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1 Samuel 7

Samuel Subdues the Philistines

1And 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.

Kirjathjearim according to Strong's Concordance means "**city of forests or city of towns**". It was given to Judah by Jacob and then given as a Priestly City to Benjamin.

Abinadab according to Strong's Concordance means "**my Father is noble**". His house was on a hill which seemed proper place for the God of Creation's Arc. It would remain there for 20 years.

Eleazar according to Strong's means "**God has helped**".

There is likely a lineage of Levites through Abinadab and Eleazar. Abinadab consecrated his son to guard the arc. There are several Eleazar's mentioned in the Bible, and all seem to be deeply committed men to whatever task God gives them. We are not

told much more about this Eleazar, but he was consecrated by his father to guard the arc and did so while in his custody.

2And 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.

20 years is a long time in anyone's life. So much more so for Israel that the Arc was absent from the Tabernacle. Without the Arc, the Tabernacle was without the symbol of God's presence.

God had given the Law to Moses and in that Law was the requirement for animal sacrifices. It all centered on two things, innocence and blood. While the Arc was absent from the Tabernacle no animal sacrifice could be offered for Israel at what is called Yom Kippur.

This is an interesting quote from Got Questions:

Modern Jews believe that forgiveness of sin is obtained through repentance, prayer, and good deeds. They use verses like [Hosea 6:6](#) to devalue the need for sacrifices: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings." Still, it is hard to overlook such passages as [Leviticus 17:11](#), "The life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life."

We will see Samuel draw Israel back to the Law from which they had strayed. It will be that repentance of Israel that will save them for as long as they walk with and abide in God. What we see in the quote from Got Questions is an attempt to move from the Law to Grace. Unfortunately, they have omitted the need of the Innocent Savior and His Blood but instead put in works.

Samuel heard of course the lament of the people and they knew Samuel was their Judge and Prophet from God to Israel.

3And 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. 4Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.

Samuel as he grew up in the Tabernacle under the direction of Eli, he could see even from the Priest what was happening in Israel. God in His first commandment established this.

Deuteronomy 6: 1Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: 2That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and

*thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. **3**Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.*

***4**Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: **5**And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. **6**And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: **7**And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. **8**And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. **9**And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*

Even while Israel still had the Arc in the Tabernacle from the Priest of Phineas and Hophni Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. Many had started worshiping false idols which violated God's 1st Law

*Deuteronomy 6:4 **4**Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: **5**And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*

In the 10 Commandments God began the 10 with this:'

Deuteronomy 5:7 3Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

There was no misunderstanding as to God's Law and His intent. So, when Israel followed after other gods it was a clear failure on the part of the Priests. The Prophets like Samuel repeatedly chastised Israel for leaving the God of Abraham, Issac and Jacob and worshiping other gods. God will not be mocked.

Israel due to its failure in walking with God were under constant attack and pressure from the Philistines. Samuel could see the problem and knew how to fix it. But, it would require repentance by the nation of Israel.

5And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD. 6And 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.

Samuel called Israel to a location called Mizpah. The meaning of the name according to many commentators is "Watchful or Watch Tower". The location is the anchor of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and was the location of national decision making during these days.

The idea of drawing and pouring out water was a sign of cleansing. It was a precursor to baptism. The pouring out of water was a plea for a cleansing from sin.

Lamentations 2:19 Arise, cry out in the night from the first watch of the night. Pour out your heart like water in the presence of the Lord. Lift up your hands to Him for the lives of your children who are fainting from hunger on the corner of every street.

Repentance requires a confession of sin. Samuel judged Israel that day as to her sin against God. It was a turning point for Israel to return to their God.

Through a succession battles that the Philistines had won against Israel, the people were the slaves of sorts to the Philistines. If you recall that is why the leadership wanted the Arc brought to the battlefield so Israel would have the victory and not be the slaves of the Philistines. Not only did Israel lose but they lost the Arc as well. All through the time of the judges Israel would repeatedly go after other gods and the God of Israel would punish them. In Judges 13:1 just at the time of Samson and around the time of Samuels births Israel was cast into 40 years of slavery to the Philistines.

Judges 13:1 1And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.

Samson and Samuel were contemporaries.

<https://www.biblestudy.org/maps/judges-of-ancient-israel.html>

“Samson

1085 to 1065

Due to their many sins, the southern and western sections of the land are allowed to be dominated by the Philistines for forty years. The Lord then raises up Samson, a Nazarite from birth, to deliver his people. His unique superhuman strength destroys many Philistine leaders and weakens their nation for several years.

Samuel

1085 to 1053 B.C.

Samuel, called by God at an early age, becomes a prophet and well-respected Judge. He anoints both Saul and David as kings over Israel (1Samuel, 2 Samuel).”

7And 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.

Video of the location of Mizpah.

<https://www.holylandsite.com/mizpah>

It is unknown how the Philistines heard about the meeting but likely they had their own people inside Israel so when the word went out the Philistines were promptly told. The meeting of a slave nation spelled only one thing to the ruling Philistines: uprising. The Philistine army was on the coastal plains, so they marched uphill into Israel and against Mizpah.

8And 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.

Israel was in sore need of a leader and Samuel was both a Priest, Prophet and Judge, the last Judge of Israel. When no real government existed for Israel, they turned to their leader Samuel and he told them to turn to God. They agreed and begged Samuel not to cease crying out to God on their behalf. They were convinced that it was their only hope.

