

## Sunday Night Message

July 28, 2019

### *King Saul*

Topics – The People Desire a King; Saul

Series – *1 Samuel*

Text – 1 Samuel 11

### Introduction

In chapter ten, we saw:

The Anointing of Saul (vs. 1 – 8)

The Authentication of Saul (vs. 9 – 16)

The authentication came when the events that Samuel prophesied actually came to pass; all of them.

The Announcement of Saul (vs. 17 – 26)

The people of Israel were all gathered together at Mizpeh where Samuel officially announced the selection of Saul as the first king of Israel.

The Antagonists of Saul (v. 27)

Initially, not everybody is happy about the new king, and there were men who refused to bring him “presents,” which would have been an acknowledgement of Saul’s right to rule over them. Notice that nothing is done to punish these “children of Belial” (meaning wicked or ungodly men) for their refusal to honor their new king.

Here in chapter eleven, we will see the first test that Saul faces as king. An invading army comes up and threatens a city belonging to Israel.

Saul demonstrates both strong leadership and gracious compassion in how he handled this initial test. The secret to his successful handling of this attack is found in v. 6. Saul was yielded to the Spirit of God.

*“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

At this point in Saul’s reign, he is still “little in his own sight,” and he has sense enough to allow God to call the shots. Later on, Saul will be lifted up with pride and will start resisting the will of God by making his own decisions, which will be the beginning of his downfall. But, here in chapter eleven, it’s all good.

Practical Point – This is a common pattern in ministry. When we are first called to do something for God, we lack confidence in our own ability, which forces us to rely completely on the Lord, which is what He wants us to do. We are successful because we are acknowledging Him and not leaning unto our own understanding. However, after we have had some successes, we begin to

believe that the good results were because of us, and we start doing things our way, instead of God's. We start relying on our own power instead of His.

Illustrate – first time teaching; first time soulwinning; first time singing.

### I. **Jabeshgilead is Goaded by the Invading Ammonites (vs. 1 – 3)**

The Ammonites come up from Rabbah to attack the city of Jabeshgilead. The people from Jabesh offer to surrender and serve the Ammonites, but the Ammonites will only do so on the condition that they are willing to have their right eyes all thrust out. Surprisingly, they agree to give the people from Jabesh a week to come up with an army to save them.

Notice that the people of Jabesh did not trust the leadership of Saul and the strength of God's people to deliver them, at first. Their first response was to surrender, and had the Ammonites accepted their surrender and had not demanded their right eyes, the people of Jabesh would have gladly given up without a fight.

Notice also that the Ammonites didn't have much respect for Israel or her new king.

Jabeshgilead was mentioned back in the Book of Judges, in chapter 21. When the entire nation of Israel was going to war against the tribe of Benjamin, Jabeshgilead refused to go with them. Later, when they needed to find wives for the surviving men of Benjamin in order to preserve the tribe, they punished the people of Jabeshgilead for not fighting alongside of them, and they took all of the young virgins from the city and gave them to Benjamin.

Practical Note – Jabeshgilead was not a particularly strong city within Israel. The devil will often attack you where you are weakest. If you have a weakness in a moral area, he will attack you there. If you struggle with anger, he will provoke you in that area. You need to spiritually fortify the areas where you are weak. Jabesh was not a fortified city, and was the easiest place for the enemy to attack.

The Ammonites are descendants of Lot (see Genesis 19:31 – 38; Deuteronomy 2:19). The capitol city of Ammon is Rabbah, which is the same location of the current capitol of Jordan today, which is called Amman. Though God had strictly instructed Israel to not take any land from the Ammonites, the Ammonites were not a friend to Israel. They refused to allow Israel to cut through their land on their way to Canaan. They also attacked Israel during the time of the Judges (Judges 10 – 11), but Israel was delivered by Jephthah.

#### Practical Note

Everybody who serves the Lord will be tested. Saul already knew he had some critics within Israel, and now he has a country attacking him from without. God is sometimes going to allow the enemy to come into your life to threaten you. Whether you pass the test or not will be determined by your yieldedness to the Lord. In other words, if when the trials and tests come, you go through them in the power and strength of the Lord, you will pass the test and have victory over the enemy, and everybody will see that God is with you. Through this initial test, everybody

in Israel is going to know that God's hand was genuinely on Saul. Had the trial never come, the people would have never seen that. Trials are necessary for a couple of reasons:

They give you an opportunity to grow.

They show you what God can do, if you rely upon Him, and thus, increase your faith.

They show everybody else that God is with you.

## II. Saul Gathers Together an Impressive Army (vs. 4 – 11)

Notice that there must not have been too much kingdom business at this point because Saul is still doing farm work.

When he hears the weeping of the people, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him (see also 1 Samuel 10:6), and he was angry because of what was being done to God's people.

Saul does something somewhat similar to what the Levite from Bethlehem Judah who cut up his dead concubine in twelve pieces and sent the pieces all over Israel to the twelve tribes to let them know that the Benjamites from Gibeah had raped and murdered his wife (See Judges 19).

