

15.07 Samuel Prays; Philistines Attack (1 Samuel 7:1–17)

✓ “*Check*” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- A small container of water; a towel

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *circuit*: a roughly circular line, route, or movement that starts and finishes at the same place
- *to fast*: to be so devoted to doing God’s will that a person doesn’t eat for a time
- *weaned*: no longer nursing a mother’s milk. *Unweaned* is to be still nursing.

Scripture: (ESV)

1 Samuel 7:1 And the men of Kiriath-jearim came and took up the ark of the LORD and brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill. And they consecrated his son Eleazar to have charge of the ark of the LORD. 2 From the day that the ark was lodged at Kiriath-jearim, a long time passed, some twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

3 And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, “If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” 4 So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the LORD only.

5 Then Samuel said, “Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you.” 6 So they gathered at Mizpah and drew water 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 people of Israel at Mizpah. 7 Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. 8 And the people of Israel said to Samuel, “Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines.” 9 So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. And Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him. 10 As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel. 11 And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them, as far as below Beth-car.

12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, “Till now the LORD has helped us.” 13 So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. 14 The cities that the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath, and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites.

15 Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. 16 And he went on a circuit year by year to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah. And he judged Israel in all these places. 17 Then he would return to Ramah, for his home was there, and there also he judged Israel. And he built there an altar to the LORD.

Introduction/Review:

The ark of the Lord had been taken. Eli’s two sons had died in the same day, just as the man of God had

prophesied. Eli himself had died when he heard the ark of God was taken by the Philistines. After seven months the Philistines had sent the ark of God back to Israel. How? By hitching two milk cows to a cart, setting the ark on the cart along with a box containing a guilt offering to God of five golden tumors and five golden mice. Even though those two milk cows left their babies at home, they took the ark back to Beth Shemesh, mooing as they trudged without stopping. Many of the people of Beth Shemesh died because they looked into the ark. So the people of Kirjath-Jearim came and got the ark, placing it in the house of Abinadab, who made his son, Eleazar, the caretaker of the ark.

Story:

Time passed. Samuel, the boy who had been dedicated to God by his mother before his was born, was well known throughout all Israel as a prophet of God and as a judge. He was, perhaps, ✓thirty to forty years old. Every year he traveled from his home in Ramah [locate these places] to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, doing his work as a judge and ✓preaching, saying, “If you want to return to the Lord with all your hearts, then put away your idols.”

—What?! God’s people worshiping idols again?! How can they forget the first two commandments?! Yet they had forgotten! But now, hearing Samuel preach, they were sorry and repented, for Samuel said, “Prepare your hearts unto the Lord: serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” Yes, God could deliver, and Samuel said God *would* deliver them from the Philistines.

So the people got rid of their Baal and Ashtaroth idols and served the Lord only.

Samuel called all the people to meet with him in the city of Mizpeh so that he could pray for them. They showed they meant business by (1) pouring out water on the ground [Teacher, pour out some water on a towel.] ✓Maybe they were showing that, just as the water could not be gathered again in a cup, so they were pouring out their sins, not to gather them and do them again. They also (2) fasted. What is fasting? [Being so devoted to doing God’s will that a person doesn’t eat for a time.] They fasted all day. Then the people (3) confessed, “We have sinned against the Lord.” Samuel judged them there. Isn’t it great to see God’s people acting like God’s people—and so many of them doing so?

But, as so often happens when believers do what’s right in God’s eyes, Satan fights them. So, in Mizpeh the Philistines saw all these people of Israel gathered together and decided this was the perfect time to fight against them. Had Israel come to fight? No, they had come to pray. Were they now afraid? Oh, yes!

“Samuel!” they cried. “Don’t stop praying unto the Lord our God for us. Pray that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.”

Samuel took an unweaned lamb and offered it for an offering and cried unto the Lord for Israel. Would God hear and answer? Oh, it didn’t look as if God heard, for as Samuel was offering the sacrifice, the Philistines were getting very close!

God is so inventive! The Bible states, “But the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines” and confused them so much that they ran back towards home. The Israelites chased them far into their land, taking over the cities of Ekron and Gath, where the ark had been. The Lord gave a great victory that day! In the very place where the ark had been taken by Philistines in a battle perhaps twenty years before, in that very place Samuel took a great rock and named it Ebenezer, “the Lord has helped us.”

Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:

“Samuel’s sacrifice without his prayer would have been an empty shadow, his prayer without the sacrifice would not have been so prevalent, but both together teach us what great things we may expect from God in answer to those prayers which are made with faith in Christ’s sacrifice ([1 Samuel 7 Commentary - Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible \(Complete\) \(biblestudytools.com\)](#)).

