

Ebenezer

1 Samuel 7

I. Israel Was Not Ready for Reform

A. The nation began the restoration process. And the men of *Kirjathjearim* came, and **fetch**ed 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. (1 SAMUEL 7:1)

B. Israel practiced a form of reverse superstition. 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**. (1 SAMUEL 7:2)

II. Samuel Preached Repentance and Reformation

A. Samuel called for an end to compromise with idolatry. 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 Ashtaro**th 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)

B. Israel did what the prophet required. Then the children of **Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaro**th, and **served the LORD** only. (1 SAMUEL 7:4)

III. Israel Acted Publicly and Communally

A. Samuel promised to represent the nation to God. And Samuel said, **Gather all Israel** to Mizpeh, and **I will pray for you** unto the LORD. (1 SAMUEL 7:5)

B. The nation made an offering, fasted, and confessed sin. And they **gathered** together to Mizpeh, 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 Mizpeh. (1 SAMUEL 7:6)

C. Other sinners tried to prevent the reform. 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. (1 SAMUEL 7:7)

D. Though Israel feared the Philistines, the nation feared God even more. 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. (1 SAMUEL 7:8)

E. Samuel made the appropriate offering. 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**. (1 SAMUEL 7:9)

F. The results of reform became obvious to everyone immediately. 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**. And the **men of Israel** went out of Mizpeh, and **pursued the Philistines**, and smote them, until **they came** under Bethcar. (1 SAMUEL 7:10-11)

III. Israel Acknowledged God's Providence

A. Samuel summarized the situation in a word. 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**. (1 SAMUEL 7:12)

1. **EBENEZER** signifies *the stone of help*"; and is the same place which by anticipation has this name, [1 Samuel 4:1] so that in the place where the Israelites were twice beaten by the Philistines, and the ark taken, was this salvation wrought for them:

2. **HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED US** Gill notes that as this was but the beginning of deliverance from the Philistines, and which was owing to the help of the Lord; and ***as he had begun to help them, they might hope and encourage themselves*** that he would go on to help them until their deliverance was completed: however, they with Samuel thought it their duty, which was right, to acknowledge what the Lord had done for them, and perpetuate the memory of it, though they could not be sure what he would do for them hereafter; yet ***as they were sensible of, and thankful for this instance of his goodness, they hoped for more***, and had their dependence on him for future success against their enemies.

B. God restored righteous order. 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. 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.*** (1 SAMUEL 7:13-14)

C. Samuel blessed the nation by the testimony of his faith in the lives of the people. And ***he went from year to year in circuit*** to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, ***and judged Israel in all those places.*** And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there ***he built an altar unto the LORD.*** (1 SAMUEL 7:16-17)