

Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. (Quality: very good)

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Preacher: Dawson, Herbert (1890-1969)

[0 : 00] As the Lord shall be pleased to help me, I shall call your attention to a subject you will find in the first book of Samuel, chapter 7, and the twelfth verse.

Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.

Chapter 7, twelfth verse, the first book of Samuel.

This is one of those subjects which is linked up to an incident, a chapter as it were, in the dealings of God with Israel of old.

And as you read it where it is in the sacred pages, you may look upon it as just a piece of the history of Israel.

[1 : 35] And yet, the word of God tells us, whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort in the scriptures, might have hope.

And now, the name of this stone, Ebenezer, has indeed become famous down through the ages in the Church of Christ, and especially in New Testament times, when those who are heaven-bound pilgrims, Israelites indeed, have been helped in remembering the way the Lord has led them along to set up stones.

The meaning of Ebenezer is a stone of help. And I have no doubt whatever that many of you, who are indeed heaven-bound pilgrims, you have got quite a few stones of help that you have set up in the dealings of God with you, when you have looked on, and seen his goodness and mercy passing before you, when his hand has been upon you, for good, when trouble like a gloomy cloud has gathered thick and thundered loud.

And these stones of help you prize, you treasure them up. glad you are, when in heaven's own light, you can call them to mind.

It is rather surprising that sometimes, some stones of help, which you have set up in the early dealings of God with you, they seem to be covered up.

[3 : 40] And then all at once, another blink of light from heaven will bring it back to your mind. And you will live, as it were, that experience over again, and see once more that Ebenezer stone which you set up.

Oh dear friends, it is so necessary to remember the Holy Spirit is the Remembrancer.

And the Saviour said to his disciples, he shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said to you.

And it might also be added, whatever I have done for you. The Spirit will bring all these things, whether words or deeds, to your remembrance, that you may be helped in looking back to take courage to go forward with a sweet assurance.

Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. And this is the argument, he who hath helped us hitherto will help us all our journey through.

[5 : 02] It is a wonderfully good argument, he hath delivered, he doth deliver, and we trust he will yet deliver us.

And now, in approaching the subject, the setting of it, to me, is wonderfully interesting. And it might be well, just to look at it, ere I come to open up the subject as my mind runs.

And you find, in the opening words of the chapter, this gives you an amazing sidelight on Israel's history in Samuel's time.

And the men of Ker-Jah-Jah-Arim came, and fetched up the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar, his son, to keep the ark of the Lord.

the Philistines had captured the Ark of the Lord and tried to keep it in their land but the judgments of God were so poured out upon them and all who had to do anything whatever with the Ark of the Lord that they were very glad to send it back to Israel's land where it belonged and it came to pass while the Ark of the Ark incurred Jath-Jarim that the time was long for it was 20 years and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord think of Israel as a nation being carried on and all that while the actual center of the worship of God was where the ark of the covenant was in the house of Abinadab and where Eleazar his son kept it and conducted the worship of God thereby.

[7 : 18] And now this is good reading. All the house of Israel lamented after the Lord and yet it was their own turning from the Lord which had brought about the solemn fact that they were under the heels of the Philistines so that they were not able to live as God ordained they should live all the while they sought him and his kingdom first of all.

And Samuel spake unto the house of Israel saying If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts then put away the strange gods in Ashtoreth from among you and prepare your hearts unto the Lord and serve him only and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

I want to make one comment there which is very applicable necessary to be said concerning the times in which you and I are living.

And now there is not one of us under Union Chapel roof who is a sinner born again but what would be glad to see better days in the Church of Christ and to know better times in their own soul's experience and do long to see a gracious revival in the midst of the years especially in their denominational life.

And now what says the Scriptures? If you do desire this in your soul's experience what are you to do?

[9 : 18] Ere the Lord is pleased to do what you desire there are some things that you must be doing. Put away the strange gods little g gods and Ashtoreth from among you and prepare your hearts unto the Lord and serve him only.

