

1 Samuel (Sh'mu'el Alef)

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Chapter 7

1 And the men of Kirjathjearim came and carried up the ark of the LORD and brought it into the house of Abinadab (Avinadav)¹ in the hill and sanctified Eleazar (El'azar) his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

2 And it came to pass while the ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long, for it was twenty years,² and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.³

¹ **H41**

אֲבִינָדָב

'aˁbîynaˁdaˁb
ab-ee-naw-dawb'

From H1 and H5068; **father of generosity** (that is, liberal); Abinadab, the name of four Israelites: - Abinadab.

² Twenty years is probably another copyist error. The figure didn't sound right to me, considering that Samuel did nothing with the Ark, and Saul did nothing with the Ark, and David did not take it to Jerusalem until he was around 40 years old, so I looked it up online. The Ark was there in Kirjathjearim a lot longer than 20 years; probably 120 years, according to a very good study by James Johnson:

Because of the calamity precipitated by their impious handling of the ark, Beth-shemesh besought Kirjath-jearim to come and get the ark. They did so, and I Sam 7:2 says that the ark stayed in Kirjath-jearim for 20 years. This number seems to be to be totally untenable in light of other biblical statements, and I embarked on this study as a result of the incongruity of this date. I could find no other mention of this discrepancy, though I am sure someone somewhere has noticed it. If we accept the 20 years of I Sam 7:2, notice what it does to our carefully constructed chronology presented above.

Since Acts 13:21 says Saul was king for 40 years and David became king after the death of Saul, the earliest that David could have moved the ark from Kirjath-jearim was in his first year. That means if I Sam 7:2 is correct, that Saul began to reign while Eli was still living, and that Samuel was never really a judge at all. However, the Bible says that the ark was at Kirjath-jearim a long time (I Sam 7:2) and that Samuel was old (I Sam 8:1) when he anointed Saul king.

If we allow Samuel to be an "old" 60 when Saul was anointed, it means that Eli was only 18 when Samuel came to live with him in the temple. At that time Eli would have had two grown sons and the Bible says he was "very old" at 18. It cannot be possible.

If we take the 20 years to be correct, we have no period when Samuel alone was judge of Israel as he clearly was for a time. I Sam. 7 recounts some of the activities of Samuel during this period when he was judge. There was the notable battle of Ebenezer when God fought for Israel and sorely discomfited the Philistines. In fact, the rout was so bad that the holy writ says that Philistia was subdued, they came no more in the land of Israel, and there was peace between Israel and the Amorites (I Sam 7:13-14). This positively does not sound like the reign of Saul when he fought the Philistines almost continuously for 40 years.

A further fact that mitigates against the 20 years of I Sam 7:2 is I Chron 13:3. There the inspired writer says of the ark that Israel, "Enquired not at it in the days of Saul". Yet if the 20 years is correct, the ark was in Shiloh for 20

years of his reign where Eli was priest and ministered at the ark continually. Another fact that makes the 20 years of I Sam 7:2 unlikely is in I Sam 14:2. There the writer says, "And Saul abode... in Migron: ... and Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of Jehovah in Shiloh, wearing the ephod" (I Sam 14:2). This verse says Ichabod's nephew was a grown man serving as a priest during the days of Saul. But Ichabod was born the day of Eli's death (I Sam 4:18-21) when the ark was taken. It is highly unlikely that Ichabod's brother was a grown man with grown children when Ichabod was born.

Notice also another fact. In I Sam 7:2 Eleazar son of Abinadab was consecrated to keep the ark. However, 20 short years later we find it is Uzzah and Ahio who are sons of Abinadab commissioned to care for the ark (II Sam 6:3). More likely they were descendants of Abinadab in a succession of priests who cared for the ark at Kirjath-jearim.

There is a variant reading of the text that has a bearing on the problem of I Sam 7:2. I Sam 14:18 is rendered, "Bring hither the ark of God..." in most versions. However, the ASV notes an alternate reading, "Bring hither the ephod...". That reading makes a lot more sense for two reasons. First, I Chron 13:3 says that Saul did not seek the ark. Second, I Sam 7:2 says the ark was long at Kirjath-jearim, but here a few short years later we find the ark at Gibeah. It was not long at Kirjath-jearim if it soon moved to Gibeah. Furthermore, we find the ark still at Kirjath-jearim a hundred and twenty years later when in II Sam 6:4 David comes to remove it to Jerusalem.

