

SEQUOIA NOTES

Today's Sequoia Message...

Remember, to Renew & Refuel your Faith

With Ryan Dawson - Lead Pastor

January 5, 2025

Encore Sermon



1 Samuel 7:1-14 (NLT) 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. 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. ³ Then Samuel said to all the people of Israel, “If you want to return to the Lord with all your hearts, get rid of your foreign gods and your images of Ashtoreth. Turn your hearts to the Lord and obey him alone; then he will rescue you from the Philistines.” ⁴ So the Israelites got rid of their images of Baal and Ashtoreth and worshiped only the Lord. ⁵ Then Samuel told them, “Gather all of Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you.” 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.)

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. ⁸ “Don’t stop pleading with the Lord our God to save us from the Philistines!” they begged Samuel. 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. 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. ¹¹ The men of Israel chased them from Mizpah to a place below Beth-car, slaughtering them all along the way. 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!” 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. 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.

What can we take from this as we enter a new year?

- **Reflect on your relationship with God.** v. 2

“The unexamined life is not worth living” - Socrates

Exodus 34:14 (NLT) “You must worship no other gods, but only the LORD, for he is a God who is passionate about his relationship with you.”

- **Repent & renew your commitment to Jesus Christ.** v. 3-9

“In idolatry we are enjoying what we’re supposed to be using. We are treating as ultimate what is only [good]; we are heaping infinite, immortal expectations on created things that will pass away; we are settling on some aspect of the creation rather than being referred through it to its Creator...disordered love is like falling in love with the boat rather than the destination. The problem is that the boat won’t last forever and is going to start to feel claustrophobic. Your heart is built for another shore.” James K.A. Smith - On the Road with Saint Augustine.

Where do you need to realign with God’s purposes in your life?

Where do you need to turn from your own way to trusting & obeying God’s way?

1 Peter 1:18-24 (NLT) “For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the **empty life** you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. ¹⁹ **It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.** ²⁰ God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but now in these last days he has been revealed for your sake. ²¹ Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And you have placed your faith and hope in God because he raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory. ²² You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart. ²³ For you have been **born again**, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your **new life** will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God.”

- The **sacrifice** of Jesus reveals the **ultimate faithfulness** of God.

- **Remember God’s faithfulness to refuel your faith.** v. 12

Big Idea: Remember God's past faithfulness to strengthen your faith for the future.

The Translation of the Bible Scriptures used in today is the New Living Translation (NLT)



Sequoia Impact Communities are where we
live out our identity as a
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To get plugged in email:

impactcommunities@sequoiachurch.org

Remember, to Renew & Refuel your Faith
#1 of 1 - January 5, 2025

- 1) Read 1 Samuel 7:1-14. What is the **Context** for this passage? Who is the writer and the recipients? Where does this fit in the book as a whole? What are the circumstances?
- 2) **Observation:** What “jumps out” in these passages? What interesting details do you observe? What questions does it raise for you?
- 3) **Meaning:** What was the meaning for the original recipients? What meaning is inferred in this for us?
- 4) Why does God tell us to “remove idols” from our lives? What does this reveal about how God feels about us. Read Exodus 34:14.
- 5) Read the quote from James K. A. Smith on idolatry. In what ways do we see this showing up in our lives?
- 6) Why did Samuel set up an “Ebenezer” for the Israelites? How would this help them trust God in the future?
- 7) Read 1 Peter 1:18-23. How does the sacrifice of Jesus reveal God’s ultimate faithfulness to us as people? List the implications for us as believers from this text.
- 8) **Application:** How is God speaking to you through this message? What action step is God asking you to take?
- 9) What “Ebenezer’s” can you point to that reveal God’s faithfulness to you? How does this help you trust God for the future?
- 10) Take time to write down answers to the two prayer requests... “Lord Jesus, thank you for your faithfulness....” *“Lord Jesus, give me faith to trust you with....”*



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