The meaning is that you and I must weigh matters up before God as to whether there is anything whatever in our everyday lives and in our home life our family circle which is not consistent with what the Word of God declares should be with those with names on church rules and those whose names ought to be on church rules and those who want to live the life of the godly.

Do you remember it's a simple illustration but it is very forceful and now when the rain is about to descend the leaves of all vegetation prepare to receive it but when you do watering with a water can the leaves do nothing about it.

It is as the heavens above influences the plants growing that they prepare to receive what God is kindly sending rain which is so much needed and now if you and I need to think upon this subject from that viewpoint it will help you to do it our hearts are to be prepared unto the Lord ere the rain from heaven that presages the gracious revival will descend prepare your hearts unto the Lord and serve him only and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtoreth and serve the Lord only and now you see what followed and Samuel said gather all

Israel to Mishpah and I will pray for you unto the Lord and they gathered together to Mishpah and drew water and poured it out before the Lord and fasted on that day and said there we have sinned against the Lord and Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mishpah the pouring out of the water before the Lord was to signify the pouring out of their hearts in confession of their sin and their guiltiness before God remember that and now the Philistines heard about all this and that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mishpah and so they went up to do war against the children of Israel the children of Israel said to Samuel cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us mark that word in their little

[12 : 48] G gods are now put away Baal and Ashteroth and all things which ought not to be cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for he is our God for us that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines now I want you to follow this along it is not just meaningless repetition and Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered it for the burnt offering holy unto the Lord and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel and the Lord heard him what happened and as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel but the Lord 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 Mishpah and pursued the Philistines and smoked them till they came under Beth car and it says 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 and now what God was pleased to do then in that far back day when Samuel dwelt upon the earth God can still do it again and now the outcome of this then then Samuel took a stone there was to be a memorial of this great event in Israel's history then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shem and called the name of it

Eben Ezer saying hitherto hath the Lord helped us and now that brings us to a starting point as to how this subject should be a means of help to you and that what Samuel was enabled to do when he took a stone and set it up the Lord can grant you grace to do likewise in fact you have done it many of you and you ought to do it even much more it may be than you have done and now there are three viewpoints of this subject I just want to look at and then it may be I will tell you why I've been constrained to take the text at all then Samuel took a stone and set it between

Misfit and Shannon called the name of it Ebenezer saying hitherto hath the Lord helped us and now the three viewpoints are very simple one is to do with the past and the second viewpoint is to do with the present and the third viewpoint is to do with the prospect and now first of all the past I wonder if you can go back into the past many of you can do I'm sure and search out when you first of all began to be concerned to be a pilgrim and began to ask the way to Zion with your face thitherward and when you first of all set up a stone of health it may not have been one that was outstanding and I would like to make this plain to encourage you dear young people who are following on to know the Lord these stones of health are not all the same size no there are some which are outstanding when you look back and recall to mind the experience you were called upon to endure when by the help of

God afforded you you could set up the stone and it was a high stone and it stood out there are other stones of health they are stones assuring you of the help of God afforded you but they do not always stand up as high as other stones may do when bigger troubles have befallen you and you have been granted a deliverance and I might make this plain as you read in Jeremiah set the way marks and make the high heaps and now in Jeremiah's day there were no roads very much to speak of and sometimes those who were travelling in the outlying districts they had only tracks not well defined to journey along but it was a law that along these tracks there should be here and there heaps of stones and every traveller going along the track as he came to a heap of stones it was necessary for him to gather a stone out of the track and cast it on the heap that it might still remain as a heap of stones and a help to other travellers coming after him in days to come that he was journeying along in the right way to where he desired to be and now it may help you dear young people to think of it from that viewpoint you may not be able as yet to take a stone and set it up as to something outstanding in your soul's experience which the

[19 : 30] Lord has wrought for you but you can argue like this could I joy his saints to meet choose the ways I once abhorred find at times the promise sweet if I did not love the Lord and now to argue like that is like gathering up the little stones and making them into a heap and here is another encouragement for you the soul that with sincere desire seeks after Jesus love that soul the Holy Ghost inspires with breathings from above and now regarding the past and that is your past experience where do you begin in recording it as you remember the way God has led you I say where do you begin in recording it it may be you have got no clear cut beginning to the good work and yet here you are in the attitude of worship following on to know the

