

Prayer Makes the Difference

Key Verse: “*Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him.*”
—*I Samuel 7:9*

Selected Scripture:
I Samuel 7:3-13

blem of Divine presence was in their possession.

Samuel then spoke to the Israelites, urging them to return to the LORD. (chap. 7:3) The people responded favorably by putting away their false gods and also destroying the images and altars associated with such worship. (vs. 4) The nation gathered at Mizpeh where they fasted and repented before God, as symbolized by their drawing out and pouring water upon the ground. (vss. 5, 6) Upon learning of Israel's assembly at Mizpeh, the Philistines prepared to attack the nation once more. The Hebrews became fearful and pleaded with Samuel to intervene on their behalf.—vss. 7,8

In our Key Verse, Samuel prepared a sacrifice to the

IN TODAY'S LESSON, WE

are introduced to Samuel—Israel's last judge, who also was one of God's greatest prophets. (I Sam. 3:20) The ark, which had fallen into the hands of the Philistines earlier, had now been returned and remained in the house of Abinadab after God's displeasure had been manifested against the heathen enemies of Israel. They were punished with plagues and other forms of destruction while this sacred em-

LORD—a lamb of the first year. Although the prophet did not realize it, this offering was a type of the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) Samuel’s petition on behalf of the nation was answered by God by means of a sudden violent storm which arose against their approaching enemy. The Philistines then turned their backs against this severe outburst of nature and the Israelites, seizing the opportunity, rushed forward and pursued their fleeing antagonists, gaining a great victory as a result. (I Sam. 7:10,11) Samuel then set up a stone as a pillar, or monument, to mark the success in defeating these enemies. He called it Ebenezer saying, “Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.” (vs. 12) Samuel proved to be highly effective in permanently delivering Israel from oppression during his tenure as a judge.—vs. 13

There are valuable lessons in this study for God’s people during this present Gospel Age. Repentance from sinful behavior, and reformation of conduct, must precede God’s mercy being extended when we have gone astray. Samuel offered a typical sacrifice on behalf of Israel, along with prayer, before the Philistines were routed. So, too, it is necessary for believers to acknowledge the great sacrifice made by the Master in giving his life for the sin of Adam as the basis of our relationship with the Heavenly Father because we have devoted our lives to follow Jesus Christ.—I John 3:2

Finally, as consecrated believers, we have been called to a special station requiring obedience to, and glorifying, our Heavenly Father in all that we do. If faithful to our calling, we will be allowed to assist Jesus Christ in the great work of judging and blessing all the families of the earth in the kingdom of God. (Acts 17:31) “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: . . . they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”—Rev. 20:6 ■