Activities:

- Play dough: lightning bolt; rock
- Snack: Lamb's meat or a milkshake. Here's a site for instructions: [How to Make the Perfect Milkshake \(tasteofhome.com\)](http://tasteofhome.com). Or attempt to fast.
- Remember other times when a rock became a memorial: crossing Jordan; two and one-half tribes going back across Jordan; Joshua's rock set up before he died; Gideon; the ark's coming to the great rock at Beth Shemesh.
- Tell about times in which "God has helped us" in the lives of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, *etc.*
- Using the second map found below, ask students to locate cities mentioned in today's lesson.
- Sing "Samuel" by Diana Dow found at <http://www.biblesongsandmore.com/songs/old-testament-songs/samuelsong/>. See a photo of my visual for this song on the "Songs" page at teachingthebibletokids.org.
- Review questions: (Game: On a white board or chalk board write dots and the names of the cities Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpah, and Ramah. For each correct answer a student may write an X near the name of a city in the order above. See how many total "circuits" they can make. [It will be two and one-half "circuits" if all questions are answered correctly.]
 1. Samuel told Israel to put something away. What was it? [Foreign gods.]
 2. Samuel said God would deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines if they did something. What were they to do? [Direct their hearts to the LORD and serve him only.]
 3. Did Israel obey God? [Yes.]
 4. How did they obey? What did they do? [They put away the Baals and the Ashtaroah and served the LORD only.]
 5. Name one of the three things that the people did to show their sincerity in obeying. [Drew water and poured it out before the LORD; fasted; said, "We have sinned against the LORD.]
 6. Who showed for battle while Israel was gathered to Samuel? [The Philistines.]
 7. How did God fight for Israel that day? [Thundered with a sound so mighty that the Philistines were thrown into confusion.]
 8. What did Samuel name the stone he set up? [Ebenezer.]
 9. What does *Ebenezer* mean? [Till now the Lord has helped us.]
 10. Name one of the Philistine cities that Israel took in battle. [Ekron; Gath.]

Memory Verse[s]:

- 1 Samuel 17:12: "Thus far the Lord has helped us."
- 1 Samuel 2:30: [God said,] "Those that honor me I will honor, and those that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

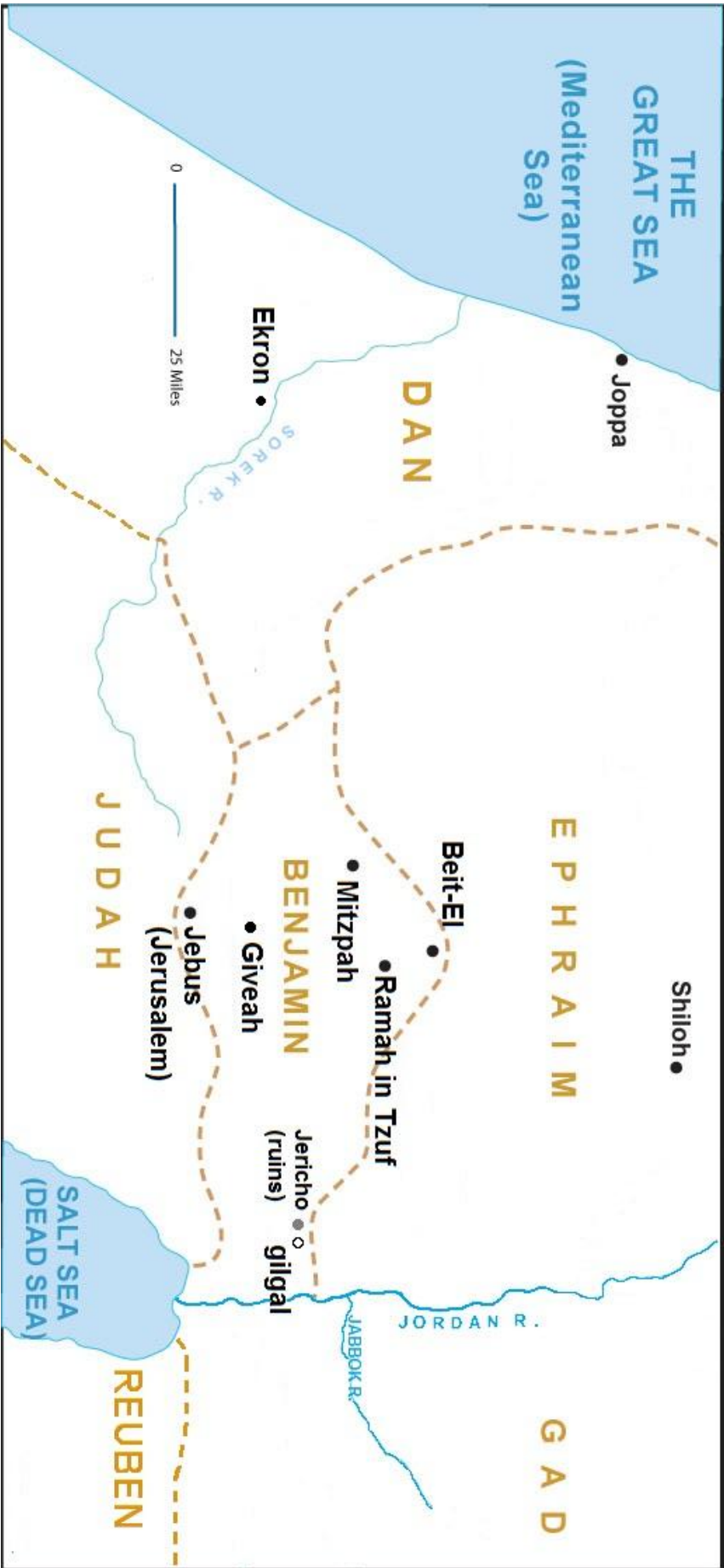
Handwork:

