

Part 8 Effective Leadership

1 Samuel 7

The Bible calls us to a fresh understanding of everything in life—an understanding in which God is no longer ignored or marginalized, and the person of Jesus Christ is no longer unimportant. It should not, therefore, surprise us to find that the book of 1 Samuel presents its theme (which I have suggested is leadership) in an unexpected, even perplexing way. Indeed as we have followed the story of the loss and return of the ark of the covenant in chapters 4-6, we may have begun to wonder whether the subject of leadership had been forgotten.

We are about to see that is not the case.

One striking feature of chapters 4-6 has been the absence of Samuel (apart from 4:1). The man who was established as a prophet in Israel according to the last sentences of chapter 3 plays no active role in the dramatic events of the following three chapters. Indeed in chapters 5, 6 no Israelite at all plays any active role. At the end of the story, to be sure, there are the astounded witnesses to the return of the ark to Israelite soil, but they played no part whatsoever in bringing it back.

In the context of Israel's leadership crisis the story of chapters 4-6 testifies to the fact that God is perfectly capable of dealing with Israel's wicked leaders without any help from the Israelites (chapter 4), and he is fully competent to deal with Israel's enemies, again without any involvement of the Israelites (chapters 5, 6). In other words, the very things that we might have described as constituting what we have been calling a leadership crisis in Israel—namely, the internal threat of corrupt people in power and the external threat of mighty enemies—are things that God had now demonstrated he can deal with for Israel without the help of any human leader at all!

This means that Israel's problem was not fundamentally their corrupt and inept leaders (God dealt with them decisively), nor was it the Philistine threat (they could not prevail against God's heavy hand). If Israel had a problem (and they certainly did), it was with God himself!

It is perfectly clear that the relationship between Israel and God was in serious difficulties. Up until now it has not been clear why. It seems to be the case that the Israelites themselves did not understand why all was not well. After the first battle of Aphek, when the Israelites were thoroughly defeated, and four "thousand" died, the elders of Israel asked, "Why?" (1 Samuel 4:3). After the second battle of Aphek there was a terrible slaughter, and you can feel the sense of utter dismay in the latter part of chapter 4. God had not merely judged Hophni, Phinehas, and Eli, but another thirty "thousand" Israelites died, and the ark of the covenant was taken. The obvious question raised by these events is, why?

The issue came to its clearest expression at the end of chapter 6, when for a reason that is again not fully explained, God struck down a number of the men of Bethshemesh. The people mourned, apparently realizing that their situation had not improved since the defeats at Aphek some seven months earlier (1 Samuel 6:19). Their question was very much to the point: "Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? And to whom shall he go up away from us?" (v. 20). The first question is rhetorical. They had come to the conclusion that no one could stand before him. Therefore, the second question was pressing. The disturbing fact is that it was the same as the question of the Philistines. They had asked,

"What shall we do with the ark of the LORD?" (1 Samuel 6:2),

meaning, "How do we get rid of the Lord's heavy hand on us?" The Israelites now asked in essence, "What shall we do with the Lord?" meaning, "Where will we send the ark?"

At the very end of chapter 6 we saw that the people of Bethshemesh sent a request to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim to come and take the ark.

Why was Israel (like the Philistines) experiencing the heavy hand of God? That is the question that the events of the last three chapters have powerfully raised.

The Situation Now (vv. 1, 2)

First Samuel 7 begins by reporting the response of the people of Kiriath-jearim to the request from Bethshemesh:

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. (v. 1)

Abinadab is a name that we will hear again in the story of 1 Samuel. One of David's older brothers bore it (1 Samuel 16:8; 17:13; also 1 Chronicles 2:13), as did one of Saul's sons (1 Samuel 31:2; also 1 Chronicles 8:33; 9:39; 10:2). This Abinadab, however, is only known to us in connection with the ark and its care at Kiriath-jearim (see also 2 Samuel 6:3; 1 Chronicles 13:7). No reason is given for the choice of the house of Abinadab as the place to which the ark was brought. Some have argued that Abinadab must have been a well-known priest. Others have argued that, since he is not identified as such, he was not. Since the proper handling of the ark by Levites was mentioned earlier (1 Samuel 6:15), and care was taken to "consecrate" Eleazar for the task of keeping the ark, there is an implication that Abinadab and consequently his son Eleazar were proper persons for this task—that is, Levites (Numbers 3:31; Deuteronomy 10:8; 31:9, 25; Joshua 3:3; 8:33).

