

1 Samuel 11

1 Samuel 11:1–15

Saul Defeats the Ammonites

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Doctrines Alluded To

The Ministry of God the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

Various Levitical Offerings

Introduction: The beginnings of Saul as king are fascinating. On the basis of 1Sam. 11, Saul will receive widespread popular approval and we may assume that his rule begins at the end of this chapter. In 1Sam. 9:1–10:1, Saul was set as king over Israel privately by God. At the end of 1Sam. 10, Saul was brought before the people of Israel and selected as their king possibly by lots and possibly as an elaborate ceremony. In this chapter, Saul takes a leadership position from a military standpoint (which was the public's chief reason for desiring a king), and this gains him popular approval, which essentially begins and solidifies his rule over all Israel.

Also in this chapter we see shades of the division of Israel into two nations. In v. 8, we have troops coming from Israel (the northern portion of the Jewish nation) and from Judah (the southern portion). Recall that in earlier chapters, the Philistines drove a wedge between the two parts of Israel. Recall that even before then, the judges were often from specific areas. Therefore, even though in this chapter, we see Saul gaining popular approval throughout all Israel, we also recognize that there are two separate territories that make up Israel; and we know from history that these two territories will split into two sovereign nations after the death of Solomon.

This chapter begins with Nahash, a ruler of the Ammonites, besieging the kingdom of Israel from the east. If the additional information found in certain translations and the information found in Josephus are to be believed, Nahash had attacked the Gadites and the Reubenites with great success. To help you with the location, Reuben and Gad are both tribes on the east side of the Jordan. Gad's boundaries went from the Sea of Chinnereth down

to the Dead Sea and the tribe of Reuben occupied the area east of the Dead Sea, on the northern half of that body of water (see the map below right). Given the relative juxtaposition of these countries, these are the two countries that we would expect Ammon to attack first. If we were to depend upon most translations, we might see this as an attack upon Jabesh-gilead, without reference to what has gone before. However, the additional material indicates that Nahash has attacked most of Gad and Reuben and that the surviving males find themselves in the city of Jabesh-gilead, which appears to be the last hold out for the eastern Israelis. These men ask for terms of servitude and Nahash says that his terms are he will gouge out their right eyes and then make them servants of his. They then ask for a seven-day reprieve from their fate, and Nahash grants that reprieve.

The men of Jabesh-gilead send messengers throughout Israel, and Saul responds. He assembles an Israeli resistance, under the guidance of Samuel and in the power of the Holy Spirit. In v. 11, we have the actual battle, wherein Saul successfully strikes and scatters the forces of Nahash. On the basis of this great victory, Saul is made king over all Israel through popular recognition. This victory and Saul's ascension to the throne of Israel are both celebrated in Gilgal.

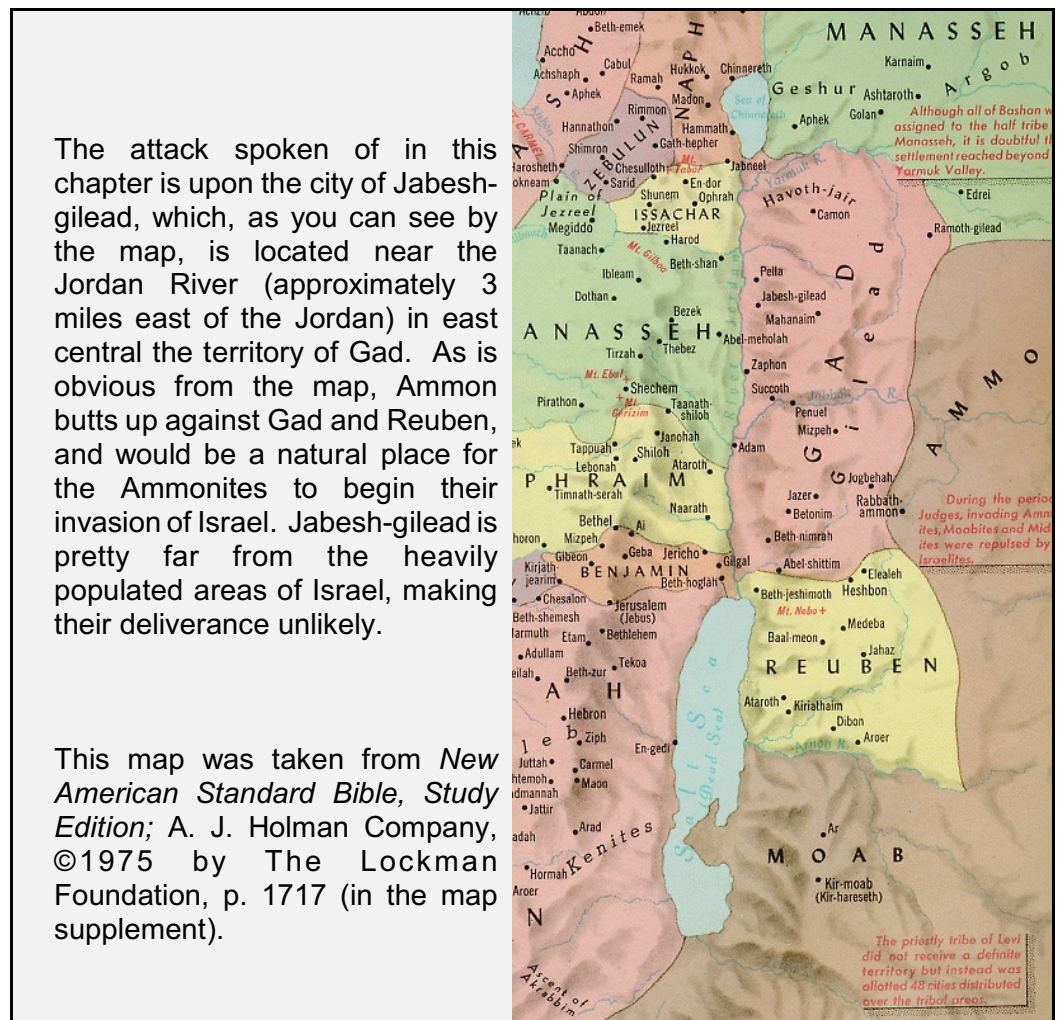
There are a couple of things which will stand out in this chapter: even though Saul will apparently assume the reigns of civil rule, Samuel will be looked to make decisions which should belong to a king (1Sam. 11:12). This is to be expected, as Samuel has been the unquestioned ruler over Israel for several decades now (my guess would be for at least 40 years and possibly even 60 years). Therefore, even though the people will cheer on Saul as their king, they will still go to Samuel for some guidance as he was a judge.

You should notice Saul's bravery. Even though, when his name was called to rule over Israel, he hid (1Sam. 10:22), when he is called upon to lead an army to destroy the Ammonites, he took a military leadership role without wavering. After defeating the Ammonites and being publically inducted as King over Israel, Saul, for a moment, had the opportunity to destroy his political enemies—and graciously, he chose not to. Saul had no problems with those who disagreed with him being allowed to live. Recall that the first king of Israel, Abimelech, killed all of his half-brothers in order to insure his claim to the throne. Saul was willing to be gracious to his enemies.

Finally, you may recall that back in 1Sam. 10:8, Samuel seemed to prophesy about Saul going to Gilgal and waiting 7 days for Samuel to come and to offer up sacrifices to God. We will discuss if this chapter contains the fulfillment of Samuel's words.

The attack spoken of in this chapter is upon the city of Jabesh-gilead, which, as you can see by the map, is located near the Jordan River (approximately 3 miles east of the Jordan) in east central the territory of Gad. As is obvious from the map, Ammon butts up against Gad and Reuben, and would be a natural place for the Ammonites to begin their invasion of Israel. Jabesh-gilead is pretty far from the heavily populated areas of Israel, making their deliverance unlikely.

This map was taken from *New American Standard Bible, Study Edition*; A. J. Holman Company, ©1975 by The Lockman Foundation, p. 1717 (in the map supplement).



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The Proposal of Nahash the Ammonite

Slavishly literal:

[Now Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had been grievously oppressing the Gadites and the Reubenites. He would gouge out the right eye of each of them and would not grant Israel a deliverer. No one was left of the Israelites across the Jordan whose right eye Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had not gouged out. But there were seven thousand men who had escaped from the Ammonites and had entered Jabesh-gilead.] And so about a month later, went up Nahash the Ammonite and so he encamped against Jabesh-gilead; and so say all men of Jabesh unto Nahash, “Cut for us a covenant and we will serve you.”

Moderately literal:

[Historical note: Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, had been grievously oppressing the Gadites and the Reubenites. He would gouge out the right eye of each of them and would not grant Israel a deliverer. No one was left of the Israelites across the Jordan whose right eye Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had not gouged out. But there were seven thousand men who had escaped from the Ammonites and had entered Jabesh-gilead.] About a month later, Nahash the Ammonite went up and encamped against Jabesh-gilead. Then all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, “Make a treaty with us and we will serve you.”

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11:1

[Historical note: During this same time period, Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, was attacking and oppressing both the Gadites and the Reubenites. He would typically gouge out their right eyes and Israel had no one to deliver them. Nahash had gouged out the right eyes of virtually every male east of the Jordan, with the exception of 7000 men who had escaped from the Ammonites and were holed up in Jabesh-gilead]. About a month after Saul was selected as king of Israel, Nahash the Ammonite brought his vicious army to Jabesh-gilead. The men at Jabesh begged Nahash, “Make a treaty with us and we will be your servants.”

Let’s see what others have done. Also, I will include a portion of what the NRSV tacks onto the end of the previous chapter. God’s Word™ includes that same portion, but places it where it logically belongs—at the beginning of this chapter. Several other translations include this either as a footnote or as part of the text. I have included a large number of translations here because you may or may not have this additional text in your translation and you may wonder from where I am teaching.

Ancient texts:

Dead Sea Scrolls

[Na]has king of the [Ammonites oppressed the Gadites and the Reubenites viciously. He put out the right [ey]e of a[ll] of them and brought fe[ar and trembling] on [Israel. Not one of the Israelites in the region b[eyond the Jordan] remained [whose] right eye Naha[sh king of] the Ammonites did n[ot pu]t out, except seven thousand men [who escaped from] the Ammonites and went to [Ja]besh-gilead.¹ Then after about a month,² Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh-[Gilead]. So all the people of Jabesh said to Nahash, [“Make a covenant] with [us, and we will serve you.”]

¹ 4QSam^a; cf. Josephus. Not in MT LXX. The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible calls this *one of the single most dramatic discoveries among the biblical scrolls* but tells us that Josephus had this passage in the Bible which he used. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*; translation and commentary by Martin Abegg Jr., Peter Flint and Eugene Ulrich; Harper SF, ©1999, pp. 224–225.

² As per 4QSam^a and LXX. The MT reads *but he kept silent* instead.

Latin Vulgate	And it came to pass about a month after this, that Naas, the Ammonite, came up, and began to fight against Jabes Galaad. And all the men of Jabes said to Naas: Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you.
Masoretic Text	[Now Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had been grievously oppressing the Gadites and the Reubenites. He would gouge out the right eye of each of them and would not grant Israel a deliverer. No one was left of the Israelites across the Jordan whose right eye Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had not gouged out. But there were seven thousand men who had escaped from the Ammonites and had entered Jabesh-gilead.] And so about a month later, went up Nahash the Ammonite and so he encamped against Jabesh-gilead; and so say all men of Jabesh unto Nahash, "Cut for us a covenant and we will serve you."
Septuagint	And it came to pass about a month after this that Naas the Ammanite went up, and encamped against Jabis Galaad; and all the men of Jabis said to Naas the Ammonite, "Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you."
Significant differences:	The most significant difference is the missing portion of Scripture found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. It appears as though these lines were lost around the time of our Lord's first advent.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	[The Dead Sea Scrolls add "King Nahash of Ammon was making the people of Gad and Reuben miserable. He was poking out everyone's right eye, and no one in Israel could stop him. He had poked out the right eye of every Israelite man who lived east of the Jordan River. Only seven thousand men had escaped from the Ammonites, and they had gone into the town of Jabesh in Gilead. About a month later...] About this time, King Nahash of Ammon came with his army and surrounded the town of Jabesh in Gilead. The people who lived there told Nahash, "If you will sign a peace treaty with us, you can be our ruler, and we will pay taxes to you."
NJB	About a month later, Nahash the Ammonite marched up and laid siege to Jabesh in Gilead. All the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a treaty with us and we will be your subjects."
NLT	{Dead Sea Scroll 4QSam ^a continues [v. 27]: <i>Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had been grievously oppressing the Gadites and Reubenites who lived east of the Jordan River. He gouged out the right eye of each of the Israelites living there, and he didn't allow anyone to come and rescue them. In fact, of all the Israelites east of the Jordan, there wasn't a single one whose right eye Nahash had not gouged out. But there were seven thousand men who had escaped from the Ammonites, and they had settled in Jabesh-gilead.</i> } ³ About a month later, King Nahash of Ammon led his army against the Israelite city of Jabesh-gilead. But the citizens of Jabesh asked for peace. "Make a treaty with us, and we will be your servants," they pleaded.
REB	About a month later Nahash the Ammonites attacked and besieged Jabesh-gilead. The men of Jabesh said to Nahash, 'Grant us terms and we will be your subjects.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word</i> TM	King Nahash of Ammon was severely oppressing the tribes of Gad and Reuben. He would poke out everyone's right eye and allow no one to rescue Israel. There was no one among the Israelites east of the Jordan River whose right eye King Nahash of Ammon had not poked out. However, seven thousand men had escaped
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³ I appreciate that the NLT tells us exactly from which manuscript this addition came.

from the Ammonites and gone to Jabesh Gilead. About a month later Nahash the Ammonite blockaded Jabesh Gilead. All the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a treaty with us, and we'll serve you."

JPS (Tanakh)

[From Septuagint and 4QSam: *About a month later*], Nahash the Ammonite marched up and besieged Jabesh-gilead. All of the men of Jabesh-gilead said to Nahash, "Make a pact with us, and we will serve you."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB

Now Nahash the Ammonite came up and besieged Jabesh-gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a covenant with us and we will serve you."

NRSV

Now Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had been grievously oppressing the Gadites and the Reubenites. He would gouge out the right eye of each of them and would not grant Israel a deliverer. No one was left of the Israelites across the Jordan whose right eye Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had not gouged out. But there were seven thousand men who had escaped from the Ammonites and had entered Jabesh-gilead. About a month later, 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."

Young's Updated LT

And Nahash the Ammonite comes up, and encamps against Jabesh-Gilead, and all the men of Jabesh say unto Nahash, 'Make with us a covenant, and we serve you.'

This prologue found in the NRSV is not found in the Greek nor is it found in the MT but it is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. This introduction found in the NRSV certainly seems to make more sense than the way the MT reads (which simply jumps into the subject without any sort of introduction); and it seems unlikely that this would certainly be added to Scripture as a result of someone's very fruitful imagination.

What is the gist of this verse? The viciousness of Nahash the Ammonite is made clear: he has waged war against the eastern tribes of Israel, and, upon conquering them, would gouge out their right eye. There were only 7000 men of Israel who remained, who were holed up in Jabesh in Gilead.

1Samuel 11:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
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All I have at this point is the English translation found in the Dead Sea Scrolls Bible and from the NRSV (and a few other translations give their version of this as well). I do not have access to the Greek or Hebrew Dead Sea Scrolls. In fact, at this point, I don't even know if this text is Greek or Hebrew (although it appears as though the 4QSam^a text is Hebrew—I personally have not seen this to confirm it).

Translation: [Historical note: Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, had been grievously oppressing the Gadites and the Reubenites. He would gouge out the right eye of each of them and would not grant Israel a deliverer. No one was left of the Israelites across the Jordan whose right eye Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had not gouged out. But there were seven thousand men who had escaped from the Ammonites and had entered Jabesh-gilead.] As is obvious, several translations include a rather lengthy prologue to this chapter (this was actually tacked onto the end of the previous chapter). Its origin is one of the manuscripts found with the Dead Sea Scrolls (4QSam^a).⁴ Apparently, we only have but one lone Hebrew manuscript which supports this addition. However,

⁴ *Qumran* refers to the general area where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. Therefore, when you see a Q in front of a particular book, that means that the manuscript was one of those discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The standard designation could have just as easily been 4DSSam^a. The number 4 refers to the cave from which this manuscript was taken. Since there were three Samuel manuscripts which came from cave #4, my guess is that the superscript a refers to a particular one of the three.

there is some support for this historicity of this additional paragraph, as the NRSV points to Josephus, *Antiquities* VI. v. 1 (68–71).

Off the Internet, I located the following quote from Josephus: *AFTER one month, the war which Saul had with Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, obtained him respect from all the people; for this Nahash had done a great deal of mischief to the Jews that lived beyond Jordan by the expedition he had made against them with a great and warlike army. He also reduced their cities into slavery, and that not only by subduing them for the present, which he did by force and violence, but by weakening them by subtlety and cunning, that they might not be able afterward to get clear of the slavery they were under to him; for he put out the right eyes (9) of those that either delivered themselves to him upon terms, or were taken by him in war; and this he did, that when their left eyes were covered by their shields, they might be wholly useless in war. Now when the king of the Ammonites had served those beyond Jordan in this manner, he led his army against those that were called Gileadites, and having pitched his camp at the metropolis of his enemies, which was the city of Jabesh, he sent ambassadors to them, commanding them either to deliver themselves up, on condition to have their right eyes plucked out, or to undergo a siege, and to have their cities overthrown. He gave them their choice, whether they would cut off a small member of their body, or universally perish. However, the Gileadites were so affrighted at these offers, that they had not courage to say any thing to either of them, neither that they would deliver themselves up, nor that they would fight him. But they desired that he would give them seven days' respite, that they might send ambassadors to their countrymen, and entreat their assistance; and if they came to assist them, they would fight; but if that assistance were impossible to be obtained from them, they said they would deliver themselves up to suffer whatever he pleased to inflict upon them.*⁵

Besides the fact that this manuscript is probably the oldest manuscript that we have and is in agreement with Josephus' historical account (which would have come from the Bible), we also have the fact that Nahash is called *the king of the Ammonites* in this prologue, a fact which is missing in the MT and Greek texts, and which is abnormal. When a warrior king would attack Israel, they are not simply identified by their nationality, but by their title (see Judges 3:8, 12, 17 4:2 etc.). In other words, we would expect Nahash to be called *king of the Ammonites* rather than simply *an Ammonite*.

Several scholars do not blame the missing lines on a poor manuscript, but upon the eye of the scribe jumping from one paragraph with the name Nahash in it to the next paragraph, and leaving out the first paragraph (this is called a parablepsis).

So what we have here is the warrior Nahash, an Ammonite king, who has been attacking the eastern tribes of Israel, defeating the tribes of Reuben and Gad. Apparently, once he has defeated this city or that, he gouges out the right eye of all the males (perhaps even the females). It says that he would not allow them a deliverer, indicating that Nahash struck swiftly and without mercy, not allowing time for Israelites to appeal to their brothers on the west side of the Jordan. Only 7000 men remained (and possibly, 7 family-clans remained) and they were held up in Jabesh, Gilead, a city located in the northern third of Gad, fairly close to the Jordan River. Gilead is affixed to the name as this general area was originally known as Gilead prior to Israel moving in and conquering it at the end of the exodus.

Now, is there any reason that a scribe would simply not reproduce this section? No, not at all. What probably happened is, we have the problematic manuscripts. Given the many differences that we have come across in the book of Samuel between the Greek and the Hebrew, more differences than could simply be called a matter of translation or interpretation, at some point in time, the Hebrew manuscript must have been extremely poor with many passages partially done due to wear and tear. Apparently, at some point in time, there were only a couple of Samuel manuscripts remaining which could be used (which probably occurred around the time that the LXX was first translated) and they were obviously quite damaged. Possibly to the Masoretes, only the poorest of manuscripts remained for this book; and, not wanting to add any additional material to Scripture, these Masoretes

⁵ Web address: <http://www.interhack.net/projects/library/antiquities-jews/b6c5.html>, which is apparently the work of Matt Curtin (Last modified: Fri Apr 17 18:02:41 EDT 1998).

carefully included only the words and verses which they were able to verify. Apparently, at some time or another, a much better manuscript family existed, but we have no idea how widespread this manuscript family was or just who had access to it. However, even our versions of the LXX lack this first verse, which is found only in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the writings of Josephus.

