

Expositional Preaching from the Authorized Version of the Holy Bible

Scriptures for Today: 1 Samuel 7:1-17 – God calls His people to repentance and restoration

Today's Message:

"Return unto the Lord"



INTRODUCTION

Last week, we saw the consequences of God's ark being taken by the Philistines. God does not share His glory, He will not be manipulated, and He alone is holy. Today, we will see the return of Samuel and the word of God. After much pain and death, God had returned the ark to His people by two milk cows. Yet even after the ark came home, Israel was not right with God. They put the ark on the hill and continued in sin. It was time for God's people to return to God. This is God's message to you ...

LEARNING TOGETHER

❖ The Text 1 Samuel 7:1-17

A. Preaching and Repentance 7:1-4

1. Samuel preached the word of God; the people **RESPONDED** with godly repentance.

1Samuel 7:1 – And the men of Kirjathjearim came... **fetches the ark** of the LORD...

1Samuel 7:2 – ... time was long... **twenty years**...all... Israel lamented after the LORD.

1Samuel 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 hands of the Philistines.

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

"Twenty years... **lamented after the LORD**" – bewailed; mourned for; they wanted God!

"**Return unto the LORD with all your hearts**" – sin is a heart issue; must return to God

"Then **put away the strange gods**" – repentance requires removal of idols, forsaking sin

"**Prepare your hearts unto the LORD**" – God wanted their hearts! Not just externals...

"Baalim and Ashtaroth" – Babylonian Religion – Nimrod and Semiramus – Lucifer worship

KEY TRUTHS

- "Godly sorrow" – 2 Corinthians 7:9-11; 2 Kings 23; 2 Chronicles 34
 - ✓ **Begins with the word of God** – preaching + confrontation of sin against God.
 - ✓ **Requires a return unto the Lord** – turning away from sin and unto God.
 - ✓ **Requires a forsaking of sin** – you cannot serve God and idols (other gods).
 - ✓ **Requires preparation of the heart** – God was interested in their **hearts**.
 - ✓ **Results in exclusive service to the Lord** – and serve Him **ONLY**.

Important Note

You cannot expect God's blessing while deliberately holding unto the things God has commanded you to forsake.

Biblical Example

Josiah

2 Kings 23

He destroyed idols, removed false worship, and cleansed the house of God. **There was a visible connection between returning to the word of God and removing sin and idolatry.**

Personal Application

If you were really going to return unto the Lord, what would have to change?

1. Sin to confess? 2. Idol to put away? 3. Heart surrender? 4. Devoted service?

B. Prayer and Dependence 7:5-9

2. Israel gathered to seek the Lord; Samuel **PRAYED** for them unto the LORD.

Important Note

Shiloh was destroyed.
The ark was on a hill.
Mizpeh was chosen.

Dependence

Where do you turn
when “the Philistines”
come to your house?

Money?
People?
Experience?
Technology?
Government?
Personal strength?
Personal wisdom?
OR
Prayer to God

1Samuel 7:5 – ... Samuel said, GATHER all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you...

1Samuel 7:6 – ... they GATHERED TOGETHER ... **We have sinned against the LORD.**

1Samuel 7:7 – ... **Philistines heard** ... Israel were GATHERED TOGETHER to Mizpeh...

1Samuel 7:8 – ... children of Israel said to Samuel, **Cease not to cry unto the LORD...**
that **HE WILL SAVE US** out of the hand of the Philistines.

1Samuel 7:9 – ... **Samuel took a... lamb, and offered it... wholly unto the LORD:**
and **Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him.**

“Gather all Israel to Mizpeh... **I will pray**” – Samuel’s ministry – preaching and prayer.

“**Gathered together**... sinned against the LORD” – assembly together – honesty to God.

“When the Philistines heard” – you better believe it! Spiritual warfare, Satan’s response!

“Cease not to cry... **he will save us**” – Wow! Now we are talking! Prayers to God to save!

“Lamb... offered it... cried... **the LORD heard him**” – sacrificing to God His way.

KEY TRUTHS

- “Dependence upon God” – **Deut 4:29; Proverbs 3:5-6; John 15:5; 2 Corinth 3:5**
 - ✓ **They gathered to seek God** – the assembly; united, fasting, confessing!
 - ✓ **They confessed their sins to God** – genuine; accept personal responsibility!
 - ✓ **Samuel became their intercessor** – a picture of Jesus Christ! Amen!
 - ✓ **A lamb was sacrificed, prayer was made** – approaching His way, His terms!
 - ✓ **The enemy showed up when they got right** – obedience brings opposition!
 - ✓ **Their response was different this time** – they want God and His help **now!**
 - ✓ **God heard their prayers** – Israel prayed. Samuel prayed. God **HEARD!**

C. Victory and Remembrance 7:10-17

3. God fought for Israel / brought **VICTORY**; Samuel made a memorial / judged Israel.

1Samuel 7:10 – ... **as Samuel was offering...** the Philistines drew near to battle...

1Samuel 7:12 – ... Samuel... a stone... **Ebenezer**... Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

1Samuel 7:13 – ... **hand of the LORD**... against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

1Samuel 7:15-16 – ... Samuel judged Israel... to **Bethel**, and **Gilgal**, and **Mizpeh**...

1Samuel 7:17 – ...his return was to **Ramah**; for there was his house... **built an altar...**

“The LORD thundered... **a great thunder**” – God heard. God intervened! He is Victor!

“Samuel took a stone... **Ebenezer**” – *hitherto* – a testimony of God’s faithfulness!

“The **hand of the LORD** was against” – a dramatic reversal – they had returned to God!

KEY TRUTHS

- God was the **ANSWER!** Once they returned unto God, they depended on Him!
- The stone: a memory of God’s help – memorials can help future generations!
- Samuel’s leadership continued – *built an altar* – it was not about Samuel! Amen.

Important Note

In **Chapter 4**, Israel
had the ark but lost
the battle.

In **Chapter 7**, Israel
seeks the LORD, and
God gives the victory.

The difference was
not religion.

It was dependence
upon God.

“...the LORD heard him... the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day...”

Preaching and Repentance – God confronts His people. *What do you need to put away?*

Prayer and Dependence – God’s people cry out to Him. *Are you depending on God for help?*

Victory and Remembrance – God gives victory; His people remember. *How has God helped you?*