

A CHARACTER STUDY IN

# THE LIFE OF SAMUEL

SAMUEL'S MINISTRY

I Samuel 7:1 - 17

Adult Sunday School  
Gethsemane Baptist Church  
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## SAMUEL'S MINISTRY

I Samuel 7:2-4

The man Samuel was dedicated to the Lord as a young boy. Throughout his childhood his mother taught him the truth of the scriptures and then “lent” him to the Lord as a young teenager. As he ministered to the Lord and the man of God, Eli at Shiloh, God revealed Himself to him. *“For the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.”* (I Sam. 3:31)

In chapter four of I Samuel we find the story of the attack of the Philistines. In that battle great devastation came to Israel. In that battle The Ark of God was taken from the temple at Shiloh, the army of Israel was destroyed, the two priests were killed and their father, the high priest died. In the process Shiloh was over run and destroyed. The Philistines captured the Ark and all Israel was left in disarray. Phinehas’ wife summed the situation aptly, *“The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.”* (4:21)

For the next many years the Philistines oppressed the people of God. “This long time, when the hand of Philistia pressed so heavily on Israel, was an important period of Samuel’s life. For these 20 years he must have labored incessantly to wake up the old worship of the Eternal and the Pure life loved by God among the people.” (Biblehub.com. Commentary on I Samuel 7:2) During this time Samuel *“spake unto all the house of Israel.”* (7:2b) and *“the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.”* (3:19) When the Ark was returned from the Philistines it was given a place to abide in seclusion where it was safe from the Philistines. Unfortunately, it was ignored by the people of Israel for 20 years. This is the period of time that Samuel traveled the land preaching and calling the people back to faith in God. As is true in many revivals awakening was slow in coming. During those years the people were oppressed by the Philistines. They gradually realized that God was calling them back and if they repented He would forgive their sins and give peace again to their lives. When this

realization came, *“all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.”* (7:2b) The word “lamented” here is a very interesting word. It suggests that the people felt sorrow and mourned for their sins. They felt estranged from God and longed again for his blessing. The word suggests that they “hungered after the Lord. This conviction from the Lord was a result of the preaching of the Word of God by Samuel for those 20 years. As the Philistines dominated the people Samuel, “fled the Philistines but preached and taught to stir up all Israel to a sense of the greatness of their sins, and the necessity of renewed trust in and return of old love to their God. So fresh spiritual life sprang up among the people.” (IBID.) Samuel told the people that if they truly sought to be right with the Lord they should, *“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.* (7:3) In other words they were to repent of their wrong living, confess their sins and dedicated themselves to serve only

the Lord with all their hearts. Verse four of chapter 7 tells us that they did just that.

After Samuel “Spake to the people” he prayed for them. He called them all together for repentance and worship at Mizpeh. While there the Philistines sought opportunity to attack the people. This is a typical tactic of the Devil. As soon as a person seeks to get right with God he is attacked by the Evil one. Satan is seeking to pull that one from the Lord. In this case Samuel prayed and the Lord drove the Philistines away from the people. We have a responsibility to one another to pray for God’s protection around the repentant one. As a memorial to the defeat of the Philistines, Samuel erected a stone to commemorate the return of the people to the Lord and the victory over the Philistines. He named it Eben-ezer which means, “hither to 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 ‘Hither to 1[up to this point, up to the present time]

God has helped us'." (McGee. P.47) This stone is a memorial to remind them of the activity of their God in their lives. Would it not be a profitable thing to erect monuments in our lives to remind us of the answers to prayer we have seen. It could note the special interventions of God in our lives. It need not be a stone. It might just be a note made in a journal or beside a verse in our Bible that was significant to us. It might be a special gift given to one of God's ministries.

Chapter seven ends with a summary of the ministry of Samuel. *"And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. 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."* Samuel was the first circuit riding preacher. He was used of God to bring repentance and revival to Israel. From this point he will guide the people of God as they institute a monarchy to rule the land.

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