

'The Rise of the Kings Series'

Sermons in the Book of 1 Samuel

Message 12 - 'Here I Raise My Ebenezer' 1 Samuel 7:7 - 17



We can see in these verses the raising of an Ebenezer to testify that thus far the Lord had helped the people. It is so important that whilst we are to be a people of future vision, that we are also a people who remember times of provision from the past. It is when we recall to mind those times of God's special presence with us that we are stirred to carry on, and desire again His blessing. In the verses last time, we saw that the people of Israel would raise a significant Ebenezer to mark the Lord's intervention in their circumstances. We should consider the following two things:

1. God's Mercy Experienced (v7-10) - Following the time that the people of Israel had spent together coming to the Lord in repentance, the enemy became aware of their gathering together and look to attack. The Israelites needed to see that they had their greatest weapon at hand, that being the great Jehovah God. As they placed their faith and hope in Him, expressed in prayer, they could have belief that he would fight on their behalf. 'Samuel was a man of prayer and God would hear him and answer him on that day. The Lord appeared for them in a dramatically wonderful way, he thundered to such an extent that the Philistines were disorientated and they became helpless to defend themselves against the Israelites. The victory was monumental. See the lesson? Whenever God's people rest and rely on their own resources, they will fail and miss out on the blessing that God has for them. Yet, when God's people throw themselves on Him, cast themselves on Him in prayer, trusting Him, He meets the need and works in ways that we could not have even begin to fathom or imagine. God is a great God, and He can do exceedingly abundantly and when He moves on our behalf, He receives the glory. The children of Israel experienced God's mercy as they cast themselves on Him wholly and truly. When we do the same we will find that we too will experience God's mercy through the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. God's Mercy Remembered - The memorial erected here is called Ebenezer. Ebenezer literally means 'stone of help'. The purpose of the monument was such that it would remind the Jews that God had helped them thus far, and would continue to intervene and work for them if they would trust Him and keep His covenant. Samuel makes sure that they realise who was responsible for their deliverance, and to make sure they remember the most recent aspect of God's gracious, and miraculous intervention. By remembering this instance, Samuel is also tapping in to something more significant. He means 'up to this point', 'hitherto hath the Lord helped us', and as such as they remember the most recent, it only serves to illuminate the fact that it is the latest part of a chain of God's mercy that goes back to the very origin of the nation. The gratitude for God's intervention continues to build with every Ebenezer that is laid. However, not only does it point to the past, it also points to the future, as it is thus far the Lord has helped us, and so it will be that as we walk after Him, He will continue to grant to us our Ebenezer experiences. So it is for the believer, as we gaze back through the Ebenezer's in our own lives, and state that hitherto hath the Lord helped me, we also can be sure that He will continue with us to lead us home. Standing in the present, we muse on the deliverances of the past, which grants us steadfast hope for the future. 'Here I raise my Ebenezer, Hither by Thy help I'm come', let us think on our Ebenezer's as they stand as milestones along our journey under the Lord's hand. As we walk on in the light of the past acknowledging His hand appearing for us, what steadfast hope that should grant us for the future as we face with Him.



Penzance Baptist Church

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Pastor Jonathan Stobbs