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**Jabesh Gilead**

**Invasion Of The Ammonites (1 Sam. 11:1)**

*1 Then Nahash the Ammonite came up and encamped against Jabesh Gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, “Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you.”*

- This is Saul’s first real challenge as king, and his first major battle.
- Gilead was on the other side of the Jordan River. Gad and Reuben lived there.

**About The Ammonites** *(See map on last page.)*

- The Ammonites descended from Ben-Ammi, the son of Lot.
- The Ammonites and the Moabites were brother nations, and cousins to Israel.
- No Ammonite or Moabite was allowed to worship in the congregation of Israel. This could have been because of their practices, or to avoid intermingling.
- God didn’t let Israel harass the Ammonites when coming into Canaan: *“And when you come near the people of Ammon, do not harass them or meddle with them, for I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the descendants of Lot as a possession.”* (Deut. 2:19) In a similar way, God said they shouldn’t bother their other relatives, the Edomites and the Moabites.

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- The Ammonites and Edomites conquered their lands from giants. More confidence than Israel?
- Most of the time the Ammonites were not friendly to Israel.
- Israel ended up serving the gods of the Ammonites and the other peoples around them. God “sold them” into the hands of the Philistines and the Ammonites.
- The famous judge, Jephthah, was called by the elders of Gilead to fight the Ammonites.
- The Ammonites always opposed what God was doing.

### **About Molech**

- The Ammonite god was perhaps the most terrible pagan god in the Bible. Molech was a god of child sacrifice.
- His idol was a hollow metal statue, heated to burn children alive.
- This was detestable to God and the Israelites. In Leviticus 20, God pronounced the death penalty for anyone in Israel who gave his child to Molech. God also said that He would cut off anyone who overlooked child sacrifice to Molech.
- Nevertheless, a number of Israelites worshiped Molech, including a number of their kings.
- David was friendly with the King of Ammon in his day, the son of King Nahash.
- Solomon actually built a high place for Molech on the hill facing Jerusalem, as well as Chemosh, the “abomination of the Moabites.”
- Solomon went so far as to marry an Ammonite woman, Naamah. She gave birth to Solomon’s successor, Rehoboam.
- Therefore, women from the two peoples who were not allowed in the congregation of the Lord were found in the line of Jesus!

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## The Legacy of Ammon

- Worship of Molech and Chemosh continued in Israel for centuries. Manasseh actually made his own son pass through the fire.
- Molech was worshiped in the Valley of Hinnom, later called Gehenna.
- Today Ammon’s capital of Rabbath-Ammon is Amman, the capital of Jordan.
- The Ammonites seem to be a picture in Scripture of the Devil.
- At the end of the age, God may have mercy on Ammon and the other cousin-nations of Israel: *“He [meaning Antichrist] shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon.”* (Daniel 11:41)

## Nahash's Demand (1 Sam. 11:2-3)

*2 And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, “On this condition I will make a covenant with you, that I may put out all your right eyes, and bring reproach on all Israel.” 3 Then the elders of Jabesh said to him, “Hold off for seven days, that we may send messengers to all the territory of Israel. And then, if there is no one to save us, we will come out to you.”*

- The name *Nachash* means “serpent,” even in modern Hebrew.
- The Serpent King was overconfident.
- Why take their right eyes?
  - A man whose right eye was put out could no longer be a man of war.
  - He might be limited to doing the work of a slave or a child.
- Nahash wanted to bring reproach on all of Israel.

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- Everyone would know that he had humiliated the men of Jabesh by making them unable to defend themselves, and showing up Israel as being weak.
- The name of the city, Jabesh, means “dry.”
- This story is a parable about believers who are dry and have no hope of resisting this enemy on their own.
  - When the Devil comes into our lives and we take his bait, the Serpent King takes our eye out!
  - You will feel unprotected and useless.
  - However, a king has been anointed to rescue you!

**Saul Seeks To Summon The Nation To Battle (1 Sam. 11:4-7)**

*4 So the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and told the news in the hearing of the people. And all the people lifted up their voices and wept. 5 Now there was Saul, coming behind the herd from the field; and Saul said, “What troubles the people, that they weep?” And they told him the words of the men of Jabesh. 6 Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard this news, and his anger was greatly aroused. 7 So he took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the territory of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, “Whoever does not go out with Saul and Samuel to battle, so it shall be done to his oxen.” And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.*

- Notice again that Saul is characterized by mixture. A “non-kinging king.”
- His act of butchering the oxen was effective but disturbing. By the same tactic of butchering and warning, Israel intimidated the people to gather and fight against Saul’s city of Gibeah and the Tribe of Benjamin.

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- It seems that a tendency towards violence has been released.

### **Help Is On The Way (1 Sam. 11:8-10)**

*8 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 to the messengers who came, "Thus you shall say to the men of Jabesh Gilead: "Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, you shall have help.'" Then the messengers came and reported it to the men of Jabesh, and they were glad. 10 Therefore the men of Jabesh said, "Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you may do with us whatever seems good to you."*

- Jabesh gets the good news that help is on the way, so they trick the Ammonites

### **Victory... And A Fierce Reaction (1 Sam. 11:11-13)**

*11 So it was, on the next day, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and killed Ammonites until the heat of the day. And it happened that those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together. 12 Then the people said to Samuel, "Who is he who said, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Bring the men, that we may put them to death." 13 But Saul said, "Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the LORD has accomplished salvation in Israel."*

- Saul attacked in the middle of the morning watch, which was from 2 – 6:00 AM.
- Notice the trend towards violence that Saul seems to have unleashed. Soon it will be Saul who acts harshly and wants to kill people for ridiculous reasons.

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## **Renewing The Kingdom At Gilgal (1 Sam. 11:14-15)**

*14 Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there." 15 So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal. There they made sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.*

- Gilgal was another of the four holy cities where Samuel judged the people. It was a place of dedication.
- Gilgal was where the men of Israel were circumcised on their way into the Promised Land. The place was named Gilgal, which means *a wheel, or rolling*: *Then the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day.*
- Meeting at Gilgal was perhaps a way of saying that God had taken their shame away once again.
- Saul was again made king. This seems to have been more like a rededication, and this time there was worship of the Lord.
- This was the high point of Saul's reign, and unfortunately it came right at the beginning.

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