

## FIRST SAMUEL

5. How many men going up to Bethel was Saul to see? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What items of offering were they to have? \_\_\_\_\_
7. To what town was Saul to go to meet Samuel again? \_\_\_\_\_
8. In what unusual activity was Saul to participate after God's spirit came upon him? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who was Saul's uncle? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Where was Saul anointed a second time? \_\_\_\_\_

## A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 11

- Vv. 1-3 *Jabesh-gilead attacked.* Israel was seldom free from oppression and opposition. This may have been the meaning of the spies who said, "The land, . . . , is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof" (Numbers 13:32). Many of the attacks came from neighbors nearby, and the Ammonite people were such neighbors.
- Vv. 4-11 *Jabesh-gilead delivered.* The Spirit of God came upon Saul, and he took immediate steps to rescue the Trans-jordan residents of Jabesh-gilead from the clutches of their attackers. His kindness on their behalf made them his lifelong friends.
- Vv. 12-25 *The kingship of Saul renewed.* Samuel called the people to an assembly at Gilgal. Saul was again presented to the people, and some called for the punishment of those who had rejected the kingship of Saul when he was first crowned king. Saul's magnanimity prevailed, and the worthless fellows who had opposed him at the first were spared. This happy solution to the situation caused all Israel to return to their homes with joy.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Christian living is never easy.* The Israelites may have thought that their life in the promised land of Palestine would be without hardship. It was, indeed, often described as a land "flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8). The land, however, was a political football; and from the south the Egyptians often attacked it. From the north came the Assyrians. From the east came the Ammonites and Moabites. Besides these hostile peoples, there were the Edomites, Amalekites, and Philistines. These are typical of the enemies of Christians—the materialists, secularists, atheists, and hedonists.
2. "*There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother*" (Proverbs 18:24 b). When the tribes of Israel demanded that the men of Benjamin deliver up the criminals of Gibeah, the Benjaminites refused (Judges 20:13). As a result, a civil war was fought; and Benjamin was nearly destroyed. The remnant of the men of Benjamin found wives in Jabesh-gilead (Judges 21:14). We are left to wonder if Saul might have been descended from one of these. At any rate, he moved swiftly to deliver the inhabitants of the city in his day. As a result, these people were ever after indebted to him. They showed him the final kindness of taking his gibbeted body from the walls of Beth-shean (I Samuel 31:11-13). Christians today should be grateful for their lifelong friends in the church and especially thankful that they can sing, "What a friend we have in Jesus."

Samuel's Retirement from the Judgeship, 11:1—12:25.

#### *Jabesh-gilead Attacked.* 11:1-3

Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.

2 And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this *condition* will I make a *covenant* with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it *for* a reproach upon all Israel.

3 And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then, if *there be* no man to save us, we will come out to thee.

1. *Who was Nabash? 11:1*

Nahash was the king of the Ammonites. The Ammonites were descendants of the younger daughter of Lot by Lot himself (Genesis 19:38). These people settled in the land east of the Jordan near the north end of the Dead Sea. They became a very idolatrous people and worshiped a false god named Molech. Although the people of Israel had been told not to fight against them when they came out of Egyptian bondage, these people were quite often among Israel's warring neighbors and enemies (Judges 11:12).

2. *Where was Jabesh-gilead? 11:1 b*

Jabesh-gilead was an Israelite town east of the Jordan river and north of the Jabbok river. It was an important town in Gilead, somewhat closer to the Sea of Galilee than to the Dead Sea. Wives had been found among the citizens of Jabesh-gilead for the men of Benjamin after the other tribes had nearly exterminated the Benjamites (Judges 21:8-15). It may have been that some of Saul's ancestors were citizens of this community.

3. *Why would Nabash's cruelty be a reproach on Israel? 11:2*

For all the men of one city to be maimed in such a terrible way would be a sign of reproach to any people. They would be looked upon as rather helpless cripples. The fact that an enemy had been able to do this to them would also indicate that they were weak and unable to

defend themselves. The loss of the right eyes of all the men in the town would be a terrible price to pay for peace. No honorable group of people would allow such a penalty to be exacted from them. It would be quite a victory for Nahash if he were able to exact this ransom from the men of Jabesh-gilead, but a reproach on Israel.

*Jabesh-gilead Delivered.* 11:4-11

4 Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people: all the people lifted up their voices, and wept.

5 And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field; and Saul said, What *aileth* the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh.

6 And the spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly.

7 And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent *them* throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying; Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.

8 And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

9 And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, Tomorrow, by *that time* the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and showed *it* to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad.

10 Therefore the men of Jabesh said, Tomorrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you.

11 And it was *so* on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites

until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.

4. *Why did Saul return to the farm? 11:5*

There was no kingdom as such; that is, there was no army, no court, no palace. Saul again demonstrates a very wholesome attitude inasmuch as he was content to return to his father's house and to his former way of life. When he heard of the oppression of the Ammonites, his anger was aroused; and it is even connected with the Spirit of God, inasmuch as he was rightly indignant that such an act was to be committed. He sent word to Nahash, as the custom of war would be; but it would further take Nahash off his guard, making it possible for the Israelites to attack unawares while the enemy was lax with its night guard.

5. *In what way did the Spirit of God come upon Saul?*  
11:6

Nothing is said about the manner in which the Holy Spirit came upon Saul. On the Day of Pentecost the coming of the Spirit was attended by certain outward signs which were visible and audible (Acts 2:3, 4). God's spirit came upon the judges throughout their three-hundred-year history, but nothing is said in any of their cases to indicate that there were such manifestations to be tested by the senses. Generally, it was stated that "the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him (Judges 14:6). The coming of the Spirit in such a case enabled Samson to perform feats of unusual strength. In the case of Saul it appears that God's spirit helped him to have the courage he needed to take the necessary action. The spirit of God incited him to such righteous indignation that he determined not to let the king of the Ammonites go unpunished for his threatened cruelty.

