



A GREAT BACKGROUND

1 Samuel 7:1-2a: *"And the men of Kiriath-jearim came and took up the ark of the Lord and brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill. And they consecrated his son Eleazar to have charge of the ark of the Lord. ² From the day that the ark was lodged at Kiriath-jearim. A long time passed, some twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord.*

- * **1st Samuel 7:1 Points Back:** It refers to all of the events from Chapters 4-6. Israel is defeated.
- * **In Chapter 4:** The Israelites are twice defeated by the Philistines. Eli and his sons are killed. The Ark is stolen.
- * **In Chapter 5:** The false god "Ashdod" is humiliated. The stolen Ark causes the Philistines tumors and panic.
- * **In Chapter 6:** The Ark is returned.
- * **Israel got the ark back,** but they never got their heart back.
- * **20 years of defeat:** For 20 years Israel has lived in disgrace among their rivals.
 - Shilo is likely destroyed
 - Israel is oppressed by the Philistines
 - Idolatry is everywhere

A GREAT CONFESSION

1 Samuel 7:3-8 ³ *And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, "If you are returning to the Lord with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the Lord and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. ⁵ Then Samuel said, "Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you." ⁶ So they gathered at Mizpah 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 people of Israel at Mizpah.*

- * **Return to The Lord:** Implies turning from idols and worshiping God only *"with all your heart."*
- * **Deuteronomy 6:4,** *Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*
- * **Put away your gods.** It is impossible to repent while hanging onto idols.
- * **Gathering At Mizpah.** Samuel gathers the people at Mizpah (a significant gathering place).
- * **Pouring Out.** Samuel leads them in pouring out their soul to the Lord. Symbolic of repentance.
- * **Direct Your Heart.** Means serving God only (Matthew 4:10).
- * **Joel 2:12-13,** *"Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning." Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity."*

A GREAT TRIAL

1 Samuel 7:9-11: *⁷ Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. ⁸ And the people of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines." ⁹ So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. And Samuel cried out to the Lord for Israel, and the Lord answered him. ¹⁰ As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the Lord thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel. ¹¹ And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them, as far as below Beth-car.*

- ✳ **Crying Out:** Samuel cries out to the Lord instead of simply gathering "the box."
- ✳ **The Lord Answers:** Samuel cries to the Living God. False gods do not answer. False gods do not deliver.
- ✳ **The Lord Thundered:** God fights battles on belief of His people. Has has been in charge this whole time.
- ✳ **1 Samuel 2:10,** *Those who oppose the LORD will be shattered. He will thunder from heaven against them. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth and will give power to His king. He will exalt the horn of His anointed.*
- ✳ **Exodus 14:24-25,** *And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."*

A GREAT ENDING

1 Samuel 7:12-17: *¹² Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, "Till now the Lord has helped us." ¹³ So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. ¹⁴ The cities that the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath, and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites. ¹⁵ Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. ¹⁶ And he went on a circuit year by year to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah. And he judged Israel in all these places. ¹⁷ Then he would return to Ramah, for his home was there, and there also he judged Israel. And he built there an altar to the Lord.*

- ✳ **Ebenezer:** Means "stone of help." It is the name of the city where the Israelites were first attacked (4:1, 5:1)
- ✳ **"Until now the Lord has helped us."**
 - Till now the Lord has helped us" (ESV)
 - Thus far the Lord has helped us (NIV)
 - Up to this point the Lord has helped us (NLT)
- ✳ **Genesis 35:14:** *And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone. He poured out a drink offering on it and poured oil on it.*
- ✳ **Exodus 17:15,** *And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The Lord Is My Banner.*
- ✳ **Joshua 4:9,** *And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood; and they are there to this day.*
- ✳ **Ekron to Gath:** Represent Israelite dwellings that the Philistines had occupied. Chapters 4-7 end in a time of peace under Samuels leadership. This will change as Israel will soon again reject good leadership.