

## MIZPAH, THE PLACE OF PRAYER



(I Samuel 7:5)

Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah and I will pray to the Lord for you (I Sam. 7:5). The Ark of the Lord had been in the possession of the Philistine for seven months, when they decided to send it back. They had taken it from Israel and tried to put it in line with their god- Dagon but were not successful, for their god Dagon would not stand before the God of Israel. They found him fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord, his head and both the palms of his hands were lying cut off on the threshold; only the trunk of Dagon was left him (I Sam. 5:1-5). God also caused the people of Ashdod deadly destruction and He smote them with tumors or boils. When the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is heavy on us and on Dagon our god (I Sam. 5-7). In spite of these people's

blindness to the reality of the true God, they perceived the cause for their affliction and made the decision to send the ark back to Israel. The ark was taken to Kiriath-jearim into the house of Abinadab. It stayed there for a long time (nearly 100 years] (1 Sam. 7:1-2). Samuel was judge over Israel in those days. Sadly, it had been twenty years before all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord (vs.2b). The void of God's presence in the midst of the nation existed because they did not seek the Lord. God's presence is of great significance collectively and personally for all to receive His blessings.

Israel's foreign gods had taken their desire to call on their true God. I am sure that they were worshipping and directing their attention to their dead gods, provoking the Lord to jealousy. Samuel called the nation to repentance and returning to the Lord. It had to be with their whole heart, giving up of their foreign gods, including the Ashtaroth [female deities]. Israel had to direct their hearts to God and serve Him only. After that, Samuel called them to Mizpah, where he would pray for them. Mizpah was situated four miles north-west of Jerusalem, on a loft hill 600 feet above the plain of Gibeon. They came to Mizpah and there they experienced a revival. They drew water and poured it out before the Lord and fasted on that day and said there, We have sinned against the Lord. (1 Sam. 7:3-6).The pouring of the water before the Lord signified the acknowledgement of their sinful ways and the desire to be washed clean by the blood of the covenant in true repentance. Mizpah seemed to be situated in an ideal location- on a loft hill 600 feet above the plain of Gibeon; a place physically closer to God. The higher the mountain, the greater the effort needed to climb it. Not many of us have the stamina and strength to climb high mountains. But in the spiritual lessons, one will only get close to God when he achieves the height of their spiritual mountain. The flat places easier to get through, does not offer the physical exercise and the achievement of having climbed high. It does not offer closeness to God; rather is close to everyone else and everything else that is not necessary to win the spiritual battles of life. After experiencing Mizpah revival, the nation of Israel went out of it and pursued the Philistines and smote them as far as before Bethcar (vs.11). After they had called on the name of the Lord, He was ready to help them and deliver them from all their chains. The Philistines had been a thorn in their flesh as long as Israel did not seek the Lord. But at the same token, they were looked with favor when they directed their hearts to love, obey the Lord with all their hearts. As long as Samuel lived, God's hand was against the

Philistines and Israel enjoyed restoration when the Philistines returned to Israel all that was taken from them.

Mizpah should mean to every believer a place of fellowship with the Lord, where things are made right with Him; where a repentant heart is offered washing water for deeper cleansing. Where the blood of YAHSHUA is applied and restoration takes place so we can climb the highest mountain without being tired and weary, as if we had the wings of an eagle. Every difficulty we face, every defeat we suffer, they are just mountains we are climbing. Many times we just don't climb, or in another time we do turn around, never getting to Mizpah from where refreshing for our souls will come. Life seems more comfortable staying where we are than trying to climb and reaching the destination for sanctification. Believers who never climb their mountains to be close to the Lord to know Him, are prone to defeat and a life without blessings, because they have become fattened with the things of the world, and like the Israelites, they never seek the Lord. Their personal relationship with the Lord is through television, or through words from others, which is always the horizontal way, not the vertical.

After the meeting at Mizpah with the nation, Samuel made that experience concrete in the eyes of Israel by taking a stone and setting it between Mizpah and Shen, and calling it Ebenezer, saying, Heretofore the Lord has helped us (I Sam. 7:12). A stone served as a witness to them of the faithfulness of the Lord in their repentance and turning to the Lord in Mizpah, the place of prayer where the Lord showed forgiveness and blessed them with victory over their enemies. Yes, my friend, victory will always come from Mizpah- the place of prayer. Mizpah can be any way away from the crowds, and away from ways of communications. YAHSHUA encouraged His disciples to go into a private room; He said, and, closing the door, pray to your Father, Who is in secret; and your Father, Who sees in secret, will reward you in the open (Matt.6:6). A private room is not necessary on a top of a mountain; it is however where we can climb spiritually to God and be renewed physically, emotionally and spiritually. YAHSHUA always went to the mountain in the hours of the night to spend praying. It was His time to be renewed from a busy day teaching and healing all those who came to Him. His time with the Father alone was essential to Him, as He much needed His strength. Matthew relates the event saying, and after He had dismissed the multitudes, He went up into the hills by Himself to pray. When it was evening, He was still there alone (Matt. 14:23) in the time of the multiplication of bread and the fish. One

day YAHSHUA took three of His disciples to experience His time alone with the Father at the top of a mountain. That was a glorious time for the three disciples when they saw Him in His glorified body. The glory of the Lord's presence is everywhere we make it to be our Mizpah place of prayer. The peace that overflows our soul sometimes with tears, sometimes with inner happiness is without a doubt the Lord's presence visiting us in our Mizpah. It is also a place to intercede for others with groan and anguish of the soul, as YAHSHUA suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane before His trials and death.

Mizpah means watchtower or lookout. So it is a place for secured refuge in times of trouble. From there, we can watch the enemy and be prepared to fight him with confidence, for it is the presence of the Lord confirming His protection over us.

**THINK ABOUT IT!**