objects which must be realised before Israel's sad condition could be remedied or the Divine ideal realised. First: The national unity must be recovered from the anarchy in which it had been overwhelmed. It was useless to think of holding the land against the inroads of the neighbouring people so long as each tribe was content with an isolated existence, repelling its own enemies for a time, but indifferent to the condition of its neighbours and of the country at large. Israel must be one, animated by a common enthusiasm for its future independence and integrity. Let each tribe be proud of its idiosyncrasy, and fulfil its own distinctive mission; but let all be one in asserting the independence and glory of the chosen people.

This is no less desirable in our own age. The divisions of the Church are her bane, and render her impotent before her foes. Ephraim envies Judah, and Judah vexes Ephraim; and their common enemies make profit out of their mutual recriminations and rivalries. It is a sad spectacle to witness the divisions between Christians in the face of a mocking world, and we shall never be able to make men believe, till we have learned to magnify the points of agreement, and to bear with all those who love the Lord Jesus, and are united with Him as their living Head, though their method of stating the truth may differ widely from our own.

Secondly: The evils that had eaten into the nation's heart must be put away. The people had forsaken the God of their fathers for the Phœnician and Philistine deities, whose images were worshipped in his stead. Shrines to Baal and Ashtaroth covered the land. Foul orgies of shameless impurity were everywhere rife. And it was evident that only a widespread revival of religion could save the people from rotting away before the very evils for which the ancient Canaanites had been destroyed.

Samuel was pre-eminently a man of prayer. He is known on the subsequent page of Scripture as he that called on the Divine Name (1 Sam. 9:6, 7, 8, 9; Psa. 99:6; Jer. 15:1). In addition, he was a man of blameless reputation and life—in themselves eminent qualifications. It has been truly said that the special work of guiding, moderating, and softening the jarring counsels of men is the particular privilege of those who have grown up into natural strength from the early beginnings of purity and goodness; of those who can humbly and thankfully look back through middle age, and youth, and childhood, with no sudden rent or breach to their pure and peaceful recollections—and such was certainly Samuel's happy lot. He was also a man of practical sagacity, and by his appeals wrought upon the national conscience; so that, as the result of his efforts, "it came to pass, while the Ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented before the Lord."

Notice those two phrases; all the house of Israel—there is the restoration of the lost unity; lamented before the Lord—there is the national repentance, which was followed by a widespread reformation: "Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only." Would that there might be a similar turning unto God in our own time and land! "Revive, O Lord, thy work in the midst of the years. In the midst of the years make known."

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### The Victory of Faith (1 SAMUEL 7:1–14)

Oh bring us back once more  
The vanished days of yore,  
When the world with faith was filled!  
Bring back the fervid zeal,  
The hearts of fire and steel,  
The hands that believe and build.

AFTER twenty years of quiet and unobtrusive toil, Samuel had led his people to desire both to feel and manifest the old unity, which had made them one before their enemies, and there was a distinct yearning after Jehovah. The sacred writer tells us that all the house of Israel “was drawn together” after Jehovah (ver. 2, R. V. margin). In being drawn to God they were drawn towards each other, as the spokes of a wheel centre in the hub. If the Lord Jesus is the centre of our heart-life, we must inevitably be drawn into fellowship with all those to whom He is also first and best.

In verses 3 and 4 we probably have the substance of innumerable exhortations which Samuel delivered to all the house of Israel. From end to end he traversed the country, urging the people to return to Jehovah; to put away the false gods and Ashtaroah, and to direct their hearts to the God of their fathers and serve Him only. Wherever he could find a group of willing listeners, he poured forth his prayers and tears, his rugged denunciations of sin, and his fervent exhortations to a true repentance. Now he would stand upon the historic site of Jericho; then he might be found on the ancient heights of Carmel, Shiloh, Nob, or Hebron, witnessing to vast gatherings of deeply moved and repentant people; and finally, as the result of all that he had said, there was a great turning to God. On every hand idols were cast from their pedestals, and the vicious orgies were brought to an end in the groves and valleys. It was as though the spirit of spring were breathing over some wintry waste, and through the thawing snow the grass and flowers began to appear. Oh, that Samuels by the score might be raised up to induce the Church of God to put away what grieves Him, with the assurance that when she has arrayed herself in the beautiful garments of humility and purity, God will deliver her out of the hands of the Philistines.

