

LET GOD ARISE!

*Revival
Prayer Guide #5
Rev. Dr. Don L. Davis*



Cry to the Lord for Victory: Revival under Samuel

1 Samuel 7.1-13

Come, Thou Fount

Robert Robinson and John Wyeth

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
Mount of Thy redeeming love.

Here I raise my Ebenezer;
Here by Thy great help I've come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

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1 Sam. 7.1-13 - 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. [2] From the day that the ark was lodged at Kiriath-jearim, a long time passed, some twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. [3] And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, “If you are returning to the Lord with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the Lord and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” [4] So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the Lord only. [5] Then Samuel said, “Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you.” [6] 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.” And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah. [7] Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. [8] 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.” [9] So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. And Samuel cried out to the Lord for Israel, and the Lord answered him. [10] As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the Lord thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were routed before Israel. [11] And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them, as far as below Beth-car. [12] 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.” [13] 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.



Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV)

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2 Sam. 24.14 - Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man."

1 Sam. 12.19-24 - And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the Lord your God, that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king." [20] And Samuel said to the people, "Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. [21] And do not turn aside after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, for they are empty. [22] For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself. [23] Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you, and I will instruct you in the good and the right way. [24] Only fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you."

Isa. 62.1 - For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch.

Isa. 62.6-7 - On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who put the Lord in remembrance, take no rest, [7] and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth.

James 5.16 - Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

Ps. 50.15 - and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.



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Ps. 99.6 - Moses and Aaron were among his priests, Samuel also was among those who called upon his name. They called to the Lord, and he answered them.

Gen. 22.14 - So Abraham called the name of that place, “The Lord will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.”

Exod. 17.15 - And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The Lord is my Banner.

Deut. 32.36 - For the Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free.

Ps. 22.4-5 - In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. [5] To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

2 Cor. 1.8-10 - For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. [9] Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. [10] He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.

Exod. 34.6 - The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.”



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Ps. 86.5 - For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.

Ps. 103.8-14 - The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. [9] He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. [10] He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. [11] For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; [12] as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. [13] As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. [14] For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.

Ps. 119.156 - Great is your mercy, O Lord; give me life according to your rules.

Mic. 7.18 - Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love.

Ps. 71.6 - Upon you I have leaned from before my birth; you are he who took me from my mother's womb. My praise is continually of you.

Ps. 71.17 - O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.

Isa. 46.3-4 - Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from before your birth, carried from the womb; [4] even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save.



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Acts 26.22 - To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: [23] that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles. ■

SOMETIMES, WE just don't get it.

In the history of God dealing with his people, we have evidence of God's people being willing to suffer because they fail to respond to his pleas and direction. The revival that takes place under Samuel is such a time. In a time of national defeat, spiritual decline, and communal wandering, the children of Israel finally came to a place of brokenness before God. But, it didn't come easy.

According to the testimony of Scripture, it took the children of Israel some *twenty years* to get their hearts in sync with the Spirit of God. Even after the Philistines returned the ark to Israel in Kirjath-jearim, it took the people of God *twenty years* to acknowledge their need for God and his grace. *Twenty years*. That is a long time to be in a holding pattern, to be in a point of indecision, to be unclear about one's allegiances. Yet it is plain it took the children of Israel this period of time before they began to thaw from their spiritual deep freeze. While it also seems clear that in the years that followed, even a longer period occurred before the people of Israel finally removed the ark from Kirjath-jearim (cf. 2 Samuel 6.1-19; 1 Chron. 13.1-14), it was the twenty years that elapsed before the Israelites recognized their need for the Lord.

When they did, they admitted the whole truth about themselves. Before their national repentance, even the capture of the ark didn't bring them out of their spiritual slumber; there is no evidence in the text that they were



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affected by it either way—it didn't seem to matter for a long time whether they lost the ark or recovered it from the Philistines.