At the same time Kiriath-jearim had no particular prominence in Israel's past history and did not now become important because of the ark's presence there. In other words, it seems that Kiriath-jearim did not become the new Shiloh. It was not the site of the tabernacle (as far as we know), and no known assembly or other significant event took place there. A little later in the story there will be a passing reference to the ark, indicating that it accompanied Saul and his army on at least one occasion (1 Samuel 14:18). Otherwise the ark seems to have been left in Abinadab's house until David decided to bring it up to Jerusalem in 2 Samuel 6 (see 2 Samuel 6:3; also 1 Chronicles 13:5, 6; 2 Chronicles 1:4).

This situation continued for a long time:

"From the day that the ark was lodged at Kiriath-jearim, a long time passed, some twenty years..." (v. 2a).

This is one of those points in the Biblical narrative where the passage of a considerable period of time is noted but passed over. There is a difficulty, however. Some have suggested that the twenty years during which the ark lodged at Kiriath-jearim refers to the time until David sent for it in 2 Samuel 6. This would mean that the events from 1 Samuel 7:1 to 2 Samuel 6 took place over twenty years. While this is possible, it is a less natural reading of the present context and also creates certain other problems. The twenty years is best understood as the long period of time before the next reported event, which is presented as (in some sense) a consequence of the long time in which Israel had little or nothing to do with the ark. The next significant event, from the narrator's point of view, was this:

"... and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD" (v. 2b).

It is not that Israel lamented after the Lord *for* twenty years, but that *after* twenty years they did so.

What happened during those twenty years? No doubt we are expected to be wondering just that. The implication, to be confirmed shortly when we hear from Samuel, is that during these twenty years the Israelites had little or nothing to do with the Lord. The ark "lodged" at Kiriath-jearim, and the people lived without regard for it or what it stood for—namely, the covenant between Israel and the Lord.

We are not told yet whether those days were peaceful and prosperous for Israel or otherwise. Perhaps there was a time when things went reasonably well. But it will soon become apparent that at least toward the end of the period the Philistine threat was very real again.

In other words, this period of twenty years was very much like the periods of apostasy that had recurred during the era of the book of Judges. As on those previous occasions "they abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt," and the Lord responded by giving them over to their enemies, in this case to the Philistines (cf. Judges 2:12-14).

What did Israel do at the end of those twenty years? On the previous occasions Israel had typically "cried out to the LORD" (see Judges 3:9, 15; 4:3; 6:6, 7; 10:10; cf. 1 Samuel 12:10). The wording this time is different, but the sense is similar. After twenty years, Israel experienced yet another change of heart and turned yet again to the Lord, with (it seems) tears.

The record is remarkably brief, but after twenty years there was the sound of wailing in Israel. The words of Jeremiah from many years later could have applied here:

"A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping" (Jeremiah 31:15a).

The Gospel According To Samuel (vv. 3, 4)

Suddenly, without warning, in verse 3 Samuel appears again in the narrative.

More than twenty years previously Samuel had last appeared when "The word of Samuel came to all Israel" (1 Samuel 4:1). The events that were the fulfillment of Samuel's word had then taken place, leading to these twenty years. Although the details are not given, it is as though Samuel had been waiting twenty years for this moment. Israel's tears were the sign that the time had come for them to hear the word of Samuel again. What they heard was the gospel according to Samuel.

Return (v. 3a)

And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart..." (v. 3a)

Here is Samuel's confirmation of what the last twenty years had involved. Samuel did not assume that the weeping and wailing amounted to a true returning to the Lord. His words did, however, assume that they had been away from the Lord in their hearts. Through these twenty years Israel had not recovered from the Eli era. They had attempted to put the ark out of sight, and so out of mind. The same applied to the Lord himself. Unable to bear his hard hand against them, they had sought to be rid of him (see 1 Samuel 6:20). After twenty years, however, it was just possible that there had been a change of heart.

In another context the Bible would call the possible change in the Israelites repentance. Repentance, however, is not just weeping. It is "returning to the LORD with all your heart." This is the first point in Samuel's gospel.

Put Away (v. 3b)

Samuel spelled out the necessary consequence of genuine repentance:

"...then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you..." (v. 3b).

"Ashtaroth" is the plural form of Ashtoreth, the Canaanite goddess also called Astarte, who was (in Canaanite religion) the wife of Baal, the storm and fertility god. The plural probably indicates many images of Astarte. It is probable that the worship of these deities involved various practices.