9And 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.

Leviticus 22:7 When a bullock, or a sheep, or a goat, is brought forth, then it shall be seven days under the dam; and from the eighth day and thenceforth it shall be accepted for an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

God laid out the Law. When Israel through its Priests followed precisely the order of things as in sacrifices, God responded. Due to Samuel's honoring God, God heard his cry.

10And 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.

Samuel is evidently still kneeling before the alter with the sacrificial lamb still over the flame of the alter when the Philistines drew near to a plateau just below the brow of Mizpah. With Samuel crying out to the Lord to save His people God responds with thunder right over the heads of the Philistines.

We have all experienced that instant when out of no where comes this dynamic loud burst of thunder. It tells us that lightening has just coursed through the sky separating air and molecules for an instant before they come crashing back together emitting this amazing sound of thunder. So, how does thunder happen?

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA):

Thunder is the acoustic shock wave resulting from the extreme heat generated by a lightning flash. It is produced the same way regardless of whether lightning is positive or negative.

Lightning can be as hot as 54,000°F (30,000°C), a temperature that is five times hotter than the surface of the Sun! When lightning occurs, it heats the air surrounding its channel to that same incredible temperature in a fraction of a second.

Like all gases, air expands when heated. The faster it is heated, the faster the rate of expansion. When air is heated to 54,000°F (30,000°C) in a fraction of a second, a phenomenon known as "explosive expansion" occurs – air expands so rapidly that it compresses the air in front of it, forming a shock wave similar to a sonic boom. Exploding fireworks produce a similar result.

It is doubtful that any on the battlefield understood the scientific process that brings about lightening as it was believed at that time that when you heard thunder it was from the gods. The Philistines rightfully associated this thunder with the One and Only God the God of Israel. That sound and belief set them on a run downhill to where a they were pursued by Israel, filled with courage that the Lord God had spoken on their behalf.

11And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until *they came* under Bethcar.

Not much is known about Bethcar, but is believed to have been a stronghold of the Philistines that they took shelter in from the pursuing Israeli's. The name Bethcar has two possible meanings; "house of the lamb" or "house of the field".

12Then 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.

Numerous times in Israel's victories and defeats a monument was set up, usually a stone or group of stones to mark a place in their history. We do not know where Shen is. Shen in Hebrew means "tooth" so likely it was a sharp outcropping that Samuel chose for this monument to the victory of God over the Philistines. The term "ebenezer as God states means; "the Lord help us".

13So 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.

There is usually a point in every Believer's life that they finally surrender all of themselves to God. At that point God will respond and His Hand will be on that person for the rest of their lives as it was with Israel when they finally repented. But as with life sometimes people as did Israel will fall back into the world and suffer the consequences. The sooner we reach the point of no return to the world the better it will be for us.

So, in a spiritual sense the Philistines would be like the world to a Believer. Once the Believer has set his/her desires to serve only God the will the know Peace and no more will the world Satan entice them.

14And 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.

The identifying of two Philistine cities Ekron and Gath means that they became the border for Israel. The Philistines still had the cities of Gath and Ekron, but no more would they pursue east into

Israel from those cities and all the cities east of that border that had been taken from Israel were now back in Israel's possession.

The mention of the Amorites is related to them also being attacked by the Philistines. And now that Israel had shown its strength through God the Amorites who were of the Canaanite heritage had a mutually beneficial peace treaty with Israel against the Philistines.

Samuel Judges Israel

15And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

Samuel and Sampson were contemporaries, but Samuel was the last Judge of Israel. Samuel would lead Israel under God's direction even to the creation of the King's of Israel.

16And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.

Bethel according to Strong's Concordance means "the Lord is with you." Gilgal additionally means "Circle of Stones" or "Rolling off". Mizpeh means "watch tower" or "lookout". All are significant locations for historical events of nation of Israel.

Gilgal is identified in 3 different places but the most likely in this context is just across the Jordan in Israel where Israel crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land. Joshua laid 12 stones in a circle

as a monument to Israel and to God. It is also where Saul was anointed by Samuel, Saul then went to Mizpah to be crowned by Israel as their king. Gilgal is also where King Saul was dethroned by Samuel all at God's direction. Gilgal is the location of many more important historical events in the Nation of Israel's history.

As Samuel made a circuit of these three locations to judge Israel it is believed that they all lay within Judah and Benjamin. So, Samuel never went into the northern tribes to judge. The people may have come down to Samuel, but we don't know for certain.

As we all know that through the succession of Kings, Saul, David and Solomon, that when Solomon died, and his son Absalom took over the northern tribes separated from the two southern tribes. They fell into idolatry, and were defeated by the Assyrians and scattered around the known world as punishment by God

17And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

According to Strong's Concordance Ramah means "height". It is referenced in a number of different locations but in each instance it is high above other areas for strategic reasons.

Strong's Concordance says this about Ramah.

Ramah in the Ministry of Samuel

Elkanah and Hannah lived at Ramah ([1 Samuel 2:11](#)). (these were Samuel's mother and father)

Samuel built an altar there and made it the base for his national circuit (7:17). Israel's elders came to Ramah to demand a king (8:4); David fled there for prophetic shelter (19:18-23). The Spirit's overpowering of Saul at Naioth in Ramah underscores God's sovereignty over political power.

There are many more important facts about Ramah you can find if you search out this verse in Biblehub.com

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