

March 17, 2002

Loss of Freedom and Liberty  
1Sam 7:7-12

Over 20 years previous to this passage, Israel had lost a battle with their enemy, the Philistines, and Israel was now servants of the Philistines. The ark of the Lord had been lost in that battle, and Eli's sons were killed when it was taken. The Lord caused the Philistines to send back the ark, and it was placed in the house of an Israelite who was close at hand.

The people longed for the liberty and independence they had had before the Philistines conquered them. They were tired of being the servants of the Philistines. Over in chapter 13:20, 21, we see that when the Philistines were in control, Israel was disarmed, and were not even allowed to have grind stones to sharpen their tools.

No doubt they had to have travel documents, and could not fly without going through an x-ray machine.

New Security Devices at Fla. Airport Fri Mar 15, 1:10 AM ET

By MIKE BRANOM, Associated Press Writer

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) - The airport security systems of the future can see through clothes for weapons, sniff a person for explosives and determine what's in a bottle without opening it.

That future has landed at Orlando International Airport, as six prototype security systems will begin operation over the next few days. OIA, one of the world's busiest airports, was chosen in December as the testing ground for next-generation security checkpoint devices.

However, the heightened security may come at a price. The scanner that can see through clothes leaves nothing to the imagination, and the bomb sniffer also can test for drugs. Both of these systems concern civil liberties advocates that these searches may go too far.

On Thursday, the Advanced Technology Checkpoint Project made its debut to the media as government leaders looked on approvingly. ...

V. 3, Samuel finally told them that if they wanted their liberty and freedom back, they had to deal with ***strange gods and Ashtaroth***, and serve the Lord only .

America serves the god of mammon, among other gods. We gripe and complain about the loss of freedom, but I really do not see a genuine desire to deal with the strange gods.

There are many moves attempting to restore personal liberty and freedom without dealing with the false gods. All of those efforts have the Lord Himself against them because there is no genuine heart change from sin to God.

V. 4-6, the people put away their false gods, confessed their sins, and renewed their commitment to the Lord. The ***pouring of the water*** in v. 6, represented the cleansing of the people. Paul talks about the cleansing of the heart by the ***water of the word***.

I have noticed today that rather than returning to the word of God, people are getting further away from it with the many fluffy books Jabez's Prayer and the Left Behind series. Rather than folks drawing closer to God's word, they flock to things like the character training programs.

V. 7, their enemy, ***the Philistines***, heard that the children of Israel were gathered together, and assumed that the people were uniting against them. So they sought to nip the rebellion in the bud.

Israel, being unarmed and untrained for warfare, was afraid when they saw the Philistines gathering together.

**NOTE** I guarantee that as soon as we make **up our minds** to deal with sin, claim our freedom from the power of sin and claim our victory that we have in Christ over sin, as soon as we put that sin under the blood of Christ, the enemy will rise up with all his might to do everything he can to hinder us, and to draw us back into that sin.

I could not tell you how many people I have met that almost as soon as they determined to deal with sin, an old friend they had not seen for years showed up, and urged them back into an old sin that had dominion over them.

I cannot count the number of people who have promised to come to church the next Sunday, and that Saturday or Sunday morning, an old friend or family member shows us. Or some other event takes place to get their mind off of trying to renew their relationship with the Lord. Some of the strangest things you can imagine happen to hinder the people from renewing their fellowship with the Lord.

I try to warn people that as soon as they make up their minds to put away sin and serve the Lord, the enemy will be there to make his very appealing offers to them. Or to put every hindrances they can imagine in their way.

**V. 8, the people realized their distress was the sin that tried to retain its hold, and cried out to the man of God to pray for them.**

Their fear of the Philistines caused the people cry out to Samuel, "*Cease not to pray for us.*"

We need to pray one for another that the Spirit of God would keep them faithful to their profession, and would supply all their needs as they face the daily attacks of sin.

**James 5:16** *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

**Colossians 1:9** *For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;*

Do we pray one for another as we are told to do? I realize that each person is responsible for his or her own sin, but we have been command to pray one for another. We must ask, then, how much responsibility lies upon other believers in prayer? A person falls back into sin how much responsibility lies with those who failed to pray for that person?

On the other hand, we are very efficient in hiding our true self from one another we refuse to be open with each other, so others do not know how to pray for us as they should.

**We have a Great High Priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus Christ, the righteous. He continually makes intercession with the Father for His people.** Moreover, we are told that we do not know how to pray as we should, so the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.

V. 9, Samuel intercedes for them with the proper sacrifice, and he prays for the people, and the Lord hears him. So does our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ the Righteous, intercede for us with His proper sacrifice:

*Hebrews 4:11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. 12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. 14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

Our Great High Priest has passed into the heavens; He is now seated on the right hand of the Power on High. He delights in our coming to Him in our time of need (temptation), and He will intercede for us as did Samuel for Israel in their hour of need.

