

1 Samuel 7:15 (John Brereton) 214815

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First Samuel Chapter 7 and beginning at verse 50. And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life, and he went from year to year in circuit to battle, and Gilgal and Mispa. And judged Israel in all those places, and his return was to Rama. For there was his house. And there he judged Israel, and there he built an altar. Unto the Lord, I'm sure, dear young people, the story of Samuel is one that you have read before and enjoyed very much. And it is not my purpose this afternoon to try to go over the life of Samuel. But what I would like to talk about for a little while. Are these four places? That Samuel made it his habit. To visit. We find that his home, his house was at Rama. And perhaps if we have time at the end, we will go into that name a little bit more. What's sufficient to say at this point that the word Rama means high place? And I think it is particularly lovely that Samuel should dwell in that which speaks of the high place. You know, dear young people, that's where the Lord Jesus wants you to dwell and where he wants me to dwell. He wants our whole to be in the high place. You remember the story of the man? I believe he was a Shoemaker, if I remember rightly, who had the sign in his window. Of his store and it said simply working below, living above. Well, dear young people, that's what the Lord wants for you and me to be working below but living above, living in the high places for the heavenly places in Christ Jesus in the book of Ephesians that we've had mentioned from time to time during these meetings. We have been reminded that we are seeing. In the purposes and counsels of God, as seated in Christ in the heavenly places, and that is. Truth of God as He has revealed it to us in His Word. But as far as it being practically true? Everything around us in this world is designed by the God and the Prince of this world to drag us down so that we don't live, we don't actually live and enjoy the high places, the preciousness of the truth of God, that which has been spoken of in these meetings as the promised land. Enjoy it all dear young people. The Lord Jesus wants you to be happy. He wants you to be happy, He wants your life to be a happy and fruitful one. He wants you to be the happiest person in you, on your street, in your city, and he has done everything possible to enable you to be here in this world and yet living in the high places. Well, we find that in the case of Samuel, his living at Rama. Was not by accident. For many here the history of Samuel has been repeated. We find, if we go back to the first chapter of Samuel, that Samuel had. A godly father, a man by name of El Cannon, who went up yearly to Shiloh to worship. He was a godly Ephraimite. But we find out also that Samuel had a godly praying mother. And all how many there are here that can do, or perhaps some that should and do not. Thank God for the privilege of having a mother that has spent hours upon hours upon their knees crying to the Lord for you that your life might be a happy.

Fruitful life, not a life wasted and thrown away. Upon the things of this world, but a life, dear young people, that will be one of joy here, and of reward upon well. We find that El Cannon and Hannah's prayers were answered in the case of Samuel, We're told in the 4th chapter, I believe it is, that there was a time when Samuel knew not the Lord. But the time came. When the Lord revealed himself to him, and I trust that's true of each one of the dear young people here this afternoon. What we have to say is directed particularly to those who know the Lord, to whom the Lord has revealed himself. Who can say the Lord Jesus Christ is my Savior? Oh dear young people, is that true? Have you come to that point in your life where you know? No, on the authority of the Word of God, that the Lord Jesus Christ is your Savior. That He has paid your debt, redeemed you to himself, That you belong to Him. Well, if you'll turn back with me for a moment in Samuel. To the 19th verse of the third chapter it says in Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground, and all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord. Thou Hannah had come, and in faith had presented Samuel before the Lord at Shiloh, and Samuel was growing up. And it was clear that the Lord's intent was that Samuel should be a profit of the war. If I could just spend a moment to address a few words to those who are parents here this afternoon, and I dress my own heart in particular, particularly those of us who have younger children. You know, dear beloved brethren, the Lord Jesus has given you and I a wondrous privilege, and that privilege is to raise those children up for Him. It has struck me very much of how we find that when Hannah prayed for Samuel, she mentioned in her prayer in the first chapter that the razor would not come upon his head. She would raise him as a Nazarite, and the Lord intended him. For a prophet. Would you just keep this place in Samuel for a moment and turn over to the book of Amos for a moment? Amos chapter 2, Amos chapter 2 and verse 9. Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the Cedars, and he was strong as the oaks. Yet I destroyed his fruit from above and his roots from beneath. Also, I brought you up from the land of Egypt and LED you 40 years through the wilderness. To possess the land of the Amorite. And I raised up of your sons for prophets. Of your young men for Nazarites, is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord. He gave the Nazarites wine to drink and commanded the prophet saying prophecy not. Beloved brethren, I believe you and I, as I'm sure we would all agree, have been given. A privilege and a responsibility to bring our children up for the Lord. And we find that in the book of Amos. There we're told that the Lord intended he raised up of their children for Nazarites and for prophets. But the parents had not been faithful. They had fed the Nazarite strong drink and they had said to the prophets prophecy not. All my friends, dear beloved brethren. Those children that the Lord has committed to your care and to mine. Careful, we must be. What an exercise we should have, I should have as to what we feed our children.