Lord and after the spirit the things of the spirit and you came up with willing feet to worship God and in your heart was a desire bless spirit of Christ descend on us thus thy servant assist teach him to teach us and yet you may be troubled because you cannot set up a stone for a clear cut definite beginning to the good work but let me encourage you there you will not find in the word of God with some of the most notable characters whose lives are recorded therein that the word of God tells us about their beginning and now that is very striking and yet that good work is indeed begun though there is no particular place or particular time that you can recall to mind as to when it was begun but the fact cannot be overturned by earth or hell that you are following on to know the

Lord and your great concern is that you may win Christ and be found in him and maybe the stone of hell you set up first of all is when you felt an aching void within which this world cannot fill when you found something had happened within although you could not say when it was yet the reality of it has followed you you have been the subject of it and it has influenced your life from that day to this you were felt like the psalmist when he said one thing have I desired of the Lord that will I seek after that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to see the beauty of the

Lord and to inquire in his temple think of it like this I will come down as low as the Lord will allow me to do to encourage any of you the day of small things is not to be despised and now can you remember when you first of all heard the gospel if you had never heard it before when you felt in listening that God the Lord was speaking to you through the preacher whoever he was and as he proclaimed the gospel your ear was open to hear it in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book and you can look back to that day when it happened to you and now that of a truth is a stone of hell and you must set it up along life's way you can remember when this was the truth about you and now you should be able to remember this behold he prayeth behold she prayeth can you go back over life's journey and search out that spot and that place when you turned your back on the world and turned to

God when in your heart there welled up longing desires let me amongst thy saints be found remember me oh lord with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people oh visit me with thy salvation or what a stone of help that is when a poor sinner first of all goes up to the mercy seat and begins to feel a fellowship a unity of the spirit with the publican God be merciful to me a sinner not only so can you remember when hope rose up within your heart it may be week in week out you try to pray and you simply felt to be a hell deserving sinner and you had many fears and paintings as to whether

[26 : 01] God would indeed regard you maybe you felt depth of mercy can there be mercy for a wretch like me and then there came a stone of help and you realized there was mercy held up in store there is a nice word to think on keeping mercy for thousands then you realized God had kept some mercy for you what a stone of help that is when you learn Jesus blood through earth and skies mercy eternal mercy cries and here is another stone of help when things become real to you it is very strange maybe it is not strange when viewed aright according to how sad our state by nature is but it does seem strange that people from baby days on may be under the gospel and in the worship of

God and then the time comes when maybe in late teenage life or later still they have the mercy to be born again and all the things they have listened to all their life long suddenly take on a new meaning and become real they have heard these things in the letter of the truth but now it comes home to you then you realize you were a poor sinner with a never dying soul and new words come into your vocabulary you begin to think about time and you realize that your life only hangs on the next breath that you draw and if you are not allowed to draw it time is no more with you when you have entered eternity only this frail and fleeting breath preserves me from the jaws of death soon as it fails at once

I'm gone and plunged into a world unknown and what a word is eternity can you remember when you first of all began to ponder it in your heart with this solemn awareness that you would enter into it however long you lived even if you lived to be as old as Methusale 960 and 9 years and he died and so will you however long you live and you will step out of time into eternity either heaven or hell and now these things are realities and then sin becomes a reality to you from this viewpoint that now being a sinner born again you have to measure sin by its intent and not only by its extent which is to say to be angry with your brother is to be a murderer an unchaste look is adultery it is the intent and it is what you are within before

God as a man thinketh in his heart so is he and thus you begin to learn sin is exceeding sinful and that God will not look upon sin with any degree of allowance but then there is another word that you will begin to think of and that word is grace oh what a wonderful word that is when you think by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God not of works lest any man should boast when you ponder grace sovereign grace or sin abounding just another word too becomes real to you and that word is salvation and it is a reality in your soul's experience and it gives an aim to your attempts to pray say unto my soul

