

1 Samuel 7:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

Analysis

And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

This narrative marks the transition from priestly to prophetic leadership in Israel. Samuel's calling demonstrates that God raises up servants according to His sovereign purposes, often choosing unexpected persons during dark spiritual times. The rarity of prophetic revelation ('the word of the LORD was precious in those days') underscores the spiritual bankruptcy of the era. God's threefold call emphasizes both divine initiative and human response—Samuel must learn to recognize God's voice and respond in faithful obedience.

Historical Context

The Philistines, part of the 'Sea Peoples' who settled the coastal plain around 1200 BCE, possessed superior iron technology and organized military forces. Their pentapolis (five major cities: Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, Gath) controlled coastal trade routes and threatened Israelite settlements in the hill country. The Philistine threat created the political pressure that would eventually lead to Israel's demand for centralized monarchy.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does divine judgment in this passage reveal about God's holiness, justice, and intolerance of persistent rebellion?
2. What specific heart attitudes, thought patterns, or life practices does this passage call you to examine or change?
3. How does divine judgment in this passage drive us to appreciate Christ's substitutionary atonement on our behalf?

Interlinear Text

וּתְשַׁבֵּת וְ	הָרָמָה תָּהָ	כִּי	שָׁם	בֵּית וְ	שָׁם
And his return	was to Ramah	H3588	H8033	for there was his house	H8033
H8666	H7414			H1004	
שָׁם ט	יִשְׂרָאֵל לְ	אֶת	וּבָן	שָׁם	מִזְבֵּחַ הָ
and there he judged	H853	Israel	and there he built	H8033	an altar
H8199		H3478	H1129		H4196
לַיהוָה:					
unto the LORD					
H3068					

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 1:19 (References Lord): And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her.

1 Samuel 8:4 (References Israel): Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,

1 Samuel 1:1 (Parallel theme): Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite:

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