

I. Introduction and review.

- A. **REPENT!** Mt. 3:2,8 4:17 Mark 6:12 Acts 2:37-38 3:19 20:21 26:20 Rev. 2:5,16,22 3:3,19 Ezek. 14:6 I Ki. 8:46ff
- B. **How did Israel get to the point of repentance?** 7:1-2
1. When they tried to defeat the Philistines by using the ark of the covenant as a magic charm they were utterly defeated and the ark was captured. 4:3ff
 2. Twenty long years pass.
 3. Finally the people cry out to the LORD in lamentation. 12:10 Jdg. 2:11ff 3:9 4:3

II. Samuel leads the people in repentance. 7:3-6

- A. Where has Samuel been for the past 20 years (3 chapters)? v. 3a
1. Even though God had raised him up as a prophet in Israel, it appears that the people were not interested in hearing his message. 3:19-4:1
 2. Their affliction finally drives them to seek the LORD. Ps. 119:67,71
 3. Samuel answers the question they had asked 20 years earlier. 4:3
- B. Samuel preaches a gospel of repentance. v. 3
1. Return to the LORD with all your heart. Dt. 4:30 30:2 Joel 2:12-14
 2. Put away your idols. Ex. 20:3-6 Ge. 35:2 Josh. 24:14,23 Jdg. 10:11,16 II Chr. 14:3
 3. Serve the LORD alone. Deut. 6:4-5,13 Luke 4:8
 4. If you turn to Him, He will deliver you. 4:3 II Chron. 7:14 Jer. 18:8ff I Ki. 8:46ff
- C. The people respond in faithful obedience -- a colossal turnaround. v. 4 John 3:8
- D. The people gather at Mizpah for covenant renewal. v. 5-6
1. In which sense did *all* Israel gather at Mizpah? Mt. 3:5
 2. Samuel intercedes for them. v. 5,8-9 12:19,23
 3. They humble themselves before the LORD and confess their sins. v. 6a 31:13 1:15 12:10 Lam. 2:19 Jdg. 20:26 Neh. 9:1 Jonah 3 Ps. 22:14 12:10 14:33 I Jo. 1:8-10
 4. Samuel exercises his office as judge of the people. v. 6b,15 4:18 12:23
- E. Application: Repentance is still needed today.
1. You cannot be saved without repentance. Acts 2:38 17:30 20:21 Luke 24:47 13:3 5:32 Mt. 9:12
 2. The Christian life involves ongoing repentance. I Jo. 1:8-10
 3. The professing church, like Israel, is prone to follow after the ways of the world (the Canaanites). Rom. 12:2 Js. 4:4
 4. True repentance is from the heart and produces ongoing transformation. II Cor. 7:10-11 Heb. 12:16-17
 5. Are you willing to take drastic measures to destroy your idols? Mt. 5:29-30 19:21
 6. God still uses the faithful proclamation of His Word to bring His people to repentance I Th. 1:9-10 Js. 1:18 I Pe. 1:23 Acts 19:19
 7. We need bold preachers like Samuel who will explain what God requires of us.
 8. True repentance is a gift from God. II Tim. 2:21 Acts 11:18 Ro. 2:4
 9. Pray that God will bring many people to repentance.

III. God delivers Israel from the Philistines. 7:7-14

A. Israel defeats the Philistines. 7:7-11

1. The Philistines attack. 7:7a
2. The fearful people plead with Samuel to intercede for them. v. 7b-8 Ex. 2:23
3. Samuel offers a sacrifice and cries out to the LORD. v. 9a 2:17 Lev. 22:17
4. The LORD answers with thunder and scatters the Philistines -- a complete reversal. v. 9b-10 2:10 4:2-3,10 Dt. 28:7 II Sam. 22:14-15 Ps. 18:13-14 29:3
5. The Israelites drive their enemies out of the land. v. 11,13-14
6. Why did they win this time, after the terrible defeats of chapter 4?

B. Samuel establishes the Ebenezer – stone of remembrance. v. 12

1. What other memorials can be found in the Old Testament? Ge. 28:18-19 Josh. 4:9
2. A permanent reminder of God's help. Ps. 115:9-11

C. Samuel continues to faithfully lead (judge) Israel in a season of peace. v. 15-17

D. Application: What victories can we expect when we humbly turn to the LORD?

1. Should nations today experience military victory? II Chron. 7:14 John 18:36
2. The chief application of this text is to the church as we engage in spiritual warfare. Eph. 6:10ff Rev. 2:4-5
3. Cry out to God and He will deliver you - individually and corporately.
4. While God gives the victory, He uses human agency.
5. We need spiritual leaders like Samuel: men of the Word and prayer. Acts 6:4
6. Give glory to God for every victory.

E. Application: Do we have Ebenezers (stones of remembrance)?

1. God has delivered and helped us many times.
2. The ordinances of the church serve as our Ebenezer.

IV. Concluding applications.

A. Where do we see Christ in this text?

1. He came preaching repentance. Mt. 4:17
2. He demands exclusive loyalty and worship. Mt. 10:37-38
3. He intercedes for His people - even now. 7:5b,8,9b Heb. 7:25 Ro. 8:34
4. His soul was poured out in His suffering. Ps. 22:14
5. He is the Lamb who turns away God's wrath and brings salvation. 7:9 John 1:29
6. He has defeated the enemy of our souls. Ge. 3:15 Ro. 16:20 Col. 2:15 I Jo. 3:8
7. He brings everlasting peace. 7:13-14 Isa. 9:6 Eph. 2:14

B. Repent. Ezek. 18:32 Acts 17:30 II Pe. 3:9 Ezek. 18:32 Luke 15:7,10

Discussion questions

1. Why did the people respond to Samuel's message at this particular time?
2. How does Samuel's message summarize biblical repentance? v. 3
3. What is the difference between worldly sorrow and true repentance?
4. Why is repentance so little spoken of from pulpits in our day?
5. What was Samuel's role as a Judge in Israel?
6. In what ways is Samuel a model for spiritual leaders today?
7. Why does Israel conquer the Philistines this time after losing twice before?
8. Can governments today expect military victory if they repent as Israel did?
9. How can idols lead to our spiritual defeat -- corporately and individually?
10. What Ebenezers do we have in our personal lives and in the life of our church?