I am thy salvation yes much might be said along that line of thought then here is a stone of help when you begin to feel the love of God enabling you follow this along enabling you to feel as you never felt before to love the people of God for who they are the people of God and to love the house of prayer and go up to worship therein with willing feet and to feel we love the place oh God wherein thine honour dwells the joy of thine abode all earthly joy excels then when you think of how you heard the gospel preached as you had never heard it before you have got the memory of it and now look at it like this dear friends the subject is so vast

[31 : 56] I can't begin to think of setting before you all the stones of hell you have set up along life's way making up your past experience but you have got the holy bible that you use you have got your hymn book that you use and when you look into your bible there are some words where there are special notes in the margin when you look in your hymn book there are some asterisks or some other markings when the hymn that is so marked was a reality to you and you got help in reading it or in singing it and you have never forgotten it it was so real you did not want to forget it and so you made a mark that you should be reminded not to forget it it is quite lawful before God to do that and it would be all to the good of the church of

Christ if people belonging to it put down more in black and white what were the dealings of God with their souls write the things which thou hast seen you have got scripture to do that so these Ebenezer stones oh how many they are then you can remember can you when God gave you a soft heart oh that is something to remember I can assure you for these soft hearts alas they seem nowadays to be very few and far between but there is this experience and a stone of health it is when you feel a broken heart a contrite spirit and you can humble yourself under the mighty hand of God with whom you have to do and worship him spend a few sweet moments rich in blessing before the cross of

Christ all out good that is but here is a stone of help when you can see Jesus with the eye of faith and feel to me Christ is more precious far than life and all its comforts are sweet are those remembrances and how you feel when you look back in help to do it help by God thy former visits we recount on Mizar's hill and Hermann's mount but still our soul desires anew thy sweet thy lovely face to view then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mispah and Shenn and called the name of it Ebenezer saying hitherto hath the Lord helped us and now let us get right down to bed rock if you say what you ought to say and some of you ought to say it before the church having obtained help of

God I continue unto this day hitherto the past our good guidance saviour has helped us thus far and tis by his favour we are what we are and now in that word I quoted the apostle Paul said having obtained help and you have obtained it and you obtain it as a rule in the means of grace oh dear friends you must tell the truth and admit that you have found help at the mercy seat and you can understand David when he says blessed be God for he hath heard my prayer and turned away his mercy from me and you have found help under the gospel you have obtained it you have come up to hear what

God the Lord would say and in listening to the gospel you see no man whoever the preacher was but Jesus only you must admit the help you have obtained in the worship of God so that the Sabbath day was to you a day of rest and you wished Monday morning was farther off when it might be taken up the duties of everyday life again you would lose the quietness of mind and peace within which you had felt before God in the worship of his holy majesty not only so you have obtained help when they that fear the Lord speak often one to another and you can recall when you have been helped in listening to a brother a sister in the Lord as they have told out the dealings of God with their souls and what they have told out as helped you comforted you and made you to feel the unity of the spirit and given you this stone of help we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren not only so when trouble has come upon you it may be the afflicting hand of

[37 : 50] God has been laid upon you how have you felt when it has come have you felt like this Lord I want to know if my religion is that which thou are the author of and if this affliction has come upon me to make it manifest that it is Lord I will welcome it let my soul live and it shall praise thee and let thy judgments help me and you can remember these afflictions and God has granted you restoring mercy done great things for you altogether beyond your expectations and God always works like that he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or even think would you think of the stones of hell you have set up some of you have set them up in a hospital ward when

God has been with you gone with you down to the operating theatre and brought you back again when maybe you were tempted and tried as to whether your religion would stand such a crucial test and you might have teakles stamped upon it be weighed in the balances and found wanting a but you but you were not found wanting you were brought back to set up a stone of help and to say Ebenezer hitherto the Lord hath helped us oh do you thank God for whatever past experience you possess dear friends but then I said there was a second viewpoint I can only just look at that a little and now there is the present hitherto is to do with the past and you can look back as grace is given and contemplate it and if you're helped to do that right

