

## Unit 9, Session 4: Freedom from the Philistines

**Big Picture Question:** How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

**Memory Verse:** Philippians 4:19 – And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

**Christ Connection:** Samuel called the people to turn away from false gods and to worship God, and God gave them victory over their enemies. God calls us to turn away from sin and trust in Jesus who gives us victory over our enemies of sin and death.

### **Bible Passage: 1 Samuel 7**

Find the passages together in your Bibles and read through them together. You could also read the paraphrase of all these passages below in blue. For younger kids, you may want to just read the bolded portions.

Israel learned firsthand the consequences of abandoning the Lord for false gods. Because of their persistent sin, they lost right standing with God. They felt this loss by suffering at the hands of their enemies, especially the Philistines. Though the Lord was with Israel and caused the Philistines to return the ark to the Israelites (1 Samuel 6), the people of Israel did not immediately return to the Lord. After the ark was returned, it still took another twenty years for Israel to lament after the Lord (1 Sam 7:1-2). When Samuel hears of their desire for repentance, he has to instruct the people to put away their false idols and serve only the Lord God with all of their heart (vv. 3-4). In what seems to be an act of true repentance, Israel responds by acknowledging their sin, pouring out offerings, and fasting (vv. 5-6). Though their gathering alerted the Philistines and raised the threat of additional suffering, the Lord intervened on behalf of his repentant people. They had finally acknowledged that they were helpless to fight the Philistines without the Lord. Samuel prayed and offered sacrifices on the behalf of the people and the Lord rescued them from their enemies (vv. 7-14).

The Israelites had finally come to the understanding that the Lord was to be their help. They had regained possession of the ark of the covenant, but this time they knew better than to assume they could manipulate it. The Israelites lamented and longed for God himself, they acknowledged their sin against God, and they sought help from God alone with Samuel acting as a mediator and judge. Their right relationship had been restored because they sought God himself, not a trinket or a token that they could wield in their favor. The evidence of their right relationship with the Lord's action against the Philistines for his people (v. 13), the restoration of Israelite territory (v. 14), and peace with the Amorites (v. 14). We too must seek God for himself. We find him when we come to him in honest repentance, acknowledging our sin and his power alone to save through his son. Jesus acts as mediator and judge, and our evidence of right relationship with God is the promised seal of his Holy Spirit living and working in us.

**Twenty years after the ark was returned from the Philistines, the Israelites began to cry out for God.**

**Samuel told them, "If you are returning to worship the Lord, then you must stop worshipping the false gods from the nations around us. If you dedicate yourselves to worshipping only the Lord, then He will rescue you from the Philistines." The people obeyed and removed the statues and poles that were used to worship the false gods, and they only worshiped the Lord.**

**Then Samuel said, "Gather all the people, and I will pray to the Lord on your behalf." They fasted that day and confessed their sins to God.**

**When the Philistines heard that all of Israel had gathered in one place, they decided to attack. The Israelites were afraid and said to Samuel, "Don't stop crying out to the Lord our God for us. Ask him to save us from the Philistines!"**

**Samuel made a burnt offering to the Lord and cried out to Him, and the Lord answered him. As the Philistines approached to fight Israel, the Lord thundered loudly against them and made them confused. Israel defeated the Philistines, chasing them away as they retreated.**

**Samuel set up a large stone to remember what happened that day. He said, "The Lord has helped us to this point."**

**Israel took back the land and cities that the Philistines had taken from them, and the Philistines did not invade Israel again. Samuel led the Israelites as their judge, and the Lord's hand was against the Philistines all of Samuel's life.**

**If you or your child have questions about what it looks like to follow Jesus in salvation or baptism, Pastor Sam would love to talk with you! Please feel free to contact him at [siever@lenexabaptist.com](mailto:siever@lenexabaptist.com).**