**Raising Our Ebenezer**

*1 Samuel 7:12*

**Introduction**

1. **Colossians 3:17 –** we must submit to the word of Christ and thank God through Him continually for everything.
2. The life of a Christian should be filled with thanksgiving to God. (**cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:18**)
3. Christians should constantly count their blessings and thank God for each of them in prayer.
4. Also, Christians should honor God with a life of thanksgiving by faithfully serving Him.
5. Israel’s Victory Over the Philistines
6. Spiritual State – Unfaithful
   1. Corrupt leadership:
      1. Hophni and Phinehas – sons of Eli, the High Priest – **1 Samuel 2:12** – corrupt.
      2. Eli – High Priest – **1 Samuel 2:28-29** – honored sons more than God; **1 Samuel 3:12-13** – didn’t restrain his sons.
   2. The people followed in transgression – **1 Samuel 2:24**
7. Conflict with the Philistines
   1. Came out to battle with the Philistines and defeated – 4,000 killed. **(cf. 1 Samuel 4:2)**
   2. Brought the ark of the covenant from Shiloh to the camp thinking it would ensure victory – 30,000 killed, and the ark captured. (**cf. 1 Samuel 4:3-11**)
      1. Thought their unfaithfulness to be inconsequential.
      2. Thought the proximity of the ark would bring victory, when all along their defeat was due to God’s displeasure with their sin.
   3. Phinehas’ wife bore a son named Ichabod – **1 Samuel 4:21-22** – glory of the Lord departed from Israel. (God was no longer with them in their sinfulness.)
   4. Ark with the Philistines for 7 months (**cf. 1 Samuel 5-6**):
      1. Plagued by tumors and rats.
      2. Had enough and sent the ark back to Beth Shemesh with golden replicas of the tumors and rats as a trespass offering.
   5. Ark taken to Kirjath Jearim from Beth Shemesh and remained for 20 years. (cf. **1 Samuel 7:1-2**)
   6. Israel lamented after the Lord (Godly Sorrow), and Samuel instructed them to repent, prepare their hearts for the Lord, and serve Him only. (cf. **1 Samuel 7:3-4**)
   7. Israel goes to battle with the Philistines again, and Samuel prays to the Lord, and offers a sacrifice – victory is gained. (**cf. 1 Samuel 7:7-11**)
8. A Memorial of the Lord’s Help Erected
   1. **1 Samuel 7:12** – upon the victory granted Israel by the Lord, Samuel made sure to lead the nation in remembering the Lord’s help.
   2. Ebenezer – ’eḇen; a stone; ‘êzer; aid: — help – Stone of help.
      1. “Thus far” – in the past up to this point, and in the future. (Provided Israel’s fidelity.)
      2. This memorial stone would ensure that GLORY WAS GIVEN TO GOD.
      3. It would be a REMINDER OF GOD’S HELP, AND CAUSE THANKSGIVING.
      4. It would be a REMINDER OF ISRAEL’S DEPENDENCE UPON GOD.
      5. It would serve as a REMINDER OF BOTH THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNFAITHFULNESS, AND THE BELSSEDNESS OF FAITHFULNESS.
   3. “Here I raise my Ebenezer: Hither by Thy help I’ve come; and I hope by Thy good pleasure safely to arrive at home.” (O Thou Fount Of Every Blessing)
      1. We sing this song of praise and thanksgiving which reminds us of the abundant favor of God in our lives.
      2. The second verse refers to the memorial stone set up by Samuel.
      3. WE NEED TO CONSTANTLY RAISE OUR EBENEZER BEFORE GOD, PRAISING HIM AND THANKING HIM FOR HIS CONSTANT HELP IN ALL AREAS OF OUR LIVES.
9. Raising Our Ebenezer
10. Physical Life – God, Our Creator and Provider
    1. It is imperative that we acknowledge our existence, everything we are, as being from God.
       1. This seems to be such an obvious truth that needs no attention.
       2. However, men live every day in constant disregard for this fact.
       3. Also, the failure to acknowledge this on a consistent basis leads to a profligate life.
