

Scripture reading: 1 Samuel 7:1-17

Baal Worship

The Philistines defeated the Israelites and took with them the Ark of the Covenant. After another fight, they returned it back to the Israelites. After the death of Eli, the people came to Samuel and said that there were none to lead them in the ways of God. Then Samuel gathered them all at Mizpah and said them to get rid of all the idols of Baal and worship the Lord God alone. While this was happening, the Philistines once again came to war against the Israelites. Samuel took a suckling lamb and worshiped God by offering it as a burnt sacrifice. God instantly thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were defeated before Israel. There they set up a memorial and called its name Ebenezer, meaning, thus far the Lord has helped us.

Question:

How did the Israelites get the idols of Baal? Were they fearful of the Philistines for these many years because of it?

Answer:

Since Eli's vision was dimmed, he'd given the temple responsibilities to his sons Hophni and Phinehas. They both had behaved in an unworthy manner towards the offering and the holy things of the temple. Many of those who were discouraged by their mannerisms in the temple began to go after Baal worship. In this manner, when Baal worship entered Israel, the protection of God departed from their midst and they were being oppressed by the Philistines. When Samuel once again led them to be sanctified, the presence of God came in their midst and gave them victory. Dear children, no enemy can do us any harm when our God is standing by our side. If God is not by our side, we cannot overcome even a "house fly". If God should abide with us, we should depart from all uncleanness.

"Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us." 1 Samuel 7:12

Prayer

Ebenezer, Ebenezer! Thank You for the help and protection thus far. Continue to protect us from all sinful habits Lord. Amen