

BOOK OF 1 SAMUEL
SAUL'S VICTORY OVER THE AMMONITES
1 SAMUEL 11:1-15

Introduction

We saw last how that after Saul's public coronation, he returned immediately back home to Gibeah. (**1 Samuel 10:26**)

We saw also that Saul had his critics but didn't let them get under his skin! (**10:27**)

We are not told all of what Saul was doing back home, but very possibly it was a time of transition from his old life and settling what he needed to at home while at the same time setting up the kingdom from scratch.

In the meantime, the sadistic Ammonites were right on Israel's doorsteps. (Think along the terms of the present day ISIS fighters!) (**Vs 1**)

100 years had passed since Jephthah had subdued the Ammonites. Now they were besieging Jabesh-Gilead. Jabesh-Gilead was a good city to pick on. It was isolated to the east of the Jordan, just west of Ammon.

The men of Jabesh-Gilead knew they were no match for the Ammonites and sought to make a covenant with them. (In this covenant they offered to serve the Ammonites to keep from being wiped out by them.) But their surrender to servitude was not enough for the Ammonites. (**Vs 2**)

Nahash and the Ammonites would only make a peace covenant with Jabesh-Gilead under one condition. That the Ammonites be allowed to gouge out their right eyes. Going along with this ultimatum would have rendered the citizens of Jabesh-Gilead useless in war.

This was the first "reproach", if you will, that any of the Israelites suffered as a part of this nation that now had a King to unite them. But note how Jabesh-Gilead didn't send messengers to the King, but rather they sent messengers to all the coasts of Israel instead. (**Vs 3**)

Obviously they weren't used to this idea of having a King yet! So, they handled the matter in the old way! Even sending a set of messengers to Gibeah where Saul lived. (**Vs 4**)

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Of course the news of this brought sadness and fear into the hearts of those that heard it! ("*...they lifted up their voices, and wept.*")

Saul is out in the field tending to his herd when he catches wind of all this weeping and wailing by the people! (**Vs 5**)

Then in the verses that follow we see Saul's steps to victory over this threat!

I. THE SPIRIT OF GOD CAME UPON SAUL. (Vs 6)
The first step in victory is **going in the power of the LORD!**

Zechariah 4:6 ...Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

2 Corinthians 10:4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

2 Timothy 2:1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

And yes, **sometimes that will motivate us to anger** for the LORD's sake!

Anger is a powerful agent of change, but in the wrong hands, it can be **dangerous, destructive, and even deadly to the wrong people.**

Saul's anger here was more than an act of indignation; it was an act of righteousness. Three characteristics of Saul's anger qualify it as righteous anger.

1. Righteous Anger Is Honorable!
It has a constructive purpose with regard to the LORD's will, God's purpose.

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It is unleashed to obtain the LORD's justice, to right His wrong, and to do right.

Anger without godly restraint, rhyme or reason is not righteous. Righteous anger is calm, not chaotic. It is done to stabilize the LORD's people and contain damage, not to undermine law or create fear.

Righteous Anger Is Honorable!

2. Righteous Anger Is Holy!

Saul was not consumed by his anger, but rather compelled by it.

His human spirit and human driven anger did not overcome him, but rather God's spirit did. (*v 6*)

Further, note how the people did not fear him, but God! (*v 7*) The terror of the LORD, not the terror of Saul, fell on the people. The fear of God is wise and healthy, but the fear of man can be disturbing and unhealthy.

3. Righteous Anger Is Healthy!

Anger did not conquer Saul, but rather it convicted others and corrected things that needed to be corrected.

Saul's anger resulted in a proper action! The text does not tell us whom he was mad at, but from his actions we can see that his anger brought about a right conclusion against the Ammonites—the enemy! That's where a righteous anger is directed...against the enemies of God's people!

More importantly, **planned action, and not blind rage**, was the outcome. They had **unity** (*v 7*), **teamwork and strategy** (*v 11*). We can see that Israel responded as a nation!

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They were unflinching in their opposition to this enemy of God's people, their obligation to one another, and their obedience to Saul's call.

II. SAUL DEMONSTRATED THE LEADERSHIP THAT WAS REQUIRED IN THIS INSTANCE. (Vs 7-11)

Saul's leadership here cannot be mistaken! He grabbed the helm and steered the nation toward victory over the Ammonites!

Wisdom was needed...he had it! (Almost in a Solomon type way!)

Urgency was required...he led with it! (King Saul had less than one week to pull this together!)

Mercy and self-control were needed...he provided it! (*Vs 12-13*)

He controlled his pride, subdued any desire for revenge, and overcame the lust for pomp and glory here!

The wasn't about Saul, it was about the nation of Israel and Israel's God!

As we view King Saul here very early in his reign, we can see that he was very kingly in his leadership! He showed in this instance that he was indeed the man for the job of being king of Israel!

Conclusion

A great beginning! But great beginning doesn't guarantee a good end! It take consistency in the things of the LORD to have a good end! And in time we'll see that Saul lacked that consistency and moved from obedience to the LORD to disobedience!

Oh how we need to be consistent in the right things and finish well!