

“SAMUEL”

Text: I Samuel 7:17

Subject: Your Spiritual Weapons That Overcome Evil Intentions

Introduction

(I Samuel Chapter 7 Has A Remarkable Backdrop)

- ◆ In (I Samuel 1), Hannah gives birth to Samuel.
- ◆ In (I Samuel 2), The sin of Eli’s sons occurs.
- ◆ In (I Samuel 3), The Lord calls Samuel.
- ◆ In (I Samuel 4), The Ark is captured by the Philistines.
- ◆ In (I Samuel 5), The Ark destroys the idol DAGON.
- ◆ In (I Samuel 6), The Ark is too holy for Bethshemesh.
- ◆ In (I Samuel 7), The Crisis, critical hour and intervention of the Lord.

(What Happens Is:)

- #1. The presence chamber of God (The Ark) is received in Bethshemesh on a new cart. (6:7)
- #2. The people of God are frivolous, familiar, shouting and void of all reverence.
- #3. They open the Ark and in (6:19) 50,070 men are smitten dead on the spot.
- #4. The holiness of God has been ignored and thought light of (6:20)
- #5. So the people of Bethshemesh ask the people of Kirjathjearim to come down and take the Ark off their hands. (6:21)

(And Now Our Text In Chapter 7)

In verse 1, The Ark of the Covenant is fetched and brought into the house of Abinadab.

- ◆ Eleazar was chosen to “keep the Ark” (or guard it from the unholy intrusions as before).

In verse 2, is the time frame where many now live:

“And it came to pass, while the Ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years; and all the house of Israel lamented because it seemed that the Lord had abandoned them”.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ The Ark of the Covenant was symbolic of the presence of God.
- ◆ The Philistines had defeated the Israelites and carried off the Ark.
- ◆ But now, the Ark was “stalled” in the house of Abinadab.
- ◆ For twenty years now, the Ark is in a little town on the border.
- ◆ For twenty years, Israel has been without the presence of God (and lost many battles).
- ◆ For twenty years, Israel had struggled with the old Adam.
- ◆ For twenty years, Israel had suffered the oppression of the Philistines.
- ◆ For twenty years, Israel had lamented in frustration (as the Glory of God had departed).

(Now God Restores What Was Lost)

I. The Call To Action

Question: What was the beginning of a spiritual war that was won?

Answer: Samuel gives the call to arms in (v. 3):

“And Samuel spoke unto all the house of Israel, saying, if you do return to the Lord with all your heart, 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”.

Question: What was the call for in (v. 3)?

Answer: “Put away the gods of Ashtaroth and Baal”.

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- ◆ Baal was the supreme male god of the Canaanite nations.
 - ◆ Ashtaroath was the supreme female god of the Canaanite nations. (And God reveals something here).
- #1. That Israel has to prepare their hearts to make progress with God.
 - #2. That idols and interference must be put aside.
 - #3. That only a pure heart can move forward with God.
 - #4. That repentance is not a dirty word (but the beginning of dramatic internal change).

(What's The Call Of God In Verse 3?)

“Put away the strange gods, prepare your heart, and serve Him only”

- ◆ Put away everything strange that competes with God in your life.
- ◆ Put away anything that drains God's presence from your life.
- ◆ Put away whatever is questionable and God will meet you at Mizpeh.

Question: How did God's people answer the call?

Answer: (V. 4) “And the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroath, and served the Lord only”.

(What A Response!)

- ◆ An immediate “Yes” to the call of God!
- ◆ An immediate “Yes” to the preaching of Samuel!
- ◆ An immediate “Yes” to the prompting of the Spirit!
- ◆ An immediate “Yes” to prepare for the next step!

II. The Confession From The Heart

Question: What did Samuel do when the congregation agreed with God?

Answer: (V. 5), “They all gathered at Mizpeh”.

(In Other Words)

1. Samuel had a burden for the whole congregation.
2. Mizpeh was the usual place Israel would go to experience the presence of God.
(Judges 10:17; 11:11; 20:3)
3. It was a definable location of assembling together.
4. It was a place to seek the Lord and believe God to meet us face to face.
5. It was a corporate gathering that would be united by spiritual weapons.

(What Were The Weapons?)

(V. 6), “And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, we have sinned against the Lord”.

(I Discover Here)

- ◆ That it takes more than just gathering together to experience revival (otherwise every congregation in America would be in revival).
- ◆ It takes the example of Samuel for God to come in to the picture of your life.

(What Was The Response From The Heart?)

