

Saul's Rescue of the Jabesh-gileadites Portrays How the King Is to Save and Reign Over God's People

1 Samuel 11:1-15

- Though there will be glimpses of a positive portrayal of Saul being king through the rest of 1 Samuel, his rescue of Jabesh-gilead most positively portrays him as the king who, by God's enablement, saves and reigns over God's people. It shows us the picture of the ideal, with God as the central actor, the king trusting and obeying, and the people trusting in God and their king.
 - 10:1 - "Has not the Lord anointed you to be prince (Leader.) over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the Lord and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies.
 - This is picturing Jesus, but we will mostly remain in Saul's context as we go through the text. But each sentence in the outline should be obvious.
- I. Vs. 1-4 - The wicked enemy poses a horrible threat.
- **Vs. 1** - Nahash the Ammonite besieges Jabesh-gilead (Idea of besieging. In the Trans-Jordan, just east of the Jordan about halfway between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Close to Ammonites. Gad, Reuben, and East Manasseh.), and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a treaty with us, and we will serve you (Fear and compromise.)"
 - **Vs. 2** - Nahash says, "On this condition I will make a treaty with you, that I gouge out all your right eyes (There's actually an extra-biblical record that indicates that Nahash had been gouging out the eyes of the Gadites and Reubenites too. Sign of defeat, humiliation, and subservience. Ju. 16:21 and Samson.), and thus bring disgrace on all Israel (Nahash's designs? This is serious as it relates to God's glory.)" **Vs. 3** - The elders of Jabesh ask Nahash for seven days' respite to send messengers throughout Israel, and if no one will save them, they'll give themselves up to him (Seems strange. But Nahash is thinking in terms of all Israel. The question of, is there anyone who can rescue?)" **Vs. 4** - The messengers come to Gibeah of Saul and report the matter to the people, and everyone weeps (Degree of tragedy. Corporate aspect. They know where they're supposed to go.).
- A. It's worth noting that this depicts the depravity of the human heart.
- B. Saul will redeem the tragedy of the Benjaminite horror in Judges 19-21, and this will matter later in 1 Samuel.
- In Judges 19, a traveling Levite's concubine is repeatedly raped and left for dead by men in Gibeah of the Benjaminites. He cuts her into 12 pieces and sends them throughout Israel. The rest of Israel, 400,000 men, gathers at Mizpah, and comes to Gibeah to punish the men, but the Benjaminites refuse and 26,000 of them fight against the rest of Israel. 700 left-handed men. In a series of battles, Israel loses 40,000, Benjamin loses 25,000, and Benjamin is defeated. 600 survive and flee to the wilderness. Israel kills men and animals and sets fire to the cities of Benjamin, including Gibeah. Benjamin is on the verge of extinction because Israel vowed to not provide daughters for the 600 left (implying women were killed too.). They discuss what tribe didn't participate, and Jabesh-gilead, in East Manasseh is identified. Israel sends 12,000 men who wipe out the city, including women and children, and save 400 virgins to give to Benjamin for repopulation. It's even possible Saul descended from this sinful tragedy. So blood relation. Ju. 21:25 - In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.
 - In chp. 31, when Saul dies, the Philistines cut off his head and hang his body on a wall. Men of Jabesh-gilead retrieve Saul's body and bury him in Jabesh-gilead. David will re-inter him in 2 Sa. 21.
- II. Vs. 5-7 - The king responds with a Spirit-filled outrage, and compels Israel to respond likewise.
- **Vs. 5** - Saul's coming from the field behind the oxen (Plowing. Normalcy. Animals!). He asks why the people are weeping (His question is indicative of a good king.). They tell him what the men of Jabesh said. **Vs. 6** - The Spirit of God rushes upon Saul when he hears this, and his anger is greatly kindled (Another instance of uniqueness in Spirit's role to equip Saul for what he's supposed to do. Note it is God's Spirit enabling and making mad.). **Vs. 7** - He takes a yoke of oxen (two.), cuts them in pieces, and sends 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 (Interesting and severe means of motivation. Mention of Samuel. Remember, 7 days. Messengers scatter. He claims authority. But I believe there's also an intentional connection to Ju. 19-21.)!" The dread of the Lord falls upon the people, and they come out as one man (God stirs their hearts, similarly, to Saul, to do what is necessary. Unity against what threatens their people.).
- III. Vs. 8-11 -The king provides victory as he is enabled by and trusts God.

