

Saul's Finest Hour 1 Samuel 11

INTRODUCTION

If you have a Bible, turn with me to 1 Samuel 11. Continuing in our study of 1 Samuel, Saul has been privately anointed as the first human king of Israel. He has been publicly presented to the people as God's choice for the first human king of Israel, and at the end of chapter 10 he simply goes back home, and that's where we left the story. We pick it up then in chapter 11.

It's helpful to get a little background on what exactly is going on here, so first of all, who were the **Ammonites**? If you go back to Genesis 19, it's a familiar story with the destruction of the city of Sodom. Lot is living there with his wife and two daughters. The angels come. They warn Lot of the destruction. Lot, his wife and two daughters escape. His wife looks back. She's turned into a pillar of salt and so Lot and his two daughters end up hiding in a cave, and in the cave Lot's two daughters get their father intoxicated. Both have relations with their father; both become pregnant with sons. One of those sons becomes the father of the Ammonite people. The other becomes the father of the Moabite people. Just east of the Jordan River was home base for the **Ammonites** and right below them, the Moabites to the south and then to the west basically from the foothills all the way to the Mediterranean Sea were the Philistines. **Those are the three big enemies of Israel in the Samuel story.**

I. King Saul's _____ (11:1-3)

A. The _____ from Nahash (11:1a)

B. The _____ from the men of Jabesh-gilead
(11:1b)

C. The _____ proposal: one _____ (11:2)

D. The _____ to Nahash's condition (11:3)

II. King Saul's _____ (11:4-7)

The account does not waste time following the messengers as they went all over Israel. We are taken straight to the moment when they arrive at Gibeah, Saul's town. But even then, the messengers did not seek out Saul: (read 11:4).

Now there are a lot of things to notice in these verses.

First, we're told that **...behold, Saul was coming from the field behind the oxen.** (11:5a) Just like last week when Saul was hiding in the luggage, the word **behold** is to make sure you don't just read through this, but it's like, **"Stop. Shine a spotlight on it. Behold, Saul's in the baggage."** Well, this is similar. **"Behold, Saul is coming in from the field behind the oxen."** In other words, Saul had not assumed his role as king. Saul went home and went back to farming. He's coming in from the field as a farmer, and he hears the people weeping, and he asks why they're weeping (11:5b).

They relay the message of what was happening, and the text says **"...the Spirit of God came upon him mightily."** (11:6) **It doesn't say that Saul prayed. It doesn't say that Saul sought Samuel. It doesn't say that Saul did anything, but God, true to His promise, came upon Saul to equip him for his first big test.** He responds with what I would consider a righteous anger. The Ammonites intend to make a reproach, a laughingstock, out of both Israel and Israel's God, and God responds with a holy anger through Saul. **"We're not going to take that."**

Then Saul does a rather strange thing, at least in our opinion. He takes a couple of oxen, cuts them up into bloody pieces, and sends them with messengers all over the territory, and the message is (read 11:7a). The backstory to this action is found in Judges 19-21. You can read it on your own but it's PG13.

III. King Saul's _____ (11:8-15)

A. The _____ at Bezek (11:8)

B. The _____ for Jabesh-gilead (11:9)

C. The _____ (11:10-11)

D. King Saul _____ to give God the _____
over the _____ of personal
_____ (11:12-13)

This is one of those passages that gives just a shadow, just a hint that there is a promise of a king who would be the Savior, who would be their deliverer.

E. Saul _____ as king over Israel
(11:14-15)

This is but a glimpse of what was possible—that God could use a very ordinary man like Saul to do something extraordinary in the nation.

CONCLUSION

What can we take with us this morning? Let me end by reiterating what I said at the beginning of our time together this morning: **When you go back through the Scriptures, when you go back through the history of the church, there is a clear and established pattern by God that God uses the most ordinary people to do the most extraordinary things for Him.**

The issue will never be: are you adequate? The issue will never be: are you perfect? What's your level of formal education? It won't be any of that. **The issue will simply be will you believe God and have the courage to believe God tells the truth when He says, *"I have called you to be part of something that will matter forever, and I will give you what you need to fulfill your calling. Just trust Me!"***