You may recall that there was a small portion of the end of 1Sam. 10:27 which we were uncertain about; that is, it may or may not belong to the end of 1Sam. 10 and it may or may not have been translated correctly. Given that this is translated one way from the Hebrew, but differently in the Greek and Latin and in the Greek of the Dead Sea Scrolls; and given that there was a textual problem right here as well (essentially, what is found above was left out of the Hebrew); this gives credence to the alternate rendering which I have listed below:

1Samuel 11:11b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
What is actually found here is: k ^e machăriysh (כִּמְחַרֵּיִשׁ) [pronounced <i>k^e-mah-khuh-REESH</i>], which is simply the kaph preposition followed by the Hiphil participle of <i>to be silent</i> . What follows is not an alternate reading, but what actually would have to be here in order for this to read: <i>And it came to pass after a month...</i>			
k ^e mô (כִּמּוֹ) [pronounced <i>k^emoh</i>]	<i>like, as, when; thus, so; when, afterwards, as soon as</i>	Adverb/conjunction	Strong's #3644 BDB #455
chôdesh (חֹדֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>KHOH-desh</i>]	<i>new moon, month</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2320 BDB #294
There are several things which would have to be changed in order for this to be the correct rendering. The easy one is, the rho (ר) in Hebrew is often confounded to the dâleth (ד). However, also, a yodh (י) must be removed and a wâw must be added (ו) in a different place in order for this to read <i>And it came to pass after a month...</i> Now, the wâw could be replaced with a vowel point, which would have been added centuries later, meaning that only the yodh would have to disappear to make this work. So, I am not saying that this is incorrect; I am simply showing you that this is not simply a matter of <i>well, you could read it this way, or you could read it that way</i> . It is not that simple. On the other hand, it is a reasonable approach. Furthermore, given that the text at the beginning of the next chapter is problematic, it should not surprised us to have a problem right here.			
Now, on the other hand, given that the LXX text reads this way, as do the Dead Sea Scrolls, and given that the Hebrew text is so close to this alternate reading, we may reasonably assume that this should read <i>And it came to pass after a month...</i>			

Alternate (and possibly the best) translation: *And it came to pass after a month...* The Greek and apparently a manuscript from the Dead Sea Scrolls begins this chapter with *about a month later*. That is reasonable and probably belongs in the text.

One month after what? Most people understand this to mean a month after Samuel introduces Saul to the people of Israel as their next king. All of this is in keeping with the additional text and this is how most translations read, with or without the additional text. In my Dead Sea Scrolls, the sense is, Nahash begins to besiege Jabesh Gilead a month after his attacks on eastern Israel began.

Here’s the deal: the elders have gone to Samuel asking for a king. They do not just do this out of the blue. They are not bored and decide, “Hell, what we need is a king.” There is probably something occurring which causes them to go to Samuel and ask for a king, even though this is not specifically mentioned in 1Sam. 8; and what this probably is, is Nahash making his moves against various cities in eastern Israel. Perhaps he has only attacked one or two cities so far. Why would these elders not mention this to Samuel? They want a permanent king, not a temporary deliverer. They do not want someone to come along, save them from Nahash, and then, face some other threat in the future, which requires another deliverer. They want someone who is permanent. Now, the military necessity of a king is cited by these elders (1Sam. 8:20), which suggests that Nahash is just beginning to war against Reuben or Gad.

If this is the case, then it indicates that Nahash is moving quite quickly over eastern Israel. Perhaps just one or two major attacks on a couple of key cities, which result in the eyes being gouged out of all the males, resulted in a scattering of those in eastern Israel. Those who remained were in desperate fear. Meanwhile, on the other side of the Jordan, reports of these attacks are just now reaching western Israel, and therefore, this group of elders go to Samuel to ask for a king. This is further evidences by 1Sam. 12:12, which reads: [Samuel is speaking to the people of Israel] *“When you saw that Nahash, the king of the sons of Ammon, came against you, you said to me, ‘Now, but a king will reign over us.’ although Jehovah your God was your king.”* This confirms that Nahash advancing against Reuben and Gad was the motivation for asking for a king.

Therefore, the timing is all pretty close together.

A Chronology of Events

1. Nahash first attacks Israel in the east;
2. The elders comes to Samuel asking for a king;
3. Samuel privately inducts Saul as king of Israel;
4. Samuel presents Saul publically as king;
5. A month passes, and Saul is called upon to lead Israel into battle against Nahash.

There are no great spiritual lessons here that I can think of; I am simply giving you a time line to use when recalling these events. In a short while, I will give you more detail about these events.

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If by any chance you want to see an even more detailed examination of just exactly *after what event* is one month later, see Robert Gordon, *I & II Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; pp. 62–64.

1Samuel 11:1c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
‘âlâh (אָלָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-LAWH</i>]	<i>to go up, to ascend, to come up, to rise, to climb</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #5927 BDB #748
Nâchâsh (נָחָשׁ) [pronounced <i>naw-KHAWSH</i>]	<i>serpent</i> and is transliterated <i>Nahash</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong’s #5176 BDB #638

1Samuel 11:1c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿAmmôwnîy (עַמּוֹנִי) [pronounced ʿahm-moh-NEE]	transliterated <i>Ammonite</i>	gentilic adjective with the definite article	Strong's #5984 BDB #770

Translation: ...Nahash the Ammonite went up... Nahash had beaten down almost all of Reuben and Gad; now, he was going to go after their last holdouts, who were in Jabesh.

The name *Nahash* is nâchâsh (נָחָשׁ) [pronounced *naw-KHAWSH*] in the Hebrew, and it means *snake, serpent*. This is obviously an onomatopoeic word. According to Gnana Robinson, *Nahash* means *serpent* in the Sanscrit as well.⁶ It is not clear whether this is a name appropriately given him by the Israelites, or whether he assume this name as one which would strike historic fear in the hearts of the Israelites. Perhaps his parents decided to name their kid *snake* (no telling what his name means in the Ammonite language; however, given that the Jews and the Ammonites are first cousins, their languages are probably very nearly equivalent).

We will hear more about Nahash in the future; furthermore, we will see a good relationship between himself (or a descendant of his) and King David in the future as well (see 2Sam. 10:2 17:25–27 1Chron. 2:16–17 19:1). You may wonder just how this is even possible; the US and Japan were bitter enemies in 1944; but 1960, our relations had warmed considerably. There is no reason to think that things between Ammon and Israel could not be repaired after 40 or 50 years.

1Samuel 11:1d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
chânah (חָנָה) [pronounced <i>khaw-NAW</i>]	<i>to bivouac, to camp, to encamp in [or, against], to set up camp</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2583 BDB #333
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ʿahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
Yâbêsh (יָבֵשׁ) [pronounced yaw ^B -VEYSH]	<i>to be dry, dried up, withered; transliterated Jabesh</i>	cognate of verb (Strong's #3001); acts as a proper noun	Strong's #3003 BDB #386
Gal ^E ʿêd (גִּלְעָד) [pronounced gahl ^E -ĠAYD]	<i>witness-pile, hill of witness; and is transliterated Gilead</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #1567 BDB #165

Although some exegetes treat this as one noun, *Jabesh-gilead*; I think the idea is that this is the city *Jabesh* in *Gildean* (sort of like *Boston, Massachusetts*).

⁶ Gnana Robinson, *1 & 2 Samuel; Let Us Be Like the Nations*; International Theological Commentary; Eerdmans's Publishing Co., Grand rapids, ©1993; pp. 64–65. I must admit here that I did not originally look up *Nahash*'s name in the Hebrew. It was G. Robinson who pointed out its meaning (I don't recall seeing this in any of my other commentaries).

Translation: ...and encamped against Jabesh-gilead. Jabesh besieges Jabesh-gilead, which is just on the other side of the Jordan midway between the Yarmuk and Jabbok Rivers. You may recall Jabesh-gilead from the book of Judges when most of the Benjamites were killed by their fellow Israelites. Once they were down to 600 male Benjamites, the Israelites suddenly realized that they were about to destroy one of the twelve tribes of Jacob. There was another problem: the only city that did not participate in this cleansing effort was Jabesh-gilead. What the Israelites decided to do was to wipe out the male population of Jabesh-gilead and to keep alive 400 virgins to marry those who remained of the Benjamites. See Judges 19–21 for the entire story.

altogether, this gives us: [Historical note: Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, had been grievously oppressing the Gadites and the Reubenites. He would gouge out the right eye of each of them and would not grant Israel a deliverer. No one was left of the Israelites across the Jordan whose right eye Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had not gouged out. But there were seven thousand men who had escaped from the Ammonites and had entered Jabesh-gilead.] About a month later, Nahash the Ammonite went up and encamped against Jabesh-gilead;... Assuming the historical information found in the NRSV is correct, Nahash, a powerful leader of the Ammonites, was viciously attacking all of east Israel. In his wake, he left behind men whose right eyes had been gouged out. Josephus gives us a broader picture that apparently some had their hands or feet cut off.

Ammon, as you have observed in the map presented earlier, is east of eastern Israel. The two illegitimate sons of Lot by his two daughters were Moab and Ammon, both of whom were given land east of the Jordan (Gen. 19:38 Deut. 2:19, 37 Joshua 12:2). Israel had trouble with both of these countries throughout history. Moab and Ammon are both mentioned in the book of the Judges (Judges 3:13–30 10:6–11:33). As is true today, Israel was surrounded by enemies, whose hatred rivaled the hatred of her enemies today. You must realize that the Jews are chosen of God, and therefore, we would expect vicious attacks upon Israel throughout all of history. There is more here than mere animosity between sets of peoples—therefore, the resultant viciousness and evil should not be unexpected.

1Samuel 11:1e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	with a plural noun, it is rendered all of, all; any of	masculine singular construct with a plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʾânâsîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced uh-NĀW-seem]; also spelled ʾîyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced ee-SHEEM]	men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers	masculine plural noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35
Yâbêsh (יָבֵשׁ) [pronounced yaw ^B -VEYSH]	to be dry, dried up, withered; transliterated Jabesh	cognate of verb (Strong's #3001); acts as a proper noun	Strong's #3003 BDB #386
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced el]	unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39

1Samuel 11:1e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Nâchâsh (נָחָשׁ) [pronounced <i>naw-KHAWSH</i>]	<i>serpent</i> and is transliterated <i>Nahash</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5176 BDB #638
kârath (כָּרַת) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAHTH</i>]	<i>to cut off, to cut down; to kill, to destroy; to make a covenant</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #3772 BDB #503
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition; with the 1 st person plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
b ^o rîyth (בְּרִית) [pronounced <i>b^oreeth</i>]	<i>pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, covenant</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1285 BDB #136

Translation: Then all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, “Make a treaty with us... The remaining men in Jabesh knew that they did not stand a chance. They asked for mercy from Nahash; they asked for a treaty (which was often granted in exchange for a tribute being paid at regular intervals to the country which has conquered them. After all, getting a regular income from a particular city or country was much more financially rewarding than simply wiping them off the face of the earth.

1Samuel 11:1f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
‘âbad (עָבַד) [pronounced <i>ġaw^b-VAHD</i>]	<i>to work, to serve, to labor; to be a slave to</i>	1 st person plural, Qal imperfect with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5647 BDB #712

Translation: ...and we will serve you.” Offering to serve Jabesh is equivalent to unconditional surrender. This gives us: So all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, “Make a treaty with us and we will serve you.” The idea here was that these men were willing to give up anything to Nahash in order to retain their appendages and their eyesight. The fact that they could strike a treaty with Nahash independent of the rest of Israel gives us a good idea as to the organization of the Israeli states—they were very independent and not required to seek the approval of the other territories in order to strike a treaty. They were allied enough to go to the other tribes for help, but they were not required to go to them to ratify a treaty.

Now that we have a full understanding of the translation from the Hebrew, as well as the historical background found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is easy to understand how one can have...

A Mistaken Impression of the Facts

The Dead Sea Scrolls' Version

Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, had been grievously oppressing the Gadites and the Reubenites. He would gouge out the right eye of each of them and would not grant Israel a deliverer. No one was left of the Israelites across the Jordan whose right eye Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had not gouged out. But there were seven thousand men who had escaped from the Ammonites and had entered Jabesh-gilead. About a month later, Nahash the Ammonite went up and encamped against Jabesh-gilead. Then all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a treaty with us and we will serve you."

Notice how this gives us a more complete understanding of the situation. Nahash the Ammonite had been attacking the Gadites and the Reubenites and that he had gouged out the eyes of every male save 7000 who had escaped to the city of Jabesh-gilead.

From the Massoretic Text

About a month later, Nahash the Ammonite went up and encamped against Jabesh-gilead. Then all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a treaty with us and we will serve you."

From the Massoretic text, we have no clue that Nahash had attacked anyone prior to this. That he had a clearly established, vicious reputation is not made known to us. It appears from the abbreviated text that the men of Jabesh-gilead are native to Jabesh-gilead. This would cause us to assume that Jabesh-gilead had been repopulated since Judges 21.⁷ All of the impressions that we would get are incorrect; yet, this verse does not contradict what we find in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

What is important to get from this is that not every verse of the Bible necessarily contains the whole story to what is occurring. We may get an incorrect impression in our minds concerning some historical event or some doctrine from a single verse or passage, and then we find that it is contradicted by another passage or by archeological discoveries. What we need to do is to go back to the original passage and see whether or not it allows for a different interpretation.

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Now that we know a little more, let's examine this sequence of events more carefully. In 1Sam. 12:12, we read: **When you saw that Nahash the king of the sons of Ammon came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king will reign over us,' although Jehovah God was your King.**" This was Samuel speaking at the convocation of Saul. That means that not only are the sequence of events close together, but they overlapped. Nahash's attack upon eastern Israel was probably the primary cause of the demand for a king. This would make complete sense, as, generally speaking, people are not going to demand change if there is no reason to demand change. However, if there is an imminent military threat and no savior on the horizon, then Israel's faith in God would wain and they would seek a human-viewpoint solution.

The Sequence of Events

1. First, Nahash the Ammonite attacks Reuben and Gad. 1Sam. 11:prologue 12:12
2. A delegation of elders speak to Samuel at Ramah saying that Israel needs a king. 1Sam. 8:1-9 12:12
3. Samuel goes to God about this situation and God tells Samuel that this is a rejection of Him and not of Samuel. God tells Samuel that to accede to the wishes of the people. 1Sam. 8:10-21
4. God leads Saul to the home of Samuel. Samuel is expecting him. The day that Saul arrives, he is the honored guest and Samuel has several hours before made preparations for Saul's arrival, even though

⁷ See, for instance, *Barnes' Notes; 1Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 27, margin reference.

The Sequence of Events

- Saul and Samuel had never met before. 1Sam. 9
5. Saul is anointed king by Samuel the next morning in a private ceremony before God. Samuel also prophesies what will happen in Samuel's life over the next few years, with events which come to pass that very day. 1Sam. 10:1–16
 6. Saul is publically chosen by God as king at Mizpah. We may assume that all the while, Nahash is conquering more and more of eastern Israel. After the selection ceremony, Saul simply goes home to continue farming his family's land. 1Sam. 10:17–27 11:5
 7. About a month after the public selection ceremony of Saul, the surviving men of Gad and Reuben escape to Jabesh-gilead. This is where we pick up our story. 1Sam. 11:prologue

I hope you notice how the missing portion of 1Sam. 11 helps 1Sam. 12:12 to make perfect sense; that is, Samuel indicates that the time that this delegation came to him asking for a king, Nahash was attacking eastern Israel. This makes the motivation of the delegation of elders reasonable and the fact that Nahash was first making war against eastern Israel fits more logically into the time frame as well.

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And so said unto them, Nahash the Ammonite, "In this I will cut [a covenant] to you: in a boring out to you every eye of [the] right [side] and I will put her [i.e., *disgrace*] upon all Israel."

1Samuel
11:2

Then Nahash the Ammonite said unto them, "On this condition will I make [a treaty] with you: when I gouge out all of your right eyes and [thus] put shame upon all Israel."

Then Nahash the Ammonite responded to the, "I will make a treaty with you on one condition: that I first gouge out the right eye of every one of you and thus disgrace all Israel."

First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so said unto them, Nahash the Ammonite, "In this I will cut [a covenant] to you: in a boring out to you every eye of [the] right [side] and I will put her [i.e., *disgrace*] upon all Israel."

Septuagint And Naas the Ammanite said to them, "On these terms I will make a covenant with you: I will dig out all your right eyes, and I will lay a reproach upon Israel."

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV Nahash answered, "Sure, I'll sign a treaty! But not before I insult Israel by poking out the right eye of every man who lives in Jabesh."

NAB But Nahash the Ammonite replied, "This is my condition for a treaty with you: I must gouge out every man's right eye, that I may thus bring ignominy on all Israel."

NLT "All right," Nahash said, "but only on one condition: I will gouge out the right eye of every one of you as a disgrace to all Israel!"

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

Nahash the Ammonite responded, "I'll make a treaty with you on this one condition: I'll poke out everyone's right eye and bring disgrace on all Israel."

JPS (Tanakh)

But Nahash the Ammonite answered them, "I will make a pact with you on this condition, that everyone's right eye be gouged out; I will make this a humiliation for all Israel."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB

But Nahash the Ammonite said to them, "I will make *it* with you on this condition, that I will gouge out the right eye of every one of you, thus I will make it a reproach on all Israel."

Young's Updated LT

And Nahash the Ammonite says to them, 'For this I covenant with you, by picking out to you every right eye—and I have put it a reproach on all Israel.'

What is the gist of this verse? Nahash agrees to a treaty, with the stipulation that he will gouge out the right eye of each Israelites as a shame to all Israel.

1Samuel 11:2a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced <i>e]</i>	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Nâchâsh (נָחָשׁ) [pronounced <i>naw-KHAWSH</i>]	<i>serpent</i> and is transliterated <i>Nahash</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5176 BDB #638
ʿAmmôwnîy (עַמּוֹנִי) [pronounced <i>gham-moh-NEE</i>]	transliterated <i>Ammonite</i>	gentilic adjective with the definite article	Strong's #5984 BDB #770
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i>]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective	Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260
Together, b ^e zeh mean <i>in this [place], here, with this, on these conditions, herewith, thus provided, by this, through this, for this cause, in this manner, on this one.</i>			
kârath (כָּרַת) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAHTH</i>]	<i>to cut off, to cut down; to kill, to destroy; to make a covenant</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3772 BDB #503

1Samuel 11:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ^l)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition; with the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: Then Nahash the Ammonite said unto them, “On this condition will I make [a treaty] with you:... When the lâmed preposition is used in this sort of construction, the verbal exchange is less formal, as in among friends or from someone high on the social ladder to someone low on the social ladder. We would expect to find that here. However, we find, instead, `el (לֵאל) [pronounced *el*], which is a more formal address and I often designate that formality by rendering this *unto*. Quite properly, this reads: **Then Nahash the Ammonite said unto them,...** Here, I believe the formality is a mocking formality. That is, it sounds as though Nahash is considering their offer very carefully, in all seriousness and with all due respect. What appears to be the case is that these 7000 men realize what the ultra-vicious Nahash plans to do with them. They meet and discuss the situation and have determined that all they have to give him is their blind loyalty.⁸

So Nahash responds: “On this [condition] I will make [a covenant] with respect to you:...” I placed *covenant* in brackets because this word is not found in the Hebrew. However, we find the actual word *covenant* in the Septuagint, the Syriac and the Vulgate codices. Furthermore, it is implied because it is found in the Hebrew in the previous verse. Now, all of this sounds as though Nahash has given serious thought to this proposal and that he has come up with a solution.