I. THE CONVOCATION AT MIZPEH.—The movement to which we have referred at last demanded a public demonstration, and Samuel summoned all Israel to Mizpeh—which means watchtower, and is evidently a commanding summit that can still be identified in Central Palestine, rising some five hundred feet above the surrounding country, and nearly three thousand above the sea level. It is remarkable that on the summit of this hill, as at Shiloh and Kirjath-jearim, there is a level platform some five or six feet high, cut out of the rock, where doubtless some kind of building was erected to receive the sacred tent.

The day was devoted to fasting, as the law enjoined on the great Day of Atonement. The people confessed their sins, afflicted their souls, and humbled themselves before Jehovah. In addition, a somewhat novel rite was introduced. Water was brought from a neighbouring well, and solemnly poured out before the Lord, as afterwards at the Feast of Tabernacles. Whenever that great festival had nearly run its course, as it was being celebrated in the Temple, it was the custom for the priests to go forth to the Spring of Siloam, accompanied by the Levite choir, and bring thence water in a golden vessel; this was poured out at the foot of the altar at the hour of the morning sacrifice, while all around the white-vestured choir chanted Isaiah’s words, “With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” Whether this scene in the life of Samuel was the origin of that solemn procession, it is impossible to say. Such may have been the case, though it is generally assumed that, as used in the Temple service, the pouring out of water was a memorial of the flowing of water from the smitten rock in the wilderness, and the type of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit (John 7:37–39).

The pouring forth of water may have implied that they poured forth from their full hearts floods of penitence and tears; that they desired by the heaviness of their grief to wash their land free from the accumulated evil of the past years; or that the people realised their utter helplessness, so that they were as water spilt on the ground, which could not be gathered up. But whatever it may have signified, it must have been a very striking spectacle, when Samuel, as the representative of his countrymen, brought the whole nation back to true loyal allegiance to the God of their fathers. It was a worthy act for his manhood’s prime, and we are not surprised to learn that, as by a sudden outburst of acclamation, he was appointed judge (ver. 6).

Oh, who shall induce the professing Church of God to put away the evil things by which her testimony is now impaired! Sometimes in buildings connected with the Church we hear of fancy-fairs, raffles, full-dress soirées, dances, theatricals, comic concerts, and many other such like things, which indicate the corruption of the spiritual life as certainly as an army of fungi indicate the damp and unwholesome atmosphere in which they thrive. What would not be the blessed result if the children of God would come to another Mizpeh and confess, as Israel did, “We have sinned against the Lord!”

II. THE VICTORY OF FAITH.—The tidings of this great convocation reached the Philistines, who looked upon it as an unmistakable sign of the returning spirit of national life, and “the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel” (ver. 7). From every part the contingents of a great army were assembled, and there was every reason to fear that the terrible experiences of Aphek would be renewed. A panic of fear spread through the multitudes of Israel. There appeared but one hope: God must arise to his people’s help, or they would be trampled as the leaves of autumn beneath the heel of the conqueror. What could timid sheep do against wolves? What could unarmed peasants do against such soldiers? How could the national life, which was just reviving, after the discouragement and anarchy of years, withstand the onset of these bitter foes? “Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us,” the people said to Samuel, “that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.”

Ah, soul! this is the only hope for thee. Thou hast been ground down beneath tyrant sins, which have held thee in subjection as the

Philistines did Israel; thou hast groaned in the prison-house like another Samson shorn of his locks. There seems no help or hope of deliverance, because thy moral life is impaired by the commission of evils analogous to those which infected the Hebrew nation in the days of the Judges. Only put these away, and stand clear of them; in the name of God pour out all your self-confidence before the Cross where Jesus died, receive the forgiveness which is never withheld from the penitent and believing soul; and then, however many be the obstacles, temptations, and sins that beset thee, know that the Lord will save thee out of the hand of thine enemies.

If only the tempted and overwhelmed would bathe their souls in the purifying waters of the Word of God, and cultivate the spirit of unwavering prayer and faith, the Lord would fight for them, and they might hold their peace.

When so far as we know them we have put away our sins, or at least are steadfastly resolved to be rid of them, we may count on an ungrieved Holy Spirit; and this always means the consciousness of our Saviour's presence, as our Deliverer from the power of the enemy.

