

Sermon Title: Raising Ebenezer
Preacher: Rev. Dr. Kanyere Eaton
Scripture: 1 Samuel 7:4-12 (NIV)
March 17, 2024

Scripture:

⁴ So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the Lord only.

⁵ Then Samuel said, "Assemble all Israel at Mizpah, and I will intercede with the Lord for you."⁶ 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." Now Samuel was serving as leader of Israel at Mizpah.

⁷ When the Philistines heard that Israel had assembled at Mizpah, the rulers of the Philistines came up to attack them. When the Israelites heard of it, they were afraid because of the Philistines. ⁸ 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."⁹ Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and sacrificed it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. He cried out to the Lord on Israel's behalf, and the Lord answered him.

¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ The men of Israel rushed out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, slaughtering them along the way to a point below Beth Kar.

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

Sermon Notes:

On this church anniversary Sunday, Rev. Eaton began by declaring that during its 138 years of history Ebenezer Baptist Church has become the fulfillment of a plan that was hatched in heaven. Through powerful pastoral leadership, including our pastor, Rev. Dr. Raphael G. Warnock, EBC has cause to testify, "To God be the glory!"

Similarly, in today's Scripture God's people had cause to testify to the glorious power God exercised on their behalf. Israel had been confronted by Philistine enemies on the battlefield and by secret enemies in the form of idols undercutting their worship of Yahweh (the Lord). Samuel, their priest/prophet/judge brings the people to repentance but as they return to the Lord the Philistines felt threatened and initiated overwhelming military action.

Samuel cried out to the Lord. The Lord heard his cry and responded with peals of thunder dramatically routing the Philistines in a state of panic. Samuel erects a memorial stone (an Ebenezer) as testimony to the spectacular victory accomplished by God

Rev. Eaton urged us to do likewise and raise our personal "Ebenezers", our own stones of hope and memory as our testimony.

Sermon Points:

1. By raising our Ebenezer, we testify to the power of God.
2. Raising our Ebenezer reminds us that if God did it back then, God can do it again.
3. Faith comes by hearing; therefore, our testimony builds faith in us and in others
4. The Ebenezer stone is the testimony that gives us strength to trust God in our future battles.

Discussion Questions

1. What “*power(s)*” can you identify that are ***not*** God but you turn to sometimes?
2. What did you learn about God in this scripture/sermon?
3. Share a testimony about something spectacular God has done in your life.
4. Share how someone’s testimony has strengthened your faith.
5. When it comes to testifying to the power of God, how is Ebenezer Baptist Church doing?
How can we do even better?