



8: Who Will Save Us?

(1 Sam 11)

Have you ever experienced something that is way beyond what you can handle on your own? Today we discover how God raised a deliverer, united a nation, and offered mercy at the very moment justice seemed easiest—and how Jesus does the same for us today.

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teachingnotes

* All Scripture is from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB) unless otherwise noted.

1 Samuel 11:1-3

Nahash the Ammonite came up and laid siege to Jabesh-gilead. All the men of Jabesh said to him, “Make a treaty with us, and we will serve you.” Nahash the Ammonite replied, “I’ll make one with you on this condition: that I gouge out everyone’s right eye and humiliate all Israel.” “Don’t do anything to us for seven days,” the elders of Jabesh said to him, “and let us send messengers throughout the territory of Israel. If no one saves us, we will surrender to you.”

Nahash was king of the Ammonites (1 Sam 12:12) - one of the 2 nations that fought against Israel. The removal of one eye would reduce their fighting ability having much less depth perception. Further, leaving one eye would allow them to continue to farm and generate taxable revenue for Nahash.¹

The Dead Sea Scrolls contain more information about this text telling us that Nahash had previously gouged out the right eyes of military men captured from 2 of the 12 tribes of Israel (Gad & Reuben). It also tells us that 7,000 Israelite troops had retreated from battle with the Ammonites and escaped to **Jabesh Gilead**.²

1 Samuel 11:4-5

When the messengers came to Gibeah, Saul’s hometown, and told the terms to the people, all wept aloud. Just then Saul was coming in from the field behind his oxen. “What’s the matter with the people? Why are they weeping?” Saul inquired, and they repeated to him the words of the men from Jabesh.

The last chapter of Judges (Judges 20-21), about 300 years earlier, tells how 11 tribes of Israel joined together to go to battle against the tribe of Benjamin - Saul’s tribe - because Saul’s ancestors defended men who committed an atrocity at **Gibeah**. All the Israelite people participated in battling Benjamin EXCEPT the people from **Jabesh-gilead**. As punishment, Hebrew leaders decided that everyone in Jabesh-gilead was to be killed, only sparing unmarried females. As such, BOTH Jabesh-gilead & Gibeah had been decimated.

300 years later, Saul, the Benjamite from Gibeah is king. These 2 related towns are repopulated and once again face difficult days. This is why the people of Gibeah **wept** over what was about to happen to Jabesh.

Based on the text, **the messengers** didn’t come to Gibeah asking to speak to Saul. This “king” isn’t in a palace being served. He is still acting like a humble, dirty farmer, an average man in an average town doing normal-people stuff.

1 Samuel 11:6-7

When Saul heard these words, **the Spirit of God suddenly came powerfully on him**, and his anger burned furiously. He took a team of oxen, cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout the territory of Israel by messengers who said, “This is what will be done to the ox of anyone who doesn’t march behind Saul and Samuel.” As a result, **the terror of the LORD fell on the people**, and they went out united.

The Spirit of God came powerfully on King Saul. This is no small claim as this spotlights the Righteous Eternal Judge’s anger burning through the earthly judge, King Saul, to accomplish His will. The Israelite people would be **united** and go out to liberate the people besieged by the Ammonites inside Jabesh-gilead. The king warned those who would not go that their farm animals would be put to death & dismembered (some scholars think was a warning to the person and not just the animal he owned).

¹ Robert D. Bergen, 1, 2 Samuel, vol. 7, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 135.

² Bill T. Arnold, 1 & 2 Samuel, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 176-177.

But even more weighty than Saul's warning, **the terror of Yahweh fell on the people** to accomplish the rescue mission He prompted through Saul. So, out they went on a 40+ mile journey NE of Saul's home in Gibeah. They stop at a place called **Bezek**, 13-14 miles from Jabesh-gilead.

1 Samuel 11:8-11

Saul counted them at Bezek. There were three hundred thousand Israelites and thirty thousand men from Judah. He told the messengers who had come, "Tell this to the men of Jabesh-gilead: 'Deliverance will be yours tomorrow by the time the sun is hot.' " So the messengers told the men of Jabesh, and they rejoiced. Then the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Tomorrow we will come out, and you can do whatever you want to us." The next day Saul organized the troops into three divisions. During the morning watch, they invaded the Ammonite camp and slaughtered them until the heat of the day. There were survivors, but they were so scattered that no two of them were left together.