- **Vs. 8 -** Saul musters (gathers) 300,000 men from Israel and 30,000 men from Judah at Bezek (Possibly 10 miles west of Jabesh-gilead, across the Jordan. Over 30 miles from Gibeah. Distinction. Unity.). **Vs. 9 -** They tell the messengers to go back and tell Jabesh-gilead: ‘Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, you shall have salvation (Mid-afternoon. Confidence in God’s power to say it won’t take long.)’” The men of Jabesh are obviously glad to hear this (Good news brings relief and joy.). **Vs. 10 -** Therefore the men of Jabesh say, “Tomorrow we will give ourselves up to you (Nahash.), and you may do to us whatever seems good to you (Deception.)” **Vs. 11 -** The next day Saul puts the people in three companies (Military strategy in Saul. God’s enabling alone.). They come into the midst of the camp in the morning watch (Unexpected ambush.) and struck down the Ammonites until the heat of the day. The survivors scatter, so that no two of them are left together (It’s clear this is God’s doing, like the Philistines in chp. 7. Gideon in Ju. 7.).

IV. Vs. 12-15 - The king exercises wisdom, gives glory to God, and is recognized as king.

- **Vs. 12 -** The people say to Samuel, “Who is it that said, ‘Shall Saul reign over us?’ Bring the men, that we may put them to death (10:27.)” **Vs. 13 -** Saul says, “Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the Lord has worked salvation in Israel (Wisdom, trust and giving glory. Contrast with Ju. 21.)” **Vs. 14 -** Samuel tells the people to come to Gilgal and renew the kingdom (Time between chp. 10 and here - 13:1 implies a year. Transition.)” **Vs. 15 -** So all the people go to Gilgal, and make Saul king before the Lord. They sacrifice peace offerings before the Lord, and Saul and all the men of Israel rejoice greatly (Attribution to God. Positive portrayal. Ju. 21:25, no king.).

V. What is this telling us contextually, in the larger context, and for our own application?

A. This is the most positive portrayal of Saul, with a few more positives here and there.

- For instance: Overview of victories in 14:47-48. David’s perspective. But after this, the portrayal is mostly negative.
- Ways that Saul is portrayed positively: 1) Vs. 6 - The Spirit’s work: Here, it’s unique for enabled actions. We have the fullness. 2) Redeeming the horror of Ju. 19-21. 3) Vs. 6-7, 9 - He has an appropriate anger against evil and oppression, and demonstrates a corporate solidarity. 4) Vs. 8, 11 - He shows appropriate leadership and strategy. 5) Vs. 11 - He trusts God and demonstrates courage. 6) Vs. 13 - He exercises wisdom, forbears, and seeks peace. 7) Vs. 13 - He recognizes God’s work and gives him credit and glory, for he is doing it all. 8) Vs. 15 - He worships.

B. This is demonstrating the picture of the ideal king in Israel.

- All we see here, which, as you look at Saul’s story must be attributed to the Spirit’s unique enabling, and not Saul’s character, points to God’s design for his king to save and reign, trusting in him, which David will truly demonstrate.

C. Therefore, we can see how this points to how Jesus saves and reigns.

- Saul’s redeeming. Saul’s anger against oppression, slavery, and evil. In contrast, Jesus saves alone, but rescues a multitude. Instead of destroying, he receives the punishment for evil people. It is the rescue that makes the people embrace him as king. 1 Pt. 3:18 - For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous...
- Why is it important to stress how we need a better king? Obviously, we have a greater need than rescue from an evil man. Our enemy is of greater magnitude. We need forgiveness. He saves. But then we need a Lord of life, a King, who continues to rescue, loves, relates, blesses, protects, works things for our good, and is for us. Everything we see in Saul that is good here is fulfilled perfectly in Jesus. He reigns.
- Jesus said at the beginning of his ministry that the kingdom was at hand. What he did and how he acted in his time on earth - healing, leading, teaching, authority, being Lord, compassion - is him being the king, then, and for us.

D. How does this particularly speak to our lives?

- The moral observations we can see in Saul only mean anything in Christ, the one who had no fault. Look, trust, and rely on him. The positive portrayal we see in Saul is an evidence of the Spirit’s work, so by the Spirit, by grace, for God’s glory, we can pursue the good we see.
- But then as we look to our King who saves and reigns, we embrace his saving, for that’s what the King does, and we embrace his reigning, for that’s what the King does.
- Titus 2:14 summarizes all of this. Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.