What we allow in our home, what they're allowed to see. What their hearts are allowed to be occupied with, the Lord intends them for Nazarites and for prophets. Are we raising them as NASA rights and as prophets? There were those who said to those whom the Lord intended for profits, prophecy not do we find ourselves sometimes, and I say this to my own heart. Discouraging our children from being faithful because it becomes a reproach to ourselves. Well, we find in the case of Samuel his parents. Raised Samuel as a Nazarite. A prophet and the Lord claimed Samuel, and the time came when he fulfilled that role that he had been raised for as a Nazarite and a prophet. And so we come to this place in First Samuel Chapter 7, where Samuel is now established. As the judge in Israel, and he's living in that which speaks of the high places. What was so unusual about that? Well, you know, what is to me so beautiful is that it was the place where his mother and father lived. They had lived in Rama, and that's where Samuel chose to live too. All beloved brethren again. Are we choosing to live in the

high places? Our desire, you know, the children had often been said children are great imitators and they can see through us very quickly and it should be a very real exercise to us as to whether we are living. In the high places, Elkanah and Hannah live there. You know Hannah, her name means grace. Grace. What a lovely thing, a praying mother whose name means grace and their dwelling at Rama, living in those high places themselves. We find the day comes when Samuel chooses to live it around. Well, then, we find that in the circuit that he follows, he goes first of all to battle. Battle. The House of God. I'd like you to turn with me now back to the book of Genesis. First of all, we'll look at Genesis chapter 12, Genesis chapter 12 and the seventh verse. Lord appeared unto Abram, and said unto thy seed, will I give this land? And there he built an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the West, and Hai on the east. And there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South. And there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there. For the famine was grievous in the land. The 13th chapter. And Abram went up out of Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him. Into the South. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver and gold, and he went on his journey from the South, even to Bethel, onto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai, onto the place of the altar which he had made there at the 1st. And there Abram called on the name of the Lord. And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. The 11th verse, then Lot chose him, all the plain of Jordan. Now if you would turn over to the Genesis chapter 27, sorry, Genesis chapter 28 and verse 15. The Lord speaking in a vision to Jacob. And he says, And behold, I am with thee, and I will and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land, for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place? This is none other but the House of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel. Then if you go on to the 35th chapter for a moment. And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to battle.

And dwell there, and make there an altar unto God that appeared unto thee, when thou fledst from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him. Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments. And let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress. And was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears. And Jacob hid them under the oak, which was by Shechem. And they journeyed the ninth verse. And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Peyton Arum and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob. Thy name shall not be called anymore Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name, and he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty, Be fruitful and multiply. A nation, and a company of nations shall be of thee, and king shall come out of thy loins. And the land which I gave Abram and Isaac to thee, I will give it to thy seed. After thee will I give the land. And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone. And he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him. Bethel. The study of this place called Bethel is a whole subject in itself. But I would just draw your attention particularly to the fact that there was certain things connected with battle, one of which was a heap of stones. We'll find as we go through these names, if the Lord gives us the time here, that in the connection with Bethel and in connection with Gilgal and in connection with mitzvah, in each case there is a stone, a heap of stones connected with them. We find that in the case of Abraham, dear young people, it was his joy to go to battle. The House of God to get into the presence of God. All beloved young people, the enemy of your soul and mind wants to rob us of our enjoyment of the high places, of being able to dwell at Rama in the high places, in the enjoyment of heaven before we get there and our first recourse. Is to get into the presence of God. We find in the case of Abram, when he went down into Egypt, when he was restored in his soul, he went back to Bethel. Back to the House of God, Back to the Presence. Of the God that he knew, but. Didn't choose to remain at Vessel. You know, it's very striking that when Locke chose Sodom and went down into Sodom and finally he loses everything. Sodom is destroyed and everything Lot had set his heart on was gone. The Angel says to Lot flee to the mountain. I'll get back into the presence of God, Lot. But Lot chose the little town of Zor. He was afraid. Afraid to get back into the presence of God. Abram delighted to dwell at Bethel. We find when we come to the. Case of the in the 28th chapter. Jacob. Really departed on a journey after having connived to obtain the birthright that God had intended to give him anyway. And I have no doubt that Jacob had a bad conscience. When we find him there. And he sees in a vision that ladder reaching to heaven. And when he wakes up. His comment, dear young people, is to me a tragic 1. He says, surely the Lord is in this place. And then he says, This is a dreadful place, this is a dreadful place. What a tragedy it is, dear young people, when those who belong to God, those who have been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, having a bad conscience connected in some way or other with that which dishonours the Lord.

Refuse, and I say this to my own heart, it's a tragedy. Refuse to go to Bethel, the House of God, and to get into God's presence about it. There is no doubt that there is that which is in keeping. With being at Bethel, we find in the 35th chapter when the Lord says to Jacob arise, go to Bethel, Jacob could see right away. That that which he had allowed in his house. That which we had allowed in his home and amongst his family was out of keeping with being in the presence of God at Bethel. And so he commands them to put away their idols, to put away those things. That were robbing him of the enjoyment of the presence of God. All beloved young people, Satan wants to have your heart occupied with idols too. He wants to occupy your heart with anything that will keep you. From going to Bethel and enjoying the presence of God. I'm sure there is a collective sense connected with Bethel in the House of God, but I believe there is a very real personal individual instruction for us connected with it, and that is to personally, privately detached from all others. To spend time, dear young people, in the presence of God. To get into the presence of God at Bethel, the House of God. If we're going on with that which gives us a bad conscience and we refuse to judge it, we may indeed find it a dreadful place. We may indeed find that we're not happy there in the presence of God, because God would speak to our consciences, Speak to my conscience. And the things which He allows speak to our conscience to give us to see that that which we are allowing is out of keeping with being in the presence of God. All beloved young people, you belong to Christ now. You're his. God claims you as his child. As he said to Jacob, He's never going to let you go until he's completed all of these plans for you, and that is to have you safely home in the glory. In the meantime, if you're going to enjoy, if you're going to have a happy, fruitful life for Christ here. You're going to have to go to bed and spend time in the presence of God. Spend time there. Find, like Abram, that it is a precious place, a place where there's an altar where you can offer Thanksgiving and praise and worship to the one who paid the cost through his own son to make you his own. Well, Abram, delighted to go to Bethel. Jacob first of all feared it, but he finally went, and it tells us there in that portion in. Genesis chapter 35 that when he went to Bethel, God appeared to him at Bethel. There he was reminded again of all that God's purpose for him, of all God's promises made to Abraham and to Isaac. Beloved young people, the Lord wants you to enjoy His company. And if you and I, if we're going on with anything, anything, dear young people, now that hinders us, holds us back from going to battle. It's costing us too

much. It's costing God too much. He's never going to let you go. No, He's going to take you safely home to glory. But oh, how much you lose. How much Jacob lost. In being away from. But to go to bed? Mean, dear young people, to put away that which is in our lives. That is a dishonor to Christ. You notice the next place they went to was Gilgal.