The power of Samuel's prayers was already known throughout the land, like those of John Knox in the days of Queen Mary. The people had come to believe in them; they felt them to be the palladium of their liberties. If only Samuel would pray, they might count on deliverance. They knew that he had prayed; they now entreated that he would not cease.

But Samuel did more than pray. He took a sucking lamb and offered it as a whole burnt-offering to the Lord, symbolising thus the desire of Israel to be wholly yielded to the Divine will. There must be consecration before there can be faith and deliverance. It is not enough simply to put away sin; we must also give ourselves absolutely and entirely to God. There must be a wholeness in the offering, the yielding ourselves—spirit, soul, and body—to be whatever God would have us be. Failure in the walk always denotes failure in the heart-life. If you are perpetually overcome by the Philistines, be sure that there is a flaw in your inner consecration.

While the smoke of this offering was rising in the calm air, and the eyes of tens of thousands were fixed upon the figure of Samuel, who, as a prophet of the Lord, was within his rights in superseding the Levitical priests in this solemn function, and while his piercing cries for Divine help were rising to heaven, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. Can you not see them creeping up the mountain slopes, and encircling the defenceless crowd which had no might nor power to resist? But suddenly the voice of God answered the voice of the Prophet. "The Lord thundered with a great thunder (Hebrew, voice) on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them." The sky was suddenly black with tempest, peal after peal rolled through the mountains, the heart of the foe was stricken with terror, and though Israel drew never a sword, the heathen turned in dismay to flee. Then at a signal from Samuel, the men of Israel flung themselves upon the flying foe. Down the steep they sped, catching up the arms which were cast away in flight, and stripping the dead of their weapons. Josephus tells of another circumstance that added to the horrors of that irresistible onslaught. "God destroyed their ranks with an earthquake; the ground trembled under their feet, so that there was no place whereon to stand in safety. They either fell helpless to the earth, or into some of the chasms that opened beneath them."

The pursuit only stayed when the Philistines came beneath the shadow of their own fortress of Bethcar, the Well of the Vineyards as it is now called.

This is the great message of the whole story for us. If only the Church of God would put away the evils that grieve his Holy Spirit, if only we would ourselves come out and be separate, not touching the unclean thing, and cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh, the Spirit would interpose for us too. The Lord would deliver us, fighting on our behalf against our foes, so that we should be more than conquerors through Him that loveth us and have to do nothing more than take the spoil.

III. THE STONE OF HELP.—"Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called it Ebenezer (the stone of help) saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." This was the same spot upon which Israel had suffered the great defeat which led to the capture of the Ark (4:1). How wonderful this was, that the story of the victory should be told upon the plain which had been the scene of defeat! Does not this carry sweet encouragement? Is it not true that when we turn to God, the disgrace of our failure is blotted out in the glory of our deliverance, so that we talk no more of our sins and their fatal consequences, but only of God and his almighty succour? Yes, child of God, be sure that the place of defeat may become that of victory, sublime and glorious so as to fill thine heart with adoring rapture, and heaven with consenting praise. Think how, in the generations that succeeded, fathers brought their children to look at that great stone, and read the inscription, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," arguing from it that what He had done He would do; that the forgiveness and grace which He had shown upon that site would be renewed and repeated in all after years.

From that moment Samuel's supremacy in the country was established. The Philistines came no more during his judgeship within the border of Israel. The hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all his days. The alienated cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath. The very Amorites, who had taken part with the Canaanites, found it to their advantage to side with Samuel, and abstain from hostilities (ver. 14). As Dean Spence, in "Ellicott's Commentary," says: "This success at Ebenezer was no mere solitary victory, but was the sign of a new spirit in Israel, which animated the nation during the lifetime of Samuel, and the reigns of David and Solomon and of the great Hebrew kings. The petty jealousies had disappeared, and had given place to a great national desire for unity. The old idol worship of Canaan, which degraded every

nationality which practised it, was in a great measure swept away from among the chosen people, while the pure religion of the Lord of Hosts was established, not only through the care and guardianship of the tribe of Levi, but by the new order of the Prophets."