#1. Humility

“They drew water and poured it out before the Lord’ (what does it mean?) (v. 6)

- ◆ Pouring out the water is symbolic of pouring out the heart.
- ◆ It's humbling myself before God and saying, “God I am helpless and powerless without you”.
- ◆ This is you and me acknowledging our dependency upon God! (Pg. 2 of 4)

#2. Discipline

“...and fasted on that day”. (v. 6)

- ◆ Israel fasted to draw closer to God.
- ◆ Israel fasted to press through in prayer.
- ◆ Israel fasted to see the glory of God return.
- ◆ Israel fasted to prepare their heart before the Lord.
- ◆ Israel fasted to overcome every foreign and strange god.

3. Confession

“...we have sinned against the Lord” (v. 6)

- ◆ This is not external lip service here
- ◆ This is not shallow or superficial activity.
- ◆ This is deep repentance without reservation:

(“We Have Sinned Against The Lord”)

- ◆ It’s the first step to **recovering** strength and joy.
- ◆ It’s the big step to **overcome** sin that entangles.
- ◆ It’s the desire to be **pure** before God.
- ◆ It’s my heart not wanting to offend God’s **holiness**.
- ◆ It’s God’s way to live with **power** over sin.
- ◆ It’s part of fasting and prayer in **preparation** for personal renewal.

“Lord, return my heart to you completely”.

“Lord, bring to the surface unconfessed sin”.

“Lord, restore unto me what I’ve been without”.

“Lord, I want your presence and glory in my life more than anything else”.

(It’s A Choice I Make Because:)

- ◆ When I want the blessing of God enough, I will humble myself before God and care less who’s looking on around me!!!

III. The Conflict With Evil

Question: Pastor, will it be an easy road in my pursuit of God?

Answer: (v. 7), “When the Philistines heard about Israel gathered at Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel”.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Satan doesn’t easily let go of anybody.
- ◆ Sin doesn’t easily allow you to make progress.
- ◆ The old Adam doesn’t want you to flee every sin.
- ◆ The devil gets angry when you forsake everything questionable.
- ◆ It’s not a cake walk (but warfare) to be a man or woman of God.

Fact: Some of you (right now) are in a war (know why?)

Fact: It’s because you are dying to yourself so that you can move forward in God.

(It’s O.K!)

- ◆ God has good news for your heart!
- ◆ God has an encouraging word for your progress.

Question: How did Israel respond when the enemy came in like a flood?

Answer: (V. 7B), “...And when the children of Israel heard it, **they were afraid** of the Philistines”.

Question: What are the two options when you're battles are fierce and raging?

Answer: #1. Fear or #2. Faith

- ◆ Fear paralyzes us and backs us up.
- ◆ Faith motivates us and moves us forward.

IV. **The Conquest Of The Lord**

Question: What follows those who truly believe that God answers prayer?

In (v. 9), Samuel cried unto the Lord.

In (v. 10), The battle drew near Israel.

In (v. 11), The Philistines were beaten hands down.

In (v. 13), The enemy was subdued.

In (v. 14), An awesome revelation for us:

“And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were “restored” to Israel”

Question: What did the Israelites do when the enemy tried to hinder progress?

Answer: (V. 8), “Samuel, pray for us”.

(What A Discovery Here)

- ◆ That your best friends in the world are those who know how to pray and touch God.
- ◆ That your greatest help will come from your friends who believe in “carpet ministry”.
- ◆ Those friends not ashamed to put their face in the carpet and pray with all their heart.
- ◆ Confidence was born in Israel because Samuel knew how to pray.

(What Happened After Prayer And Fasting?)

#1. The powers of evil were broken. (Israel was freed from sin).

#2. (V. 14), What was stolen by the enemy was restored by God:

- ◆ Israel regained the cities that had been taken by sin.
- ◆ Israel recovered what had been forfeited.
- ◆ Israel was restored to their rightful inheritance. (what was it?)

#1. A clear conscience

#2. Power in prayer

#3. Fasting that prevails

#4. Victory over evil

#5. Freedom from Philistine dominion.

Conclusion

“Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, hitherto hath the Lord helped us”.

◆ **The place of victory was called “Ebenezer”.** ◆ **The word “Ebenezer means: “The Lord has helped us”.**

(Why The Stone?)

- ◆ To remind us what the Lord has done!
- ◆ To remind us what God still does!
- ◆ To remind us what faith can obtain!

Question: Why does God want us to remember “Ebenezer”?

Answer: So that faith will fill our hearts and we will believe now like Samuel did then!!!

Question: Why is faith so important?

Answer: Because its faith that makes mountains!

AMEN!

Bill Kirk, Pastor

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