It turned back to Joshua Now for a moment, the 4th chapter of Joshua, we noticed that there was a heap of stones there that Jacob had raised at Bethel. Well, now we find that Gilgal, there's also a heap of stones, Joshua chapter 4 and verse 19. And the people came up out of Jordan on the 10th day of the first month, and in Campton, Gilgal in the east border of Jericho, and those 12 Stones which they took out of Jordan. Did Joshua pitch in Gilgal now if you look at the 5th chapter. The seventh verse. And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised, for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way. And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole. And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day. How dear young people. The next stop in Samuels journey. The next stop that took him in his journey that ended up back at Rama was to Gilda, the place that has been spoken of as the place of self judgment. And you know, dear young people, we never get right thoughts of ourselves until we first get into the presence of God. Until we first get into the presence of God. The first stop was Bethel. There was that in Jacob's life which he saw was obviously inconsistent with being in the presence of God, but that perfect that. Continuous, I should say that continuous self judgment that we need day by day. Dear young people, it will only be carried out effectually as we spend time in the presence of God. We find that at Gilgal there was a heap of stones, 12 Stones. Where had they come from? They had come from the bottom of the River Jordan. They could look at those stones and see that they had come out of death, come out of death, that they had been in the place of death under the waters of Jordan and has been raised up out of that and placed there on the shore at Gilgal. Dear young people, that's what you and I are. We are stones that have been raised up out of the place of death. We have gone under the waters of death with our blessed Savior, crucified with Him, and now raised with Him, and we can see ourselves as those who died with Him, who were in the place of death with Him, but have been raised dear young people, as we see ourselves thus. And risen with him, identified with a grave, glorified Savior. Now, dear young people, in the presence of God, in the presence of God, we are going to have the privilege of applying the knife to the flesh in the presence of God. You know, it is a sad thing. And I trust that each one will recognize that I speak to my own heart in these things. But to me, it is a tragedy when you hear. Real children of God, young people, sometimes, some of us sometimes that are not so young. You hear them saying, well, I don't really see any harm in that. I don't really see and I don't have a conscience about that. Well, beloved young people, if we spent more time in the presence of God, there would be more of a conscience about these things, more of a conscience about how we dress. How we act, what we say, where we go, who we're with. And the reason? The reason? That there is so little, I said to my own heart of applying the knife to the flesh is because we know so little of what it is to spend time at Bethel in the presence of God. Know so little of what it is to get into the presence of God and there have a right view of the flesh, and know and see clearly. That which needs to have the flesh applied to it. Well, we find in the case of Samuel, he first went to Bethel, a heap of stones there. He then went to Gilgal, a heap of stones there. And I would to God, dear young people, that I knew more of what it was to spend time at Bethel. For I know that if I did, I would know more of what it is to spend time at Gilgal.

And apply the knife to the flesh. The Lord has to give the grace for it. But beloved young people, the flesh, the flesh that will rob your soul. Of the enjoyment of the high place that the Lord wants you to enjoy. Will only be judged rightly. In the presence of God. We find the next place that Samuel went to was MISPA. Now if you turn back to I think it's the 31st chapter of Genesis for a moment, 31st chapter of Genesis, the 45th verse. And Jacob took a stone and set it up for a pillar. Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones. And they took stones and made in heap, and they did eat there upon the heap. And Laban called it Jigar Sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galid. And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee. This day therefore was the name of it called Ghalib and Mispa. For he said, The Lord watched between me and thee, when we are absent one from another, and then. Turn over to Samuel again and chapter Chapter 7, Chapter 7, the early part of where we've been reading, and the fifth verse, perhaps we should read from the third verse. And Samuel spake unto all the House of Israel, saying, if you do, return unto the Lord with all your hearts. Then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only, and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Balaam and Ashtaroth and serve the Lord only. And Samuel said, gather all Israel to mitzvah. And I will pray for you unto the Lord. In the seventh verse. And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mispa, the Lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistine. And Samuel took a suckling lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord. And Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the Lord thundered with a great Thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them, and they were smitten before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mesmer, and pursued the Philistines, and smoked them until they came under that car. Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Misbah and Shin, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying hitherto. Hath the Lord helped us? We find back there in the 31st chapter of Genesis that Label and Jacob were having their conference together. And we find that Jacob named the place galley, which means simply a heap of witness. There were the stones. This was to be a symbol of the agreement that they were reaching amongst themselves. You know, dear young people, it says. But it was also called mispa. Mispa means a watchtower. Well, we find here when we come to First Samuel, Chapter 7. That Israel has sinned and they have owned it. They have got into the presence of God. They have judged the rightly concerning their ways. They have owned before God. That they have sinned, they have cried to the Lord for deliverance, and the Lord has come in and delivered them. And they raise another stone, another stone between misperson and this stone is called Ebenezer. And it means simply hitherto hath the Lord help us? Here was the the symbol, the very. Storm that signified to them that the Lord had come in, in His goodness and delivered them. Beloved young people, the Lord would have you and I to go to Mispa. Oh, how often Satan would come in and seek to discourage us, discourage us with the way things are going, perhaps at home or in our family or in the assembly or at school or at work or whatever it is, and to get our eyes away and get our eyes. With the difficulties and the problems and the result is that we lose the high places, that is the enjoyment of them. We're not able to return to Rama. We find ourselves occupied with the things in this world, personal problems and difficulties that would rob us of what the Lord wants us to enjoy.