1Samuel 11:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88

The infinitive construct, when combined with the bêyth preposition, can often take on a temporal meaning and may be rendered *when [such and such happens]*. It can serve as a temporal marker that denotes an event which occurs simultaneously with the action of the main verb.

nâqar (נָקַר) [pronounced <i>naw-KAHR</i>]	<i>to bore, to pick, to dig, to bore out, to hollow out, to gouge out</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #5365 BDB #669
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ^l)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition; with the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481

⁸ Forgive the pun.

1Samuel 11:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿayin (אֵינַי) [pronounced ĠAH-yin]	<i>spring, fountain; eye, spiritual eyes</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
yâmîyn (יְמִינִי) [pronounced yaw-MEEN]	<i>the right hand, the right side, on the right, at the right; the south</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #3225 BDB #411

Translation: ...when I gouge out all of your right eyes... This is Nahash's proposed solution. The verb is the Qal infinitive construct of nâqar (נָקַר) [pronounced naw-KAHR], which means *to bore, to pick, to dig, to bore out, to hollow out, to gouge out*. And Nahash proposes that he gouge out every man's right eye. Properly, this reads: "...in a boring out with respect to you every eye of the right side." Less literally, "...when [or, after] I bore out each of your right eyes."

At first, I didn't really grasp what was going on here. To avoid having their eyes gouged out, the 7000 men offered themselves as slaves to Nahash. Nahash said fine, that he would agree to their treaty terms, just as long as he gouged out their eyes. This is a man whose cruelty is legend, whose cruel and vicious seed still lives today in the middle east. "I will agree to the terms of your treaty," he says, "just so long as I first gouge out your right eyes." There is no mercy; there is no human compassion. He is willing to accept them as slaves as long as he also gets to gouge out their right eyes. Now, there is a reason that Nahash desires to gouge out the right eyes of the men of Israel. This makes them useless as archers, and, in battle, the Israelites would have no depth perception, making them easy prey as well. Once he defeats a people, he has no interest in fighting them a second time. Removing their right eyes guarantees no insurrections. Keil and Delitzsch suggest that part of Nahash's purpose here is to avenge the shame of defeat which Jephthah had inflicted upon the Ammonites.⁹ This may or may not be true; however, there was bad blood between Israel and all of her neighbors—as we would expect, Israel being God's chosen people.

1Samuel 11:2c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
sîym (שִׂיַם) [pronounced seem]; also spelled sûwm (שׂוּמ) [pronounced soom]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect; with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
cher ^e pâh (חֶרְפָּה) [pronounced kher-PAW]	<i>a reproach, a taunt, scorn, shame, disgrace</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #2781 BDB #357
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ġahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481

⁹ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 438.

1Samuel 11:2c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Yisʿrâʿêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis'-raw-ALE</i>]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

Translation: ...and [thus] put shame upon all Israel.” Or, “...and I will place shame upon all Israel.” Nahash wants more than a simple victory; Nahash wants Israel to be shamed. He is turning one entire portion of Israel into damaged slaves.

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The Men of Jabesh-gilead Send for Help

And so say elders of Jabesh unto him, “Forsake to us seven of days and let us send messengers into all territory of Israel and if no one is delivering us and we will come out unto you.”

1Samuel
11:3

Then the elders of Jabesh replied to him, “Leave us alone for seven days and let us send messengers throughout the territory of Israel, and if [there is] no one to deliver us, we will come out to you.”

The leaders of Jabesh replied to him, “Give us seven days to send messengers throughout all of Israel. If we cannot find anyone who will deliver us, then we will surrender ourselves to you.”

Let's see what others have done first:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so say elders of Jabesh unto him, “Forsake to us seven of days and let us send messengers into all territory of Israel and if no one is delivering us and we will come out unto you.”

Septuagint And the men of Jabis say to him, “Allow us seven days, and we will send messengers into all the coasts of Israel. If there should be no one to deliver us, we will come out to you.”

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

NLT “Give us seven days to send messengers throughout Israel!” replied to leaders of Jabesh. “If none of our relative will come to save us, we will agree to your terms.”

REB The elders of Jabesh-gilead said, ‘Give us seven days’ respite to send messengers throughout Israel and then, if no one relieves us, we shall surrender to you.’

TEV The leaders of Jabesh said, “Give us seven days to send messengers throughout the land of Israel. If no one will help us, then we will surrender to you.”

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) The elders of Jabesh said to him, “Give us seven days’ respite, so that we may send messengers throughout the territory of Israel; if no one comes to our aid, we will surrender to you.”

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible

The elders of Jabesh said to Nahash, Give us seven days' time, that we may send messengers through all the territory of Israel. Then, if there is no man to save us, we will come out to you.

NASB

And the elders of Jabesh said to him, "Let us alone for seven days, that we may send messengers throughout the territory of Israel. Then, if there is no one to deliver us, we will come out to you."

Young's Updated LT

And the elders of Jabesh say to him, 'Let us alone seven days, and we send messengers into all the border of Israel; and if there is one saving us—then we have come out unto you.'

What is the gist of this verse? The men of Jabesh ask to be allowed seven days to find someone from Israel to deliver them. They promise to come out to the Ammonites if no one from Israel will deliver them.

1Samuel 11:3a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced el]	unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
zâkên (זָקֵן) [pronounced zaw-KANE]	old, elderly, aged	masculine plural construct	Strong's #2205 BDB #278
Yâbêsh (יָבֵשׁ) [pronounced yaw ^B -VEYSH]	to be dry, dried up, withered; transliterated Jabesh	cognate of verb (Strong's #3001); acts as a proper noun	Strong's #3003 BDB #386
râphâh (רָפָה) [pronounced raw-FAW]	lose interest [in a person or project] and abandon [that person or project], forsake [something]; let down, stop, desist, leave off; be still, be quiet	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative, apocopated form	Strong's #7503 BDB #951
lâmed (לְ) (pronounced l ^P)	to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to	directional/relational preposition; with the 1 st person plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
shib ^e ʾâh (שִׁבְעָה) [pronounced shi ^B v ^e -GAW]	seven	numeral feminine construct	Strong's #7651 BDB #987

Although Owen lists this as BDB #988, mine begins on p. 987.

1Samuel 11:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâmîym (יָמַיִם) [pronounced yaw- MEEM]	days, a set of days; time of life, lifetime; a specific time period, a year	masculine plural noun	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

Translation: Then the elders of Jabesh replied to him, “Leave us alone for seven days... Certainly all of Jabesh did not show up to counsel with Nahash. Instead, the leaders of the city meet with him. These would be the men of v. 1.

There appear to be at least two forms of government in Israel at this time, both of which were often simultaneous and complementary, and which organically sprung up. There were judges, of course, as we find in the book of Judges (as well as in the beginning of 1Samuel). And there were elders—those men who had lived long in the land and had the respect of the people. We find groups of elders mentioned as those in authority throughout Scripture (e.g., Judges 8:14, 16). This was not ancestor worship, but ancestor respect.

The request of the elders is: “Leave [us] alone for seven days...” This is something that we would not have expected. These elders have asked Nahash to give them seven days to go to plan B. They have asked for a chance to find someone to deliver them.

1Samuel 11:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw- LAKH]	to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out	1 st person plural, Qal imperfect; with the voluntative hê	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
The hê at the end, it is called a voluntative hê and the verb itself is known as a cohortative and is often translated with the additional word <i>let, may, might, ought, should</i> .			
mal ^e âk ^e (מַלְאָכִים) [pronounced mah ^e - AWK ^e]	messenger or angel; this word has been used for a prophet (Isa. 42:19) and priest (Mal. 2:7)	masculine plural noun	Strong's #4397 BDB #521
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	every, each, all of, all; any of, any	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
g ^e bûl (גְּבוּל) [pronounced g ^{eb} -VOOL]	border, boundary, territory	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1366 BDB #147
Yis ^e râ`êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw- ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

Translation: ...and let us send messengers throughout the territory of Israel,... What the elders ask is surprising. They want to get together some messengers and send them throughout Israel. They are going to appeal to the ego of Nahash the Ammonite. This man is going to be interested in eventually conquering all of Israel; so this will actually interest him.

1Samuel 11:3c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i>]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
ʾêyin (אֵין) [pronounced <i>ĀYH-yin</i>]	<i>in the condition of being not = without, nothing, no, not; there is no [none, no one, not]</i>	negative construct	Strong's #369 BDB #34
yâshaʿ (יָשָׁע) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAHG</i>]	<i>deliverer, savior; and less literally, redeemer, rescuer, lifesaver, liberator</i>	Hiphil participle	Strong's #3467 BDB #446
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	affixed to the 1 st person plural suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84

Translation: ...and if [there is] no one to deliver us,... The men of Jabesh will gather some men together and send them out throughout Israel, probably in twos and threes, several groups of them, going all over Israel, in an attempt to find any man who will lead them and the rest of Israel against Nahash. This also will allow these men to escape this branding which Nahash has planned.

1Samuel 11:3d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâtsâʾ (יָצָא) [pronounced <i>yaw-TZAWH</i>]	<i>to go out, to come out, to come [go] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]; [of money:] to be expended, laid out, spent; promulgated; outgoing [end of a time period]</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced <i>e/</i>]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: ...we will come out to you.” The literal rendering is: “...and if [there is] none delivering us and we will come out unto you.”

The mixture of outright brutality and honor is striking. They appeal to this vicious warlord, who has promised to gouge out their eyes, to send messengers throughout Israel in order to determine whether they can defend against him. What you should ask yourself is, *what can Nahash gain from this?* That is, *why would such a bloodthirsty man agree to such a thing?* There are some exegetes who doubt the authenticity of this report, e.g. Gnana Robinson, who writes: *The historicity of this event is doubtful. It is strange that any Israelite would make such a request to Nahash when he was not prepared even to accept their surrender offer.*¹⁰

Why Does Nahash Agree to the Proposal of the 7000 Jews?

1. First you must recognize that a man in his position is going to feel omnipotent. He will be an egomaniac. As far as he is concerned, there is no one who can defeat him and his army. His vicious slaughtering is known throughout the mid-eastern world. Those who oppose him, at best, survive minus their right eye and/or minus an appendage. That is the best one can hope for who does battle with him. So Nahash is expecting no one to come to the rescue of these 7000 men.
2. If anything, many of the men of Israel will flee further out in order to escape his certain future attacks. Therefore, there is a reasonable chance that it will make Nahash's attack on the rest of Israel even easier. What he plans to do and what he has done in all of eastern Israel is going to be spread across the land. The natural result is, the rest of Israel is going to become very fearful, making them easier prey.
3. Seven days is a very short amount of time to go throughout Israel and beg for the other Israelites to deliver them. Israel has a history of being 12 loosely grouped tribes whose cooperative action is rare (we have exceptions early on in Israel's history in Judges 1:3 20:1). So, even if some of their Israeli brothers appear, it is unlikely that they could raise a full army in seven days time. Nahash doesn't even expect that these messengers can go throughout Israel in that short amount of time. What he reasonably expects is that a small, disjointed and disorganized army might be raised in that short amount of time. His defeating them and removing their right eyes would send a message throughout all Israel, where those who remain were not brave enough to show up for the first call to battle.
4. Nahash is unbearably cruel. The only thing better to him than boring out the eye of his enemies is for them to shudder over this eventuality for a week first. When a man reaches this level of cruelty, the only thing he likes better is to be enjoy greater acts of cruelty. There are killers in our culture who enjoy not just the killing but the begging for one's life prior to the killing.
5. Nahash allows these messengers to go throughout Israel and, if no one shows up to deliver these men, then they will surrender willingly to him and there will be no loss of life in his army. These 7000 men would likely all die if they resisted Nahash; however, many of his men would die as well.
6. Keil and Delitzsch suggest two other possible reasons: first, that Nahash was not actually ready take this city all at once by storm. I don't believe this to be the case, but it is a reasonable possibility.
7. Secondly, Nahash did not expect the rest of Israel to support the men in Jabesh-gilead because Israel was without a central government. They had no king. The anointing of Saul may or may not have been known to Nahash (Keil and Delitzsch believe that he was unaware); however, whether he knew of Saul's anointing or not is moot. Saul was not ruling the country at this time and there was no central government and no standing army. Therefore, the chances of Israel responding as a nation, as far as Nahash assessed, were nil.

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Edersheim, ever the wordsmith, describes the events of these three verses: *Nahash had penetrated much farther into Israelitish territory than his predecessor. His horde had swarmed up the lovely rich valley of the Jabesh, laying bare its barley-fields and olive plantations, and wasting its villages; and they were now besieging the capital of Gilead—Jabesh-gilead—which occupied a commanding position on the top of an isolated hill overhanging the southern crest of the valley. In their despair, the people of Jabesh offered to surrender, but Nahash, in his insolence, insisted that he would thrust out their right eyes, avowedly to “lay it as a shame upon all Israel.” Terrible as these conditions were, the “elders” of*

¹⁰ Gnana Robinson, *1 & 2 Samuel; Let Us Be Like the Nations*; International Theological Commentary; Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand rapids, ©1993; p. 65.

Jabesh saw no means of resisting, and only begged seven days' respite, to see whether any were left in Israel able and willing to save them. In the foolhardiness of his swagger, Nahash consented, will assured that if Israel were, as he fully believed, incapable of a combined movement for the relief of Jabesh, the whole land would henceforth be at his mercy, and between Philistia in the west and Ammon in the east, Israel—their land and their God—would lie helpless before the heathen powers.¹¹

So, here is Israel, for the umpteenth time—helpless men in a hopeless situation.

<p>And so come in the messengers [to] Gibeah of Saul and so they speak the words in ears of the people. And so lift up all of the people their voice and so they weep.</p>	<p>1Samuel 11:4</p>	<p>So the messengers came into Gibeah of Saul and they reported this matter in the hearing of the people. Then all of the people lifted up their voices and wept aloud.</p>
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One set of messengers went into Gibeah, Saul's hometown, and they proclaimed this matter publically. After hearing their report, the people wept aloud.

First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

<p>Masoretic Text</p>	<p>And so come in the messengers [to] Gibeah of Saul and so they speak the words in ears of the people. And so lift up all of the people their voice and so they weep.</p>
<p>Septuagint</p>	<p>And the messengers came to Gabaa to Saul, and they speak the words into the ears of the people; and all the people lifted up their voice, and wept.</p>

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

<p>CEV</p>	<p>Some of the messengers went to Gibeah, Saul's hometown. They told what was happening at Jabesh, and everyone in Gibeah started crying.</p>
<p>NLT</p>	<p>When the messengers came to Gibeah, Saul's hometown, and told the people about their plight, everyone broke into tears.</p>
<p>TEV</p>	<p>The messengers arrived at Gibeah, where Saul lived, and when they told the news, the people started crying in despair.</p>

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<p><i>God's Word™</i></p>	<p>The messengers came to Saul's town, Gibeah. When they told the people the news, the people cried loudly.</p>
<p>JPS (Tanakh)</p>	<p>When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and gave this report in the hearing of the people, all the people broke into weeping.</p>

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<p>NASB</p>	<p>Then the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and spoke these words in the hearing of the people, and all the people lifted up their voices and wept.</p>
<p><i>Young's Updated LT</i></p>	<p>And the messengers come to Gibeah of Saul, and speak the words in the ears of the people, and all the people lift up their voice and weep;...</p>

What is the gist of this verse? One set of messengers come to Gibeah of Saul and tell what has happened to them. The people hear this and cry.

¹¹ Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 443.

1Samuel 11:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (בּוֹ) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
mal'âk' (מַלְאָכִים) [pronounced <i>mah'-AWK'</i>]	<i>messenger or angel; this word has been used for a prophet (Isa. 42:19) and priest (Mal. 2:7)</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #4397 BDB #521
Gib'ath (גִּבְעָת) [pronounced <i>gi^{ph}v'-GAHTH</i>]	<i>hill; and is transliterated Gibeath</i>	proper feminine construct	Strong's #1394 BDB #149
This is simply the construct of the feminine noun for <i>hill</i> .			
Shâ'ûwl (שָׂאוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i>]	<i>which is transliterated Saul; it means asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982

Translation: *So the messengers came into Gibeah of Saul...* We have covered this Gibeah in some detail in Joshua 18:18:28 Judges 19:12. We will cover Gibeah of Saul in further detail in 1Sam. 13:2. It is not clear how many messengers were sent out or whether several sets were sent out simultaneously. The most logical place for these messengers to go would be to the territory of Benjamin first. First of all, it was closest. Secondly, there were close ties to the territory and tribe of Benjamin by marriage (see Judges 20:12–14). In fact, there was somewhat of an unusual history between the tribe of Benjamin and the people of Jabesh-gilead. You may recall from the book of Judges that some men in Gibeah demanded to have relations with a Levite male who was staying in town for the night. He and his host sent out the Levite's mistress instead. These men raped her and she died from exposure and abuse on the doorstep of that house. Her Levite boyfriend cut up her body and sent it throughout Israel, presumably along with a message to let them know what occurred. The tribes of Israel responded and demanded justice. When the tribe of Benjamin would not give up these men of Gibeah, Israel attacked and decimated the tribe of Benjamin, leaving only 600 men. The rest of Israel then suddenly realized that they were about to destroy one entire tribe of the 12 tribes. They reevaluated the situation, and determined that, of all the cities in Israel, only Jabesh-gilead had not sent representatives to fight the tribe of Benjamin. Therefore, they then went to Jabesh-gilead and destroyed every man, woman and child, leaving alive only 400 virgins, whom they brought to the men of Benjamin, in order to perpetuate the tribe (see Judges 19–21). So you have this old situation in which the men of Jabesh-gilead were unwilling to attack the tribe of Benjamin and the women of Jabesh-gilead were given to the men of Benjamin to save their tribe. The men were killed and a few of their virgin daughters were kept alive and taken to Benjamin in order to perpetuate the tribe.

Now it is several hundred years later; the men in Jabesh-gilead are apparently from surrounding cities, and the men of Jabesh-gilead are not related to the original population (which was destroyed).¹² Anyway, the nearness of Gibeah along with this previous relationship of sorts made Gibeah the first stop for the messengers from Jabesh.

Now, what we may reasonably assume is, if there was only one set of messengers, they would not have gone throughout other parts of Israel first. There simply was not enough time. Did they know that Saul had been proclaimed king? Possibly; in fact, likely. This would be another reason that they would have gone to Gilead. However, interestingly enough, notice that they speak to the people of Gibeah rather than to Saul directly:

¹² Unless, of course, some of the virgins of Jabesh-gilead caused their new husbands to move back to Jabesh.

1Samuel 11:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAHR</i>]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Piel imperfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
dâbâr (דְּבָרִים) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAWR</i>]	<i>words, sayings, doctrines, commands; things, matters, reports</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
ʾôzen (אָזְנַי) [pronounced <i>OH-zen</i>]	<i>ears</i>	feminine dual construct	Strong's #241 BDB #23
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

Translation: ...and they reported this matter in the hearing of the people. Here, we have the Piel imperfect of *dâbar* (דָּבַר) [pronounced *daw^b-VAHR*], which means *to speak, to declare, to proclaim, to announce*. In the Piel stem, which is intensive, *dâbar* is stronger and can carry with it the idea of providing guidance and direction, if not a set of mandates (and this would be determined by context). The kind of intensification is determined by context. The Piel may call for *talk, backed with action; give your opinion; expound; make a formal speech; speak out; talk it around*. Here it means *to give a somber and tragic report*. This gives us: ...and they proclaimed the words in the ears of the people...

There were possibly several sets of messengers sent about (as is found in the CEV by interpretation), and they possibly even had a proclamation to read. However, it is extremely important to note to whom these messengers spoke—they did not go directly to King Saul, who essentially was citizen Saul at this time. They went to town square (more precisely, to the open area by the gate to the city) and spoke to the people. Even though Saul had been publically proclaimed king as recently as the previous chapter, these men did not see him as king nor as their savior. That he lived in Gibeah and that it is called *Gibeah of Saul* here at first may seem to indicate that this was a factor in their going to Gibeah.¹³ However, when the messengers spoke to the people directly and not to Saul, they indicated in that action that Saul was still not viewed as King over all Israel. In the next verse, it will be clear that Saul had not given up his day job yet and that he was not even in the crowd that these messengers spoke to.

¹³ Calling this city *Gibeah of Saul*, by the way, simply indicates that this is the city named in the previous chapter (1Sam. 10:10, 26). This also indicates that there were several cities in Israel named Gibeah.

So, how do we explain this? It appears as though these messengers from Jabesh went to Gibeah because King Saul resides there, but they don't speak to Saul directly, they speak to the residents of Gibeah. What's up with that? Saul has not assumed a clear position of leadership. Even though some men have joined him as a private army/cabinet (Judges 10:26); Saul is still farming the land of his father. The idea is this—they spoke to the people of Gibeah, knowing that this would get to Saul. Furthermore, it would not be completely Saul's decision here, as a large number of people would know the whole situation. And their decision to speak to the people of Gibeah could have been a simple matter of expediency. Saul is nowhere to be found. They go to town square and make this pronouncement there. Saul comes back into the city after this proclamation has been read. Furthermore, they need an army, not just one man. So, whether they know about Saul or not, they will require a savior and His army to come and defeat Nahash.

1Samuel 11:4c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâsâ' (נָשָׂא) [pronounced naw-SAW]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
'am (עַם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
qôwl (קוֹל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #6963 BDB #876
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bâkâh (בָּכָה) [pronounced baw-KAW]	<i>to weep, to cry, to bewail</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1058 BDB #113

Translation: *Then all of the people lifted up their voices and wept aloud.* It is reasonable to ask, *why did these people in Gibeah weep aloud?* First, as you have no doubt noticed, the Hebrews were very demonstrative about their emotions (compare Judges 2:4 20:23, 26 21:2 1Sam. 30:4). They wept for several reasons—first, in great empathy for their brothers, who occupy the city that their grandmothers are from; and secondly, because Nahash would probably invade western Israel and do the same to them. In fact, given their location, Nahash would probably invade Benjamin next. Finally, they weep because they do not automatically think of Saul as being the man to lead them. Sure, there was a public coronation and he had a band of soldiers with him now, but other than that, little had changed in his life. So, even if these men are considering helping out their brothers in Jabesh, they

do not really have a military leader, as they do not see Saul as a military leader, despite all of the hoopla of the previous chapter.

And behold Saul coming in after the oxen from the field and says Saul, “Why all the people that they weep?” And so they recount to him words of men of Jabesh. 1Samuel 11:5

And observe Saul coming in [to town] behind the oxen from the field. Then Saul said, “Why [are] all the people weeping?” Therefore, they declared to him the report of the men of Jabesh.

At that time, Saul was returning to town behind his oxen after working in the field, and he asked, “Why are the people crying?” The people told him the report brought to them from the men of Jabesh.

Here is what others have done with the fifth verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And behold Saul coming in after the oxen from the field and says Saul, “Why all the people that they weep?” And so they recount to him words of men of Jabesh.
Septuagint	And behold Saul came after the early morning out of the field; and Saul said, “Why do the people weep?” And they tell him the words of the men of Jabis.

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Just then, Saul came in from the fields, walking behind his oxen. “Why is everyone crying?” Saul asked. They told him what the men from Jabesh had said.
NLT	Saul was plowing in the field, and when he returned to town, he asked, “What’s the matter? Why is everyone crying?” So they told him about the message from Jabesh.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God’s Word™</i>	Just then Saul was coming from the field behind some oxen. “Why are these people crying?” Saul asked. So they told him the news about the men of Jabesh.
JPS (Tanakh)	Saul was just coming from the field driving the cattle; and Saul asked, “Why are the people crying?” And they told him about the situation of the men of Jabesh.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	Now behold, Saul was coming from the field behind the oxen; and he said, “What is <i>the matter</i> with the people that they weep?” So they related to him the words of the men of Jabesh.
<i>Young’s Updated LT</i>	...and lo, Saul has come after the herd out of the field, and Saul says, ‘What—to the people, that they weep?’ and they recount to him the words of the men of Jabesh.

What is the gist of this verse? Saul comes in the from the field after a hard day at work and he sees all of the men weeping, so he asks why. They tell him about the report of the men of Jabesh.

1Samuel 11:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
Shâ'ûl (שָׂאוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i>]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
bôw' (בוֹא) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'achârêy (אַחֲרָי) [pronounced <i>ah-kuh-RAY</i>]	<i>hinder parts; behind, after; following; after that, afterwards</i>	preposition; plural form	Strong's #310 BDB #29
bâqâr (בָּקָר) [pronounced <i>baw-KAWR</i>]	<i>ox, herd, cattle</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #1241 BDB #133
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
sâdeh (שָׂדֵה) [pronounced <i>saw-DEH</i>]	<i>field, land, country, open field, open country</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7704 BDB #961

Translation: *And observe Saul coming in [to town] behind the oxen from the field.* Israel had never had a king before. Saul appears to be a reluctant king, to say the least. He had no natural leadership abilities. After being privately anointed as the king of Israel and then publically being chosen the king of Israel, Saul returned to his hometown and to his normal chores. Instead of putting together a cabinet or establishing a central city from which to rule, Saul was out plowing his family's field. These messengers from across the Jordan, rather than going to Saul, went to the people, even though the primary reason that the men of Israel requested a king from God was for military leadership. The fact that these messengers did not wait with their message to speak to Saul directly indicates that his presence in this city was not necessarily a factor in their coming to Gibeah. In order for any man to assume leadership over a country, there must be some popular assent, no matter what the form of government.

There have been many who have made comments about Saul's plowing a field at this time. He has been anointed king twice—what more does he need? an anvil to drop on his head? Keil and Delitzsch give us the most succinct explanation: *Even after the election by lot at Mizpeh, Saul did not seize upon the reins of government at once, but returned to his father's house in Gibeah, and to his former agricultural occupation; not, however, merely from personal humility and want of ambition, but rather from a correct estimate of the circumstances. The monarchy was something so new in Israel, that the king could not expect a general and voluntary recognition of his regal dignity and authority, especially after the conduct of the worthless people mentioned in 1Sam. 10:27, until he had answered their expectations...and proven himself a deliverer of Israel from its foes by a victorious campaign but as Jehovah had chosen him ruler over his people without any seeking on his part, he would wait for higher*

instructions to act, before he entered upon the government. The opportunity was soon given him ¹⁴ [i.e., the circumstances of this chapter].

Now, do you recall 1Sam. 10:7, which were Samuel’s final instructions to Saul? **And it will be when these signs have come to you, you will do for yourself what your hand finds; for God is with you.** The signs have all come to pass (apart from the final sign to take place in Gilgal); but nothing has really been put before Saul to do. There was no palace for him to go to; no capital city; no man had been king before (apart from Abimelech), so there was not really any established protocol. So, Saul was waiting for God to put something before him, and this was it.

1Samuel 11:5b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
ʾamar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #559 BDB #55
Shâ`ûwl (שׂוּאֵל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated Saul; it means asked for	masculine proper noun	Strong’s #7586 BDB #982
mâh (מַה) [pronounced maw]	what, how, why	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong’s #4100 BDB #552
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l ^e)	to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to	directional/relational preposition; with the 1 st person plural suffix	No Strong’s # BDB #510
‘am (עַם) [pronounced gahm]	people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong’s #5971 BDB #766
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong’s #3588 BDB #471
bâkâh (בָּכָה) [pronounced baw-KAW]	to weep, to cry, to bewail	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #1058 BDB #113

Translation: Then Saul said, “Why [are] all the people weeping?” Now that Saul is proclaimed king and all, even though he really did nothing about it, his opinion and what he has to say is given more credence. In the past, he may have walked into town and he may have had to ask a question several times before someone would pay attention and answer it, but here, he will ask one time and get a response.

The second sentence does not even appear to be proper Hebrew, which reads, literally: “Why all the people that they weep?” The idea is that Saul comes into town, everyone is crying, and he has a difficult time asking the question. He asks this question immediately, but it apparently does not come out right. “What’s up with all the people that they are crying?” might be a more modern rendering.

¹⁴ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 437.

1Samuel 11:5c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
çâphar (סַפֵּר) [pronounced saw-FAHR]	<i>to recount, to enumerate, to tell with praise, to celebrate, to recall, to declare, to narrate, to tell or declare something from memory, to declare the facts or particulars of, to tell in a specific order</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Piel imperfect	Strong's #5608 BDB #707
ʿêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
dâbâr (דְּבָרִים) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	<i>words, sayings, doctrines, commands; things, matters, reports</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
ʾănâsîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced uh-NAW-seem]; also spelled ʾîyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced ee-SHEEM]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
Yâbêsh (יָבֵשׁ) [pronounced yaw ^b -VEYSH]	<i>to be dry, dried up, withered; transliterated Jabesh</i>	cognate of verb (Strong's #3001); acts as a proper noun	Strong's #3003 BDB #386

Translation: [Therefore, they declared to him the report of the men of Jabesh.](#) Or, [So they recounted to him the words of the men of Jabesh.](#) This is quite fascinating, this historical narrative. The men of Jabesh do not wait around for Saul; they do not ask for him by name—even though I have suggested that Saul's presence here may have been one of the reasons that they came to Gibeah, it does not really appear that way. The people of Gibeah don't stop them mid-speech and say, "Wait, let's get Saul; he is going to be Israel's new king." The men from Jabesh come to town, tell what has happened, and, apparently, they leave. The report is given to Saul not by the men of Jabesh but by his fellow townsmen.

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Saul Responds with the Army of Israel

[And so came a Spirit of God upon Saul in his hearing of the words the these and so it kindled his nostril \[or, anger\] greatly.](#)

1Samuel
11:6

[Then the Spirit of Y^ehowah came upon Saul as he heard these words and his anger was greatly kindled.](#)

[Suddenly, as he heard these words, the Spirit of God came upon Saul and he became extremely angry.](#)

How translators handled the sixth verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so came a Spirit of God upon Saul in his hearing of the words the these and so is kindled his nostril [or, *anger*] greatly.
 Septuagint And the Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul when he heard these words, and his anger was greatly kindled against them.

Significant differences: The Greek, Aramaic and Latin all read the *Spirit of Jehovah*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV Then the Spirit of God suddenly took control of Saul and made him furious.
 REB When Saul heard this, the spirit of God suddenly seized him; in anger [he took a pair of oxen, cut them in pieces, and sent messengers with the pieces all through Israel to proclaim that the same would be done to the oxen of any man who did not follow Saul and Samuel to battle.] [A portion of v. 7b was included to continue the context of REB's rendering].

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ When he heard this news, God's Spirit came over him, and he became very angry.
 JPS (Tanakh) When he heard these things, the spirit of God gripped Saul and his anger blazed up.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul mightily when he heard these words, and he became very angry [lit., *his anger burned exceedingly*].
 Young's Updated LT And the Spirit of God prospers over Saul, in his hearing these words, and his anger burns greatly,...

What is the gist of this verse? Saul is taken by the Holy Spirit when he hears these words and he becomes angry.

1Samuel 11:6a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
tsâlach (וַיִּצְלַח) [pronounced <i>tsaw-LAHCH</i>]	<i>to come upon, to rush upon, to prosper, to be prosperous</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6743 BDB #852
Tsâlach means <i>to go over, to go through</i> [a river, for instance] when followed by an accusative. <i>To prosper, to be prosperous</i> generally followed by a lâmed preposition; <i>to come upon, to rush upon</i> generally followed by the prepositions 'al or `el.			
rûwach (רוּחַ) [pronounced <i>ROO-ahkh</i>]	<i>wind, breath, spirit, apparition</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #7307 BDB #924
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>gods, foreign gods, god; God; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

1Samuel 11:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
In the Syriac, Greek and Latin, this reads <i>Jehovah</i> .			
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ʿahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752
Shâʿûwl (שׂוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
The infinitive construct, when combined with the bêyth preposition, can often take on a temporal meaning and may be rendered <i>when [such and such happens]</i> . It can serve as a temporal marker that denotes an event which occurs simultaneously with the action of the main verb.			
shâmaʿ (שָׁמַע) [pronounced shaw-MAHĠ]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
ʿêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
dâbâr (דְּבָרִים) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	<i>words, sayings, doctrines, commands; things, matters, reports</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
ʿêlleh (אֵלֶּה) [pronounced KEHLleh]	<i>these, these things</i>	demonstrative plural adjective with the definite article	Strong's #428 BDB #41

Translation: [Then the Spirit of Y^ehowah came upon Saul as he heard these words...](#) Literally, from the Hebrew, this reads: [Then the Spirit of Elohim came upon \[or, rushed upon\] Saul as he heard these words...](#) In the Hebrew, the *Spirit* is affixed to *Elohim*. In the Greek, Latin and Aramaic, we find their equivalents to *Y^ehowah* here.

Commentaries argue whether Saul is saved or not; particularly when we come to Saul's death in 1Sam. 31. Well, they don't so much as argue it, as often say, "Whether Saul was saved or not, God knows." Here we have God the Holy Spirit coming upon this man, a man chosen by God to be king over Israel—essentially the first king of Israel¹⁵—to do what is obviously God's will...hmm, how should I put this? If you knew nothing else about Saul, would you think that he is saved or not? At this point in time, you would be hard-pressed to find any reason to doubt his salvation. What we will find later is that Saul will behave erratically and he will do things which are clearly outside of God's will. This does not make him an unbeliever. This does not mean that Saul has lost his salvation. Unfortunately, what many of us do later in life is act like unbelievers. In fact, apart from the Holy Spirit, we all act like unbelievers, albeit, some of us like religious unbelievers. People question Saul's relationship to God because of his actions; because God was against Saul. I will guarantee you that if you based my salvation on my actions, you would find things that I do questionable, if not outright sinful. And I can guarantee you that if I follow you around long enough, I will observe sins that you commit. You have got to get away from the idea, if you're good,

¹⁵ Abimelech of Judges 9 notwithstanding.

you go to heaven; if you're bad you go to hell. None of us are good. We are born with sin, we sin by our own free will, and Adam's sin has been imputed to us. We have three strikes against us, and we continue to sin after we believe in Jesus Christ and we continue to have an old sin nature after we believe in Jesus Christ.

Allow me this digression: let's say your salvation depends upon your behavior after salvation, that opens us up for two problems: first of all, you aren't really saved by grace, but you are saved by works—you are saved by your good works or your lack of sin after salvation, which makes what Jesus Christ did for you on the cross pretty meaningless. Secondly, where do you draw the line. EVERYONE sins after salvation. So, let's assume for a moment that your behavior is a factor after salvation—then just what is it you have to do? Never sin knowingly? That let's everyone out. Don't sin so much? Well, what is the proper amount? Is there going to be a cut off score, like 1,000,000 sins? The guy who commits 1,000,000 sins is okay, but the one who commits 1,000,001 is not? Should the sins be rated? 1 point for gluttony and 10 points for adultery? What about the guy who has to go out of his way to commit adultery versus the one who is tempted with it regularly and succumbs? Should there be a different point scale here? You see, none of this makes any sense. Either Jesus Christ died for our sins or He did not. There is nothing in Scripture which distinguishes the sins which He died for—that is, did He only die for your sins up to age 21, when you believed in Him? After that, you are on your own? Did He die for the minor sins after your salvation? Did Jesus Christ pick and choose the sins of yours that He died for? These points of view lead us on a very slippery path. Not only is there nothing Biblical which supports any of these notions, but in every case, we are saved by a combination of grace and works; and if there are works, then there is no more grace. I know that I am depraved. At some point in my life, I realized it; around the time I was saved; and it is more and more clear to me as time continues. Rom. 7:18: **For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good. For to will is present to me, but to work out the good I do not find. For what good I desire, I do not do. But the evil I do not desire, this I do.**

So, do not look at Saul's sorry life during his latter years and question his salvation. Read what we find in this context; think about what is occurring in this context, and then ask yourself, "Is God going to allow an unbeliever to rule over His people as their first king? Is God going to empower this unbeliever with God the Holy Spirit?" If you think Saul is an unbeliever, then what God is doing here makes little sense. As for empowerment by God the Holy Spirit, this was something given to a very, very small percentage of believers in the Old Testament. Does it make sense for God to endow unbelievers with the same Spirit? Of course not!

Application: It is the later life of Saul and the salvation of the gangster (thief) on the cross which should give you confidence in your salvation. When Saul is about to die, as a complete and total failure, do you know what Samuel, up from the dead will tell him? **"Tomorrow, you and your sons will be with me."** (1Sam. 28:19b). Yeah, I know that you have a sorry-ass Christian life. I know you give into temptation way too often; I know you exhibit the grossest self-righteousness; I know you have thoughts that even you realize that you should not have—but are you as bad as Saul? Probably not. Is your life as depraved as the gangster on the cross, who acknowledged, **"I deserve to be here, but this man Jesus does not"**? (Luke 23:41). If anything, you should thank God for the testimony of these sorry men, whose lives are probably worse than even yours. God does not save on some kind of sliding scale; a 69.4 is not failing and a 69.5 is not passing in God's scale—we are saved by being in Christ—that is passing on God's scale. This should give you a little confidence. Sure, you lead a sorry life; so do I. However, God in His grace has saved us.

1Samuel 11:6b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
chârâh (חָרָה) [pronounced khaw-RAWH]	to burn, to kindle, to become angry, to evoke great emotion	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2734 BDB #354

1Samuel 11:6b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
`aph (אֵפ) [pronounced ahf]	<i>nose, nostril</i> , but is also translated <i>face, brow, anger</i>	masculine singular construct with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #639 BDB #60
m ^e ˁōd (מְאֹד) [pronounced m ^e -ODE]	<i>exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very</i>	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547

Translation: ...and his anger was greatly kindled. Saul, up to this point in time, appears to have little or no emotional commitment. He has been put in charge of Israel and he is out plowing the family field with the family oxen. What he required was an emotional spark in order to take upon himself his proper duties. Please don't misinterpret this. This is not a good thing. Saul was clearly given the authority over Israel and he should have already done something about it. He should not be waiting for an emotional charge in order to function in God's plan. More than anyone we have seen thus far in Scripture, the Spirit of God has had to, apart from his volition, function in Saul's life in order for Saul to do what's right.

There is something else that I should point out. Saul's emotional commitment appears to be a result of the Holy Spirit or a part of this enabling or a coinciding of Saul's response with the coming of the Holy Spirit. I mention this because there are times that my interpretation of Scripture may seem to be a bit cut and dried. There is an organic and dynamic relationship between the enabling of the Holy Spirit and one's own soul and spirit. Rarely, if ever, do we find instances in Scripture of the Holy Spirit completely dominating the soul and spirit of a man (one could argue that the Holy Spirit did completely control Balaam's donkey in Num. 22). My point is that Saul's emotional response is in agreement with if not a response to the enabling of the Holy Spirit. You cannot go backwards with this. You cannot think that, because you are emotionally charged about this or that, that this is a result of the filling of the Holy Spirit. Scripture does not support that. There will be times that you are emotional while being filled with the Holy Spirit; there are times that you will be unemotional and filled with the Holy Spirit. Again, the filling of God the Holy Spirit is organically and dynamically related to our own soul and spirit. It does not automatically turn one's emotion on or off. However, there may be an emotional response which is in sync with the Holy Spirit. In other words, you may at various times feel a whole range of emotions. This does not mean that you are filled or not filled with the Holy Spirit. However, whenever you feel a plethora of emotions and you have been taken, so to speak, or if you are under the control of another power without the volition to remove this control, then it is highly unlikely that you are under the power of the Holy Spirit.

You may want to review the **Doctrine of the Ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament**, which was covered in Num. 11:25. Saul was placed under the power of God the Holy Spirit 1Sam. 10:6, 10 11:6 19:23–24.

And so he took a pair of cattle and so he cut him up and so he sends [them] out in all of [the] territory of Israel in a hand of the messengers, to say, "Whoever his not coming out after Saul and after Samuel, so will be done to his cattle." Then falls a fear of Y^ehowah upon all the people and so they come out as man one.

1Samuel
11:7

Then he took a pair of oxen and cut them [in pieces] and he sent [them] forth by the hand of [his] messengers into all the territory of Israel, saying, "Whoever does not come out after Saul and after Samuel, so [it] will be done to his oxen." Then the fear of Y^ehowah fell upon all of the people and they [all] came out as one man.

As a result, he took a pair of oxen and cut them into pieces, sending the pieces by several messengers throughout the land of Israel, with the message, "This is what will happen to your cattle if you do not come out to Gibeah to meet with Saul and Samuel." The fear of Jehovah fell upon all of they people and they came out as one.

How others have rendered v. 7:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so he took a pair of cattle and so he cut him up and so he sends [them] out in all of [the] territory of Israel in a hand of the messengers, to say, “Whoever his not coming out after Saul and after Samuel, so will be done to his cattle.” Then falls a fear of Y^ehowah upon all the people and so they come out as man one.

Septuagint And he took two cows, and cut them in pieces, and sent them into all the coasts of Israel by the hand of Messengers, saying, “Whoever comes not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall they do to his oxen”; and a transport from the Lord came upon the people of Israel, and they came out to battle as one man.

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

TEV He took two oxen, cut them in pieces, and had messengers carry the pieces throughout the land of Israel with this warning: “Whoever does not follow Saul and Samuel into battle will have this done to his oxen!” The people of Israel were afraid of what the LORD might do, and all of them, without exception, came out together.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God’s Word™ Saul took a pair of oxen, cut them in pieces, and sent them by messengers throughout the territory of Israel with the following message: “This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who doesn’t follow Saul and Samuel [into battle].” So the people became terrified by the LORD, and they came out united [behind Saul].

JPS (Tanakh) He took a yoke of oxen and cut them into pieces, which he sent by messengers throughout the territory of Israel, with the warning, “Thus shall be done to the cattle of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel into battle!” Terror from the LORD fell upon the people, and they came out as one man.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB And he took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces, and sent *them* throughout the territory of Israel by the hand of Messengers, saying, “Whoever does not come out after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen.” Then the dread of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out as one man.

Young’s Updated LT ...and he takes a couple of oxen, and cuts them in pieces, and sends through all the border of Israel, by the hand of the messengers, saying, ‘He who is not coming out after Saul and after Samuel—thus it is done to his oxen;’ and the fear of Jehovah falls on the people, and they come out as one man.

What is the gist of this verse? Saul cuts up some oxen and sends the pieces with the messengers throughout Israel. The message is, “If you don’t come out and support this war, then this will be done to your livestock.”

1Samuel 11:7a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wāw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253

1Samuel 11:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
tsemed (צָמַד) [pronounced TZEH-med]	<i>a couple, a pair</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6776 BDB #855
bâqâr (בָּקָר) [pronounced baw-KAWR]	<i>ox, herd, cattle</i>	masculine singular collective noun	Strong's #1241 BDB #133
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâthach (נָתַח) [pronounced naw-THAHKH]	<i>to cut up, to cut in pieces, to divide by joints</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5408 BDB #677

Translation: [Then he took a pair of oxen and cut them \[in pieces\]...](#) Although it would seem reasonable that Saul simply took two of the oxen which he had used in the field (v. 5), although this verse does not specifically say that. However, given the suddenness of the situation in Jabesh, it is likely that Saul worked with what he had. Again, recall that Samuel told him, [“Do whatever is in your hand”](#) meaning, whatever God puts before you, that you will do.

1Samuel 11:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>to send, to send off, to send away, to dismiss, to give over, to cast out, to let go, to set free, to shoot forth [branches], to shoot [an arrow]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
g ^{eb} bûl (גְּבוּל) [pronounced g ^{eb} -VOOL]	<i>border, boundary, territory</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1366 BDB #147
Yis ^{ra} êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

1Samuel 11:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
mal ^e âk ^e (מַלְאָכִים) [pronounced mah ^e -AWK ^e]	<i>messenger or angel; this word has been used for a prophet (Isa. 42:19) and priest (Mal. 2:7)</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #4397 BDB #521

Translation: ...and he sent [them] forth by the hand of [his] messengers into all the territory of Israel,... We would expect a suffix with the verb, but we do not find one. This gives us: ...and he sent [the cut up pieces of oxen] out into all the territory of Israel by the hand of the messengers,... The Jewish people tend to be very demonstrative. They don't rely simply upon words.

My guess is, the messengers which Saul uses are messengers from Jabesh. However, it is quite interesting that neither the men of Jabesh nor the men of Gibeah go and fetch Saul from the field. Saul has to come in from the field, notice all of the weeping, and then ask what is going on.

1Samuel 11:7c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l ^e)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
êyn (אֵין) [pronounced ân]	<i>nothing, not, [is] not; not present, not ready; expresses non-existence, absence or non-possession; there is no [none, no one, not]</i>	particle of negation; substantive of negation; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #369 BDB #34
yâtsâ ^â (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>to go out, to come out, to come [go] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]; [of money:] to be expended, laid out, spent; promulgated; outgoing [end of a time period]</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #3318 BDB #422

1Samuel 11:7c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿachârêy (אַחֲרָי) [pronounced ah-kuh- RAY]	<i>hinder parts; behind, after; following; after that, afterwards</i>	preposition; plural form	Strong's #310 BDB #29
Shâ'ûwl (שׂאוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿachar (אַחַר) [pronounced ah-KHAHR]	<i>after, following, behind</i>	preposition	Strong's #310 BDB #29
Sh ^e mûw'êl (שִׁמוּאֵל) [pronounced sh ^e -moo- ALE]	which means <i>heard of El</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028
kôh (כֹּה) [pronounced koh]	<i>so, thus, here, hence</i>	adverb	Strong's #3541 BDB #462
ʿâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ǵaw- SAWH]	<i>was made, was constructed, was fashioned, to be formed, to be prepared</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l ^e)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bâqâr (בָּקָר) [pronounced baw- KAWR]	<i>ox, herd, cattle</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1241 BDB #133

Translation: ...saying, "Whoever does not come out after Saul and after Samuel, so [it] will be done to his oxen." Saul lists himself first, not as an egomaniac, but because he is the king. However, he lists Samuel as well, because this message is more likely to get a response if Samuel's name is on it. Samuel is recognized throughout Israel as a prophet of God. Saul is known by many to be anointed as king; however, he has never really assumed this position of leadership.

The threat is interesting: Saul threatens the livestock of those who do not come out to war. But what he is doing is working with what he has. God places this threat before him and he is walking two oxen, and he works with what he has.

1Samuel 11:7d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

1Samuel 11:7d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nāphal (נָפַל) [pronounced naw-FAHL]	<i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5307 BDB #656
pachad (פָּחַד) [pronounced PAH-khahd]	<i>fear, terror, dread, a thing which is feared, that which is feared</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6343 BDB #808
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ḡahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced ḡahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

Translation: [Then the fear of Y^ehowah fell upon all of the people...](#) This is not because Saul sent out the cut up oxen. God the Holy Spirit was no doubt a part of this fear/respect. The Holy Spirit both motivated and empowered the people to obey this requisition of Saul's.

1Samuel 11:7e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>to go out, to come out, to come [go] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]; [of money:] to be expended, laid out, spent; promulgated; outgoing [end of a time period]</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
kaph or k ^e (כֶּ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>as, like, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
ʿîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35
ʿechâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD]	<i>one, first, certain, only; but it can also mean a composite unity; possibly particular</i>	numeral adjective	Strong's #259 BDB #25

Translation: ...and they [all] came out as one man. We have a tremendous amount of unity here. All the Israelites came forth to Saul to be led into war against the Ammonites.

One of the many theories concerning Scripture was that these were stories which were carried down throughout the ages verbally and eventually, long after these things occurred, were written down. One of the reasons this is asserted, is that some historical recounts are similar to others. Some claim that common elements mean that the same historical event is being recalled; however, considerable time and retellings have caused different accounts to appear when they represent but one event. If you often peruse your Bible columns for references, you have no doubt noticed several references from this chapter of 1Samuel refer back to the historical account of Judges 19–20. Therefore, it might be helpful to examine...

The Similarities and Differences to Judges 19–21		
	1Sam. 11	Judges 19–21
The Set Up:	An Ammonite king, Nahash, had threatened to remove the right eyes of the men of Jabesh-gilead. Messengers were sent throughout Israel, including to the city of Gibeah.	A Levites mistress was raped and sodomized by the Benjamite men of Gibeah.
The Response	Saul cut up oxen and sent them throughout Israel. It is possible that he was inspired by reading the book of the Judges, however, I doubt that.	The Levite cut up his mistress into pieces and sent them to the twelve tribes of Israel (Judges 19:29)
The Message	Sauls sends out the message: "Whoever does not come out after Saul and after Samuel, so will it be done to his oxen." This message accompanied the cut up oxen.	The Levite was unable to make any such threat. He apparently sent a message indicating what had been done to his mistress, as all who saw it said, "Nothing like this has happened or been seen from the day that the sons of Israel came up from the land of Egypt until this day." (Judges 19:30).
The Response of the People	They came out to Saul and Samuel as one man.	They arose as one man, taking a vow (Judges 20:8, 11).
The Tactics	Saul divides his army into 3 companies.	Tactics are not given here; just the battle itself. However, Gideon also divided his men into 3 companies in Judges 7:19–20.
The Result	Nahash was defeated in battle by the Israelites.	The tribe of Benjamin was decimated (Judges 20:12–48).

Obviously, there are many similarities between these two incidents, which are separated in history by roughly 300 years. At the same time, there are many differences between the two incidents. One war was against Ammon; the other was against their brother Israelites. The incidents which inspired the battles were completely different. The message which was sent out was different, and the one sending the message was, on the one hand, a lowly Levite; and on the other, the King of Israel. The packages were expressly sent to the twelve tribes of Israel in the book of Judges. We may assume that they were so sent here, although that is not explicitly stated. The battle and the battle strategy of the two events were entirely different. Even the time spent describing the battle was very different (one verse in 1Samuel as versus 37 verses in Judges 20).

The point is this: one can gather together hundreds of parallel incidents in history which share common elements, even though they may be separated in time by hundreds of years. This fact does not mean that historical accounts with similar elements must therefore point back to the same historical incident. In fact, if there were no similarities between various incidents in Scripture, that would ring untrue.

What is indicated here is that Saul possibly knew of this incident from the book of Judges; or an advisor of his knew this. And, recall that Saul was a *new* man, so this could be the result of inspiration. The parallel could have been intentional, not coincidental. As ZPEB put it, *Imagine the psychological impact on the Israelite warrior upon the receipt of a piece of gory meat from Gibeah of Benjamin!*¹⁶

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And so he counted them in Bezek and so are men of Israel 300,000 [or, 300 clans] and men of Judah 30,000 [or, 30 clans].

1Samuel
11:8

And he counted them at Bezek and [there] were 300,000 men of Israel and 30,000 men of Judah.

Saul mobilized Israel's armed forces in Bezek and found that he had 300 extended families of men from Israel and 30 extended families of men from Judah.

Here are the various ways v. 8 has been translated:

Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate	And he numbered them in Bezek: and there were of the children of Israel 300,000: and of the men of Juda 30,000.
Masoretic Text	And so he counted them in Bezek and so are men of Israel 300,000 [or, 300 clans] and men of Judah 30,000 [or, 30 clans].
Septuagint	And he reviews them at Bezek in Bama, every man of Israel 600,000, and the men of Juda 70,000.

Significant differences: The numbers are quite different and Bama is not mentioned in the MT or the Latin. The Latin, Hebrew and the Syriac are identical. All that we find in the Dead Sea Scrolls of this verse is the final number, listed as 70,000.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	[So all the men came together] at Bezek. Saul had them organized and counted. There were three hundred thousand from Israel and thirty thousand from Judah. [Half of v. 7 was included]
NLT	When Saul mobilized them at Bezek, he found that there were 300,000 men of Israel, in addition to 30,000 from Judah. [The DSS and the Greek read 70,000]

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	When Saul counted them at Bezek, there were 300,000 troops from Israel and 30,000 troops from Judah.
JPS (Tanakh)	[Saul] mustered them in Bezek, and the Israelites numbered 300,000, the men of Judah 30,000.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

¹⁶ *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill Tenney, ed., Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976; Vol. 2, p. 713.

NASB

And he numbered them in Bezek; and the sons of Israel were 300,000 and the men of Judah 30,000.

Young's Updated LT

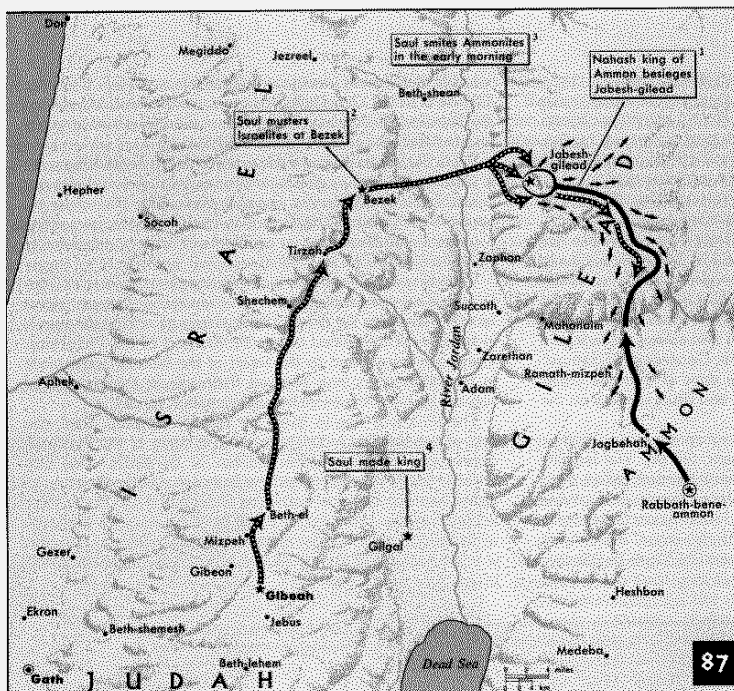
And he inspected them in Bezek, and the sons of Israel are three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

What is the gist of this verse? 300,000 men come to Saul from the North and 30,000 from the south (there is some disagreement as to the numbers in the ancient texts).

1Samuel 11:8a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
pâqad (פָּקַד) [pronounced paw-KAHD]	<i>to go to a person, to visit, to have personal contact with, to sort out, to visit a person, to commit, to charge to the care of, to fall upon, to attack, to number, to take a census</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect; with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #6485 BDB #823
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Bezeq (בֶּזֶק) [pronounced BĒH-zehk]	<i>lightning, lightning flash; and is transliterated Bezek</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #966 BDB #103

Translation: *And he counted them at Bezek...* Saul, as commander-in-chief, was in charge of all the army of Israel and Judah. Therefore, he is the one to assemble, number and mobilize the army of Israel.

Bezek has been mentioned before in Judges 1:4–7 where the tribes of Judah and Simeon fought against Adonai-bezek (after whom the city was possibly named), defeating him and the Canaanites and the Perizzites. He was taken to Jerusalem and he died there, implying that Bezek was probably near Jerusalem. However, there is serious disagreement as to the exact location of this city, some placing it as far north as Manasseh (and there could be two Bezek’s). ZPEB has more details,¹⁷ which we won’t go into, as this is the last time that we will hear of this city. The NIV Study Bible tells us simply that Bezek is north of Shechem, and just west of the Jordan, making it a reasonable distance from Jabesh-gilead.¹⁸ Barnes claims that Bezek is the name of a district rather than the name of a city. This map was scanned from *The MacMillan Bible Atlas*; 3rd Edition; Aharoni, Avi-Yonah, Rainey, and Safrai; MacMillan; ©1993 by Carta; p. 71.



You will no doubt note that this map tells us what a hundred words could not. We see where Saul is located; we see where Nahash holds a threat over the men at Jabesh. And we see why Saul would gather the troops up at Bezek. I went for the first 20 years of my Christian years without a decent Bible atlas. That was a mistake. I much have a much better understanding and appreciation for the events which took place because of owning *The MacMillan Bible Atlas* (among other similar resources).

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1Samuel 11:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
bânîym (בְּנֵיִם) [pronounced baw-NEEM]	sons, descendants; sometimes rendered men	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Yis ^o râ`êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE]	transliterated Israel	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

¹⁷ *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill Tenney, ed., Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 554.

¹⁸ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 386.

1Samuel 11:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâlôsh (שָׁלוֹשׁ) [pronounced shaw-LOHSH]	<i>a three, a trio, a triad, a threesome</i>	numeral; masculine singular construct	Strong's #7969 BDB #1025
mê'ôwth (מֵאוֹת) [pronounced may-AW]	<i>hundreds</i>	feminine plural absolute; numeral	Strong's #3967 BDB #547
ʿelep (אֶלֶף) pronounced EH-lef]	<i>thousand, family, (500?); military unit</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #505 (and #504) BDB #48

Translation: ...and [there] were 300,000 men of Israel... The key noun here is the ubiquitous masculine singular noun ʿelep (אֶלֶף) [pronounced EH-lef], which probably means *thousands*. However, I would not be surprised if it turned out to mean 500 or referred to an extended family. Robert Gordon suggests that ʿelep refers to a military unit¹⁹; however, Israel is not a militaristic country. They did not have a standing army. What they are, are a bunch of Israeli farmers and ranchers who have shown up as per Saul's request. Therefore, this would not refer specifically to a military unit.²⁰ This gives us: ...and the men of Israel were 300,000 [or, 300-500's; or possibly, 300 extended families].

1Samuel 11:8c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿânâsîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced uh-NAW-seem]; also spelled ʿîyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced ee-SHEEM]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
Y ^e hûwdâh (יְהוּדָה) [pronounced yeh-hoo-DAW]	possibly means <i>to praise, to be praised</i> ; and is transliterated <i>Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397
sh'ôshîym (שְׁלוֹשִׁים) [pronounced sh'low-SHEEM]	<i>thirty</i>	plural numeral	Strong's #7970 BDB #1026
ʿelep (אֶלֶף) pronounced EH-lef]	<i>thousand, family, (500?); military unit</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #505 (and #504) BDB #48

Translation: ...and 30,000 men of Judah. As always, the numbers are problematic. An army of 330,000 men seems huge. Even half that amount (if ʿelep meant 500) would be exceptionally large. The men from 330 clans would be a more reasonable size. As you have no doubt noticed, the numbers given us in the Septuagint are much greater: 600,000 for the number of men of Israel and 70,000 for the men from Judah. Keil and Delitzsch

¹⁹ Robert Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 124.

²⁰ However, if we referred to these men after Saul had divided them into companies, then this word might refer to *military units*.

instead explain this as the number of people who showed up, as Saul appeared to have called all of the people (he at least called all of the men). The army would have been a subset of those who showed up.

In any case, Saul gathers all the able-bodied men of Israel and Judah. What is remarkable is the difference in size of the men who are sent. However, if *ḥeleph* means *clans* or *families*, then the actual numbers would be less disparate. Also bear in mind that 10 tribes come from the northern area (Israel) and 2 from the southern area (Judah and Simeon). Also, note that there is a differentiation between the tribes who came from the south (Judah) and the tribes who came from the north. This tells us that there was already some sort of separation between these areas even prior to the monarchy. Recall that I have already theorized that the Philistines drove a wedge between the northern and southern kingdoms when they took Shiloh.

Edersheim remarks: *It was night when Saul and the armed multitude which followed him broke up from Bezek. Little did he know how well the brave men of Jabesh would requite the service; how, when on that disastrous day on Mount Gilboa he and his sons would fall in battle, and the victorious Philistines fasten their dead bodies to the walls of Bethshan, these brave men of Jabesh would march all night and rescue the fallen heroes from exposure (1Sam. 31:8–13). Strange that Saul's first march should have been by night from Bethshan to Jabesh, the same route by which at the last they carried his dead body at night.*²¹

And so they say to the messengers, the coming in ones, “So you [all] will say to men of Jabesh-gilead: ‘Tomorrow is to you [all] deliverance in a warming of the sun.’” And so came the messengers and so they declare to men of Jabesh and so they rejoice.