The morning watch was between 2-6am, before the sun came up, and the battle was over pretty quickly. The Ammonites were either **slaughtered** & thoroughly **scattered**.

1 Samuel 11:12

Afterward, the people said to Samuel, "Who said that Saul should not reign over us? Give us those men so we can kill them!"

Remember those wicked men who had said, "How can this guy save us?" They despised him and did not bring him a gift, but Saul said nothing." (1 Samuel 10:27)

This is Saul's chance to get back at them...

1 Samuel 11:13-14

But Saul ordered, "No one will be executed this day, for today the LORD has provided deliverance in Israel." Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let's go to Gilgal, so we can renew the kingship there."

This is one of the few parts in the writing of Samuel where Saul does what honors **Yahweh**. Here Saul is quick to give the credit to **Yahweh** Who provided deliverance in Israel. Israel stood together to recognize their humble, gracious, conquering king. The previous mention of **REJECTING** Yahweh as King over Israel **NOW** spotlights a thankful recognition of Yahweh's Presence.

1 Samuel 11:15

So all the people went to Gilgal, and there in the LORD's presence they made Saul king. There they sacrificed fellowship offerings in the LORD's presence, and Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

This is the highest of the highs we will see for King Saul. Israel is united & Yahweh's Presence is celebrated! The people were thankful & rejoiced greatly as they sacrificed fellowship/peace offerings - thankful to be in right relationship with Yahweh & His people, including eaten together in a community meal.

Over 1,000 years later we see...

1. **the King of Israel living like a peasant.** King Saul was plowing the fields in his hometown & the Lord Jesus - God who put on skin - lived among His people incognito.
2. **the King of Israel Anointed & empowered to Rescue those besieged by the enemy.** We've seen this in today's Scriptures, but we see this in more significant ways as Jesus teaches the truth, heals the sick, casts out demons, & sets captives free.
3. **the King of Israel offer grace instead of judgment.** As Saul chose to forgive those who spoke evil of him, the Lord Jesus offers forgiveness to the 'worst of the worst' like tax collectors & Prostitutes, the 'best of the best' like Joseph & Nicodemus, and even a Criminal on a cross beside him who had been taunting Him earlier.
4. **the King of Israel leading People to right relationship with Yahweh & one another.** The **ULTIMATE & FINAL SACRIFICE** was found in the Lord Jesus giving Himself for us, bringing us into right relationship with Yahweh & with one another.

?) Are YOU in right relationship with King Jesus? Are you in right relationship with His people?

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!

* Or call our **deacons & wives: Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Steve & Debbie Bass** (850-673-7952), **Noel & Patricia Barnes** (813-767-2881), **Derek & Emily Beaty** (813-763-4421), or **Tim & Joni Hughey** (850-464-1156).

discussion questions

These open-ended questions are designed to help you LIVE what you LEARN with your Family, Friends, or Small Group.

1. **When Fear Drives Choices** (11:1–3)

- What fears might make a community consider Nahash's 'deal'?
- Where are we tempted to accept a humiliating compromise to avoid short-term pain?

2. **Spirit & Anger** (11:6)

- What's the difference between Spirit-stirred, righteous anger and fleshly outrage?
- What guardrails help keep our anger redemptive rather than destructive?

3. **Mercy Over Payback** (11:12–13)

- Saul chose mercy when the crowd wanted blood. Where are you tempted to settle scores? What would choosing mercy (not denial, not passivity) look like?

4. **In Jesus, we see the King of Israel...**

- **living like a peasant.** Take a few minutes to discuss why Jesus lived like a peasant rather than a king.
- **anointed & empowered to rescue those besieged by the enemy.** Take some time to talk about how the teaching & miracles of Jesus set him apart from any other prophet or preacher. Talk about some specific teachings, healings, and other miracles that should leave us in awe of Who He is.
- **offer grace instead of judgment.** Take some time to recount specific times that Jesus offered grace to those who deserved judgment.
- **the King of Israel leading People to right relationship with Yahweh & one another.** Take some time to consider the significant sufferings that Jesus went through to pay for our sin to make us right with Him & with one another.

5. **Take time to share prayer needs and lift each other up to King Jesus!**

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