

## Returning to the Lord 1 Samuel 7:3-17

### INTRODUCTION

This morning, we are reconnecting with Samuel himself. If you recall, we have not heard anything about Samuel since chapter 3. In that chapter, we read about how the boy Samuel first heard the voice of God and how God called him to be a prophet to the people of Israel.

This is the first mention of Samuel since 4:1a. We have had almost three Samuel-less chapters. As Samuel's appearance in chapter 3 was a sign of fresh grace to Israel, so his presence in chapter 7 coincides with new mercies Israel desperately needs. Here Samuel as prophet and intercessor seeks to restore to repentance the Israel that has been so severely judged (chaps. 4–6). **So, we trace Yahweh's mercy in Samuel's ministry.**

Samuel's reemerging onto the scene was such an incredibly important event because the people were in desperate need of leadership. **Ever since the people had arrived in the Promised Land, they were guilty of consistently forsaking God and going after the false gods of the neighboring nations.** As they suffered under the consequences of their foolish choices, God regularly raised up leaders called "judges", who helped deliver the people from their enemies.

Here's today's study in a summary **statement: Chapter 7 commences with the Ark being placed in storage, so that all will know that the spiritual revival and military victory of the Israelites which follow are not the result of any magical use of the Ark, but the result of Israel's repentance and faith in the LORD.**

I. Israel's \_\_\_\_\_ (7:3-6)

A. The \_\_\_\_\_ according to Samuel:  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (7:3)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ command: put away

**Repentance means that we recognize the ways in which we are committing spiritual adultery, and we make it our aim to not hide but remove and put away and kill sin.**

2. \_\_\_\_\_ command: single-minded  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to the LORD

B. Israel's \_\_\_\_\_ (7:4-6)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ water before the LORD

2. \_\_\_\_\_

II. The LORD's \_\_\_\_\_ (7:7-12)

Now the name Mizpah means "**watchtower**". Militarily it was of some significance because one could see such distances from there. It sits at about 2,400 feet above sea level. It is not surprising therefore that the Philistines were concerned when they heard so many Israelites were gathered at this rather strategic place. **The Philistines were bent on keeping the Israelites weak and suppressed.** Such a gathering was seen as a sign of an Israelite rebellion. The Philistines marshalled their forces and marched up to do what they did very well; kill. It has been 21 years since the last Philistine Israeli battle, and in that battle the Israelites had been so soundly beaten they had been under Philistine oppression ever since.

We are told they said to Samuel "***do not stop crying out to the Lord our God for us, that He may rescue us***". Here is the very core of what Samuel had been preaching. **God deals with sinners and failures. The truth is that God is ever ready to receive us. There is never any need to stay in despair. The core issue is not being good enough, or not good enough, but being independent of God or dependent on God.**

### III. Samuel's leadership (7:13-17)

So not only did Samuel's leadership bring about peace with and protection from the Philistines, but also from and with all of Israel's neighbors, all the "Amorites" as they are called in verse 14. As a prophet, and in some ways as a priest, and as a national leader, God used Samuel to guide His people onto the path of salvation and obedience. Don't miss this important **truth: The child that the childless Hannah so desperately desired became the man God's people so desperately needed.**

So, throughout his lifetime once a year he would make a fifty-mile circuit. **Otherwise, home was at Ramah.** The idea of an altar there was to inform the reader that this now had become the spiritual center and Samuel was their spiritual leader offering sacrifices to God.

### CONCLUSION/INVITATION

What can we take with us this morning? For this morning a couple of things to think about:

- **One is as Christians who are serious Christ-followers, we want to \_\_\_\_\_ others for Christ.**
  
- **The second application: there are those of us here this morning who are \_\_\_\_\_ in the mud of sin.**

What's the answer? **Repentance leading to a true confession of sin resulting in the forgiveness of sin and restoration from the Lord.**

The New Testament **says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** (1 John 1:9) I absolutely believe God stands like the father of the prodigal son waiting to welcome you back. No matter what you have done, no matter how deep the mud has gotten, God stands ready to forgive and to welcome you back. God's grace is enough. **God has given every Christian what they need to get out of the mud through the presence and power of the Spirit who dwells within you.** It may take help from others, but let's do this together. But the first step is yours—true confession; real repentance—to experience the peace, the safety, the life that your soul is longing for.