There is a problem with place names here. First, II Sam 6:1 calls Kirjath-jearim by its old Canaanite name, Baale-judah. Kirjath-jearim is called Kirjah-baal or Kirjath-jearim in Josh 15:60. It is also called Baalah in Josh 15:9 and I Chron 13:6. The KJV also mentions Gibeah at Kirjath-jearim. Consulting a good Bible atlas shows that the two cities have separate locations. A possible explanation is that "gibeah" means "hill" and it is so translated in the ASV and NIV. Apparently Abinadab's house was in a hill in a high place in Kirjath-jearim.

The difficulty of the ark being 20 years at Kirjath-jearim seems to have been glossed over by Keil and Delitzsch (K&D). They accommodate the 20 years of I Sam 7:2 by allowing it to be the time that the ark stayed in Kirjath-jearim until the battle of Ebenezer (I Sam 7:12). I can find no reason whatever to take the 20 years to be from Eli until that battle. The ark is not mentioned in connection with that battle nor does I Sam 7 say anything about the ark residing in Kirjath-jearim until a battle. In fact we find it there still in the house of Abinadab over a hundred years later (II Sam 6:3).

How then can this 20 years be explained? Unless one accepts the explanation of K&D, it appears that the number "20" is corrupted. It cannot be correct since it cannot be harmonized with the chronology of that period.

If we look at I Sam 6:19, we can gain some insight into the problems with Hebrew numbers. That passage is variously rendered 50,070 or 70. There are other similar problems with the Hebrew text involving numbers as Hebrew numbers are a source of numerous textual problems in the OT. In the Masoretic text they are written out in long hand and were transmitted faithfully for thousands of years.

However, before the rise of the faithful Masorites, there was an earlier period of time when the manuscripts were transmitted by copyists as the need arose and there were people with the interest and money to pay for it. These earliest manuscripts apparently also used an alphabetic method of writing numbers. This earliest method of writing Hebrew numbers is referred to in Unger's Bible Dictionary ("Number", p799). While Unger's Bible Dictionary does not go into any specific detail on the problems with Hebrew numbering it does have one pithy remark which states that because of the alphabetic method of early Hebrew numbering, the numbers were misunderstood by copyists and translators. It is the author's view that the number "20" in the text in I Sam 7:2 was in fact misunderstood and miscopied at some point in its history as it cannot be correct as it stands.

It is the author's firm belief that the scriptures are inspired and inerrant. We must deal with reality, however, and note that there are some problems with the text. I Sam 7:2 appears to be one of them. The other dates in the scriptures combine to provide an accurate and relatively clear picture of this period of the judges. This number,

3 ¶ And Samuel spoke unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth⁴ 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.⁵

4 Then the sons of Israel did put away the Baalim⁶ and Ashtaroth and served the LORD only.

however, is a glaring inconsistency that is not easily reconciled. On the basis of the chronology developed above, it seems a more reasonable reading would be "120".

<http://www.bible.ca/ef/expository-1-samuel-7-2.htm>

³ God's judgment on the men of Beth-shemesh taught Israel to take Him seriously. It was a turning point. For hundreds of years, they had forgotten the Law and done what was right in their own sight, and that foolishness needed to stop.

⁴ Shrines built to the fertility goddess. The word means increase, and it meant womb, and this human prototype of this idol was Semiramis, the wicked queen of Babylon, who is referred to in the Book of Revelation as the Great Whore.

From Alexander Hislop's Two Babylons:

The Assyrian goddess, or Astarte, is identified with Semiramis by Athenagoras (Legatio), and by Lucian (De Dea Syria). These testimonies in regard to Astarte, or the Syrian goddess, being, in one aspect, Semiramis, are quite decisive. The name Astarte, as applied to her, has reference to her as being Rhea or Cybele, the tower-bearing goddess, the first as Ovid says (Opera), that "made (towers) in cities"; for we find from Layard that in the Syrian temple of Hierapolis, "she [Dea Syria or Astarte] was represented standing on a lion crowned with towers."

No name could more exactly picture forth the character of Semiramis, as queen of Babylon, than the name of "Ash-tart," for that just means "The woman that made towers." It is admitted on all hands that the last syllable "tart" comes from the Hebrew verb "Tr." It has been always taken for granted, however, that "Tr" signifies only "to go round." But we have evidence that, in nouns derived from it, it also signifies "to be round," "to surround," or "encompass." In the masculine, we find "Tor" used for "a border or row of jewels round the head" (see PARKHURST and also GESENIUS).

