

## Here I Raise Mine Ebenezer

Texts: I Samuel 2:10; I Samuel 7:3-14

Hannah prophesied that, “the adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed” (I Samuel 2:10). This was fulfilled in I Samuel 7. Overwhelming victory was accomplished as revealed in I Samuel 7:10, 11: “And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Bethcar.” Psalm 18 is a powerful narration of the Lord delivering from Heaven. After the initial shock of the LORD’S thunder, the men of Israel chased the fleeing Philistines and wrought a great victory. The Bible says in I Samuel 7:13, “So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.” In appreciation, Samuel makes a memorial for all to remember and never forget that the LORD is our Helper! I Samuel 7:12: “Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.”

I know of no one who does not appreciate the old hymn of the church, “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing.” Robert Robinson penned these words in the year 1758 at the age of 22. Observe these opening words of this Christian classic:

“Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,  
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
Call for songs of loudest praise:  
Teach me some melodious sonnet,  
Sung by flaming tongues above;  
Praise the mount-I’m fixed upon it-  
Mount of Thy redeeming love.  
Here I raise mine Ebenezer;  
Hither by Thy help I’m come....”

Later in the hymn, Robinson’s words read,  
“Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love....”

In a biographical vignette, Jack Andrews writes, “Robert Robinson, author of the hymn, ‘Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing,’ lost the happy communion with the Savior he had once enjoyed, and in his declining years he wandered into the byways of sin. As a result, he became deeply troubled in spirit.

Hoping to relieve his mind, he decided to travel. In the course of his journeys, he became acquainted with a young woman on spiritual matters, and so she asked him what he thought of a hymn she had just been reading. To his astonishment, he found it to be none other than his own composition. He tried to evade her question, but she continued to press him for a response. Suddenly he began to weep. With tears streaming down his cheeks, he said, 'I am the man who wrote that hymn many years ago. I'd give anything to experience again the joy I knew then.'

Anyone can get away from the most important things in life. Even more seriously, anyone can get away from the fellowship from the One most important Person in life. Someone once asked, "You Baptists, do you believe in backsliding? The most honest answer to that question is, "Not only do we believe in it, we practice it from time to time." This is not by any means a defense of backsliding, but a reminder that none of us reach a point where we should not be proactive in our pursuit of holiness in Christ.

How appropriate for this Memorial Day weekend to revisit memorials that we have made. For some it will be a good time to establish some memorials. When we think of Ebenezer, many people in the English-speaking world think of Ebenezer Scrooge, the selfish businessman of Dickens' novel who had a complete makeover into the most generous man in town. In a sense, on the Christmas morning of the story, a memorial in the heart of that old man was established and he never forsook his promise to "keep Christmas." The word Ebenezer literally means "stone of help." I personalize it and say, for me it means "Stone of My Help!" Let's look at some important Ebenezers that we should erect or revisit:

## 1. THE EBENEZER OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Genesis 31:44-49 gives a record of a memorial established: "Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee. And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar. And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap. And Laban called it Jegarsahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed. And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed; And Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another."

In a real sense, when people drive by the edifice where we as Christians meet together, the world should see more than our brick or steeple. Those who do not know Christ will be best impressed by the unity that God has given us in love. That is confirmed by these words of Jesus in John 13:34, 35: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

## 2. THE EBENEZER OF A NATION UNDER GOD

In Joshua 4:20-24 we see another record of an important memorial, “And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.”

Inscribed on our hearts and echoed in our Pledge of Allegiance is the belief that America is, “...One nation under God...” Let me give you three quotes by our second president, John Adams: “The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity. I will avow that I then believed, and now believe, that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God.”

“The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: it connected, in one indissoluble bond, the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity.”

“Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

We should never forget of the Divine Providence woven in the warp and woof of the United States of America.

### 3. THE EBENEZER OF OUR UNION WITH CHRIST

In Revelation 2:17 Jesus said to the church at Pergamos, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.”

In history, the white stone has borne different symbolic meanings. It was used to show acquittal from wrong-doing. It was used to validate freedom from incarceration or bondage. The white stone was used as a witness of the bonding of relationships.

Jesus tells the church at Pergamos, as He tells us through the symbol of the white stone, that we are His Forever and this union is only possible because of the Gospel. This is what our Lord had in mind when He established the memorial of the Lord’s Supper when He said, “...this do in remembrance of me” (I Corinthians 11:24c).

-Pastor Pope-