Yet, after the twenty years, the text tells us that *all the house of Israel* “lamented after the Lord”—they were finally in a position to admit their wrong, to mourn their indifference, to seek God’s authority, and resubmit to his will. Through the powerful prophetic and judging influence of Samuel, they finally were brought to a place of being willing to admit their sin, renounce their adultery with foreign gods, and recommit themselves to the true worship of Yahweh. The text reveals the heart of the matter:

1 Sam. 7.3-6 - And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, “If you are returning to the Lord with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the Lord and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” [4] So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the Lord only. [5] Then Samuel said, “Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you.” [6] 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.” And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah.

Samuel clearly lays out the condition for spiritual renewal and community victory. Return to the Lord with all your heart, put away the foreign gods among you, and direct your heart to the Lord for worship and service to him alone. If this is done, God will manifest his victory in the midst of his people.

Here we have the definition of revival in its clearest, cleanest, and most concise form. All forms of revival are nothing more than *the rediscovery of God as the Center and Circumference of our entire lives, both as individuals and as communities of faith*. God is merciful, faithful, compassionate, and



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will never break his covenant promise. He is poised, ready and willing, to act on the sureties of his promise if his people merely acknowledge him as their source and stronghold. When they do, even if they have failed to know of his leading for decades, he will faithfully resume his plan and bring victory and definition of revival: they were then brought, doubtless by the influence of Samuel's exhortations, to renounce idolatry, and to return to the national worship of the true God.

Through the brokenness and humility of God's people and the wise judgship of Samuel, God brought about a time of dramatic spiritual renewal and national transformation. They renounced their idols, humbly admitted their transgression, and opened themselves up to the Lord's cleansing power. They reestablished faith in Yahweh in a sacred convocation at Mizpeh, and symbolically testified to their confession of sin. They allowed God's chosen representative, Samuel, to judge them—that is, to lead them in the ways of the Lord, and he demonstrated his merciful kindness to them by giving them his victory, and establishing peace in their midst. In a wonderfully ironic twist, their repentance and crying to the Lord resulted in his giving them his brilliant victory which provided them with a secure peace for *twenty years*, as well as them being restored with the territory that the Philistines had taken beforehand.

As a visible sign of their drawing water, and pouring it out before the Lord (i.e., a sign of their pouring out their hearts in repentance before God) Samuel erected on an open spot a pillar which would testify of God's help and his intervening victory. The name given to the pillar was "Eben-ezer," a title that scholars believe was written on its face. Its meaning is clear, and can give us direction this next month of intercession on behalf of the cities of the world:



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1 Sam. 7.12 - 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."

"Till now the Lord has helped us." What a clear statement of the past, an affirmation of the present, and an anticipation of the future. As we seek to advance the Kingdom of God among the poorest of the poor in the cities around the world, we can count on with our whole hearts the kindness and help of the Lord. He knows our frame, our weakness, and our need. He will not abandon nor forsake us. We can trust his word, for it can never be broken, never go unfulfilled, and cannot be ignored. Our God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is God, and will always come to the aid of those who in humility and brokenness admit their need, cry out to him, and place themselves in a position to be used again for his high purpose.

Let's not take twenty years to get it. Till now the Lord has helped us, and by faith, we can count on him helping us again, if we humble ourselves before his mighty power. Thank God, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13.8). He will never forsake us if we only cry out to him in faith.

This month, let us readily and earnestly plead the mercies of the one who stands ready to help us if we renounce our idols, admit our sin, and pour out our cries to him. He will help us if we cry out to him alone. ■

Example of Crying Out to the Lord in Openness and Humility: Our Lord Jesus

Heb. 5.7-9 - In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. [8] Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.



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[9] And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.

Biblical Principle of the Month

Revival occurs when God's people readily admit their neediness before him, when they renounce all false gods, confess their sin, and yield themselves afresh to his Spirit and to his leaders under his authority. Revival is simply the recognition that only through the help of God can his work be done and his kingdom advanced.

Deut. 33.29 - Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord, the shield of your help, and the sword of your triumph! Your enemies shall come fawning to you, and you shall tread upon their backs.

Ps. 84.11 - For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.

Ps. 115.9-11 - O Israel, trust in the Lord! He is their help and their shield. [10] O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord! He is their help and their shield. [11] You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord! He is their help and their shield.

2 Cor. 1.8-10 - For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. [9] Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. [10] He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.



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