And in the feminine, as given in Hesychius (Lexicon), we find the meaning much more decisively brought out. Turis is just the Greek form of Turit, the final t, according to the genius of the Greek language, being converted into s. Ash-turit, then, which is obviously the same as the Hebrew "Ashtoreth," is just "The woman that made the encompassing wall." Considering how commonly the glory of that achievement, as regards Babylon, was given to Semiramis, not only by Ovid, but by Justin, Dionysius, Afer, and others, both the name and mural crown on the head of that goddess were surely very appropriate.

⁵ We should serve God only, and with all our hearts, because He alone is worthy to be worshipped, but God encouraged the Israelites with the promise that He would save them from the Philistines, as it says in Psalm 27:13, "I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living."

⁶ **H1168**

בעל

ba'al

bah'-al

The same as H1167; Baal, a Phoenician deity: - Baal, [plural] Baalim.

5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel in Mizpeh,⁷ and I will pray for you unto the LORD.

6 And they gathered together in Mizpeh and drew water⁸ 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 sons of Israel in Mizpeh.

H1167

בעל

ba' al
bah'-al

From H1166; a master; hence a husband, or (figuratively) owner (often used with another noun in modifications of this latter sense: - + archer, + babbler, + bird, captain, chief man, + confederate, + have to do, + dreamer, those to whom it is due, + furious, those that are given to it, great, + hairy, he that hath it, have, + horseman, husband, lord, man, + married, master, person, + sworn, they of.

The additional meanings to the word relate to Nimrod, who is the human prototype behind the worship of Baal. He was a skilled archer and a skilled horseman, which is why he was also known Sagittarius and the Centaur. His priests ate human flesh, which is the origin of the word "cannibal." It literally means "priest of Baal."

The word *Cahna* is the emphatic form of *Cahn*. *Cahn* is "a priest," *Cahna* is "the priest." (Two Babylons by Alexander Hislop) (See www.golden-quill.org, go to Treasures, and click on the link to Two Babylons.)

I don't recollect anything in Hislop's book about Nimrod being symbolized by a bird, but his queen was known at the vulture goddess, due to her leadership of their network of spies. Because of this, she was known as "the gazing woman." Also, she had a long, "swan-like" neck. Because husbands and wives become one flesh, her attributes were considered to be Nimrod's, as well.

Baal is identified as a babbler, because Nimrod built Babel and was its king. He and his wife and his father were the builders of the Tower of Babel. He was confederate with them and they dreamed of building an empire that ruled the whole world. Another aspect of how evil he was is that he was married to his mother, Semiramis. She was known as the "goddess of towers."

⁷ H4707

מצפה

mitspeh
mits-peh'

From H6822; an observatory, especially for military purposes: - **watch tower**.

As a prophetic sign, Israel was directed to the watch tower town to seek after the Lord, as well as be alert to their enemies, instead of allowing them to sneak up on them and inveigle them into the worship of idols, as well as other sins.

Josephus said that the Philistines marched on Mizpeh, when they heard that Israel was gathered there, and then the Israelites started to panic, as they did not feel prepared to battle, but Samuel encouraged them that, by trusting the Lord, He would give them victory over their enemies.

⁸ A footnote in the Geneva Bible says, "The Chaldee text says that they drew water out of their heart: that is, wept abundantly for their sins."

7 ¶ And when the Philistines heard that the sons of Israel were gathered together in Mizpeh, the cardinals of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the sons of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.⁹

Barnes says, "Two rites are brought together here which belong especially to the Feast of Tabernacles and the Day of Atonement, respectively, namely, drawing and pouring out water, and fasting. Hence, some think that Samuel chose the Feast of tabernacles, and the fast which preceded it, as the occasion for assembling the people."

Gill disagreed about the Feast of tabernacles ceremony, as that ceremony related to joy. He suggests, as do others, that the pouring out of water was symbolic of their repentance, as in weeping, and emptying themselves of idolatry.

Matthew Henry, on the other hand, felt that there was validity to the Feast of tabernacles theory, and that the pouring out of the water, after the fasting, was symbolic of hope, as God had forgiven them of their idolatry.

⁹ This is what Josephus said of this matter:

This their assembly did not escape the notice of the Philistines: so when they had learned that so large a company had met together, they fell upon the Hebrews with a great army and mighty forces, as hoping to assault them when they did not expect it, nor were prepared for it.