Hebrews 13:1 *Let brotherly love continue. 2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. 3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. 4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. 5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So **that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.** (See also Psalms 118:6.)*

Vv. 9-12.

**Vv. 10, 11, The enemy was subdued by the Lord, for the battle is the Lord's.**

*Zechariah 4:6 **Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.***

The children of Israel knew that the enemy was moving against them, and they were afraid. So they asked Samuel to pray for them, that the Lord would deliver them from their enemy.

Samuel agreed to pray, made the proper sacrifice, and **the Lord heard him**. Even while Samuel was praying, the Philistines drew near to battle, and the Lord **discomfited** them - that is, He confused the enemy so that Israel could have the military victory over them.

*I John 5:14 **And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:** 15 **And if we know that he hear us, whatsover we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.** 16 **If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.** 17 **All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.***

**V. 12, after the victory over the enemy, a special marker was set up to commemorate the victory the Lord gave to His people.**

Samuel set up a stone, calling it **EBENEZER**, or a stone of help.

**I Peter 2:1** *Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. 4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in **Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.** 7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 **And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.** 9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. 11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. (Note that Peter here considers Christians the new Israel of God, for he tells us to be **honest among the Gentiles.**)*

V. 8, notice here that **our stone of help**, the Word of God, is to the disobedient a **rock of offence**. The disobedient are offended at the requirements of God's word, but we find great hope and comfort in those same words.

THE LINDEN LIBRARY set up a stone to commemorate an event of years ago. I teased the librarian about the tombstone in their front yard.

We should have many **dates written** in our Bibles **commemorating special times** when we were about to perish, and the Lord moved in a special way. Do we have a stone, and **EBENEZER**, or a place or time that we can look on and say, "Here is where the Lord showed Himself strong in my behalf?"

We have all had events like that in our lives, where we clearly saw God's hand place a marker there as a reminder when things get difficult.

It is interesting that where Samuel erected the stone is the very place where, **twenty years** previously, Israel had been defeated by the Philistines, 4:1, 2. In fact, this is where Israel had lost the ark, and the sons of Eli were killed. But now it is a place of victory.

**Note** that many times we are given a chance to redeem ourselves at the very place where we were defeated previously.

**ILLUSTRATION:**

Bob and his family came down to help us yesterday. I noticed a, to them, new Dodge van sitting in the parking lot. I asked him about it. He said that their other van died a violent death just before Christmas. They had planned to go the Amazona for Christmas, but could not because they had no transportation. They told others they could not go unless the Lord provided a miracle. And he did.

CAN SOMEONE GIVE ME A PLACE WHERE THE LORD ESPECIALLY HELPED YOU?

**As we serve the Lord, the enemy is subdued, but given the slightest opportunity, he will rise and take control again. That fountain of sin is not removed by the blood of Christ; it is simply controlled by the Spirit.**

Romans 6:14 *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

Vv. 13-16, **The Philistines were subdued**, and they left Israel alone. Samuel continued to judge Israel, and as long as Samuel lived, the Lord kept the Philistines at bay.

We see that it was only as Israel followed the Lord that the Philistines were subdued.

V. 13, **the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.** The Lord is the one who kept the Philistines subdued; it was not Israel's might. But after Samuel died, the Philistines raised up again, and oppressed Israel.

And it is the Lord who much keep our enemy subdued. And as soon as we lay the word of God aside again, the enemy will be there waiting to oppress us again with sin.

- 1) The people were distressed because of the hard oppression of the enemy their freedom and liberty were gone. God brings distressing circumstances into our lives to get our attention.
- 2) The people cry out to the man of God, "What shall we do?" The Lord alone can stir us to be distressed about our sin and our lack of His power and presence. He alone can stir us to cry out to Him with a sincere heart to know and do His will.
- 3) The man of God told them what to do - put away their false gods, and serve God truly and with their whole heart. The man of God must also pray that the Lord will make His words effectual. Though the man of God uses the word of God, it is the Spirit of God who must move, or the hearers will remain unaffected.
- 4) When we determine to deal with sin and serve the Lord only, we can depend upon sin raise up its nasty head again, seeking to bring us back under its control. But the grace and power of God is stronger than all our sin combined, and our victory is in Christ's victory over sin and death.
- 5) The people realized their distress as sin sought to retain its hold, and cried out to the man of God to pray for them. We need to pray one for another that the Spirit of God would keep them faithful to their profession, and would supply all their needs as they face the daily attacks of sin.
- 6) We have a Great High Priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus Christ, the righteous. He continually makes intercession with the Father for His people..
- 7) The enemy was subdued by the Lord, for the battle is the Lord's.
- 8) A special marker was set up to commemorate the victory the Lord gave to His people.

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9) As we serve the Lord, the enemy is subdued, but given the slightest opportunity, he will rise and take control again. That fountain of sin is not removed by the blood of Christ; it is simply controlled by the Spirit.