

OF FAITH AND FABLES

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“Here I Raise Mine Ebenezer, Hither By Thy Help I’m Come”



As my battle with cancer takes even another pathway, I find myself once again saddled with some cumbersome equipment which supplies my needed “oxygen.” I’m connected to a feeder line leading to either a tank or an oxygen generator. It’s not fun but I have come to realize that “oxygen” is my friend. With it I’m here to fight another day, without it right now I would not survive (or so they say).

At any rate, my being temporarily confined to the house, I am once again searching the Bible for inspiration and hope. Of course, each time I begin one of these adventures I find both waiting for me, this time in the Old Testament and First Samuel.

The book of Samuel is really pretty exciting, in a rough-and-tumble way. It's the story of Eli and Samuel and Saul and David, and even Jonathan. It's chock-full of intrigue, battles, strategies, good guys and bad guys. It even mentions a witch or two (for you Harry Potter fans).

Sometimes my brain seems to have a mind of its own and just when I want to concentrate on one thought, suddenly another appears. At first, it doesn't seem appropriate or meaningful but a bit later, I get the connection. This time the interruption was in the form of lyrics to a well-known hymn 'Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing.'

The second verse caught my attention. The second verse begins this way: "Here I raise mine Ebenezer, Hither by Thy help I'm come. And I hope, by Thy good pleasure; safely to arrive at home. Jesus sought me when a stranger; Wandering from the fold of God; He, to rescue me from danger, interposed his precious blood."

I had stumbled onto something that God wanted me to understand. It had to do with "Raising my Ebenezer" and thanking Him for seeing me through thus far. In the story when Samuel and the Israelites defeated the Philistines near Mizpah, Samuel erected a huge "standing stone" to commemorate the victory. He named that stone "Ebenezer" and proclaimed, "Thus far the Lord has helped us."

As a result of that victory all the lands stolen by the Philistines were restored to Israel and for the rest of Samuel's life the people of Israel lived in peace. Such stones were common in those days and were the source of many conversations as to exactly what was so important that happened here that a huge stone was raised. Important events were thus passed down by word of mouth. The messages melded into one thought; "Thankfulness for the Lord's help, thus far."

In my battle with cancer, the results of constant prayers and the faith and love and caring displayed by so many people have produced some good reports as to my progress. So much so that I pause to say, "Here I raise mine Ebenezer." And with thankfulness will proceed through the next phases of recovery, no matter how inconvenient they may be. I know that only with

continuing prayers and complete faith will I ever find “peace” but I’ve come down a long road thus far and God has been with me in my journey.

I’m hoping to soon be able to say, ‘Here I raise mine Ebenezer, hither by Thy help I’m come.’ While I haven’t raised that “Standing Stone” quite yet, I think I know where it should go and to Whom to give the praise. Shalom!