

1 Samuel 7:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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.

Samuel's memorial stone created permanent testimony to divine faithfulness. 'Eben-ezer' ('stone of help') commemorated God's assistance ('ezer') at that exact location. The word 'hitherto' ('ad-hennah', 'until here') acknowledges both God's help to this point and implicit trust for future needs. The name invokes not triumphalism but humble gratitude - 'the LORD helped us,' not 'we achieved victory.' Significantly, this same region had witnessed Israel's devastating defeat two decades earlier (1 Samuel 4:1). The Eben-ezer of 1 Samuel 4 marked tragedy; this Eben-ezer marks triumph. The transformation between these two Eben-ezers encapsulates the difference between presumptuous manipulation of God's presence and humble dependence on His power. Where Israel had fallen, Israel now stands - not through superior strength but through returned hearts and prophetic intercession.

Historical Context

Memorial stones appear throughout Genesis and Joshua, marking encounters with God or covenant commitments. 'Shen' means 'tooth' or 'cliff,' likely describing a distinctive rock formation. The placement 'between Mizpeh and Shen' created a territorial marker visible to travelers, ensuring continued remembrance.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What 'Eben-ezers' mark God's faithfulness in your journey?
2. How does the phrase 'hitherto' (until here) express both gratitude for the past and faith for the future?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּקַּח	שָׁמוּאֵל	לִ	אֶבֶן	אֶחָד	וַיָּשֶׂם	בֵּין	הַמִּצְפָּה	וּבֵין
took	Then Samuel		stone	a	and set	H996	it between Mizpeh	H996
H3947	H8050		H68	H259	H7760		H4709	
וְשֵׁן	וַיִּקְרָא	אֶת	שְׁמֹה	אֶבֶן	הָעֵבֶזֶר	וַיֹּאמֶר	עַד	
and Shen	and called	H853	the name	H0	of it Ebenezer	saying	H5704	
H8129	H7121		H8034		H72	H559		
וַיִּזְכֹּר	נֹה	יְהוָה:						
H2008	helped	Hitherto hath the LORD						
	H5826	H3068						

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 1:10 (Parallel theme): Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

Joshua 4:9 (Parallel theme): And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day.

Acts 26:22 (Parallel theme): Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

Genesis 22:14 (References Lord): And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

Genesis 35:14 (Parallel theme): 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.

1 Samuel 5:1 (Parallel theme): And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Eben-ezer unto Ashdod.

Isaiah 19:19 (References Lord): In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD.

Psalms 71:17 (Parallel theme): O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

Psalms 71:6 (Parallel theme): By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee.

Exodus 17:15 (Parallel theme): And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi: