

1  **SAUL THE KING**

1 Samuel 11

2  **SAUL IS KING**

- Saul, a Benjamite of Gibeah, is made king by the nation of Israel at Mizpah.
- This is not the first time the nation of Israel has gathered at Mizpah to deal with the Benjamites of Gibeah.
- The last time was to make a pact to utterly destroy the Benjamites of Gibeah and to never again give one of their daughters to the Benjamites as wives.

3  **SAUL IS CALLED BY GOD**

- It's important to remember, as we study the life of someone like Saul, that he truly was chosen and called by God to the kingship, and that at least in the beginning he was a humble and godly man.

4  **SAUL IS CALLED BY GOD**

- Saul's story is complex and worth our time, because in many ways he was more righteous than some of the kings who would come after him:
  - Solomon introduced idolatry to Israel for the first time.
  - Sodomy flourished in Judah under the reign of Rehoboam.
- But the kingdom was not taken from Solomon - nor was it taken from Rehoboam or even Manasseh. So what makes Solomon different or special?

5  **BESIEGED BY THE SERPENT**

Saul is tested

6  **1 SAMUEL 11:1-3**

- *Then Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh-gilead, and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a treaty with us, and we will serve you." But Nahash the Ammonite said to them, "On this condition I will make a treaty with you, that I gouge out all your right eyes, and thus bring disgrace on all Israel." The elders of Jabesh said to him, "Give us seven days' respite that we may send messengers through all the territory of Israel. Then, if there is no one to save us, we will give ourselves up to you."*

7  **NAHASH THE AMMONITE**

- Saul's kingship would soon be tested, and cemented by the incursions of Nahash of Ammon.
- The king of Ammon (or "a" king of Ammon). Nahash also has connections to the family of David and even Abigail, wife of Nabal and later of David.

8  **THE SIEGE OF JABESH-GILEAD**

- According to a passage in the Dead Sea scrolls, Nahash had invaded the territories of Gad & Reuben. A portion of the population fled to Jabesh-Gilead. Within a month, Nahash had followed the refugee, and besieged the city.
- Nahash's invasion may have had something to do with the still-recent actions of Jephthah (Judges 11:33).

9  **THE SIEGE OF JABESH-GILEAD**

- According to Josephus, gouging out the right eyes of the people he conquered was standard practice for Nahash.
- “He who opposes his shield to the enemy with his left hand, thereby hides his left eye, and looks at his enemy with his right eye; he therefore who plucks out that right eye makes men useless in war.” - Theodouret

#### 10 **THE SIEGE OF JABESH-GILEAD**

- Without your right eye:
  - Use a shield effectively
  - You have no depth perception
- By effectively crippling the entire city-state of Jabesh-Gilead (after they had asked for help), Nahash would put a “reproach” upon all of Israel.
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#### 11 **NAHASH: THE SERPENT**

- Nahash means “serpent.” In fact, this is the word used in the Hebrew text to refer to the serpent in the Garden of Eden.
- Nahash is Saul’s first foe and a deadly enemy of the Nation of Israel. It is no coincidence that his name means “serpent” – and his story offers some valuable parallels to our own battle with our own deadly enemy.
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#### 12 **THE SERPENT WANTS TO BLIND YOU**

- Our enemy – the Serpent, Satan – wants to blind you.
- If he cannot blind you completely, he will settle for blinding you partially.
  - If he cannot blind you to the truth of God’s Word, he will blind you to certain truths and send you spiraling into heresy.
  - If he cannot blind you to his own machinations, he will blind you to the wickedness of your flesh.
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#### 13 **THE SERPENT WANTS YOUR SERVICE**

- Satan wants us to serve him; he seeks to gain it through both deception and intimidation.
- Sadly, there are many Christians in the church who are already doing the enemy’s work for him, through gossip and the sowing of discord and dissent.
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#### 14 **THE SERPENT WANTS TO CRIPPLE YOU**

- Satan wants to cripple us, but cannot without our agreement.
- Although Satan can attack us in a number of ways, our crippling – our being rendered ineffective for the Lord – involves our own decision.
- The enemy may tempt us, but they cannot force us to sin.