6. *Why did Saul dissect his oxen? 11:7*

By sending a piece of his oxen to each of the twelve tribes of Israel, Saul demonstrated in a dramatic way that their help was needed in the war against Nahash. He told them that if they did not come forth to fight with him and Samuel against Nahash, their oxen might well be hewn into pieces by the enemy. It was in this way that the Levite had called all Israel as one man to punish the sinners of Gibeah after they had misused and killed his concubine (Judges 19:29, 30). The dramatic action served its purpose in Saul's case, and the fear of the Lord came upon the people. They came out to battle with a unified purpose.

7. *Where was Bezek? 11:8*

Bezek was one of the first towns conquered by the Israelites after the death of Joshua (Judges 1:4). The location is indefinite, but it must have been near the border of Benjamin and Judah. This was a good place for the men of Israel to meet before they crossed over the Jordan to attack Nahash.

8. *Why was a difference made between Israel and Judah? 11:8*

Judah had been given the preeminence by his father Jacob (Genesis 49:8-12). Judah had been the leader as the people marched through the wilderness under Moses' guidance. In many ways he was always separate from the rest of the people of Israel. Saul's numbering revealed that there were 30,000 men of war ready to go up to battle out of Judah. The other eleven tribes totaled only 300,000. Judah had been the largest tribe in both the numberings in Moses' day (Numbers 1 and 26). Since there were only 330,000 between the two at this time, only one-half of Israel's fighting force must have been involved in this campaign. At the first numbering in the wilderness, there were 603,550 men twenty years of age and over, thus able to go to war (Numbers 1). At the second numbering

there were 601,730 (Numbers 26). The fact that there is a division made between Judah and the rest of Israel is not an indication of this book's being written after the schism in the days of Jeroboam (I Kings 12).

9. *Why did the men of Jabesh-gilead send a message to Nahash? 11:10*

The men of Jabesh-gilead said that they would come out to Nahash on the following day. They indicated by this that they were coming out in order that he might put out their right eyes. Such a message of seeming surrender would throw the king off his guard and make him less watchful. It would also give the necessary time for Saul's army to make a forced march all night and come upon the Ammonites by surprise.

10. *What was Saul's strategy? 11:11 .*

Saul divided his people into three companies. They would thus be able to attack from both sides of the city and from the front or the rear. Since he came on them in the morning watch, it was before the heat of the day when the Ammonites were expecting the men of Jabesh-gilead to surrender. Such strategy took the Ammonites completely by surprise. They were separated from each other and could not join forces to do battle. The victory was complete for the men of Saul.

*The Kingship of Saul Renewed. 11:12-15*

12 And the people said unto Samuel, Who *is* he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death.

13 And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for today the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel.

14 Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there.

15 And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal; and there they

sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

*11. How did Saul demonstrate his wisdom? 11:12, 13*

After the rout of the Ammonites, many of the people of Israel thought they should punish those evil men who had opposed Saul's becoming king. Saul had now demonstrated that he was an able military leader and the populace thought that those who distrusted him should not be allowed to continue their propaganda against him. Saul was very wise in not seeking vengeance. He decreed that there would not be any man put to death in Israel during the time of victory celebration. He would do nothing to mar the complete victory which belonged to the people. Saul was also very wise in attributing the victory to the power of the Lord. He said it was the Lord who had wrought salvation in Israel.

*12. In what sense was the kingdom renewed? 11:14*

Samuel called the people to go again to Gilgal. He wanted to emphasize the fact that the kingdom was now firmly established. Saul had proved himself to be a capable leader, and Samuel thought it was wise that the people reaffirm their allegiance to the new king. The place that he chose was very significant. At this place the covenant of circumcision had been renewed by the people of Israel when they crossed the Jordan under Joshua (Joshua 5:1-9). It was necessary to renew the kingdom because it was much firmer after the united effort against the Ammonites than it had been at any previous time. Now, too, the people of Israel were ready to give thanks for the victory and the many blessings they had received from God's hand.

*13. Why did they offer sacrifices at Gilgal? 11:15*

The sacrifices mentioned here are peace offerings. In a sense they were thank offerings and were usually connected with a sacrificial meal. People offered these on



joyous occasions, for they were feasts of rejoicing. Israel had many things for which to be thankful, and it was quite appropriate that they offer such sacrifices. Samuel again demonstrates that he is serving as a priest in leading the people to make such offerings.

## CHAPTER 11 IN REVIEW

1. Who was the king of the Ammonites who died? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What town of Israelites did the Ammonites attack? \_\_\_\_\_
3. In what area was the town located? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What influence came to Saul? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What animal did Saul dissect and distribute? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Where did Israel assemble to go to battle? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many men of Israel went to fight? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many men of Judah went to battle? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who won the battle? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Where did Israel meet for a sacrifice? \_\_\_\_\_

## A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 12

- Vv. 1- 5 *Samuel reviews his career.* Although Samuel had many more years of service to give to his people, they had rejected him as being their most prominent leader. They had demanded and received a king. Samuel took advantage of an opportunity to rehearse his manner of life among them. It is a man of sterling character who can say, “. . . ye have not found ought in my hand” (v. 5).
- Vv. 6-15 *Israel's history reviewed.* While Samuel was speaking to the people, he reminded them of their heritage. God had been with them throughout many thrilling experiences. In no