**Lesson 8**

**1 Sam 7:2-17**

**Chapter 7.
Samuel delivers Israel from the Philistines**

The narrative in this chap. is taken from a different source from the account which precedes.

**2. Twenty years**] The time is reckoned till Israel's repentance and not to the removal of the ark by David ([2 Sa 6:2](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Sa+6%3A2)). **3, 4.** These vv. appear to be anticipatory and in order of time to follow [vv. 5](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A5), [6](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A6). **4. Baalim and Ashtaroth**] see on [Jdg 2:11](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jdg+2%3A11), [13](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jdg+2%3A13). **5. Mizpeh**] in Benjamin.

**Pray**] Samuel was noted as a man of prayer (cp. [Ps 99:6](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ps+99%3A6)).

***1 Samuel 7:1-17 (NASB)***  *1  And the men of Kiriath-jearim came and took the ark of the LORD and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.
2  From the day that the ark remained at Kiriath-jearim, the time was long, for it was twenty years; and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.
3  Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the LORD with all your heart, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your hearts to the LORD and serve Him alone; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines."
4  So the sons of Israel removed the Baals and the Ashtaroth and served the LORD alone.
5  Then Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah and I will pray to the LORD for you."*

**6. Poured** *it* **out**] The symbolism of the act is uncertain. The most probable explanation is that of the Targum, that it represented the pouring out of their hearts **in** repentance before the **Lord:** cp. [2 Sa 23:16](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Sa+23%3A16) to [Lam 2:19](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=La+2%3A19). **7. Went up against Israel**] for the object of the assembly at Mizpeh was to throw off the Philistine yoke.

*6  They gathered to Mizpah, and drew water and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the sons of Israel at Mizpah.
7  Now when the Philistines heard that the sons of Israel had gathered to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the sons of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.
8  Then the sons of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry to the LORD our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines."*

**9. A burnt** offering **wholly] RV** 'a whole burnt offering.' The offering of the whole animal symbolized the self-dedication of the worshipper. **12. Eben-ezer**] see on [4:1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+4%3A1).

*9  Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it for a whole burnt offering to the LORD; and Samuel cried to the LORD for Israel and the LORD answered him.
10  Now Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, and the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day against the Philistines and confused them, so that they were routed before Israel.
11  The men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and struck them down as far as below Beth-car.
12  Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us."*

**13. All the days of** Samuel] The words naturally mean 'all the time he acted as judge.' This must be understood as the optimistic notice of a later writer. The narrative of c. 14 shows that Israel did not succeed in recovering from the Philistine oppression: see also on [7:1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A1); [9:16](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+9%3A16). **14. The coasts thereof**] i.e. the districts round the towns. **Amorites**] i.e. the old Canaanite inhabitants of the hill-country: see on [Jdg 1:34](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jdg+1%3A34). Israelite and Canaanite made peace in front of a common enemy.

*13  So the Philistines were subdued and they did not come anymore within the border of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.
14  The cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even to Gath; and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. So there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.*

**15. All the days of his life**] The attitude of Samuel towards Saul in the matters of (*a*) his sacrifice and (*b*) Amalek show that he retained some authority even after Saul was elected king.

**16.** He instituted what in modern language would be called 'courts of assize.' Gilgal] probably the famous site near Jericho.

*15  Now Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.
16  He used to go annually on circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpah, and he judged Israel in all these places.
17  Then his return was to Ramah, for his house was there, and there he judged Israel; and he built there an altar to the LORD.*

A Commentary on the Holy Bible: The One Volume Bible Commentary.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

##### 4. The Restoration of the Ark ([7:2-17](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A2-17))

The return of the ark to Kiriath Jearim seemed to be a tangible sign that God was once again among His people to bless them and deliver them from all their oppressors. The mere presence of the ark did not guarantee God's favor, however, as Israel had learned at the battle of Aphek. Rather, it was submission to the God of the ark that was essential ([v. 4](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A4)).

[7:2](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A2). After **the ark** was at **Kiriath Jearim** for **20 years** Samuel addressed the Israelites ([v. 3](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A3)). In other words, the ark was in Kiriath Jearim for 20 years before Samuel undertook his first recorded public ministry. In actual fact the ark remained at Kiriath Jearim for about 100 years. It was taken there just after the battle of Aphek (1104 b.c.) and remained until David brought it from there to Jerusalem in his first year as king over all Israel (1003 b.c.; see [2 Sam. 5:5](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Sa+5%3A5); [6:1-11](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Sa+6%3A1-11)).

[7:3-4](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A3-4). After these 20 long years with the ark at Kiriath Jearim, **Samuel** challenged the people **of Israel** to prove their loyalty to **the Lord** by abandoning their **foreign gods** and turning to **the Lord**... **only.** The plural **Baals** and **Ashtoreth’s** describe the many local shrines of those Canaanite nature deities. Baal, variously identified as son of El (chief of the Canaanite pantheon) or as son of Dagan (the Mesopotamian deity), was particularly recognized as the god of thunder and rain whose task was to make the earth fertile annually. Ashtoreth (or Astarte) was goddess of both love and war, as were her Babylonian and Greek counterparts Ishtar and Aphrodite respectively. She apparently functioned with Baal as a fertility deity and by their sexual union in some magical way the earth and all its life supposedly experienced annual rejuvenation and fruitfulness. (See the chart "[Some of the Pagan Gods and Goddesses Worshiped in Nations Surrounding Israel](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?pub=0&book=137&sec=00008950#links784)," near [Judges 10:6](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jdg+10%3A6).)

