

Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 42 – Nahash Encamps Against Jabeshgilead Through Saul Fails As King (I Samuel 11-15)

1. What response did Nahash the Ammonite give to the agreement offered by the men of Jabeshgilead?

- No: *“Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabeshgilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee. And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel” (I Samuel 11:1-2).*

2. What was Saul’s reaction to the news of what was happening with Nahash the Ammonite and the men of Jabeshgilead?

- *“And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days’ respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then, if there be no man to save us, we will come out to thee. Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voices, and wept. And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh. And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly” (I Samuel 11:3-6).*

3. What message did Saul send throughout all the coasts of Israel?

- *“And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent” (I Samuel 11:7).*

4. Would Nahash the Ammonite have been better off accepting the agreement offered by the men of Jabeshgilead rather than facing Saul?

- Yes: *“And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabeshgilead, To morrow, by that time the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and shewed it to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad. Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you. And it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together” (I Samuel 11:8-11).*

5. What happened when the people wanted to put to death those who rejected Saul as their king (now that they’ve seen his might and leadership)?

- *“And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death. And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to day the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel. Then said Samuel*

to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. And **all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly**” (I Samuel 11:12-15).

6. Did Samuel show that credibility is necessary in teaching and leading?

- Yes, prior to teaching a valuable lesson he calls them to witness about his credibility: *“And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and grayheaded; and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Behold, here I am: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. **And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand**”* (I Samuel 12:2-4).
- Other Scriptures support this for leaders today:
 - Elders (I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9).
 - Servants (Acts 6:1-3).
 - Deacons (I Timothy 3:8-13).
 - Gospel preachers (I Corinthians 9:27, I Timothy 4:16, and I Thessalonians 2:10-11).
 - Anyone who’s going to try and teach a lesson (Matthew 7:1-5 and Romans 2:17-24).

7. What is the point behind Samuel’s history lesson to Israel?

- To show them they rejected the KING (God) to have THEIR KING (Saul) and to remind them of who blessed and cursed them (God): *“Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers. When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then **the LORD sent Moses and Aaron**, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place. And when they forgot **the LORD their God**, he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, **and into the hand of the Philistines**, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them. And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because **we have forsaken the LORD**, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee. **And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side**, and ye dwelled safe. And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; **but a king shall reign over us: when the LORD your God was your king**. Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you”* (I Samuel 12:7-13).

8. What was required of Saul and the children of Israel to keep from having God against them?

- *“If ye will **fear the LORD**, and **serve him**, and **obey his voice**, and **not rebel against the commandment of the LORD**, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God: But **if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD**,*

but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers ” (I Samuel 12:14-15).

9. What did Samuel call upon the Lord to do so that the people could perceive and see their wickedness was great?

- *“Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king. So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel” (I Samuel 12:16-18).*

10. After the answer to question nine occurs, what did the people say?

- *“And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king” (I Samuel 12:19).*

11. What are some lessons we can learn from Samuel’s response to Israel’s fear discussed in question ten?

- *“And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: **ye have done all this wickedness (Samuel did not excuse away their sin - B.A.Y.): yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart; And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain” (I Samuel 12:20-21).***
- *“**For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name’s sake** (As we’ve discussed earlier, God had a promise to fulfill to Abraham - Genesis 22:18 - B.A.Y.): because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people” (I Samuel 12:22).*
- *“Moreover as for me, **God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way” (I Samuel 12:23).***
- *“Only fear the LORD, and **serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you” (I Samuel 12:24).***
- *“But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, **both ye and your king” (I Samuel 12:25).***

12. As Saul is in the first two years of his reign, does he begin to show his strength as a leader?

- Yes, the taking of a Philistine garrison [military post] was no small task and would cause great admiration among Israel: *“Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent. And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear. And **all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines,** and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal” (I Samuel 13:1-4).*

13. What error did Saul commit while Samuel was not yet come and the people were in fear because of the Philistines who were attacking Israel?

- He did foolishly in offering a burnt offering and peace offering to the Lord (**I Samuel 13:5-13**).

14. At what point was it revealed to Saul that his kingdom would not continue as the Lord searched for a man after His own heart to rule?

- When Samuel found out about the sinful offering of Saul as discussed in question thirteen: *“And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee”* (**I Samuel 13:13-14**; cf. **Acts 13:21-22**).

15. Why was there a great shortage of swords and spears as the day of battle came between the Israelites and the Philistines?

- *“And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin: but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual: And another company turned the way to Bethhoron: and another company turned to the way of the border that looketh to the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness. Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears: But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock. Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads. So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found”* (**I Samuel 13:16-22**).

16. Explain how Jonathan showed great faith in his willingness to trust God, but also great stupidity in speaking and leading against the instructions of his father.

- Towards God he knew it did not take an army to defeat the Philistines: *“Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on the other side. But he told not his father. And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron: and the people that were with him were about six hundred men; And Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD'S priest in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone. And between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. The forefront of the one was situate northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah. And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be*

that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few. And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart. Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto these men, and we will discover ourselves unto them. If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand: and this shall be a sign unto us. And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armourbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, Come up after me: for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armourbearer slew after him. And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armourbearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow. And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling. And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one another” (I Samuel 14:1-16).

- Towards his father, he was disobedient and lead the people to even sin against God through his ignorance: “And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted any food. And all they of the land came to a wood; and there was honey upon the ground. And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath. But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in an honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened. Then answered one of the people, and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food this day. And the people were faint. Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines? And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon: and the people were very faint. And the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground: and the people did eat them with the blood. Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have transgressed: roll a great stone unto me this day. And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay them here, and eat; and sin not against the LORD in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and slew them there” (I Samuel 14:24-34).

17. Did Saul slay Jonathan for his transgression?

- He was going to (**I Samuel 14:39-44**), but the people rescued Jonathan (**I Samuel 14:45**).

18. How long was Saul in battle against the Philistines?

- All the days he reigned (**I Samuel 14:52**).

19. Did Saul keep God's instructions concerning the Amalekites?

- No: "*Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. **Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.** And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. And **Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and **would not utterly destroy them:** but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly***" (**I Samuel 15:1-9**).

20. Using the example of Saul concerning the Amalekites, how much of God's instructions does He expect us to keep?

- Every part of every precept. Saul had won in battle, but did not follow all of God's instructions (**I Samuel 15:8-9**). Therefore, God said: "*Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: **for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments.** And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night*" (**I Samuel 15:10-11**).
- Notice also, the reaction of faithful Samuel in verse 11.

21. Did Saul think he had done anything wrong in taking the Amalekites?

- No, he sure did not: "*And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal. And Samuel came to Saul: and **Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD.** And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed*" (**I Samuel 15:12-15**).

22. If we do not fully obey the Lord, even though we may claim our disobedience was for God, will our transgressions be overlooked (again, use our current context to prove out your answer)?

- NO, Saul claimed the best of the spoils were for sacrifice to God (**I Samuel 15:15**), but that did not make it right. Notice: *“Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel? And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.”* (**I Samuel 15:16-23**).
- Think of Institutionalism, soft peddling the Gospel, denominationalism, etc. which is done falsely in the “name of the Lord”.

23. Had Saul gone too far in his disobedience to God?

- Yes: *“And Saul said unto Samuel, **I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.** Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD. And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. And Samuel said unto him, **The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent**”* (**I Samuel 15:24-29**).
- Notice how before there was a defense, now a confession and blame on the people.

24. What happened to Agag?

- *“Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And **Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal**”* (**I Samuel 15:32-33**).

25. How often did Samuel visit Saul after the events discussed in our study?

- *“And **Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel**”* (**I Samuel 15:35**).