1Samuel
11:9

And they said to the messengers who had come [to Gilead], “So you will say to the men of Jabesh-gilead: ‘Tomorrow, you will have deliverance when the sun is warm.’” So the messengers went and declared [this] to the men of Jabesh and they rejoiced.

Saul and his officers said to the messengers, “You will give the following message verbatim to the men of Jabesh-gilead: ‘You will be delivered from this crisis by this afternoon.’” When the messengers declared this to the men of Jabesh, the men of Jabesh rejoiced.

Here is what others have done with v. 9:

Ancient texts:

Dead Sea Scrolls	[They said to the messengers who came, “Tell this to the people of Jabesh-gilead: “Tomorrow,] the Lord’s del[iverance ²² ...] to you, they will open the ²³ [...].
Masoretic Text	And so they say to the messengers, the coming in ones, “So you [all] will say to men of Jabesh-gilead: ‘Tomorrow is to you [all] deliverance in a warming of the sun.’” And so came the messengers and so they declare to men of Jabesh and so they rejoice.
Septuagint	And he said to the messengers that came, “Thus you will say to the men of Jabish: Tomorrow, you will have deliverance, when the sun is hot.” And the messengers came to the city and told the men of Jabish, and they rejoiced.

Significant differences: No significant differences, apart from number change (*they* say vs. *he* said). The appears to be another line in the Dead Sea Scrolls which is not found elsewhere; however, there is not enough of that line remaining in order to determine what is being said.

²¹ Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 444.

²² 4QSam^a; *you will have deliverance* MT and LXX.

²³ 4QSam^a has an entire line that is not in the MT or the LXX. The verse and footnotes all are taken from *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*; translation and commentary by Martin Abegg Jr., Peter Flint and Eugene Ulrich; Harper SF, ©1999, p. 225.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

- CEV Saul and his officers sent the messengers back to Jabesh with this promise: “We will rescue you tomorrow afternoon.” The messengers went back to the people at Jabesh and told them that they were going to be rescued. Everyone was encouraged!
- The Message* Saul instructed the messengers, "Tell this to the folk in Jabesh Gilead: 'Help is on the way. Expect it by noon tomorrow.'" The messengers set straight off and delivered their message. Elated, the people of Jabesh Gilead...
- NAB To the messengers who had come he said, “Tell the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead that tomorrow, while the sun is hot, they will be rescued.” The messengers came a reported this to the inhabitants of Jabesh, who were jubilant,...
- REB He said to the messengers, ‘Tell the men of Jabesh-gilead, “Victory will be yours tomorrow by the time the sun is hot.” ’

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

- God’s Word™* They told the messengers who had come, “This is what you are to say to the men of Jabesh Gilead: ‘Tomorrow, by the time the sun gets hot, you will be rescued.’ ”
When the men of Jabesh received the message, they were overjoyed.
- JPS (Tanakh) The messengers who had come were told, “Thus shall you speak to the men of Jabesh-gilead: Tomorrow, when the sun grows hot, you shall be saved.” When the messengers came and told this to the men of Jabesh-gilead, they rejoiced.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

- NASB And they said to the messengers who had come, “Thus you shall say to the men of Jabesh-gilead, ‘Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, you shall have deliverance.’ ”
So the messengers went and told the men of Jabesh; and they were glad.
- Young’s Updated LT* And they say to the messengers who are coming, “Thus you do say to the men of Jabesh-Gilead: Tomorrow you have safety—by the heat of the sun;” and the messengers come and declare to the men of Jabesh, and they rejoice;...

What is the gist of this verse? The messengers are sent back to Jabesh Gilead with the message that they would be delivered by the late afternoon the next day.

1Samuel 11:9a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #559 BDB #55
In the Greek, this verb is a 3 rd person masculine singular. ²⁴			
lamed (ל) (pronounced lə)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong’s # BDB #510

²⁴ Surprisingly enough, Rotherham does not point this out. The translations which followed the Greek at this point are the NAB, NJB, NEB, and REB. Note that the JPS gets around this controversy by simply putting the verb into the passive voice.

1Samuel 11:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mal ^e ʾāk ^e (מַלְאָכִים) [pronounced <i>mahl</i> ^e -AWK ^e]	<i>messenger or angel</i> ; this word has been used for a prophet (Isa. 42:19) and priest (Mal. 2:7)	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #4397 BDB #521
bôw ^ʾ (בָּוֹא) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>the one entering [coming, one going] [in]; he who enters [goes, comes (in)]</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle with the definite article	Strong's #935 BDB #97

Translation: *And they said to the messengers who had come [to Gilead],...* As mentioned in the Hebrew exegesis, the LXX has a masculine singular verb here, which seems to make the most sense, as we would expect Saul to be the one making this promise. However, since there is no other manuscript evidence, apart from the Septuagint, to support this, we should consider that maybe the verb should be in the plural.²⁵ That would imply that this was not said entirely by Saul, but that two or more people spoke. My guess is that there was some prompting or guidance from Samuel. After all, we are speaking of a future event and Samuel specializes in future events, being a prophet. *Where did Samuel come from?* you might ask. This is an assumption on my part, based upon what Saul said in his message (...*come out after Saul and after Samuel...*) and based upon Samuel being mentioned in v. 14. His coming to Gibeah and his guidance to Saul at this point seem reasonable events to be taking place.

What appears to be the case is that these messengers from Jabesh-gilead were to be sent throughout all Israel (v. 3). However, when they arrived in Gibeah, Saul and Samuel told them to take a load off their feet and, at that point, Saul possibly sent his own messengers throughout the land. We really don't know which messengers were sent throughout Israel; however, they needed to move quickly, as there was only 7 days to gather up an army.

It is unclear whether there are other messengers from Jabesh-gilead traveling about, but that is a non-issue, as Saul has taken control at this point. He gathers the messengers from Jabesh-gilead (who are probably 2–3 men), after the men of Israel and Judah have gathered in Bezek, and Saul sends them back to Jabesh with a message, the text of which is the middle portion of this verse.

1Samuel 11:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kôh (כֹּה) [pronounced <i>koh</i>]	<i>so, thus, here, hence</i>	adverb	Strong's #3541 BDB #462
ʾāmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ^e)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35

²⁵ Notice that the plural reading in the Dead Sea Scrolls is in brackets; that means that it is not really in the Dead Sea Scrolls, but taken from the MT in order to fill in the translation.

1Samuel 11:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Yâbêsh (יַבֶּשֶׁת) [pronounced yāw ^β - VEYSH]	<i>to be dry, dried up, withered;</i> <i>transliterated Jabesh</i>	cognate of verb (Strong's #3001); acts as a proper noun	Strong's #3003 BDB #386
Gal ^ê êd (גִּלְעָד) [pronounced gah ^ê - ĠAYD]	<i>witness-pile, hill of witness;</i> and <i>is transliterated Gilead</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #1567 BDB #165
Although some exegetes treat this as one noun, <i>Jabesh-gilead</i> ; I think the idea is that this is the city <i>Jabesh</i> in <i>Gildean</i> (sort of like <i>Boston, Massachusetts</i>).			
mâchâr (מָחָר) [pronounced maw- KHAWR]	literally, <i>tomorrow</i> ; but figuratively can stand for <i>in time to come, in the future, later on, down the road</i> (chronologically speaking)	adverb of time	Strong's #4279 BDB #563

Translation:... "So you will say to the men of Jabesh-gilead:..." These are definitely the messengers which came to Gibeah from Jabesh and now Saul gives them an assigned task. According to Barnes, Jabesh-gilead is roughly 20 miles from Bezek,²⁶ which is in keeping with the map from MacMillan.

1Samuel 11:9c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâyâh (הִי הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l ^ê)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
šûw'âh (שׁוּׁוֹׁה) [pronounced š ^ê -shoo- ĠAW]	<i>deliverance, salvation</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8668 BDB #448
b ^ê (ב) [pronounced b ^{êh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88

The infinitive construct, when combined with the bêyth preposition, can often take on a temporal meaning and may be rendered *when [such and such happens]*. It can serve as a temporal marker that denotes an event which occurs simultaneously with the action of the main verb.

²⁶ Barnes' Notes; 1Samuel to Esther; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 27.

1Samuel 11:9c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
châmam (חַמַּם) [pronounced <i>khaw-MAHM</i>]	<i>to be warm, to become warm</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #2552 BDB #328
shemesh (שֶׁמֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>SHEH-mesh</i>]	<i>sun</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article; pausal form	Strong's #8121 BDB #1039

Translation:...*'Tomorrow, you will have deliverance when the sun is warm.'* " What the messengers are to say to the men of Jabesh is: *'Tomorrow, you will have deliverance when the sun is warm...'* In short order, within 7 days, Saul had gathered together an army of Israelite men ready to advance into Jabesh Gilead to deliver these men. Saul anticipated that they would destroy Nahash's army by midday next.

Samuel is barely alluded to here, so that we do not know how much he plays a part in all of this. Was he behind the scenes encouraging Saul, giving him messages from God? Did he show up and simply watch Saul, his presence there his only support? Or, does Samuel not even show, and send messengers after the battle to gather at Gilgal (1Sam. 11:14)? We can only guess at this point; however, given Saul's dependence upon Samuel, all the way to the end, it is reasonable to suppose that Samuel was providing spiritual support for Saul as well as guidance.

1Samuel 11:9d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw ^ʿ (בּוֹא) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
mal ^ʿ âk ^e (מַלְאָכִים) [pronounced <i>mahl^e-AWK^e</i>]	<i>messenger or angel; this word has been used for a prophet (Isa. 42:19) and priest (Mal. 2:7)</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #4397 BDB #521
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâgad (נִגַּד) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHD</i>]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l^e</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾânâsîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced <i>uh-NAW-seem</i>]; also spelled ʾîyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced <i>ee-SHEEM</i>]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35

1Samuel 11:9d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Yâbêsh (יַבֶּשׁ) [pronounced yāw ^β - VEYSH]	<i>to be dry, dried up, withered;</i> transliterated <i>Jabesh</i>	cognate of verb (Strong's #3001); acts as a proper noun	Strong's #3003 BDB #386

Translation: [So the messengers went and declared \[this\] to the men of Jabesh...](#) Nahash and his troops were probably poised outside the city of Jabesh, surveying the situation, savoring the fear of the Israelites. They may have been surprised to see these messengers return, expecting them to have gone to Israel and then remain there. It is more likely that they did not see the messengers return as well; the messengers may have gone before Saul and his army, and preceded them by only a few hours that night. They may have come into Jabesh the night before. At this point, surprise is important; in fact, surprise and the unexpected are always important in the art of war. Therefore, we may reasonably assume that these were factors in Saul's attack, which would suggest that the return of the messengers was secretive.

1Samuel 11:9e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so,</i> <i>that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
sâmach (סָמַח) [pronounced saw- MAHKH]	<i>to rejoice, to be glad, to be</i> <i>joyful, to be merry</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect; pausal form	Strong's #8055 BDB #970

Translation: [...and they rejoiced.](#) This gives us: [Then the messengers came and declared to the men of Jabesh and they rejoiced.](#) That previous night, the men of Jabesh were in a hopeless situation. A monster of a man was outside the city of Jabesh ready to drill out each man's eye and then make him a slave. The men of Israel had come from a period of time (the time of the judges) where they was subject to foreign king after foreign king that abused them. This particular instance appeared to be one of the greatest potential abuses in their history. The relief that they felt that an army was coming to deliver them must have been an amazing feeling. When we come to the end of Saul's life, and the men of Jabesh risk their lives in order to remove his corpse from public humiliation, remember back to this chapter to explain why they would be willing to do such a thing.

[And so says men of Jabesh \[to Nahash and the Ammonites\], "Tomorrow, we will come out unto you \[all\] and so you have done to us all the good in your eyes."](#) 1Samuel 11:10

[Then the men of Jabesh said \[to Nahash\], "We will surrender \[lit., come out\] to you tomorrow and you may do to us all \[that is\] right in your eyes."](#)

[Then the men of Jabesh went to Nahash and his men and said, "Tomorrow, we will surrender to you and you may do to us whatever you think is right."](#)

This is how others have handled this verse:

Ancient texts:**Masoretic Text**

[And so says men of Jabesh \[to Nahash and the Ammonites\], "Tomorrow, we will come out unto you \[all\] and so you have done to us all the good in your eyes."](#)

Septuagint And the men of Jabish said to Naas the Ammanite, "Tomorrow, we will come out to you, and you will do to us what seems good in your sight."

Significant differences: The Hebrew, Syriac and Latin do not tell us to whom the men of Jabesh are speaking. We may assume that they have sent a small delegation to Nahash.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

The Message ...sent word to Nahash: "Tomorrow we'll give ourselves up. You can deal with us on your terms."

NLT The men of Jabesh then told their enemies, "Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you can do to us as you wish."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ They said [to Nahash], "Tomorrow we'll surrender to you, and you may do to us whatever you think is right."

JPS (Tanakh) The men of Jabesh then told [the Ammonites], "Tomorrow we will surrender to you, and you can do to us whatever you please."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB Then the men of Jabesh said, "Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you may do to us whatever seems good to you [lit., in your sight]."

Owen's Translation Therefore said the men of Jabesh, "Tomorrow we will give ourselves up to you and you may do to us whatever seems good in your eyes."

Young's Updated LT ...and the men of Jabesh say to the Ammonites, "Tomorrow we come out unto you, and you have done to us according to all that is good in your eyes."

What is the gist of this verse? A delegation of men from Jabesh go to Nahash and tell him that they would come out to meet him the next day and that he should do whatever seems right to them in his own estimation.

1Samuel 11:10a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Only the Septuagint tells us that they are speaking to Nahash the Ammonite (which seems logical).			
ʾânâsîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced uh-NAW-seem]; also spelled ʾîyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced ee-SHEEM]	men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
Yâbêsh (יָבֵשׁ) [pronounced yaw ^B -VEYSH]	to be dry, dried up, withered; transliterated Jabesh	cognate of verb (Strong's #3001); acts as a proper noun	Strong's #3003 BDB #386

Translation: Then the men of Jabesh said [to Nahash],... You will note that the Septuagint and several other versions have the men of Jabesh speaking to Nahash or to the Ammonites in general. However, we do not find this in the Hebrew, although certainly, the man that they spoke to was Jabesh (or one of his representatives). My thinking is, just like we find to the JPS, the NLT and even in *Young's Literal Translation*, the Septuagint chose to add *Naas the Ammanite*, even though it probably was not found in their own Hebrew Bibles. It just made more sense to them to indicate to whom this was being spoken. It is reasonable to suppose a small delegation or two or three men went from Jabesh to the camp of Nahash and his army and spoke to him.

1Samuel 11:10b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mâchâr (מָחָר) [pronounced maw-KHAWR]	literally, <i>tomorrow</i> ; but figuratively can stand for <i>in time to come, in the future, later on, down the road</i> (chronologically speaking)	adverb of time	Strong's #4279 BDB #563
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>to go out, to come out, to come [go] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]; [of money:] to be expended, laid out, spent; promulgated; outgoing [end of a time period]</i>	1 st person plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
'el (אֶל) [pronounced e]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation:...“We will surrender [lit., *come out*] to you tomorrow... The verb found here is the 1st person plural, Qal imperfect of yâtsâ' again (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]. As before, yâtsâ' means *to go out, to come out, to come forth*. It really does not mean *to surrender*, although Nahash may have understood it in that way. This would be properly translated: “Tomorrow, we will come out to you...” They have chosen language which Nahash will understand in one way, but they will mean in another. These men of Jabesh would come out to Nahash the next day; he would expect them to come out in defeat, and they plan to come out to him to do battle (along side Saul's army).

1Samuel 11:10c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l ^e)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

1Samuel 11:10c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
kôl (ל כ) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
K ^e kôl (ל כ) appear to mean <i>according to all, just as all, exactly as all.</i>			
tôwb (ב ו ט) [pronounced toh ^b v]	<i>pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, good, better; approved</i>	masculine feminine singular adjective which can act like a substantive; with the definite article	Strong's #2896 BDB #373
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
ʿayin (י ך ם) [pronounced ĠAH-yin]	<i>spring, fountain; eye, spiritual eyes</i>	feminine plural noun with the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744

Translation: ...and you may do to us all [that is] right in your eyes.” Or, “...and you will do all the good in your eyes.” As you have noticed in other translations, some went with something along the lines of *whatever you believe is right*. The men of Jabesh were no doubt at the end of their 7 days, and they obviously misled their enemies here in order to catch them off guard (the Ammonites would not be expecting a battle).

It is interesting—it appears almost as if Nahash is being merciful here and that the men of Jabesh are being underhanded, but that is not really the case. Nahash is certainly going to push further west and attack more of Israel. It is better for him that his reputation precedes him. He wants to strike fear in the hearts of Israel. So far, he has defeated all of eastern Israel, with the exception of these men who have gathered in Jabesh for their last stand. Nahash is not being merciful; he still plans to put out their right eyes. He simply does not expect a fight from the rest of Israel. He knows they have no king, no standing army, and he knows that no one came into eastern Israel to help out Gad and Reuben. So, giving these men an extra seven days is simply more time for him to savor their fear and apprehension. The men of Jabesh do not lie to Nahash. They do not actually say that they are going to surrender to him; they simply say, “*We will come out to you tomorrow and you may do what you think is right.*” Nahash, because he has blinders on, hears what he wants to hear.

And so he was from the morrow and so puts Saul the people three companies and so they come in a midst of the camp in a watch of the morning and so they strike Ammon as far as a warming of the day and so it was the remaining ones and so they dispersed and none they remained in them two together.

1Samuel 11:11

And it was on the next day that Saul divided [lit., placed] the people [into] three detachments. They advanced into the midst of the camp [of Ammon] during the morning watch, and they struck down [the sons of] Ammon until the heat of the day so that it was the remaining ones scattered so that no two of them remained together.

Saul divided his men into three detachments and led them that morning into the middle of Ammon’s camp. Then they cut down the men of Ammon from morning until the early afternoon. None of those who escaped did so as a group.

Here’s what others have done with this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so he was from the morrow and so puts Saul the people three companies and so they come in a midst of the camp in a watch of the morning and so they strike Ammon as far as a warming of the day and so it was the remaining ones and so they dispersed and none they remained in them two together.

Septuagint And it came to pass on the morrow, that Saul divided the people into three companies, and they went into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and they struck the sons of Ammon until the day was hot; and it came to pass that those who were left were scattered, and there were not left among them two together.

Significant differences: No significant differences; there is an additional connective in the Hebrew which is not found in any other ancient version.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

NAB On the appointed day, Saul arranged his troops in three companies and invaded the camp during the dawn watch. They slaughtered Ammonites until the heat of the day; by then the survivors were so scattered that no two were left together.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) The next day, Saul divided the troops into three columns; at the morning watch they entered the camp and struck down the Ammonites until the day grew hot. The survivors scattered; no two were left together.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

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

Young’s Updated LT And it comes to pass, on the morrow, that Saul puts the people in three detachments, and they come into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and strike Ammon till the heat of the day; and it comes to pass that those left are scattered, and there have not been left of them two together.

What is the gist of this verse? Saul separates his army into three companies and attacks in such a way as to scatter his opponents—those that he does not kill at first.

1Samuel 11:11a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253

1Samuel 11:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâyâh (הַיָּה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
mâchōrâth (מָחָרָת) [pronounced maw-chuh-RAWTH]	<i>the morrow (the day following a past day), the next day, the following day</i>	feminine singular noun/adverb	Strong's #4283 BDB #564

An oddball thing here is that we have a *short Qâmats*, which looks exactly like a Qâmats to me. This letter is mentioned in Strong's and the "o" pronunciation is found in both Strong's and in The New Englishman's Concordance; however, this must be a rarity, as I don't find it in Mansoor's Hebrew nor is there a different, *short Qâmats* listed on the WordPerfect keyboard. As a result, the pronunciation which I have given this word does not match that found in Strong's (which offers up *mokh-or-aw-thawm'* instead).

With the min preposition, mâchōrâth means *on the morrow, on the next day*.