What cannot prayer do? It can not only open and close heaven, but will give the soul that prays an undisputed supremacy over his times, so that men will acknowledge that the saviour of the city is not so much the politician, the man of intellect, or the man of affairs, but he who has learned how to walk with God, and by his character and intercession to be the palladium of the national liberties and existence.

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### VIII The Stone of Help (1 SAMUEL 7:12)

And in the strength of this I rode,  
Shattering all evil customs everywhere,  
And past thro' Pagan realms, and made them mine,  
And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and bore them down,  
And broke thro' all, and in the strength of this  
Came Victor.  
—TENNYSON.

THERE are many such monoliths as the "Stone of Help" to be found strewn through these northern lands, from such venerable circles as those of Stonehenge to the single ones which are pointed out to the traveller in Northern Wales—the last home of the Druids and ancient Britons.

Throughout the world man has endeavoured to associate himself, and the history of his life, with the permanent monuments of nature. In this he has approved alike his littleness and his greatness—his littleness, because every such endeavour is a confession on his part of the transience of his days, and his consciousness that he has so slight a hold on the earth, on which he is but a sojourner and a pilgrim; his greatness, because he is capable of investing with a halo of undying interest wild glens and barren rocks, darksome caves and deep, rushing rivers. It is for this reason that every spot in the older countries of the world teems with interest. It is with difficulty that the tourist can make his way through England or Scotland, Germany or Italy; whereas he will haste, without hesitation or halting, through thousands of miles of Canada or the Western States. How different, for instance, is the interest of travelling through the New England States, or through Dakota and Wisconsin. Each square mile of the one is fragrant with some interesting reminiscence of the past, whilst the other only recalls a vanished race.

At the foot of this stone let us linger for a little, to learn one or two lessons more. For stones have ears and voices. Joshua said that the stone which he reared, at the end of his life-work, had heard; and our Lord said that the stones around Him might be expected to cry out (Josh. 24:26; Luke 19:40).

I. ITS SITE.—It stood on ground which had witnessed a terrible defeat and disaster. We are told in the fourth chapter that the great battle of Aphek was fought on this spot. "Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer, and the Philistines pitched in Aphek." "Now the Philistines had taken the ark of God, and they brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod" (4:1; 5:1).

Many who gathered around Samuel when he raised and named this stone must have been present twenty years before on that fatal field, the Flodden of Israel's glory. Here the fight had been fiercest, the slain thickest; there the corpses of Hebrews and Philistines had fallen like leaves in Vallombrosa, trampled beneath the feet of the combatants; yonder the fight had raged around the Ark of God, as it was taken, and retaken, and taken again. At this point, desperate deeds of valour had been done to turn back Israel from a shameful flight, but in vain. There Hophni fell, and there Phinehas. In this place a brief stand was made, but again the ill-formed line was broken, and the children of a chosen race, whose forefathers turned not back in the day of Gideon and Jephthah, fled like sheep before the wolf.

But, notwithstanding all this, and though the spot was associated with the memories of disgrace and shame, which in turn were the result of deep transgression on the part of people and priesthood, yet there was the stone erected which spoke so eloquently of the Divine help.

What living encouragement is contained in this for us all! We, too, may be traversing at this very hour battlefields which have been sadly marked by defeat. Again and again we have met the foes of our peace in mortal conflict, only to be repulsed. Our hopes have been dashed to the ground and our banners rolled in dust and blood. We meant never to yield again, but we did yield. We meant that that solemn vow should be kept, that holy resolution carried into effect; but they were shattered in pieces. We have been overthrown by our adversary, and overpowered in spite of all our efforts by our besetting sin. Yet take heart. At the very place where you have fallen you shall stand, for "God is able to make you stand"; where you have been overthrown you shall be more than a conqueror. You shall tread these very fields with songs of joy. The rocks which saw the withered leaves of autumn swirl in eddies around you shall behold the young green of spring and the mature fulness of summer. Be of good cheer! The stone of Ebenezer

shall be raised on the very field of the fatal battle of Aphek.

II. ITS RETROSPECT.—What a story this stone had to tell, if all were unfolded, of the wonderful dealings of God with his people. It looked back on the twenty years of patient work, by which the Prophet Samuel had been leading the people homeward to the God of their fathers—quiet, unobtrusive, and unseen work, like that of the coral insects from the bottom of the mighty ocean, till presently the islet emerges, with its crown of fronded palms.