I would add not that the Lord does not want us to be exercised by that which He allows. There should be a very real exercise when the Lord allows that in our lives that He would use to speak to our hearts. But, beloved young people, not to be cast down by it, not to find ourselves so discouraged that we're leaving Rama, but instead raising an Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us? Now to me it is striking that of all means that they should have picked for this place. They should have picked Ebenezer. Because if you go back to the previous

chapter in Samuel, you will find that it was at Ebenezer that Israel suffered such a great defeat and lost the ark of God. The ark of God was taken captive at Ebenezer. But Samuel, Samuel in that very place where there had been a defeat. Now gives them to see that independence of the Lord there is a victory, and he puts a stone there and calls it by that very name of Ebenezer, so that when they go to Mispa they can look at a stone and say that's Ebenezer in there to have the Lord helped us not occupied with the other Ebenezer where they had known failure and defeat, but occupy seeing there the witness the stone before them. That reminded their hearts that the Lord had given them the victory. People, the Lord wants us to remember. He wants us to look back and remember all that the Lord has done. Has he ever failed us? Has there ever been a time in your life when the Lord failed you, when he failed to come in, in his own way, and in his own time, and work his miracle of grace in your life? Has there ever been an occasion in your life or mine where we could charge him with failure? You know the answer is not. We have to raise our Ebenezer and acknowledge hitherto hath the Lord helped us. But beloved young people, Misbah is more than that. It's more than simply looking back and saying the Lord's taking care of everything in the past. It's a watchtower. It's a place where we can look on to the future and see that all the way home the Lord has undertaken to provide everything in every circumstance that we need for His Lord. He would have us mouth the watchtower and see the land, see what's before us. We're going to be with Christ. Dear young people, you and I are going to be with Christ. We're on the verge on the very eve of His coming. Why is it we get so occupied with things here? I submit to your heart and mind. It's because we don't climb the Watchtower. We don't spend time at MISMA where we see what is before us to be with the Lord Jesus in glory. Someone quoted the verse in the meeting the other day. Where there is no vision, the people perish. Dear young people, you and I need vision. We want to look back and acknowledge the Lord has never failed us and to look ahead and know that all is secure. We're on our way home to glory. How am I going to live at Rama? How are you going to live at Rama? In the high places, enjoying heaven before we get there? By spending time at battle in the presence of God, where we will judge your right with the fleshies and judge it in the presence of God. Put away, put away that which robs our souls of the enjoyment of the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. And then climb the watchtower, spend time there, looking back and acknowledging all the Lord's good hand in his ways with us. And looking on to the glory and trusting Him for all that's to come. Well, there is also, we don't have time to touch on it now, but I would just mention that there is also a stone connected with Rama. You can research it for yourself if you choose to. But Rama is the same place, has the same meaning as the word Arimathea. And you know, dear young people, there was a man from Arimathea. A man called Joseph, a man as it were, from that place of Rama, and he had a stone. He had a rock and he hewed a sepulchre out of that rock. And today there's a stone, there's a stone connected with Rama, connected with Arimathea, with Joseph of Arimathea. There's a stone connected with that too. It's an empty tomb that bears witness to the fact that the Lord of glory is raised and gone back to glory that we're seeing seated in Him in the heavenly places. We're soon going to be with Him there. And in the meantime, the Lord would have us be in the enjoyment.

Beloved young people, you and I, in the enjoyment of heaven, before we get there, may we spend time at Bethel in the presence of God. May we spend time, beloved young people, acknowledging before God, but the flesh is and judging it in the presence of God and in the Watchtower, looking back and looking on. And the result will be. That will dwell at Rama. And enjoy heaven before we get there.

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