

A Reminder for the Future

1Samuel 7:12

Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

We tend to be forgetful. Even when we have experienced some dynamic or extraordinary event, one which we may have said we would never forget, its freshness and impact can diminish over time. Great historical events are often marked by placing a plaque or monument to preserve the memory of the event and be a constant reminder to people of its significance.

Today's verse tells us of the time when Samuel set up a stone as a reminder of God's miraculous deliverance. When Israel's archenemy the Philistines drew near to engage the unprepared people in battle, the LORD divinely intervened with roaring thunder, discomfiting the enemy. Emboldened by this profound help from the LORD, the men of Israel pursued and smote the Philistines. By placing a stone and naming it Eben-ezer which means *stone of help*, Samuel was reminding the Israelites of the power and timing of Jehovah's help. This was to give them confidence when future threats would arise that God would be very present in trouble. The stone of Eben-ezer stood as a reminder of God's ability and availability to deliver in time of need.

As believers, our archenemy the devil will also draw near to engage us in battle in our Christian walk. There will be daily skirmishes and greater conflicts that arise, troubling our souls and impeding our progress. Some of these battles enter the emotional or spiritual domain while others attack us physically. Our distress can range from small and pesky thoughts to aggressive physical assaults which can produce tormenting fear. As the devil draws near to devour, we can lose focus which cripples us. During these moments we must remember a time when God delivered us in the past. At those times we may have said we would never forget, yet when the new trial arises Satan shoots his arrows of fear and doubt at us. If we dwell on our circumstances too long, we lose sight of past deliverances. When this occurs, we must quickly go back to those times when God intervened. Each of those past events can serve us well as our Eben-ezer. We also have the Eben-ezer of God's word. Every word of it is true and faithful and is a marker for us to remember the great works of God. The historical accounts remind us of God's delivering power, while its promises inspire assurance and hope.

Today, let us make our Eben-ezer of the Lord's promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us so we may defeat the devil's attacks today, and whatever confronts us in the future.

J. Ekis