I can tell you how you will feel whoso is wise and will observe these things even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord and all the way that you have come along there has been loving kindness manifested and you should make mention of it like Isaiah when he said I will mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord I do like how that is worded mention you cannot do much more than mention any more than you can go down to the ocean depths and do much more than take a bucket full out of it and when you mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord as you have seen them and the psalmist said thy loving kindness is before mine eyes all you can do is just to mention them and you should do that how many breaths have you drawn so much loving kindness have you received in thee we live and move and have our being and when you think that the psalmist tells us and it is a great truth and you learn it more and more as you go on into life even in time

I can assure you thou hast not dealt with us after our sins neither hast thou rewarded us according to our iniquities and that is one thing to be concerned about in the present and now suppose well not suppose maybe ought not to use that word look you you sit down before God when you get a little time and make the time to do it and begin to count your blessings and that will tell you something about the present you will find what the psalmist says is a wonderful truth blessed be God who daily listens who daily loatheth us with benefits and that is how you and I are living as grace is given in our everyday life what measure of health and strength you have your home life all the comforts you have heaped up they are in they are to do with the present and they come through the help of

God afforded you to gather it all together yes and think too of this great mercy who maketh thee to differ from another and what dost thou that thou dost not receive and dear friends I would like you to think of this do you remember in the morning sermon I referred to being to insular and about the prisoners of hope worldwide scattered north south east and west with not a tithe of the comforts that you and I everyday receive and I thought of another viewpoint of it which I will remind you of here are these people in old testament times and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment they were stoned they were sawn asunder were tempted were slain with a sword they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins being destitute afflicted tormented of whom the world was not worthy they wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth these dear people taught of

[44 : 11] God pilgrims to Canaan bound lived their lives like that and now you think of your everyday life as you live it think of the mercies that are heaped upon you and I as we live our everyday lives or we would not let these mercies lie forgotten in unthankfulness and without praises die or we should say at the end of every day having obtained help of God I continue unto this day June 25 1967 this day you will say it tomorrow if all is well or at least you should do you can set up a stone of help at the end of every day now there is just a third viewpoint which I can only touch on and now that is the prospect and what is the prospect the prospect is this thy love in times past forbids me to think thou would leave me at last in trouble to sink each sweet

Ebenezer I have in review confirms thy good pleasure to carry me right through he who hath helped hitherto he who is loading you with mercies at the present time when tomorrow dawns he will make known his name Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever the prospect is he hath made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things ensure the steps of good men are ordered by the Lord and he delighted in his way though he fall he shall arise the Lord upholdeth him with his hand what is the prospect in every state secure kept as Jehovah's eye tis well with them while life endure and well when called to die the prospect is this that when at length you reach the end of life's journey heaven is before you and you with a welcome guaranteed come ye blessed of my father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world then

Samuel took a stone and set it between Mishpah and Shan and called the name of it Eben Ezer saying hitherto hath the Lord helped us amen come to the first meeting in the race on Tuesday evening 10 199 to Queen Burnt 6 51 come o parent of every vessel tune my heart to sing thy grace strings of mercy never ceases call the songs of ladies' praise teach me some melodious sonnet sung by flaming tones above praise the mount hold fix me on it mount of God's own changing love one hundred and ninety-nine

Gregg sings the Yours true the on was Strength of love in heaven's indign For the world of love and free Think of the Lord Atari

Second life in heaven's indign For the world of glory Praise the Lord.

[49 : 22] Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

And I know by my own treasure, Savior, I'll cry at home.

Here is the Holy Spirit. Thank you.

[50 : 53] Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

[52 : 05] Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

[53 : 11] Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father the communion of the Holy Spirit be upon us and all who love the truth everywhere Amen and Amen I will just remind you dear friends that this Sabbath day I begin the 53rd year of my pastorate under Union Chapel Room hence my subject this afternoon