The implication of Samuel's call to "put away" these pagan gods is clear. Over the past twenty years the Israelites had taken on the Canaanite lifestyle. They had learned Canaanite ways. If those ways

were as perverse as we might suppose, perhaps the narrator had good reason to pass over those two decades in a single verse!

When did this apostate behavior begin? It is difficult to avoid the impression that it all goes back to the perversions of the Eli era. Eli's sons themselves engaged in immoral sexual practices at the tabernacle; they treated the Lord's ways with contempt; indeed they did not know the Lord (1 Samuel 2:22, 17, 12). If the people under such a priesthood abandoned faithfulness to the Lord, much of the story that has been perplexing now makes sense. Corrupt priests led the people into apostasy, so that God's judgment fell not only on Eli and his sons, but on Israel as a whole (chapter 4). That is why the return of the ark was not the joyous occasion some thought it might have been (chapter 6). As so often before, the people of Israel had provoked the Lord to anger by abandoning him and going after other gods (see Judges 2:12, 14, 20; 3:8; 10:7).

The second point in Samuel's gospel is that you must put away the pagan gods. The pagan ways must be repudiated.

Heart (v. 3c)

The third point is this:

"... and direct your heart to the LORD and serve him only..." (v. 3c).

This speaks of exclusive, single-minded, wholehearted commitment. The Lord, and the Lord alone, must hold their hearts.

Promise (v. 3d)

The final point of Samuel's gospel on this occasion supports the three preceding imperatives. It is the promise,

"... and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines" (v. 3d).

Now we learn something else about the twenty-year period, or at least the most recent part of it. The Philistine threat had not been suppressed. The Philistines continued to menace Israel. If the previous history of this people is taken seriously, we may suppose that their sufferings at the hands of the Philistines had a great deal to do with the fact that now, at last, they were "lamenting after the LORD" (v. 2).

That previous history is the key to understanding what was going on. The Lord gave Israel over to their enemies as judgment for their apostasy (see Judges 2:11-15). The Philistines, therefore, had been the instrument of God's judgment on Israel.

The gospel Samuel proclaimed that day was a simple but wonderful promise: return to the Lord with your whole heart (which will mean putting away your pagan gods and setting your heart on the Lord alone), and he will save you from your enemies and from judgment.

Israel's Response (v. 4)

According to verse 4 Israel obeyed Samuel's gospel:

"So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the LORD only" (v. 4).

This was a remarkably important moment for the people of Israel. We will miss the importance if we overlook the more than twenty years of apostasy that preceded it. At last that era was brought to an end.

I have been calling Samuel's message "Samuel's gospel" because the response of Israel that day will have its echo in the experience of Christian people. Paul later described that experience in terms that correspond strikingly to Israel's experience:

"you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10).

Israel: God's People Again (vv. 5-12)

This moment in Israel's history was so important that the summary description in verses 3, 4 is now elaborated in the details of verses 5-12.

Israel at Mizpah (vv. 5, 6)

Samuel summoned a great assembly of all Israel at Mizpah. Mizpah was a city in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin (Joshua 18:11, 26). It will not be long before this narrative takes a particular interest in the tribe, land, and one particular family of Benjamin (see 1 Samuel 9:1, 4, 16, 21; 10:2, 20, 21; 13:2, 15, 16; 14:16; 22:7). However, at this point Mizpah was already a place where Israel had gathered on a significant and solemn occasion. In the last three chapters of the book of Judges there is the dreadful account of the crime of Gibeah and the war that broke out between Benjamin and the rest of the Israelite tribes. Mizpah was the place where all the tribes (except Benjamin) assembled "to the LORD" to determine what to do (Judges 20:1, 3).

The Intercessor (v. 5)

Samuel called this assembly in circumstances as dire as those of the earlier assembly. Israel's future as God's people was at stake.

"Then Samuel said, 'Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you'" (v. 5).

Israel needed an intercessor. The relationship with the Lord had been broken because they had departed from him and gone after other gods. They had provoked him to anger and had come to understand that they could not stand before him. After twenty years of this situation, God provided, in the person of Samuel, an intercessor for his people.

The difference it made for Israel to have an intercessor able to do what they plainly could not do—namely, effectively pray for themselves—cannot be overstated. In verse 8 the people will beg Samuel to keep praying for them. A little later Samuel would underline his responsibility to pray for the people of Israel with the words,

"far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you" (1 Samuel 12:23).