It looked back on many a scene of iconoclasm as, from Dan to Beer-sheba, there had been a general putting away of the Baalim and Ashtaroth, the cutting down of groves, and overthrow of altars. It looked back on that memorable convocation of all Israel at Mizpeh, when water was poured out before the Lord, in confession of sin and humble penitence.

It looked back, specially, to the offering of the burnt-offering, which declared Israel's resolve to be henceforth wholly devoted to God, and to Samuel's piercing cry of intercession. Above all, it looked back on that memorable moment, when, as the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel, "the Lord thundered with a great thunder upon the Philistines, and discomfited them, and they were smitten down before Israel." If that stone had engraved slabs of memory within its old heart, as well as eyes and ears, it surely never would forget the mad onslaught of the men of Israel on their fleeing and panic-stricken foes, to avenge in one brief hour the wrongs and oppressions of twenty long years.

Has anything like this taken place in your life? On your answer much will depend. If since your last failure and defeat there have been no acts of the soul, like those which took place at Mizpeh, believe me, there is no probability of there being any break in the long monotony of your reverses. As you have been defeated, so you will be defeated; as you have failed, so you will fail, unless there is the pouring out of your heart before God, the putting away of idols, and the resolve to follow Him fully.

If I may be permitted to quote my own experience, I must bear witness to the incessant failure of my life, so long as I cherished things in my heart which were alien to God's holy will. Rules for holy living, solemn and heart-stirring conventions, helpful books and addresses produced but very small result. There was temporary amendment, but little else. But when the scene at Mizpeh had been reflected in the inner mirror of the soul, then victory took place on the very spot marked by defeat. Let my reader ponder this. You cannot keep the moth out of your house, so long as one old blanket, stored in some neglected cupboard or box, is full of it. You cannot keep diphtheria from your home, so long as one crack in the drains is emitting the poison of sewer-gas. You will never raise your stone of Ebenezer until you have stood on the watchtower of Mizpeh and put away all known sin, all complicity with what is grievous in the eyes of Christ. Only so will even his keeping power avail.

You say that you cannot. The evil thing clings to you as the serpent folds around Laocoön and his sons. The deadly creeper has wound itself around the tree of your life, and threatens to crush it to death in its deadly embrace. How can you rid yourself of that which has so strong a fascination that you feel you cannot live apart from it? Ah, that is the point where the Great Physician is willing to interpose for your rescue and deliverance! What you cannot do for yourself, He will do. The only question is, Are you willing? or Are you willing to be made willing? Often enough in the history of the soul it happens that the will, like a tough piece of iron, resists and resents. Then there is one glad resource—take it to Christ, tell Him that you cannot be as you would, or that you will not be as you should, and pray Him to undertake your difficult and almost desperate case.

Do not doubt the result. He takes what we give at the moment of our giving it; and when once He has taken it, we may press to our heart the consolation which the good Naomi gave to Ruth in a memorable moment of her life: "Sit still, my daughter ... for the man will not rest until he have finished the thing this day."

III. ITS INSCRIPTION.—"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." Surely if the stone had a retrospect, as we have seen, it had also a prospect. It looked forward as well as backward. It seemed to say, As God has helped, so He will help. It would have been impossible to secure such results as those twenty years had witnessed, culminating in this glorious victory, unless He had been a very present help; and could He have done so much without being prepared to finish what He had commenced? Would He have begun to build without calculating on his ability to finish? Would He have entered on a campaign without counting the cost of carrying it to a conclusion?

As we go through life, let us be careful to erect our Ebenezer stones, so that when new responsibilities begin to crowd on us, or fresh and unforeseen difficulties threaten, we may be emboldened to sing with Newton:

"His love in time past forbids me to think  
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink,  
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review  
Confirms his good pleasure to help me quite through."

All through life, if you will only trust God, if only by faith you will derive from Him grace for grace, if only you will claim a continuance and a crowning of all that He has begun, you will have occasions to raise these stones of help and to say with the Apostle, "Having,



therefore, obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great." The last stone that we shall erect will be on the margin of the river. As we turn our back for ever on the land of our pilgrimage, and enter on the work and worship of eternity, we shall set up a great stone to the glory of our God, saying once more, with a deep sigh of perfected satisfaction, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped."