

**1Samuel 7:1 ¶ And the men of Kirjathjearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.**

**1Samuel 7:2 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 after the LORD.**

Continuing directly in context from the previous chapter...

The men of Kirjathjearim came and took the ark of the LORD to the house of Abinadab in the hill; I assume he lived on the high ground of Kirjathjearim. They appointed Eleazar his son to protect the ark. The ark remained there for 20 years before the house of Israel lamented or groaned after the LORD, indicating that they had a desire for restored fellowship.

I know the ark was there a lot longer than 20 years because it was David that finally brought it from the house of Abinadab to Jerusalem.

*2 Samuel 6:2–3 “And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims. And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart.”*

Easton defines Kirjathjearim as “a Gibeonite town,” a town of Gibeah.

**1Samuel 7:3 ¶ And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, 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.**

**1Samuel 7:4 Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.**

Samuel spoke up and told the people that if they wanted restored fellowship with the LORD, they would have to get rid of their false gods and goddesses and “prepare their hearts” to serve the LORD. I believe that is a reference to expressing true repentance and renewed commitment to serve the LORD in obedience. If they did this, the LORD would deliver them from the Philistines.

The people listened and did as Samuel told them.

**1Samuel 7:5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.**

**1Samuel 7:6 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. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.**

Samuel called for the people to gather at Mizpeh so that he could pray for them.

Once they had gathered, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD and fasted on that same day. They acknowledged their sin against the LORD corporately and publicly. Samuel became the acknowledged judge of Israel at that time.

I don't remember reading about pouring out water before the LORD. Clarke offers the following possible explanation: "Perhaps the drawing and pouring out of water mentioned in the text was done emblematically, to represent the contrition of their hearts." He made the comparison to Hannah pouring out her soul before the LORD.

*1 Samuel 1:15 "And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD."*

Guzik includes a note credited to Trapp: "The Chaldean translation of this passage gives this sense well: 'They poured out their hearts like water in penance before the Lord.' 'They seemed to say in effect, We could wish to shed as many tears for our sins as there are drops of water in this bucket; but because we cannot do this, behold, we do what we can.'"

**1Samuel 7:7 ¶ And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard *it*, they were afraid of the Philistines.**

**1Samuel 7:8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.**

**1Samuel 7:9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered *it* for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him.**

**1Samuel 7:10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.**

**1Samuel 7:11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until *they* came under Bethcar.**

**1Samuel 7:12 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 lords of the Philistines heard that the Israelites had gathered at Mizpeh and decided to make a preemptive attack against any uprising. The people of Israel became frightened when they were told the news and urged Samuel to pray that the LORD would save them from the Philistines.

Samuel took a baby lamb and offered it as a burnt offering to the LORD and prayed for the people of Israel. The LORD heard him—implied, with the intent to answer that prayer. The Philistines got closer and prepared to fight the men of Israel as Samuel prayed over the burnt offering. The LORD manifested His presence with a great thunder causing the Philistines to panic and suffer defeat at

the hands of Israel. They pursued the Philistines as far as Bethcar.

We don't know how the LORD "thundered" against the Philistines, but I am reminded of the words of the psalmist. All God has to do is speak to accomplish His purposes.

*Psalms 29:3–9 "The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: **the God of glory thundereth**: the LORD is upon many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty. The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory."*

Samuel took a stone and placed it between Mizpeh and Shen and named it Ebenezer, "stone of help," as a memorial to the LORD's answer to their prayer.

Principle: To remember and be reminded of the many times that God answers our prayers and acts on our behalf encourages and strengthens our faith and enables us to comfort and encourage others.

*Psalms 77:1–14 "I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted....I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings. Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God? Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people."*

*Psalms 105:4–5 "Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore. Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth...."*

*Isaiah 46:9–10 "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure...."*

*2 Corinthians 1:3–4 "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."*

**1Samuel 7:13 ¶ So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.**

**1Samuel 7:14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel**

**and the Amorites.**

The Philistines were defeated and didn't bother Israel throughout the rest of the days of Samuel. The cities that the Philistines had taken were restored to Israel, all the territory from Ekron to Gath.

There was also peace between Israel and the Amorites. I would assume the news of their rout of the Philistines facilitated that peace.

**1Samuel 7:15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.**

**1Samuel 7:16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.**

**1Samuel 7:17 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 judged Israel for the rest of his life. He traveled a circuit each year making himself available to the people; he spent time in Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpeh. The rest of his time was spent at his home in Ramah where he built an altar to the LORD.

Clarke offers the following insight: "When he was at Beth-el, the tribe of Ephraim, and all the northern parts of the country, could attend him; when at Gilgal, the tribe of Benjamin, and those beyond Jordan, might have easy access to him; and when at Mizpeh, he was within reach of Judah, Simeon, and Gad...."