[7:5-9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A5-9). **Samuel** next summoned the people to **Mizpah,** some seven miles north of Jerusalem, and there prayed for them and **offered** sacrifice to **the Lord** on their **behalf** ([v. 9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A9)). This was a common place of assembly for Israel. In the time of the Judges the elders of the tribes gathered there to decide Benjamin's fate following the murder of a Levite's concubine ([Judges 19:1-20:1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jdg+19%3A1-20%3A1), [3](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jdg+20%3A3); [21:1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jdg+21%3A1), [5](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jdg+21%3A5), [8](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jdg+21%3A8)). Later, Saul was presented to Israel as king at Mizpah ([1 Sam. 10:17](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+10%3A17)). It was even the capital of Judah after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians ([2 Kings 25:23](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Ki+25%3A23), [25](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Ki+25%3A25)). The town of Mizpah should probably be identified with modern Tell en-Nasbeh.

[7:10-17](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A10-17). When **the Philistines** learned of the assembly, they attacked **Israel** at **Mizpah** but **the Lord,** in a mighty demonstration of power (by **thunder**), defeated them. In commemoration of this great triumph **Samuel** erected on the site **between Mizpah and Shen** (whose location is unknown), a monument which he called **Ebenezer,** literally, the "stone of [God's] help." This apparently ended Philistine occupation of **Israelite** soil though **the Philistines** came later time and time again to harass Israel ([13:5](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+13%3A5); etc.). **Amorites** ([7:14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A14)) refers to the hill-dwellers of southern Canaan (see [Num. 13:29](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Nu+13%3A29); [Josh. 10:5](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jos+10%3A5)). Thereafter **Samuel continued** to **judge... Israel** in **a circuit** (approx. 50 miles in circumference) including **Bethel... Gilgal... Mizpah,** and his hometown, **Ramah** (see the map "The Cities of Samuel").

#### F. Selection of a king ([chaps. 8-9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+8-9))

After the battle of Ebenezer ([7:12](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A12)), about 1084 b.c. (see [comments](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?pub=0&book=137&sec=00009909#links785) on [7:2](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A2)), the nation of Israel was content to follow Samuel's leadership for the next 30 years or so. Israel had made abortive attempts to establish a human monarchy during the days of the Judges (see [Judges 8:22-23](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jdg+8%3A22-23); [9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jdg+9)), actions contrary to the theocratic ideal of the kingship of the Lord Himself. But when Samuel had grown old and it appeared he would not live much longer, the people again expressed the desire for a king. God had such a king in mind, one who would be raised up and identified in His own good time ([Deut. 17:14-15](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Dt+17%3A14-15)), but that time had not yet come. Thus the stage was set for an encounter between Samuel and the people.

**Open it**

1. How would it feel to take part in a religious observance and see armed troops bearing down on you?
 **It would be very scary wondering what was happening, yet we must trust in God for protection**

2. What do you suppose would provoke people all over the country suddenly to turn to God?
 **Another world war or terrorist attack**

3. What sorts of places tend to become national memorials?
 **Where something bad has happened, large battles, loss of life**

**Explore it**

4. Although the ark was again within the borders of Israel, what was the mood of the subdued Israelites? ([7:2](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A2))
 **Very sad, feeling God had abandoned them**

5. What was God’s promise if Israel would rid itself of idolatry? ([7:3](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A3))
 **That he would deliver them from the hands of the Philistines**

6. What characterized the spiritual climate of Israel under the judgeship of Samuel? ([7:4](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A4))
 **They must serve only the LORD, not false the gods of the area**

7. What was Samuel’s role when he assembled all the people at Mizpah? ([7:5](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A5))
 **Leader of prayer**

8. What were three significant actions taken by the people of Israel in the process of repenting? ([7:6](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A6))
 **They sacrificed to God, admitted they had sinned and were judged by Samuel for it**

9. How did the assembled Israelites feel when they heard that the Philistines were attacking? ([7:7](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A7))
 **They were afraid of the Philistines**

10. What was the people’s request of Samuel when they realized they were under attack? ([7:8](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A8))
 ***Do not cease to cry to the LORD our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines****.*

11. What was Samuel doing as the army was approaching? ([7:9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A9))
 **doing a burnt offering to the Lord**

12. By what miraculous circumstance was the Philistine army defeated? ([7:10](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A10))
 ***But the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day against the Philistines and******confused them, so that they were routed before Israel.***

13. What was the significance of the stone Samuel set up between Mizpah and Shen? ([7:12](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A12))
 **This was a marker to show the God had helped them to this point**

14. What was Israel’s relationship to the powerful Philistines in the ensuing years? ([7:13-14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A13-14))
 **The Philistines were subdued and did not attack again, and all they had taked was returned to Israel and so there was peace**

15. What was Samuel’s title and function throughout his lifetime? ([7:15](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A15))
 **Judge**

16. In what locations did Samuel judge Israel and worship God? ([7:16-17](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+7%3A16-17))
 ***16  He used to go annually on circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpah, and he judged Israel in all these places. 17  Then his return was to Ramah, for his house was there, and there he judged Israel; and he built there an altar to the LORD.***

**Get it**

17. Why did Samuel see Israel’s repentance and abandonment of idols as a necessary first step to their military deliverance?
 **They were not trusting or worshipping God, instead they had turned away.**

18. When the people reacted to the approaching army by asking Samuel to "cry out to the Lord our God for us," how had the stage been set for God’s positive response?
 **They were beginning to return to the Lord**

**Apply it**

19. What would be a good first step for you as you seek God’s response to a request that is especially important to you?
 **Acknowledge that he is Lord and God**

20. How could you, figuratively, set up an "Ebenezer" stone? Create a small reminder of a particular instance of God’s unmerited favor so that you remember to praise Him for it?
 **Pick something of that day or time that makes you remember what he has done for you**