

**BOOK OF 1 SAMUEL**  
**WHEN DOES THE LORD BLESS HIS PEOPLE?**  
**I SAMUEL 7**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Philistines sent the ark of the covenant back to Israel after they had it for seven months. They felt that it had brought the curse of God upon them (and it had!) so they were more than happy to rid themselves of it!

We saw last week how the Ark of God first was taken to Bethshemesh and the men of Bethshemesh looked into the ark of the LORD and Bethshemesh paid dearly for the indiscretion of those men! (50070 died)

**Note 1 Samuel 6:20-21**

So we see in 1 Samuel 7:1 that some men of Kirjathjearim came and got the Ark of the LORD and placed it in the house of a man by the name of Abinadab where it would be for the next 20 years.

Abinadab *sanctified* Eleazer his son [whose name means “*God is helper*”, but who was NOT a Levite] “...*to keep* [to guard or protect] *the ark of the LORD.*”

Now the Ark of the LORD belonged in Shiloh where the Tabernacle was and where the sacred vessels were, not in Kirjathjearim! So why did it remain here for 20 years? It is puzzling, but we do not know!

So, the “*time was long*” as the ark was at Kirjathjearim for 20 years. Then *Verse 2 says* “...*and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD*”

It appears to have taken them 20 years before they lamented or rather cried and wailed after the LORD! The idea here is that it took them a long time to realize their problem!

They had the Ark back in their possession, but they did not have God's blessings upon them! And the Ark not being in its rightful place is rather symbolic of the LORD not being in His rightful place in the hearts of Israel!

It doesn't matter WHAT you have in your possession if you don't have God's blessing upon you! (Just ask the Philistines and the Bethshemites!)

**BOOK OF 1 SAMUEL**  
**WHEN DOES THE LORD BLESS HIS PEOPLE?**  
**I SAMUEL 7**

The same is true even today! We, as God's people, can have all the elements of Church—nice buildings, good programs, the right Bible, good singing, etc. and still not have God's blessings!

There are some that live years of their lives without realizing their predicament of not having God's blessings in their lives!

People in this position will never get any help from the LORD until they first realize what they are missing!

Upon realizing there is a problem, Israel needed to do something about it! Samuel tells the Israelites what they must do to acquire God's blessings!

**I. FIRST, “...*IF YE DO RETURN UNTO THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEARTS...*”—(vs 3)**

In Samuel's estimation these people were a big “*if*”.

Nearly everyone knows some “*if*” people. That is, they had an “*if*” that kept them from reaching their goal.

Perhaps Israel had convinced themselves they had already returned to the Lord, but Samuel was not convinced.

Many today who claim to have returned to the Lord have not returned “*with all their hearts.*” Many Churches today are filled with backslidden Christians and no doubt also with some who profess but do not possess salvation!

It is a tragic thing when Christians get so far from God that they become big “*ifs*”.

If you were being put on trial for being a Christian would there be enough evidence in your life to convict you?

Samuel said to God's people, “*You can continue to live far from God if you want to, but if you want His blessings you will have to return to Him with all your heart.*”

**BOOK OF 1 SAMUEL**  
**WHEN DOES THE LORD BLESS HIS PEOPLE?**  
**I SAMUEL 7**

**II. SECONDLY, "...THEN PUT AWAY THE STRANGE GODS AND ASHTAROTH FROM AMONG YOU..."**

Every believer should know that God does not accept our having other god's before Him.

So then why is it that so many of God's people put other things ahead of Him? *Luke 6:46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*

God constantly uses the word "*remember*" throughout His word. He knows our weakness to forget.

We need our memories jogged from time to time because we are prone to forget!

**III. THIRDLY, "...AND PREPARE YOUR HEARTS UNTO THE LORD AND SERVE HIM ONLY..."**

The LORD is to be our first love, the One we are willing to sacrifice anything and everything for.

It is not good enough to just put away the strange gods, but we must prepare our hearts unto the Lord!

**Conclusion**

The promise for doing these things was deliverance from the hand of the enemy. **Read verse 4-6.**

The children of Israel obeyed and the LORD blessed. **Read verse 7-11.**

This promise holds for us today also. The LORD will bless us when we decide to put Him first in our lives, confessing, and turning away from our sin.

Have you obeyed those things the LORD requires? **(Matthew 6:33)**  
If not, why not get things right with the LORD and watch Him deliver you!  
**Read verse 12-17.**