Saul, however, cuts up a joke of oxen and sends the pieces all over Israel, and demands that everybody come out in order to fight with him against the Ammonites that were invading Jabeshgilead. Saul acts boldly and decisively. He demonstrates very strong leadership.

Notice also in v. 7, that Saul connects his leadership to Samuel. Though the people may not have greatly respected Saul at this point, they still respected Samuel.

Note – verse 8 distinguishes the tribe of Judah from the other tribes, which indicates that 1 Samuel was probably written, or, at least edited, after the kingdom split in the days of Rehoboam (around 931 BC).

*"Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day." (1 Samuel 27:6)*

There are several references in Samuel to a divided kingdom (1 Sam. 11:8; 17:52; 18:16; 2 Sam. 5:5; 11:11; 12:8; 19:42–43; 24:1, 9)<sup>1</sup> Yet, there is no hint of a fallen Samaria in 1 and 2 Samuel, so it is likely that 1 and 2 Samuel were written after the kingdom divided, but before the fall of the northern kingdom in 722 BC.<sup>2</sup>

Notice also in v. 8 that Saul numbered the people in Bezek, which is 13 miles north of Shechem, and 17 miles west of Jabeshgilead.

## III. Saul Grants an Indulgent Absolution to His Former Critics (vs. 12 – 13; see 10:27)

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 374.

<sup>2</sup> Eugene H. Merrill, "1 Samuel," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 430–431.

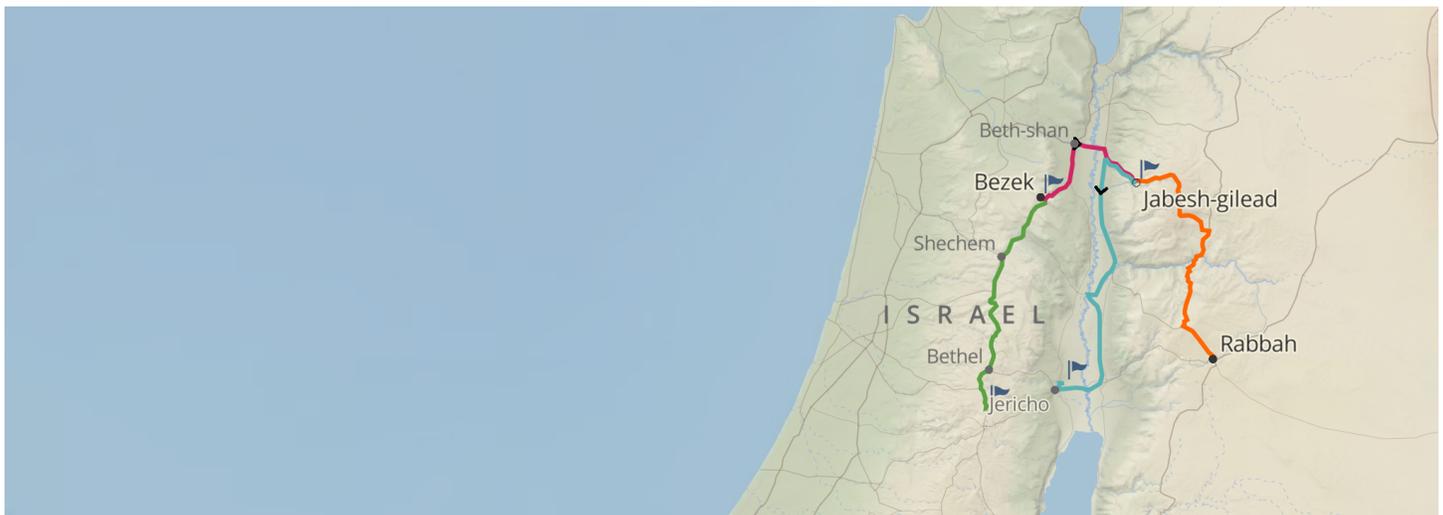
Saul does not take revenge on the people who rejected him at the first (1 Samuel 10:27). Notice that the people make their request to Samuel, but Saul is the one who makes the decision. Again, this demonstrates that Saul was a strong leader, at first.

“Effective leaders use their authority to honor God and build up their people, but ineffective leaders use the people to build up their authority. Later on, Saul began to do that, and it led to his failure.”<sup>3</sup>

#### IV. Saul Gets an Integrated Affirmation within the Kingdom (vs. 14 – 15)

Saul passed the test and the people rejoice over their new king. He had brought a great victory to God’s people. He had passed the test.

If you had asked Saul out with the herd if he wanted to go through this examination, he would have surely said no. But because he accepted the challenge, and fought for the Lord and the Lord’s people, God strengthened Saul’s kingdom. The people were now very happy about their new king.



Nahash’s route from Rabbah to Jabesh-Gilead

Saul’s route from Gibeah to Bezek to gather his army

Route of Saul and his army from Bezek to Jabesh-Gilead

Route of Saul and the people from Jabesh-Gilead to Gilgal

<sup>3</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Successful*, “Be” Commentary Series (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor/Cook Communications, 2001), 57.