Translation: [And it was on the next day...](#) You will note how much agreement that we have between the Septuagint's account and Young's translation. That would indicate to us that we have an excellent rendering of this verse. Notice that there is no agreement here with the verb, as they are not together. Here, *to be* means that we are dealing with something which *comes to pass*. The verb *to be* is often put in a different gender than the surrounding nouns in order to stand by itself and not be attached to any nearby noun.

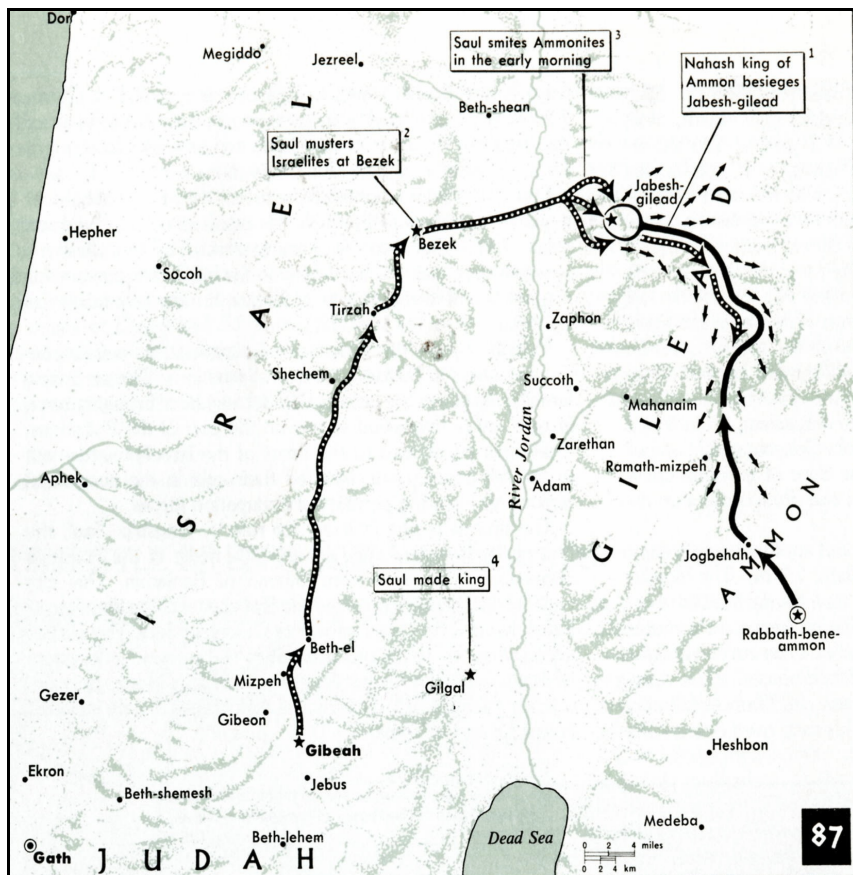
1Samuel 11:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
sîym (סִיַּם) [pronounced seem]; also spelled sûwm (סִיַּם) [pronounced soom]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
Shâ`ûwl (שָׂאוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
`êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
`am (אָם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

1Samuel 11:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
sh ^l ōshâh (שׁלֹשָׁה) [pronounced <i>shiloh-SHAW</i>]	<i>a three, a trio, a triad, a threesome</i>	feminine numeral noun	Strong's #7969 BDB #1025
rô`sh (רֹאשׁ) [pronounced <i>rohsh</i>]	<i>head, top, chief, front, choicest</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #7218 BDB #910

Translation: ...that Saul divided [lit., placed] the people [into] three detachments. The final noun in this portion of the verse is the masculine plural noun rô`sh (רֹאשׁ) [pronounced *roshe*], which means *head, top, chief, front, choicest*. In the plural, rô`sh can mean *divisions* of an army, *detachments, companies, bands*. This gives us: **So it came about on the next day that Saul put the people into three detachments...** When it comes to the actual fight, we are given all of the details in just this one verse. Everything else in this chapter are the events leading up to this battle and the things which followed. Although we are certainly not told everything that occurred, the fact that Saul separated his men into three detachments tells us that there were tactics and organization involved in this victory. Saul is led by the Holy Spirit (as we see in v. 6). However, he does not lead his men out and just tell them to get after it. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, Saul actually organizes them, obviously exhibits leadership skills, and he shows some understanding of the science of battle tactics. It is possible that Saul is following, to some extent, the tactics of Gideon, who also broke his men up into three companies (Judges 7:20). Saul had a lot of men to deal with; separating them into three companies meant that they could strike the camp of the Ammonites on three sides and envelop them. There would be no way for the Ammonites to run.



Sometimes, there is no substitute for a map. This shows the advance of Saul as well as the movement of Nahash, the Ammonite. This was taken from *The MacMillan Bible Atlas*; 3rd Edition; Aharoni, Avi-Yonah, Rainey, and Safrai; MacMillan; ©1993 by Carta; p. 70.

By the way, my assumption would be that the men of Jabesh would have formed a 4th company, and to the Ammonites would have been hit from all sides. This would explain how they could be so scattered by this battle that no two men escaped together.

1Samuel 11:11c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw ⁷ (בּוֹ) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
tâvek ^e (תְּוֶקֶ) [pronounced <i>taw-VEK^e</i>]	<i>midst, among, middle</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8432 BDB #1063
With the bêyth preposition, tâvek ^e can mean <i>in the middle of, in the midst of; into, among</i> .			
machăneh (מַחֲנֶה) [pronounced <i>mah-khuh-NEH</i>]	<i>camp, encampment; an army camp; those who are camped [army, company, people]; the courts [of Jehovah]; the heavenly host</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4264 BDB #334
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
ʿash ^m ûwrâh (אַשְׁמוּרָה) [pronounced <i>ash-moo-RAW</i>]	<i>watch, part of the night, division of time</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #821 BDB #1038
bôqer (בֹּקֶר) [pronounced <i>BOH-ker</i>]	<i>morning</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #1242 BDB #133

Translation: They advanced into the midst of the camp [of Ammon] during the morning watch,... Hebrews set up three watches at night, each four hours long. The morning watch is between 2 am and 6 am. In other words, they attacked in the morning while it was still dark. The idea was surprise. These 3 or 4 companies struck the men of Ammon suddenly and unexpectedly.

1Samuel 11:11d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâkâh (נָכַח) [pronounced <i>naw-KAWH</i>]	<i>to smite, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong #5221 BDB #645
ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84

1Samuel 11:11d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿAmmôwn (עַמּוֹן) [pronounced ʿahm-MOHN]	transliterated <i>Ammon</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5983 BDB #769
In the Aramaic, Septuagint and Syriac codices, we have <i>sons of Ammon</i> instead.			
ʿad (עד) [pronounced ʿahd]	<i>while; until, so long as; even to; even that, so that</i>	conjunction	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
chôm (חם) [pronounced khoum]	<i>heat, hot, warm</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #2527 BDB #328
mâ`aç (מאַץ) [pronounced maw-AHS]	<i>to reject, to despise, to lightly esteem, to refuse</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #3988 BDB #549

Translation: ...and they struck down [the sons of] Ammon until the heat of the day... Or, ...and they struck down [the sons of] Ammon until the warming of the day... My guess is, the companies of Saul hit the Ammonites from all three directions, leaving the area between Jabesh and Nahash's army open. If the army of Nahash tried to escape by going toward Jabesh, the men of Jabesh came out to meet them—but not to surrender.

1Samuel 11:11e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (היה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
shâ`ar (שאר) [pronounced shaw-AHR]	<i>the ones remaining, those remaining, the leftovers, the survivors, the part remaining, the thing remaining, that which remains</i>	masculine plural, Niphal participle with the definite article	Strong's #7604 BDB #983
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
This connective is not found in the Latin, Syriac or Greek. Not enough of this verse remains in the Dead Sea Scrolls to make this determination. However, it is very common to have a wâw consecutive precede a verb, which explains how a scribe may have mistakenly put one in here.			
pûwts (פוט) [pronounced poots]	<i>to break, to dash into pieces; to disperse [sometimes, to disperse themselves; to be dispersed], to scatter; to overflow</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6327 BDB #806

Translation: ...so that it was the remaining ones scattered... The final verb is means *to be dispersed or scattered*. Generally speaking, a masculine plural participle behaves like a noun. It is not philologically in agreement with the verb *to be*, which gives us an incomplete thought. We would expect a nearby verb (like the verb *to disperse*) to complete the thought. My point is, the wâw consecutive is unnecessary to begin a new thought since the old thought was not completed. Owen, Rotherham, the NASB, and young all ignore this additional wâw consecutive, even though they are among the most literal of the translators/translators. I have only one Hebrew Bible; however, Edersheim also indicates that there is a wâw consecutive here. The actual events are not changed. The Israelites did not kill every single Ammonite; there were some who remained, and they scattered.²⁷

1Samuel 11:11f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâ`ar (שָׂרַ) [pronounced <i>shaw-AHR</i>]	<i>to remain, to be left over; survivor (as a participle)</i>	3 rd person plural, Niphal perfect	Strong's #7604 BDB #983
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity; with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #none BDB #88
sh ^e nayim (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced <i>sh^{eh}-NAH-yim</i>]	<i>two (the cardinal number); both, double, twice; second; (the ordinal number); [and with other numbers]: both</i>	masculine plural numeral	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
yachad (יַחַד) [pronounced <i>YAH-kahd</i>]	<i>together, alike, all together; union, junction, mutually, with one another; equally</i>	adverb	Strong's #3162 BDB #403

Translation: ...so that so that no two of them remained together. Alternate renderings: ...and there did not remain in them two together or ...and there were no two of them remaining together. There were survivors, but the destruction of these Ammonites left no men in groups of two or larger. This is because of the way that Saul attacked. His men came in from three sides, not only catching the enemy army off-guard, but causing them to split up in all directions. There was probably a 4th company to march out of Jabesh as well. Surprise and careful tactics are a part of Saul's attack.

Application: God was on the side of the Israelites and it is apparent that God was going to uphold Saul as a general and a political leader. However, this does not mean that Saul should have done any damn thing to win this battle. He used strategy and surprise, extremely important factors in the art of war. We do not shut down our brains or our common sense as believers in Jesus Christ.

There is an important historical addendum to this: the people of Jabesh-gilead will hold King Saul in great esteem from hereon in. Because of this incident, he is a national hero to them and will always be regarded as such. Saul will die at the hands of the Philistines roughly 40 years from now. His body and the bodies of his sons will be hung on the wall of Bethshan in disgrace by the Philistines. Brave men from Jabesh will go retrieve the bodies and burn them in Jabesh, burying the bones also in Jabesh (see 1Sam. 31).

²⁷ Note that this rendering changes the use of the verb *to be* and allows it to be the main verb.

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Saul Is Gracious to His Detractors

And so say the people unto Samuel, “Who the ones saying, ‘Saul reigns over us’? Give the men and we will kill them.”

1Samuel
11:12

The people then said to Samuel, “Who [are] the ones [who] said, ‘Saul will [not] rule over us’? Bring them [to us] and we will [lawfully] execute them.”

The people then said to Samuel, “Who are those who said that Saul will not rule over us? Bring those men to us and we will execute them.”

The various renderings of v. 12 follow:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so say the people unto Samuel, “Who the ones saying, ‘Saul reigns over us’? Give the men and we will kill them.”

Septuagint

And the people said to Samuel, “Who has said that Saul shall not reign over us? Give up the men, and we will put them to death.”

Significant differences:

No significant differences, apart from the negative found in the Greek.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

The Israelite soldiers went to Samuel and demanded, “Where are the men who said they didn’t want Saul to be king? Bring them to us, and we will put them to death!”

The Message

The people came to Samuel then and said, “Where are those men who said, ‘Saul is not fit to rule over us’? Hand them over. We’ll kill them!”

Of the modern, nonliteral translations that I will quote, I might quote the Contemporary English Version more than the rest. They tend to have a different slant on things because they include a great many words which are not there (ostensibly to make the Bible an easier read). In this verse, for example, we have *Israelite soldiers* going to Samuel, whereas every literal rendering has *the people* going to Samuel. What they have done is interpreted the situation, and in this case, I believe appropriately. Throughout this chapter, those who were gathered to Saul to fight in battle are referred to as *people* and not as soldiers. Israel did not have a standing army. Even though Saul was Commander-in-Chief, there were no soldiers, per se, to be Commander-in-Chief over. Then men which Saul drafted were citizen-soldiers, more citizen than soldier at the beginning. However, what appears to have occurred is that these men got a taste of killing, they destroyed the enemy, and they were unable to completely turn it off. They respected Saul and his leadership, recalled that he had some vocal opposition, and now volunteered to remove his opposition from Israel. My point being is that CEV’s take on this verse is probably very accurate (*The Israelite soldiers went to Samuel and demanded, “Where are the men who said they didn’t want Saul to be king? Bring them to us, and we will put them to death!”*). Those who went to war against the Ammonites were certainly the ones who approached Samuel, offering to kill Saul’s vocal opposition, mentioned in 1Sam. 10:27.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God’s Word™

Then the people asked Samuel, “Who said that Saul shouldn’t rule us? Let us have them, and we’ll kill them.”

JPS (Tanakh)

The people then said to Samuel, “Who was it said, ‘Shall Saul be king over us?’ Hand the men over and we will put them to death!”

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB Then the people said to Samuel, “Who is he that said, ‘Shall Saul reign over us?’ Bring [lit., give] the men, that we may put them to death.”
Young’s Updated LT And the people say unto Samuel, “Who is he that says, ‘Saul doth reign over us!’ Give up the men and we put them to death.”

What is the gist of this verse? The men in Saul’s army recall the vocal opposition which Saul received and they offer to go find these men and kill them.

1Samuel 11:12a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #559 BDB #55
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced ǵahm]	people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong’s #5971 BDB #766
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced e]	unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong’s #413 BDB #39
Sh ^e mûwʿêl (שִׁמוֹעַל) [pronounced sh ^e -moo-ALE]	which means heard of El; it is transliterated Samuel	proper masculine noun	Strong’s #8050 BDB #1028

Translation: The people then said to Samuel,... These would be the same people who just fought against the Ammonites—Saul’s citizen army.

1Samuel 11:12b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
mîy (מִי) [pronounced mee]	who, whom; occasionally rendered how, in what way	pronominal interrogative	Strong’s #4310 BDB #566
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	saying, speaking, saying [to oneself], thinking	Qal active participle with the definite article	Strong’s #559 BDB #55
Shâʿûwl (שָׁאוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated Saul; it means asked for	masculine proper noun	Strong’s #7586 BDB #982
mâlak ^e (מָלַךְ) [pronounced maw-LAHK ^e]	to reign, to become king or queen	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #4427 BDB #573

1Samuel 11:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 1 st person plural suffix	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752

Translation:...“Who [are] the ones [who] said, ‘Saul will [not] rule over us’? ... Literally, this reads: “Who [are] the ones saying, ‘Saul will reign over us’?” Obviously, this is something where inflection plays a major part. In the English, it sounds as though the people want to talk to those who support Saul for king. However, they want those who belittled Saul as king over Israel. Notice that the CEV, God’s Word™ and the Septuagint all insert a negative to better get this idea across, even though there is no negative in the Hebrew.²⁸

1Samuel 11:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nāthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal? imperative	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
I am confused by the spelling of this verb; I should check a couple other places thru the concordance. Owen lists this as an imperative, but not as a Qal.			
ʾānāsīym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced <i>uh-NAW-seem</i>]; also spelled ʾīyshīym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced <i>ee-SHEEM</i>]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #376 BDB #35
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mūwth (מָוַת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i>]	<i>to kill, to cause to die, to put to death, to execute</i>	1 st person plural, Hiphil imperfect with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

Translation: ...Bring them [to us] and we will [lawfully] execute them.” Or, “Give them [to us] and we will put them to death.” As the saying goes, they would get a fair trial and then they’d be hung from the nearest tree. I have mentioned parallels with regards to this portion of Samuel; we also have a parallel to a parable spoken by our Lord, many years later. The last words of the parable are spoken by a nobleman, who says, “But these enemies of mine who did not want me to reign over them—bring them here and slay them in my presence.” (Luke 19:27). This was simply an ancient world way of dealing with one’s opposition (or, actually, it is a tactic used by many rulers throughout history, ancient and modern). Saul, however, was going to be more gracious.

Now, seeing that these are the final words of Jesus in a parable, I should go on a tangent here and explain this parable. I would not want you to be elected to a high office and then go out and execute all of your enemies.

²⁸ The Aramaic and Syriac codices also include the negative.

The Nobleman who Goes to Foreign Country and Leaves His Servants in Charge

First the parable: As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. He said therefore, "A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten coins, and said to them, 'Engage in business until I come.' But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business. The first came before him, saying, 'Lord, your coin has made ten coins more.' And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.' And the second came, saying, 'Lord, your coin has made five coins.' And he said to him, 'And you are to be over five cities.' Then another came, saying, 'Lord, here is your coin, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' He said to him, 'I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the coin from him, and give it to the one who has the ten coins.' And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten coins!' 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.'" (Luke 19:11–27).

This is a parable of about the Kingdom of God, and it speaks of a nobleman who goes to a far country and leaves his servants in charge. He leaves them each some money. When he returns to his country, the servants who made money are praised and given a number of cities to rule over commensurate with the investment return that they received. There was one servant who hid the money, knowing that his master was an exacting master; and he shows his master the amount of money equal to what he was entrusted with. The master execrates this servant and gives the money to another servant who showed an increase. Then, this master kills all of his enemies who did not want him to rule over them. Now, this parable is in accordance to the customs of that day (and it is in line with the customs of some countries today as well). This does not mean that rulers everywhere are being encouraged here to destroy their opposition; it simply reflects the culture of that time period.

To explain the parable: Jesus is the master or nobleman who goes to a foreign country and leaves His servants in charge. The place which He leaves is planet earth when He ascended into heaven (the foreign country). We are His servants left here on this earth. The money He leaves us are His spiritual operating assets. The increase on the money are converts, as well as the simple functioning of these gifts (not every person is an evangelist along the lines of Billy Graham). In some cases, this will involve prayer; in others, giving money; in others, our function in the church or in the world as per our spiritual gift or gifts. The servant who just kept what he had without any increase is a person with divine operating assets, yet never uses them. This is how many Christians function—they lose the filling of the Holy Spirit on day one of their new spiritual life and never regain it. Therefore, their spiritual life flatlines. They might go to a church, they might pray and they might give money, but if they never get back into fellowship, then they are producing nothing, getting no return on the money which Jesus Christ has left them.

The final statement is "Bring those who are My enemies, who did not want Me to rule, and slaughter them before Me." There are those who do not believe in Jesus Christ; who do not want Him to rule over them when He returns; all of those men will be tossed into the Lake of Fire—this is the fate of all unbelievers.

A parable is a simply, easy to understand story which has a second deeper meaning which is to be understood. When reading a parable, realize that sometimes it is a reflection of the culture of that time and that, on the surface, it does not necessarily tell us what we ought to be doing in our culture. In this case, those who assume power are not being encouraged to wipe out their political enemies. You must look at the meaning of the parable and take your guidance from the meaning of the parable rather than from the basic story of the parable. In the case of this parable, it encourages believers to make use of the time and gifts which God has given them; and it warns unbelievers that, when Jesus returns, death and hell awaits them.

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And so says Saul, “None put to death a man in the day the this for the day has done deliverance Y^ehowah in Israel.”

1Samuel
11:13

But Saul said, “No man will be put to death in this day for today Y^ehowah has brought deliverance to Israel.”

But Saul replied, “No one will be executed on this day, for today Jehovah has accomplished our deliverance in Israel.”

First, here is how others have rendered this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so says Saul, “None put to death a man in the day the this for the day has done deliverance Y ^e howah in Israel.”
Septuagint	And Saul said, “No man will die this day, for today the Lord has wrought deliverance in Israel.”

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	“No you won’t!” Saul told them, “The LORD rescued Israel today, and no one will be put to death.”
<i>The Message</i>	But Saul said, “Nobody is going to be executed this day. This is the day GOD saved Israel!
NLT	But Saul replied, “No one will be executed today, for today the LORD has rescued Israel!”
REB	But Saul said, ‘No man is to be put to death on a day when the LORD has won such a victory in Israel.’

