

# Battles

## Thus Far Has the LORD Helped Us

### 1 Samuel 7

<sup>2</sup> It was a long time, twenty years in all, that the ark remained at Kiriath Jearim at Abinadab's house, and all the people of Israel mourned and sought after the LORD. <sup>3</sup> And Samuel said to the whole house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

<sup>4</sup> So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only.

<sup>5</sup> Then Samuel said, "Assemble all Israel at Mizpah and I will intercede with the LORD for you." <sup>6</sup> When they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. On that day they fasted and there they confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel was leader of Israel at Mizpah.

<sup>7</sup> When the Philistines heard that Israel had assembled at Mizpah, the rulers of the Philistines came up to attack them. And when the Israelites heard of it, they were afraid because of the Philistines.

<sup>8</sup> They said to Samuel, "Do not stop crying out to the LORD our God for us, that he may rescue us from the hand of the Philistines." <sup>9</sup> Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it up as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. He cried out to the LORD on Israel's behalf, and the LORD answered him.

<sup>10</sup> While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day the LORD thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites. <sup>11</sup> The men of Israel rushed out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, slaughtering them along the way to a point below Beth Car.

<sup>12</sup> Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far has the LORD helped us."

## The story

### ▲ They lamented and longed for the LORD

<sup>2</sup> It was a long time, twenty years in all, that the ark remained at Kiriath Jearim at Abinadab's house, and all the people of Israel mourned and sought after the LORD. <sup>3</sup> And Samuel said to the whole house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." <sup>4</sup> So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only.

- ▶ They rejected their false gods
- ▶ They returned to their Faithful and forgiving God

### ▲ They rallied for repentance and rededication

<sup>5</sup> Then Samuel said, "Assemble all Israel at Mizpah and I will intercede with the LORD for you." <sup>6</sup> When they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. On that day they fasted and there they confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel was leader of Israel at Mizpah.

- ▶ They repented corporately
- ▶ They refocused and recommitted corporately

### ▲ An army advanced against their assembly

<sup>7</sup> When the Philistines heard that Israel had assembled at Mizpah, the rulers of the Philistines came up to attack them. And when the Israelites heard of it, they were afraid because of the Philistines. <sup>8</sup> They said to Samuel, "Do not stop crying out to the LORD our God for us, that he may rescue us from the hand of the Philistines." <sup>9</sup> Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it up as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. He cried out to the LORD on Israel's behalf, and the LORD answered him.

- ▶ They received the report with trepidation
- ▶ They resolved to trust

### ▲ They were dealt a divine deliverance

<sup>10</sup> While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day the LORD thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites. <sup>11</sup> The men of Israel rushed out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, slaughtering them along the way to a point below Beth Car.

- ▶ The LORD thundered against their enemies
- ▶ The LORD thwacked and thwarted their enemies

## The stone

### ▲ The stone was a marker

<sup>12</sup> Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen.

### ▲ The stone was a monument to mercy

<sup>12</sup> He named it Ebenezer,

## The statement

### ▲ The LORD has helped in the past

<sup>12</sup> He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far has the LORD helped us."

### ▲ The LORD has helped in the present

<sup>12</sup> He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far has the LORD helped us."

- ▶ Our testimonies and trophies are from the LORD
- ▶ Our trust for today and tomorrow is in the LORD

1. If you want the LORD to be on your side in the battles and struggles of life, you've got to move over to his side.
2. When you turn from your idols to serve the LORD, he will be merciful and receive you – so don't wait, come on.
3. Our enemy may threaten, but when our God thunders, the enemy must retreat – so call confidently on the Lord.
4. When the Lord brings deliverance, glory and praise belong to him – so resolve to remember and never forget.
5. The Lord who has helped us thus far leads us forward into the future – so trust him and don't give way to fear.