This thing affrighted the Hebrews, and put them into disorder and terror; so they came running to Samuel, and said that their souls were sunk by their fears, and by the former defeat they had received, and "that thence it was that we lay still, lest we should excite the power of our enemies against us. Now while thou hast brought us hither to offer up our prayers and sacrifices, and take oaths [to be obedient], our enemies are making an expedition against us, while we are naked and unarmed; wherefore we have no other hope of deliverance but that by thy means, and by the assistance God shall afford us upon thy prayers to him, we shall obtain deliverance from the Philistines."

Hereupon Samuel bade them be of good cheer, and promised them that God would assist them; and taking a sucking lamb, he sacrificed it for the multitude, and besought God to hold his protecting hand over them when they should fight with the Philistines, and not to overlook them, nor suffer them to come under a second misfortune.

Accordingly God hearkened to his prayers, and accepting their sacrifice with a gracious intention, and such as was disposed to assist them, he granted them victory and power over their enemies. Now while the altar had the sacrifice of God upon it, and had not yet consumed it wholly by its sacred fire, the enemy's army marched out of their camp, and was put in order of battle, and this in hope that they should be conquerors, since the Jews were caught in distressed circumstances, as neither having their weapons with them, nor being assembled there in order to fight.

But things so fell out, that they would hardly have been credited though they had been foretold by anybody: for, in the first place, God disturbed their enemies with an earthquake, and moved the ground under them to such a degree, that he caused it to tremble, and made them to shake, insomuch that by its trembling, he made some unable to keep their feet, and made them fall down, and by opening its chasms, he caused that others should be hurried down into them; after which he caused such a noise of thunder to come among them, and made fiery lightning shine so terribly round about them, that it was ready to burn their faces; and he so suddenly shook their weapons out of their hands, that he made them fly and return home naked.

8 And the sons 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 Philistines.

9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered it for a burnt offering completely unto the LORD, and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel,¹⁰ and the LORD heard him.

10 And it came to pass as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering that the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the LORD thundered with a great thunder¹¹ on that day upon the Philistines and crushed them, and they were smitten before Israel.

11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh and pursued the Philistines and smote them until they were below Bethcar.

12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpeh and Shen and called the name of it Ebenezer,¹² saying, Thus far the LORD has helped us.

13 ¶ So the Philistines were subdued,¹³ and they came no more into the border of Israel, and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.¹⁴

14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel from Ekron even unto Gath with their borders, and Israel delivered them out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorite (Emori).

15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel (Beit-El) and Gilgal and Mizpeh (Mitzpah) and judged Israel in all those places.

So Samuel with the multitude pursued them to Bethcar, a place so called; and there he set up a stone as a boundary of their victory and their enemies' flight, and called it the Stone of Power, as a signal of that power God had given them against their enemies.

So the Philistines, after this stroke, made no more expeditions against the Israelites, but lay still out of fear, and out of remembrance of what had befallen them; and what courage the Philistines had formerly against the Hebrews, that, after this victory, was transferred to the Hebrews. Samuel also made an expedition against the Philistines, and slew many of them, and entirely humbled their proud hearts, and took from them that country, which, when they were formerly conquerors in battle, they had cut off from the Jews, which was the country that extended from the borders of Gath to the city of Ekron: but the remains of the Canaanites were at this time in friendship with the Israelites.

¹⁰ This was not a ceremonial prayer. This was a fervent cry from the heart, holding love and compassion for his nation. God heard this kind of prayer.

¹¹ God probably rained meteorites on them. It was centuries before Venus, which was a comet, found its current orbit, after it broke off of Jupiter and was used to bring the plagues on Egypt. It crashed into Mars several times, scoring it with "canals," which is the origin of the legends about Mars and Venus having a love affair, and also being at war with each other at times. See *Ages in Chaos* by Immanuel Velikovsky.

¹² The matter ends as it began. The Philistines had defeated Israel at a place called Ebenezer, and now Samuel gives the same name to the place where the Philistines were defeated. God really is our help, even if the enemy causes circumstances that seem to mock this.

¹³ They were roundly beaten, first by the plague and the mice, then by the meteorites. The Philistines got the message, for a while anyway, to not mess with the Israelites, because their God fought for them.

¹⁴ This is what a godly leader can do for their nation.

17 Then he would return to Ramah, for there was his house, and there he judged Israel, and there he built an altar unto the LORD.