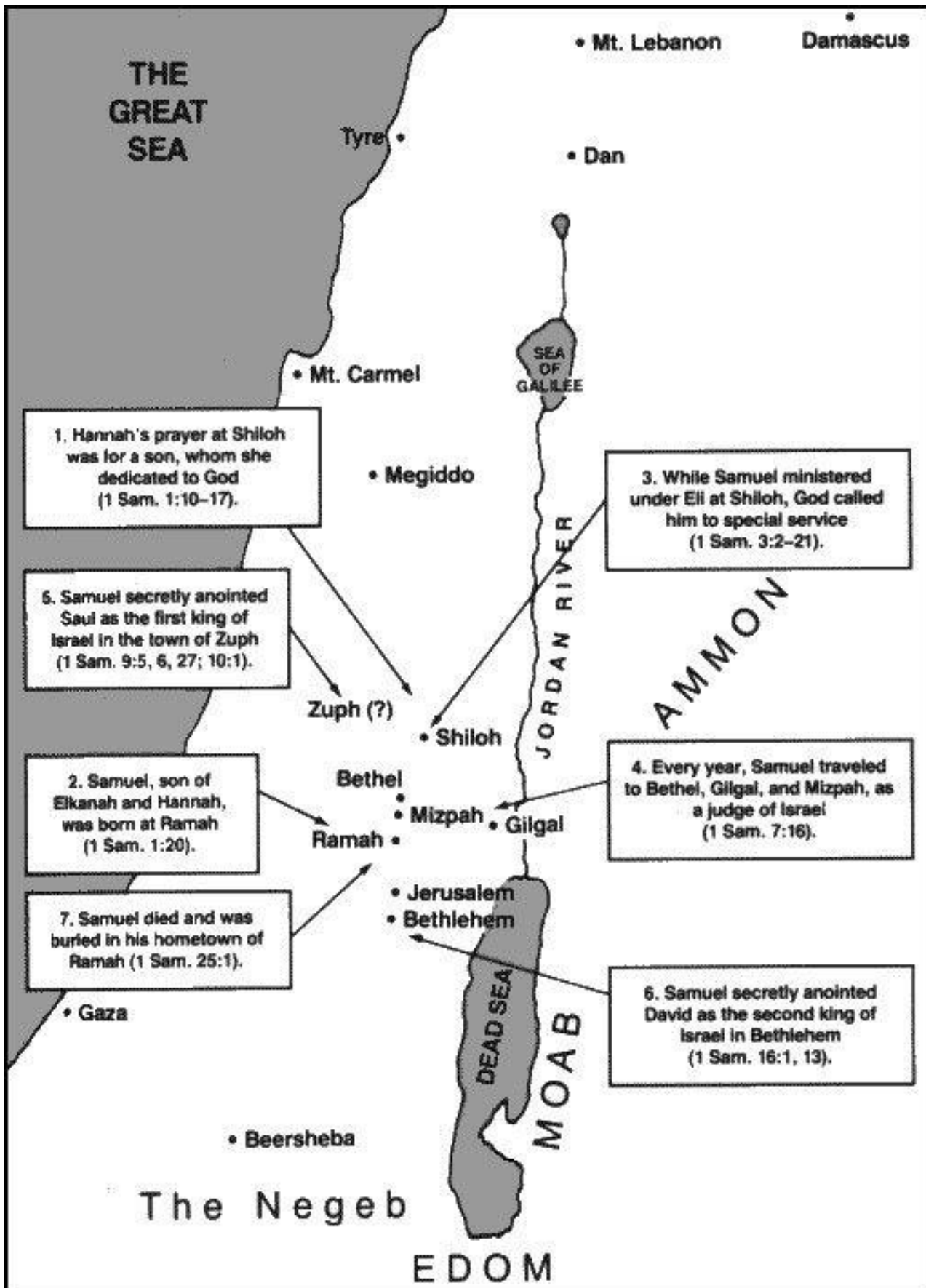
- This site has ideas for activities as well as for crafts: [Ebenezer Stone Bible Crafts \(daniellesplace.com\)](http://daniellesplace.com). Making an Ebenezer stone requires flat river rocks. A face may be drawn on one side and/or the verse, "Till now the LORD has helped us" (or part of it), written on the other side.

circuit

to fast

weaned







[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:First_Book_of_Samuel_Chapter_8#mediaviewer/File:First_Book_of_Samuel_Chapter_8-2_\(Bible_Illustrations_by_Sweet_Media\).jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:First_Book_of_Samuel_Chapter_8#mediaviewer/File:First_Book_of_Samuel_Chapter_8-2_(Bible_Illustrations_by_Sweet_Media).jpg)