#### 15 **THE SERPENT WANTS TO CRIPPLE YOU**

- Ultimately, the most effective way for he enemy to cripple you is to get your focus off of Jesus Christ:
  - By focusing on “religion” instead of your relationship

- By focusing on your past injuries or wrongs
- By focusing on the enemy themselves

16  **THE SERPENT WANTS TO DESTROY YOU**

- Nahash allows the men of Jabesh-Gilead to send for help because he:
  - Is confident in Israel's disunity
  - Wants to sow fear within the nation of Israel
- Our enemy is seeking to destroy us not just as individuals, but as a body.
  - He seeks to sow disunity and discord wherever possible
  - He preys upon our fears: our fear of him, our fear of each other, our fear of change, our fear of holiness

17  **DEFEATING THE SERPENT**

Saul's triumph

18  **1 SAMUEL 11:4-6**

- *When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul, they reported the matter in the ears of the people, and all the people wept aloud. Now, behold, Saul was coming from the field behind the oxen. And Saul said, "What is wrong with the people, that they are weeping?" So they told him the news of the men of Jabesh. And the Spirit of God rushed upon Saul when he heard these words, and his anger was greatly kindled.*

19  **1 SAMUEL 11:7-8**

- *He took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces and sent them throughout all the territory of Israel by the hand of the messengers, saying, "Whoever does not come out after Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen!" Then the dread of the LORD fell upon the people, and they came out as one man. When he mustered them at Bezek, the people of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.*

20  **1 SAMUEL 11:9-10**

- *And they said to the messengers who had come, "Thus shall you say to the men of Jabesh-gilead: 'Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, you shall have salvation.'" When the messengers came and told the men of Jabesh, they were glad. Therefore the men of Jabesh said, "Tomorrow we will give ourselves up to you, and you may do to us whatever seems good to you."*

21  **1 SAMUEL 11:11**

- *And the next day Saul put the people in three companies. And they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch and struck down the Ammonites until the heat of the day. And those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.*

22  **THE SERPENT IS DEFEATED PROACTIVELY**

- Although Saul is practically the last person in Israel to hear what Nahash is doing (in some measure this is ironic given that he is ostensibly the king), he is the first that is moved to act.
- The rest of Israel were engaged in collective hand-wringing, hoping desperately that it wouldn't happen to them or that they'd be able to protect themselves when the time came.
- Saul acts at great personal cost.

**23  THE SERPENT IS DEFEATED PROACTIVELY**

- The world, the flesh, and the Devil are waging a collective war upon your heart, the hearts of your family, and the hearts of this church.
- They will only be defeated if we are fighting an offensive war.
- It isn't enough to say, "I pray this never happens to my children." There is a good chance it has or it is and we need to be actively taking measures to take back ground.

**24  THE SERPENT IS DEFEATED BY UNITY**

- The entire Nation of Israel gathers together to defeat Nahash.
- Contrast this to many of the battles in the book of Judges, most of which were fought locally and did not actively involve all the tribes.
- In many respects, this is exactly the opposite of what Nahash was expecting.

**25  THE SERPENT IS DEFEATED BY UNITY**

- If we are to effectively fight against our enemy, we must think and act as a unified body.
- This means that we cannot afford petty squabbles; we cannot allow ourselves to be divided on minor issues.
- To let these things divide us against one another is to say that our feelings and egos are more important than the well-being of the body of Christ.

**26  THE SERPENT IS DEFEATED BY THE FEAR OF THE LORD**

- When Saul takes action, the entire nation of Israel is filled with the fear of the Lord.
- This is the third group of people in the beginning of Saul's reign upon whom the spirit of God comes.
- We need to cultivate, within our families and within this church, a fear of the Lord. This is accomplished by daily devotion, daily dwelling in his presence, and constantly making it real.