The Repentant Sinners (v. 6a)

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." (v. 6a)

The pouring of water and the fasting were both expressions of the people's repentance, which was also expressed there in words. The actions may be best seen not so much as symbolic rituals, but as real acts of self-denial as the people turned from their self-centered ways back to the Lord.

The words are clear. The cause of Israel's troubles over these past twenty years and more was at last recognized and acknowledged:

"We have sinned against the LORD."

The Judge (v. 6b)

Samuel's role in all this is summed up in these interesting terms:

"And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah" (v. 6b).

While Samuel's "judging" the people may well include what follows, it is right to see this sentence as a summary of what he had done up to this point. He had called Israel back to the Lord and prayed for them. This is not what the word "judged" usually means in English, but the Hebrew word is used in the Old Testament for precisely this. Samuel set things right in Israel by his words to the people from God and by his words to God for the people.

This statement draws our attention to the contrast between Eli's failed leadership and, at this point, Samuel's effective leadership. Eli "judged" Israel for forty years, and at the end of it, all the glory had departed from Israel (1 Samuel 4:18, 22). At Mizpah Samuel had "judged" Israel, and the glory had returned. They were God's people again.

Israel and the Philistines (vv. 7-9)

It took no time at all for this new situation to be put to the test. Very quickly the people of Israel found themselves in precisely the position they had been in some twenty years earlier at Ebenezer. They faced the hostility of their old enemy again. The outcome this time, however, would be very different.

Philistine Threat (v. 7a)

Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. (v. 7a)

Our last glimpse of the five lords of the Philistines in the narrative was as they made their way back to Ekron after witnessing the return of the ark (1 Samuel 6:16). But that was twenty years ago! We have already heard indications that in those twenty years, or at least in recent times, the Philistines had again been menacing Israel. Now, however, with "all Israel" gathered at Mizpah (v. 5), the Philistines had the opportunity for a decisive strike. The situation was very like that twenty years earlier when "the Philistines drew up in line against Israel" (1 Samuel 4:2).

Israelite Fear (v. 7b)

No doubt the people of Israel remembered all too well that earlier occasion: "And when the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines" (v. 7b).

Paradoxically, on the earlier occasion it had been the Philistines who were afraid (1 Samuel 4:7). In the accounts of both of the battles at Aphek/Ebenezer there is no indication that the Israelites were afraid of their adversary, although events proved that they had every reason to be. On this occasion we notice at least this difference in the people of Israel. They were afraid.

I do not think that it is reading too much into the account to suggest that there was a new humility in Israel now. The earlier confidence can now be seen to have been presumption. They now knew better—and they were afraid.

Samuel's Prayer (vv. 8, 9b)

Notice now the response of the people to their fear: "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'" (v. 8).

The similarity to and difference from the earlier response to the Philistine threat is striking. Twenty years earlier they had said, "Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD here from Shiloh, that he may come among us and save us from the hand of our enemies" (1 Samuel 4:3). The hoped-for outcome was the same—that God would save them from the Philistines. The obvious difference between the two occasions lay in the means by which the people hoped this result would be brought about. Twenty years earlier they proposed bringing the ark from Shiloh. The outcome was the opposite of what was hoped for. Now they begged Samuel to cry out to the Lord "our God" for them.

We now understand that in chapter 4 the people, under the influence of their apostate priesthood, had departed from following the Lord and had pursued other gods. In chapter 4 the Israelites did not call the Lord "our God"! Calling for the ark in that situation was a preposterous arrogance. They were expecting the Lord to honor his covenant with them, even though they had broken it. No wonder the whole thing led to disaster.

Now, however, at Mizpah the people have returned to the Lord. They have obeyed Samuel's gospel and now asked him to cry out to the Lord "our God" for them. God's people—when they are God's people—can expect him to hear their cries. "So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD" (v. 9a).

Once again the contrast to the situation in chapter 4 is stark. It was the contempt shown by Hophni and Phinehas toward the Lord's offering (1 Samuel 2:17) that began the sequence of events that led to the disaster of chapters 4-6. Samuel's intercession for the people began with the sacrifice that acknowledged and provided cleansing for the people's sins. "And Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel..." (v. 9b). The intercessor interceded.

The Lord's Answer (v. 9c)

The difference from the earlier occasion, twenty years previously, is expressed in two words in Hebrew (though it takes five in English): "... and the LORD answered him" (v. 9c).

This is an extraordinary moment. In the story that 1 Samuel tells, this is the first time that the Lord has acted positively toward Israel or an Israelite since chapter 1, verse 19 when he heard and answered Hannah's prayer and Samuel was born! Now, after all these years, he heard and answered Samuel's prayer, and Israel was delivered.