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God’s Word</i> TM	But Saul said, “No one will be killed today, because today the LORD saved Israel.”
JPS (Tanakh)	But Saul replied, “No man shall be put to death this day! For this day the LORD has brought victory to Israel.”

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	But Saul said, “Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the LORD has accomplished deliverance in Israel.”
<i>Young’s Updated LT</i>	And Saul says, “There is no man put to death on this day, for today has Jehovah wrought salvation in Israel.”

What is the gist of this verse? Saul refuses to kill his detractors and acknowledges that Jehovah Elohim has delivered Israel.

1Samuel 11:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Shâ'ûwl (שׂוֹאֵל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i>]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i>]	<i>to be executed, to be killed, to be assassinated</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hophal imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i>]	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article)</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i>]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective with the definite article	Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260

The bēyth preposition, yôwm and hûw (with definite articles) mean *in this day, on this day*.

Translation: But Saul said, "No man will be put to death in this day... Like the rest of this chapter, this verse is easy to translate. A slight alternative rendering would be: But Saul said, "No man will be executed this day." The people still go to Samuel at times, but now Saul is in charge, so he fields their demands. These men went to Samuel to execute Saul's detractors; however, Saul tells them it is not going to happen.

1Samuel 11:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i>]	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article)</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

1Samuel 11:13b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿāsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
t ^e shûw'âh (תְּשׁוּבָה) [pronounced t ^e -shoo-GAW]	<i>deliverance, salvation</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8668 BDB #448
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
Yis ^e râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

Translation: ...for today Y^ehowah has brought deliverance to Israel.” In the alternative: [deliverance in Israel.](#)” Saul, early on in his life, was honorable, brave, magnanimous, and tolerant. We will, as the history of Israel unfolds, find several kings who destroy their opposition (as we have seen in contemporary history). Saul, riding this great wave of popularity, could have easily executed anyone who verbally opposed him; however, he chooses not to, focusing instead on the great deliverance brought to Israel by God. This verse will no doubt rekindle the debate on whether or not Saul was saved.

There are three instances in this chapter which make it appear that Saul has been studying Scripture. One of the laws laid down by Moses was that a king was to make his own copy of Scripture (he was to actually write it out himself), and study it. This leads us to ask,...

Has Saul Been Studying Scripture?		
Judges 19:29	The Levite cuts up his mistress and sends pieces of her body to the twelve tribes of Israel.	Saul cuts up some oxen and sends their pieces throughout Israel.
Judges 7:16, 20	Gideon divides his men into three companies prior to attacking Midian.	Saul divides the Israelites into three companies before attacking Ammon.
Ex. 14:13	When Pharaoh had Moses and the Israelites trapped with their backs against the sea, Moses said to the people, “Stand by and see the deliverance of Jehovah, which He will accomplish for you today.”	Saul says to his people, “Today, Jehovah has accomplished deliverance in Israel.”

Based upon this, if I were a betting man, I would bet that Saul has been studying Scripture. What he says and does is indicative of a man who tries to imitate what has happened before. What he does is successful. This indicates that, for the time being, that Saul is the right person for the job.

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Israel Recognizes Saul as King in Gilgal

And so says Samuel unto the people, “Come and let us go the Gilgal and we will renew there the kingdom.”

1Samuel
11:14

Then Samuel said to the people, “Come and let us go to Gilgal and we will inaugurate [or, restore] the monarchy there.”

Then Samuel said to the troops, “Let us gather at Gilgal and inaugurate the monarchy there.”

First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so says Samuel unto the people, “Come and let us go the Gilgal and we will renew there the kingdom.”

Septuagint And Samuel spoke to the people, Saying, “Let us go to Galgala, and there renew the kingdom.”

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV “Come on!” Samuel said, “Let’s go to Gilgal and make an agreement that Saul will continue to be our king.”

NLT Then Samuel said to the people, “Come, let us all go to Gilgal to reaffirm Saul’s kingship.”

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God’s Word™ Samuel told the troops, “Come, let’s go to Gilgal and there acknowledge [Saul’s] kingship.”

JPS (Tanakh) Samuel said to the people, “Come, let us go to Gilgal and there inaugurate the monarchy.”

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB Then Samuel said to the people, “Come and let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there.”

Young’s Updated LT And Samuel says unto the people, “Come and we go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there;”...

What is the gist of this verse? Samuel tells the people to regather in Gilgal, and the kingdom of Israel would be renewed there.

1Samuel 11:14a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (1) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253

1Samuel 11:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Sh ^e mûw'êl (שֵׁמוֹנִי אֵל) [pronounced sh ^e -moo-ALE]	which means <i>heard of El</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eʃ]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'am (אָמ) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

Translation: *Then Samuel said to the people...* Don't misunderstand what is going on here. Samuel is not trying to hold onto his power nor is he threatening Saul's authority. Recall that, at the end of 1Sam. 7, it sounded as if Samuel was sounding his swan song. Therefore, there is no professional jealousy here; there is no power grab. Samuel is simply telling the people that they would go to Gilgal, the first camp of the Israelites after crossing the Jordan (well, maybe...), and celebrate Israel's victory, as well as do obeisance to God.

1Samuel 11:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>go, come, depart, walk; advance</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	1 st person plural, Qal imperfect with the voluntative hê	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
Gil ^e gâl (גִּלְגָּל) [pronounced gil ^e -GAWL]	<i>sacred circle of stones and is transliterated Gilgal</i>	proper noun, location with the definite article	Strong's #1537 BDB #166

Translation: *...“Come and let us go to Gilgal...* This is likely the city Gilgal which is near Jericho and likely the same Gilgal which was on Samuel's route (1Sam. 7:16). Even if these are the same *Gilgal*, we then need to determine which Gilgal it is that we are speaking of. Keil and Delitzsch suggest two possibilities: there is the Gilgal located in the valley of the Jordan, where Israel crossed over into the land for the first time; and there is the Gilgal (or, *Jiljilia*) which is on higher ground southwest of Shiloh. Keil and Delitzsch lean toward the latter because (1) they are said *to go* to Gilgal, rather than *to go down* to Gilgal. The latter use would have implied that we would be going to the Gilgal which is a lower elevation. (2) Jiljilia is a hop, skip and a jump from Jabesh-gilead, whereas

lower Gilgal is not.²⁹ One could as easily argue that, we should find *to go up to Gilgal* in this verse, so that this would indicate that we are moving to higher ground.

You will recall the prophecies which Samuel made, one of which appeared to indicate that Saul would go to Gilgal before him and waiting in Gilgal for seven days (1Sam. 10:8). It could appear that this is a fulfillment of that. Samuel had prophesied three meetings for Saul in his immediate future in that context. Then he spoke of going to Gilgal. *“And you will go down before me to Gilgal; and listen, I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. You will wait seven day until I come to you and show you what you should do.”* (1Sam. 10:8). When we get to 1Sam. 13:8, we will reopen this and examine it in great detail. However, until then, recognize simply that this is not a prophecy as we find in 1Sam. 10:2–6 (which prophecies are closed out by v. 7), but a directive which apparently became a God-commanded practice that Saul was to follow.

What has occupied all of Israel’s male population has been this war with the Ammonites that we have been studying. Therefore, there is no reason for Saul to head to Gilgal with the male population and for Samuel to head on over there within seven days. The conflict with the Ammonites precludes this. However, Saul at this point has successfully beaten down the Ammonites; the people of Israel now recognize him as a reasonable candidate for king. So now, as directed by Samuel several months previous, Saul will head on over to Gilgal and Samuel will meet up with him there and guide him from there. Samuel will be, in fact, the keynote speaker at Saul’s inauguration (see 1Sam. 12:1) to this renewal of the kingdom.

What most people find confusing in Samuel’s original prophecy to Saul is that he tells Saul about three meetings that he will have during the next day, and then he tells Saul about going to Gilgal and waiting seven days. What we assume is that these events will all occur one right after the other. As you will recall in our lengthy discussion of that verse that (1) there is no reason to suppose that this fourth event will immediately follow the first three and (2) there is no reason to suppose that Samuel only told Saul about four future events. (3) Finally, we should not confuse this *directive* with prophecy, as it is clearly separated from the prophecies.

I am going to assume that we are going to Gilgal of the Jordan, and let me explain why:

Why Samuel Suggests that all Israel go to Gilgal at this Point

1. The soldiers are all at Jabesh Gilead, which is the scene of a great battle. Everywhere they look are dead soldiers and blood.
2. There is no altar in Jabesh.
3. A convocation of Israel will be called; this will possibly include some women. They need to be shielded from the battle site.
4. Gilgal is a logical place to go as Gilgal was the first camp of Israel after crossing the Jordan River into the Land of Promise.
5. Samuel is setting up a precedent with regards to Saul, Israel and himself. Large gatherings of the Israel citizenry will be at Gilgal for awhile. This needs to be firmly in Saul’s mind, as it will be a part of what Samuel has prophesied to him.
6. Samuel, awhile ago, not only told Saul what would happen to him in the near future, but also told him what would happen in the more distant future. On the day after he was privately anointed at the home of Samuel, Saul left to return home and ran into three sets of people just as Samuel told him that he would. Well, Samuel also told him about Gilgal. Therefore, for certain matters and certain meetings involving Saul, Samuel and the men of Israel, they were to customarily meet in Gilgal.
7. Gilgal is a nice central location for Israel—we have eastern Israel, northern Israel and Judah, and the city of Gilgal is right in the middle.
8. Samuel already has an altar set up in Gilgal.

Despite Keil and Delitzsch generally excellent analysis, these points all indicate that Gilgal by the Jordan is the most reasonable location for this assembly.

²⁹ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 440.

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1Samuel 11:14c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
châdash (חָדַשׁ) [pronounced <i>khaw-DAHSH</i>]	<i>to cut and to polish [a sword]; to renew or restore [a building]; to renew</i>	1 st person plural, Piel imperfect	Strong's #2318 BDB #293
shâm (שָׁמָּה) [pronounced <i>shawm</i>]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
m ^e lûwkâh (מְלוּכָה) [pronounced <i>m^eloo-KAW</i>]	<i>kingdom, kingship, kingly office, monarchy, royalty</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4410 BDB #574

Translation: ...and we will inaugurate [or, restore] the monarchy there.” Or, “...and we will renew the kingdom there.” The idea of renewal here is actually twofold: (1) Saul has been twice recognized as the king of Israel, once in a private ceremony and once in a public ceremony, and since then, nothing with regards to the monarchy has happened. Saul did not establish a power base anywhere; he did not tax; he did not set up a palace or a capital city; he did not hire soldiers to guard him and to enforce the laws (although some soldiers did choose to attach themselves to Saul). So, even though a kingdom was established, more or less, nothing since then has been done. Therefore, this kingdom must be established. (2) However, more importantly, Israel had moved away from God, and Samuel was re-establishing ties between God and Israel. The NIV Study Bible combines these two, explaining: *Samuel calls for an assembly to restore the covenant relationship between the Lord and his people. He wants to inaugurate Saul's rule in a manner demonstrating that the continued rule of the Lord as Israel's Great King is in no way diminished or violated in the new era of the monarchy.*³⁰

As to the verb *to renew*; the idea is, Israel had fallen into disrepair. Samuel was going through an extended retirement (which he would never really have); his sons were losers who could not be depended upon; Israel was threatened militarily, and had no standing army to meet this threat; and Israel had fallen on hard times, spiritually speaking. Therefore, with the changes which were taking place, along with Israel's victory because of Jesus Christ, it was time for them to celebrate God's deliverance and the changes in Israel. Israel is going from being a theocracy to being a monarchy—this is a significant change and should be marked by a celebration.

Gilgal appears to be a spiritual center to Israel and an appropriate place for Israel to renew her bond to Jehovah God. It was Gilgal where Israel first stepped onto the west side of the Jordan River (Joshua 4). It was here where Israel paused prior to the invasion of the land given them by God. It was here that Israel's men were circumcised and observed their first Passover west of the Jordan (Joshua 5:1–11). And it was to Gilgal that Joshua often returned to for a respite (Joshua 10:6). Therefore, this appears to be the most logical place for Israel to go for a spiritual renewal.

³⁰ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 387.

And so they go all the people the Gilgal and so they cause to make king there Saul to faces of Y^ehowah in the Gilgal. And so they slaughter there slaughterings of peace offerings to faces of Y^ehowah and so rejoice there Saul and all men of Israel unto greatly.

1Samuel
11:15

So all the people went to Gilgal and there they made Saul king in Gilgal in the sight of Y^ehowah. Then they slaughtered there sacrificial animals of peace before Y^ehowah and Saul rejoiced there along with all the men of Israel to a great degree.

So all of the people went to Gilgal and there in Gilgal they made Saul king in the sight of Jehovah. Then they slaughtered sacrificial animals—peace offerings—to Jehovah and Saul, along with all the men of Israel, held a great celebration there.

Although not a difficult verse, this is probably the most difficult of the fifteen verses found in this chapter. Here is what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so they go all the people the Gilgal and so they cause to make king there Saul to faces of Y^ehowah in the Gilgal. And so they slaughter there slaughterings of peace offerings to faces of Y^ehowah and so rejoice there Saul and all men of Israel unto greatly.

Septuagint

And all the people went to Galgala, and Samuel anointed Saul there to be king before the Lord in Galgala, and there he offered meat-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord; and Samuel and all Israel rejoiced exceedingly.

Significant differences:

The people make Saul king in the MT; Samuel anoints Saul in the LXX. We may reasonably assume that both took place. Furthermore, *Samuel* and the people of Israel are said to rejoice rather than *Saul* and the people. As is generally the case, the Latin and Syriac are in agreement with the Hebrew.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

TEV Everyone went to the place of worship of Gilgal, where they agreed that Saul would be their king. Saul and the people sacrificed animals to ask for the LORD's blessing, and they had a big celebration.

NLT So they went to Gilgal, and in a solemn ceremony before the LORD they crowned him king. Then they offered peace offerings to the LORD, and Saul and all the Israelites were very happy.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

Then all the troops went to Gilgal, and there in the presence, they confirmed Saul as their king. There they sacrificed fellowship offerings to the LORD. Saul and all of Israel's soldiers celebrated.

JPS (Tanakh)

So all the people went to Gilgal, and there at Gilgal they declared Saul king before the LORD. They offered sacrifices of well-being there before the LORD; and Saul and all the men of Israel held a great celebration there.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB

So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal. There they also offered sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

Young's Updated LT

...and all the people go to Gilgal, and cause Saul to reign there before Jehovah in Gilgal, and sacrifice there sacrifices of peace-offerings before Jehovah, and there Saul rejoices—and all the one of Israel—very greatly.

What is the gist of this verse? The people go to Gilgal and officially recognize Saul as king. In addition, they offer up sacrifices and peace offerings to God. Saul and the men of Israel rejoice.

1Samuel 11:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
'am (אָם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
Gil ^e gâl (גִּלְגַּל) [pronounced <i>gil^e-GAWL</i>]	<i>sacred circle of stones and is transliterated Gilgal</i>	proper noun, location with the definite article	Strong's #1537 BDB #166

Translation: *So all the people went to Gilgal...* Previously, *the people* referred to the citizen-soldiers; here, it is unclear whether it refers to the male citizenry of Israel or to the soldiers. Since Saul made it clear that everyone had better show up to fight this war, we are still probably dealing with the citizen-soldiers.

Israel tends to gather in centrally-located areas (e.g., Shiloh or Mizpah) and that Gilgal qualifies as a centrally-located city. Also, as previously discussed, it is a good choice for a place to renew the kingdom of Israel.

1Samuel 11:15b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
mâlak ^e (מָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>maw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to make king, to cause to reign, to cause to rule over</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #4427 BDB #573
In the Greek, Samuel is anointing Saul as king.			
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced <i>shawm</i>]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027

1Samuel 11:15b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Shâ`ûwl (שׂוּאָל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ^l)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, they mean <i>upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i> . When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning <i>in the judgment of</i> .			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
Gil ^e gâl (גִּלְגָּל) [pronounced gil ^e -GAWL]	<i>sacred circle of stones and is transliterated Gilgal</i>	proper noun, location with the definite article	Strong's #1537 BDB #166

Translation: ...and there they made Saul king in Gilgal in the sight of Y^ehowah. In the Greek, this is Samuel anointing Saul as king over Israel. In any case, Saul has complete popular support now, so it is reasonable for him to assume authority over Israel. At this point, he will formally assume the duties and responsibilities of his office. This is obviously more than Samuel privately anointing Saul and more than Samuel telling the people, "Okay, you asked for him—here's your king." At that time, Samuel wrote down some ordinances related to being king over Israel, but Saul did not actually assume the reigns of government.

1Samuel 11:15c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
zâbach (זָבַח) [pronounced zaw ^b -VAHKH]	<i>to slaughter [usually an animal for sacrifice]</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2076 BDB #256
This verb is in the singular in the Greek, indicating that it is Samuel offering these sacrifices.			
zebach (זָבַח) [pronounced ZEH ^b -vakh]	<i>slaughtered animal [used in a sacrificial offering], slaughter, sacrifice, slaughtering, sacrificial animal</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #2077 BDB #257

1Samuel 11:15c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shelem (שָׁלֵם) [pronounced SHEH-lem]	<i>peace-offerings, sacrifice for alliance or friendship</i>	masculine plural adjective which can act as a noun	Strong's #8002 BDB #1023
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ʿ)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, they mean <i>upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i> . When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning <i>in the judgment of</i> .			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: Then they slaughtered there sacrificial animals of peace before Y^ehowah... The people of Israel reaffirm their connection to their God. See Lev. 7:38 where we cover the **Doctrine of the Various Levitical Offerings**. A peace offering refers to peace with God and an alliance with Him. We have this peace with Him and this alliance with Him through the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ. Along with this peace and alliance comes prosperity (the appropriate ceremonial Scripture is Lev. 3:1–17 7:11–34 22:21–23). CEV: *People who offered these sacrifices were allowed to eat most of the meat, and they could invite others to share it with them.*³¹

1Samuel 11:15d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
sâmach (שמח) [pronounced saw-MAHKH]	<i>to rejoice, to be glad, to be joyful, to be merry</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8055 BDB #970
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced shawm]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
Shâ'ûwl (שָׂאוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
This is <i>Samuel</i> in the Greek.			
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

³¹ *The Promise* (The Contemporary English Version); Thomas Nelson Publishers; ©1995; p. 299.

1Samuel 11:15d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of, all; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʾānāšîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced <i>uh-NAW-seem</i>]; also spelled ʾīyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced <i>ee-SHEEM</i>]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35
Yisʿrāʾēl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i>]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
ʿad (עַד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i>]	<i>while, so long as; to, even to [some certain limit]; even to [unto], unto; as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
ʿad (עַד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i>]	<i>while; until, so long as; even to; even that, so that</i>	conjunction	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
mʿōd (מְּוֹד) [pronounced <i>mʿ-ODE</i>]	<i>exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very</i>	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547

The combination of this preposition and the adjective gādōwl appears to result in a superlative, even though there is no superlative in the Hebrew, per se.

Translation: ...and Saul rejoiced there along with all the men of Israel to a great degree. There were several reasons for this convocation. (1) The Israelites had just defeated the Ammonites under Saul, so this victory was being celebrated. (2) Saul received recognition as a great military leader, and thus his royal position was recognized as well. (3) Sacrifices to God were offered, as Jehovah, God of Israel, is in control of all. (4) Finally, Samuel will deliver a message concerning the kingship over Israel, which must be heard by Israel and by Saul.

Saul and the men of Israel were on top of the world. They had just unequivocally defeated their enemies the Ammonites; Saul had shown himself to be a great leader in war, which was one of the most important things to the people of Israel with reference to a king. The elders had requested that God give them a king, and they now had a king, and a king whom they all approved of, a king who had been tested in battle. They felt connected to God and they celebrated all of this by sacrificing animals to God in Gilgal.

In the next chapter, we will examine the address of Samuel to the people of Israel at Gilgal.