    2. **Psalm 100** – exhortation to praise God and thank Him – NOTE: IT IS HE WHO MADE US!
       1. In this world of humanism, and evolutionary thought we must separate ourselves from the masses and praise God as His creation.
       2. **Acts 17:26-29** – created us, and made us dependent on Him, so we would seek Him and find Him for the purpose of thanking Him and serving Him.
    3. **Romans 1:18-25** – consequences of failing to acknowledge God, and thank Him.
       1. **(v. 18)** – wrath of God revealed.
       2. **(v. 21)** – didn’t glorify Him, or thank Him, as His creation should do.
       3. **(v. 27)** – Part of God’s wrath – receiving in themselves the penalty of their error.
       4. A life void of thanksgiving and praise to God for being our Creator leads to a dissolute, corrupt lifestyle filled with negative consequences – both physical and especially spiritual.
    4. We depend wholly on God for all of life’s necessities, and we should acknowledge such, and thank Him for His provisions:
       1. **Hebrews 1:3** – upholds all things by His word – i.e. everything we count on to continue on this earth is sustained by Him. (cf. **Colossians 1:17** – in Him all consists)
       2. **Matthew 5:45** – gives the sun, and rain to all men. (**cf. Acts 14:15-17** – Paul to idolaters in Lystra concerning the true God.)
       3. **James 1:17** – everything good comes from God – are you showing your thankfulness, and acknowledging your dependence upon Him?
       4. HE DESERVES THE GLORY. HE DESERVES OUR THANKSGIVING. HE DESERVES OUR SERVICE.
    5. **Ecclesiastes 12:13** – He created us to acknowledge Him by obedience and reverence. All He does for us physically is to bring us to a further realization of our dependence on Him.
    6. **Matthew 6:33** – Christians raise their Ebenezer to God for physical blessings by focusing on His will, and serving Him.
11. Spiritual Life – God, Our Savior and Sustainer
    1. All men are completely lost without God’s spiritual provisions:
       1. **Romans 3:23** – all have sinned.
       2. **Romans 3:24-26** – only justified by faith in God’s gift – the propitiation in Christ’s blood.
          1. This does away with all boasting – **Romans 3:27-28**
          2. Abraham as an example – **Romans 4:1-4, 16**
          3. Of grace, not perfect works – **Romans 11:5-6**
       3. **Romans 5:6** – without strength – i.e. nothing that we could do for ourselves.
       4. UTTERLY LOST – **Ephesians 2:1-9** – BUT GOD MADE US ALIVE TOGETHER WITH CHRIST.
    2. We raise our Ebenezer before God by living as He called us to live in Christ – **Ephesians 2:10; 4:1**
       1. When we turn from such – **Hebrews 10:26-29** – opposite of thankfulness, EVEN DISDAIN FOR GOD’S GREAT SPIRITUAL GIFT OF HIS SON.
       2. **Romans 12:1-2** – “by the mercies of God” – I.E. BASED ON WHAT HE HAS DONE FOR YOU IN CHRIST JESUS, LIVE SACRIFICIALLY FOR HIM. (**cf. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15** – we should no longer live for self, but for Him.)
       3. **Galatians 2:20** – we raise our Ebenezer (HITHER BY THY HELP I’VE COME) by letting Christ live in us by faith.
    3. **Jude 24-25** – God is able to keep us for the day of judgment (OUR SUSTAINER); Like Jude does here, we are to burst forth in praise to God for our spiritual life, and the sustaining of it by God.
    4. GOD DESERVES TO BE ACKNOWLEGED, AND THANKED FOR ALL THAT HE HAS DONE, AND CONTINUES TO DO FOR US CONCERNING SPIRITUAL LIFE.

**Conclusion**

1. Samuel saw the importance of acknowledging Israel’s dependence upon God, and thanking Him for the victory He brought them.
2. We can do what Samuel did by constantly reminding ourselves of our blessings from God, and thanking and acknowledging Him for them by serving Him faithfully.