The Philistines, Israel, and the Lord (vv. 10, 11)

The details of that deliverance (that is, the Lord's answer to Samuel's cry) are now elaborated, and we see the relationship between the Lord and his people restored to its proper state.

The Threat (v. 10a)

The threat took shape at the very time of the burnt offering: "As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel" (v. 10a).

The contrast to the earlier occasion continues to be drawn. Samuel's proper offering of the burnt offering is utterly different from the corrupt sacrificial practices of the earlier time. The Philistines drawing near to attack Israel in these circumstances is therefore very different from their earlier assaults.

But the Lord... (v. 10b)

The Lord's answer came unmistakably:

But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were routed before Israel. (v. 10b)

It was just as Hannah had said: "The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken in pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven" (1 Samuel 2:10).

The situation that had prevailed in chapter 4 was exactly reversed. Then Israel had been "defeated before the Philistines." Now the Philistines were "defeated before Israel." In both cases the expression used ("defeated before") alludes to the fact that the defeat was God's doing. In chapter 4 God was acting in judgment against his apostate people. In chapter 7 he was acting in deliverance of his repentant people.

Victory (v. 11)

The contrasting outcome is filled out with a description of the Israelite victory: "And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them, as far as below Beth-car" (v. 11).

How very different from the time when every man of Israel had fled, and "there was a very great slaughter" among them (1 Samuel 4:10)!

The Gospel Rock (v. 12)

In case anyone has missed the connections and contrasts we have been observing between these events and the horrors of twenty years previously, Samuel made the link clear and permanent.

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." (v. 12)

While it is possible, it seems unlikely that this Ebenezer is the same as the Ebenezer of 1 Samuel 4:1. That location seems too far north. Giving this memorial stone the name of the earlier locality, however, and drawing attention to the meaning of the name underlines the reversal that had taken place. The earlier Ebenezer had a terribly ironic name. At "stone of help" Israel had *not* been helped! Now, however, the new Ebenezer stood as a testimony to the Lord's help, which was once again enjoyed by Israel.

Samuel's words of explanation have a curious ambiguity, as though he had said, "So far the Lord has helped us." This may be understood spatially ("As far as *this place* the Lord has helped us") or temporally ("Until now the Lord has helped us"). The former sense is straightforward: the Lord had helped Israel all the way from Mizpah to this stone. The second sense is suggestive. The Lord had helped Israel so far—but what of the future? Will Israel and the Lord continue into the future as we have seen them in chapter 7, or will the situation of chapter 4 somehow return?

Victory And Peace (vv. 13-17)

These questions will have to wait for the following chapters. At this point our writer provides us with an extravagant description of the outcome of these dramatic events, which (for reasons I will explain) I will call Israel's justification and Israel's sanctification.

Israel's Justification (vv. 13, 14)

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. 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. (vv. 13, 14)

The great enemy of Israel was subdued and kept from Israelite territory "all the days of Samuel." In the light of ensuing events this seems to refer only to the days of Samuel's exclusive leadership of the nation. Even then it might be seen as a simplification of the situation. The point being made is clear, however. After Mizpah the enemy was defeated. What the Philistines had taken from Israel was recovered. The Philistines were no longer a cause of fear in Israel. The indigenous Canaanite peoples ("the Amorites") also ceased to be a threat, perhaps because of Israel's supremacy over their common enemy. Israel enjoyed, in other words, a period of peace, the likes of which had not been known for a very long time.

This is what God did for Israel. They could hold their heads high again—not because of their virtue or strength (don't forget the last twenty years)—but because of what the Lord their God had done *for* them.

