

PRAYER STUDY #94

EBENEZER

“Here I Raise Mine Ebenezer; Hither by Thy help I’m Come”

Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.

1st Samuel 7:12

Even Haazer or Eben-ezer, although it was not named Ebenezer until later, was a Philistine town about four miles from Gilgal where the Israelites were twice defeated by the Philistines and the Ark of the Covenant was stolen. *Even(Eben)* means stone. *Ezer* means place.

1st Samuel 4:1-11: *And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle and encamped beside Eben-ezer, and the Philistines encamped in Aphek. And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines; and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men. And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Why hat the Lord smitten us today before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of he covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies. So the people sent to Shiloh that they might bring from there the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, who dwelleth between the cherumbim; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant. And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid; for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! For there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Woe unto us! Who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. Be strong and acquit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you; acquit yourselves like men and fight. And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent; and there was a great slaughter, for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken and the two sons of Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas, were slain.*

Why were the Hebrews defeated?

1. **There was sin in the camp.** Hophni and Phinehas was the sons of the high priest, Eli, and in priestly offices but did not know the Lord(1st Samuel 2:12). They claimed and appropriated more than their due of the sacrifices(1st Samuel 2:13-17), and they also had sex with women in the tabernacle. Eli got on to them but did not remove them, and the Lord said that he honored his sons more than he honored the Lord by this action. The Lord warned of judgment against Eli's son and prophesied their deaths. Eli loved the Lord and was a good man but did not exercise proper authority over his children. Eli was ninety years old and very fat. When he heard that his sons had been killed and Israel had lost the battle, and the ark had been stolen, he fell off his seat by the side of the gate and broke his neck and died.
2. **They were using the ark of the Lord like a good luck charm.** The first time they went into battle they did not even carry the Lord's presence. The second time they went and got the ark to take it into battle and had a lot of religious hype and used the ark like a good luck charm.

1st Samuel 5:1: *And the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod.*

Who were the Philistines?

The Philistines inhabited land that is modern Palestine. They were descendants of Ham, the youngest son of Noah who was cursed for the consequence of his improper conduct when Noah was drunk and naked. (The sin was not seeing his father naked, but went much deeper than that and was the manifestation of an impure heart, perhaps filthy or perverse thoughts towards his father, even of a homosexual nature, although there is no evidence that Ham was a homosexual.) The Philistines worshiped Dagon, Ashtoreth, and Beelzebub, offered sacrifices, wore charms, were very warlike, and were diviners or soothsayers. Beelzebub or Baal(anti-God the Father), Dagon(anti-God the Son), and Ashtoreth(anti-Holy Spirit) form the unholy trinity. Divination is the art of obtaining secret knowledge by demonic power and is strictly prohibited by scripture(Deuteronomy 18:10-12). The spirit of python is the inspiration of witchcraft and divination. Python brings spiritual apathy, discouragement, lack of vision, lack of hope and dreams, depression, etc.

1st Samuel 7:1-12: *And the men of Kiriathjearim came and fetched up the ark of the Lord and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill and sanctified Eleazar, his son, to keep the ark of the Lord. And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kiriathjearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. And Samuel spoke unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord and serve Him only; and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth and served the Lord only. And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you unto the Lord. And they gathered together to 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 children of Israel in Mizpah. And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together in Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord. And Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel, but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines and smote them, until they came under Beth-car. Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*

What does this stone represent?: Bricks are man-made and, in the Bible, typically represent human effort. Stones are more enduring and represent something aligned with Jesus or Christ Himself. *(But his bow abode in strength and the arms of his hands of the mighty God of Jacob-from there is the shepherd, the stone of Israel. Genesis 49:24 Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste. Isaiah 28:16 Thou sawest until a stone was cut out without hands,*

which smote the image upon its feet that were of iron and clay and broke them to pieces. Daniel 2:34 The stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner. Psalm 118:22 To whom, coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. 1st Peter 2:4 And he beheld them, and said, What is this, then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. Luke 20:17-18) This stone represents God's help and reminds us of the Lord's presence with us.

What is the Ebenezer in your life? Is it the cross you wear around your neck, a special song or hymn, a particular person, a special scripture passage, a picture of Christ, our First Love Family.

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HELP FROM THE LORD

Psalm 3:2-3: *Many there are who say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah. But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter of mine head.*

Psalm 46:1: *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

Psalm 121:1-2: *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. From whence cometh my help? My help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth.*

Psalm 124:8: *Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*

Mark 9:23 *Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief.*

Hebrews 13:5b-6: *...for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*