

Raise Your Ebenezer!

Ponder: What is an Ebenezer? Do I have one? If I do, how do I raise it?

Scripture: “Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, ‘Thus far the Lord has helped us’” (1 Samuel 7:12, NKJV).

Question: What did Scrooge’s mother say while pointing to their house?

Answer: “Here I raise my Ebenezer!”

So much for humor.

In all seriousness Robert Robinson wrote the words to the hymn, “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing” in 1757. Though the song now appears in various editions, with some lines omitted and others changed, all of them contain the words, “Here I raise my Ebenezer; hither by Thy help I’ve come.” How many times have you sung those words without understanding what they mean?

Really, the second phrase explains the first one. Ebenezer is a Hebrew word meaning “stone of help.” Samuel set it up to commemorate a victory God had given to Israel in a battle with the Philistines. Previous battles had ended disastrously, and rebellious Israel had spent the last 20 years under the thumb of the Philistines. But now God’s chosen people had repented, so He favored them with this triumph over their enemies.

The Stone of Help was never meant to be worshiped. It was intended to be a reminder of the great success God had given them. In saying “Thus far the Lord has helped us,” Samuel hints broadly that he is hoping God will bless them with more victories.

If you have confessed Jesus as the Son of God and been immersed into Him, then the Lord has given you an enormous victory, releasing you from the bondage of our adversary, the devil. You need not put up a big stone in your front yard to commemorate this triumph. You can raise your own Ebenezer simply by remembering and acknowledging, as Samuel did, that it is by the Lord’s help that you’ve made it this far; and it will be by His gracious help that you press on toward the goal.

The Lord really is the “fount of every blessing.” Praise His Name!