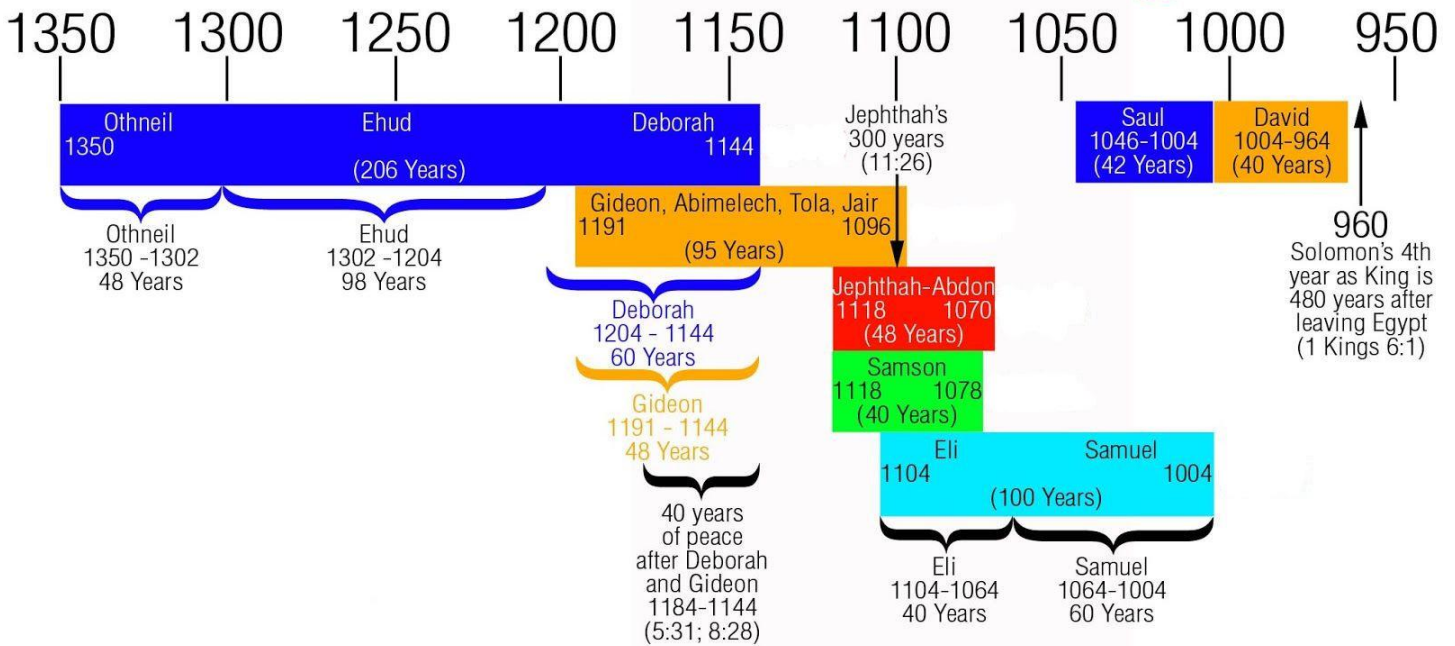
That is why I have called this Israel's *justification*. I do not want the term to be pressed too far, but there is a similarity here to our justification in Jesus Christ. Our enemy has been defeated. This is what God has done *for* us. We can hold our heads high—not because of our own virtue or strength

(you don't need twenty years of life to learn that)—but because of what the Lord our God has done for us in the victory of Jesus on the cross.

Israel's Sanctification (vv. 15-17)

Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went on a circuit year by year to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah. And he judged Israel in all these places. 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. (vv. 15-17)

Chronology of Judges Timeline
 The five Indivisible Units of Chronology



Samuel's "judging" was presumably like the judging we have seen in this chapter: calling Israel to wholehearted devotion to the Lord alone and to put away pagan ways, interceding for them, offering sacrifices for their sins, as well as a more general administration of justice.

In other words, with the enemy defeated, Samuel's job was to lead Israel in righteousness. That is why I have called this Israel's *sanctification*, because again Israel's experience is a shadow of our own. With our enemy defeated, it is time for righteousness of life.

First Samuel 7 has brought us to a climactic moment in the story that this book has to tell. It is a high point in the history of Israel, when Israel became again what Israel was meant to be.

The chapter has displayed the kind of leader that Israel actually needed. Their need was not for a great military hero or genius. God had demonstrated unambiguously that he could deal with their enemies without such a champion. Their need was not for a brilliant political giant who could organize the nation efficiently. Israel's need could not be met by management abilities. Israel's great need was a leader who would bring them back to God. They needed a leader who would lead them in righteousness. They needed a Samuel. And God gave them Samuel!

As we read on into chapter 8 we will see that the lessons of this moment were not remembered well in Israel. But we should pause and see that we learn them. If we have learned well from Israel's

experience, I hope that we can see how these chapters point us clearly to the leader we need. He is the one sent by God to bring us back to God, to intercede for us, to lead us in righteousness. The Lord Jesus Christ is the leader of whom Samuel was a faint shadow.

What a great day it was for Israel when God gave them Samuel!

What a brilliant day it is for those of us who have Jesus as our Lord!