

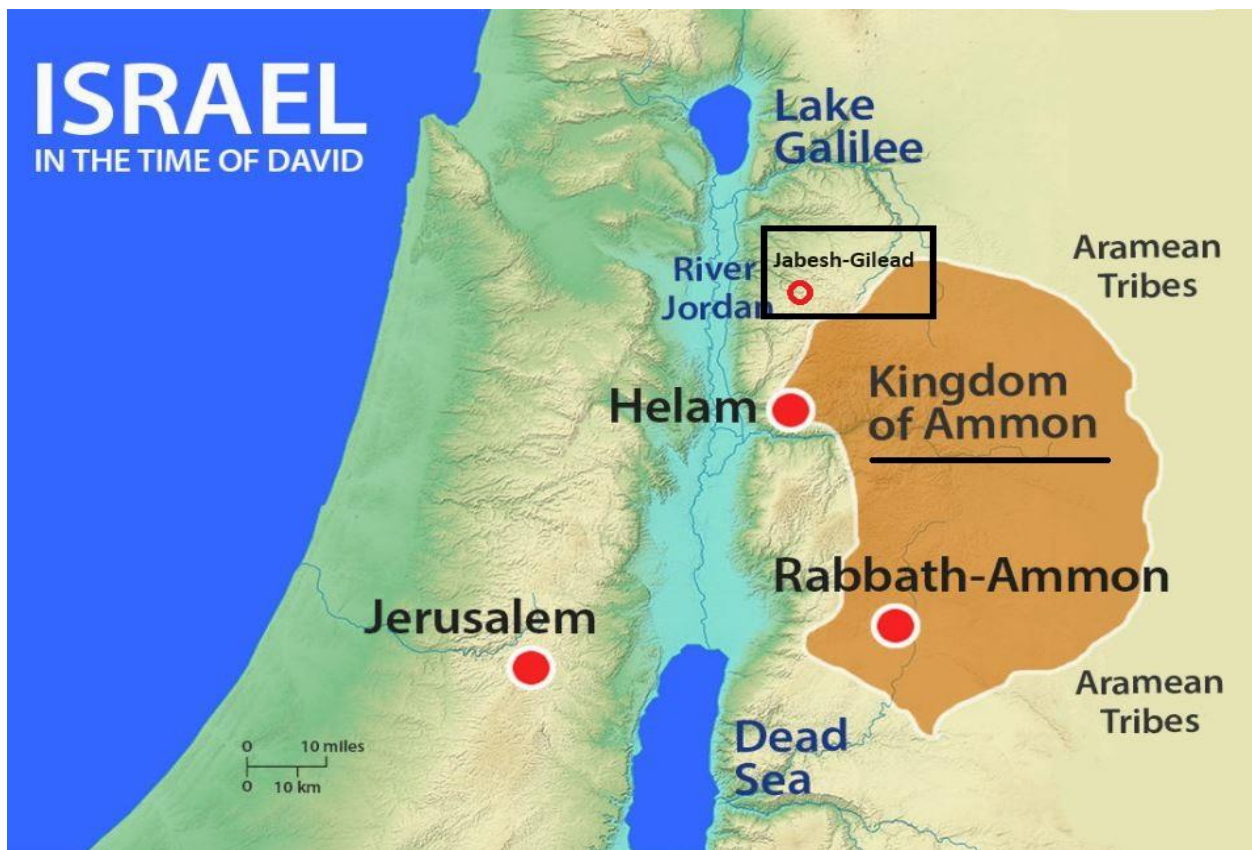
1st Samuel 11

Verses 1 - 4

Now Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh-gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, “Make a covenant with us and we will serve you.” ² 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, and *thereby* I will inflict a disgrace on all Israel.” ³ So the elders of Jabesh said to him, “Allow us seven days to send messengers throughout the territory of Israel. Then, if there is no one to save us, we will come out to you.” ⁴ Then the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and spoke *these* words in the hearing of the people, and all the people raised their voices and wept.

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See Map 1105 Ammon & Jabesh-Gilead



The Ammonites are the descendants of Lot. The younger daughter gave birth to a boy named Ben-Ammi; the Ammonites.

The town of Jabesh-gilead was part of the tribe of East Manasseh.

² 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, and *thereby I will inflict a disgrace on all Israel.*”

Jephthah had fought the Ammonites in Judges 11, about 44 years earlier (1094 BC), and “he inflicted a very great defeat on them”. Apparently Nahash wanted to even the score and was in no mood to give Israel a way out of this conflict.

³ So the elders of Jabesh said to him, “Allow us seven days to send messengers throughout the territory of Israel. Then, if there is no one to save us, we will come out to you.”

It seems odd that Nahash allowed the elders request, so one can only guess that this was part of the code of warfare at that time in history.

⁴ Then the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and spoke *these* words in the hearing of the people, and all the people raised their voices and wept.

The people knew that this war with Ammon could not be averted and all of Israel had a responsibility to fight against them.

Verses 5 - 8

⁵ Now behold, Saul was coming from the field behind the oxen, and Saul said, “What is *the matter* with the people that they weep?” So they reported to him the words of the men of Jabesh. ⁶ Then the Spirit of God rushed upon Saul when he heard these words, and he became very angry. ⁷ He then 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, the same shall be done to his oxen.” Then the dread of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out as one person. ⁸ He counted them in Bezek; and the sons of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah, thirty thousand.

⁵ Now behold, Saul was coming from the field behind the oxen, and Saul said, “What is *the matter* with the people that they weep?” So they reported to him the words of the men of Jabesh.

Saul was coming in from the field at his home (no palace) where he had been plowing.

⁶ Then the Spirit of God rushed upon Saul when he heard these words, and he became very angry.

The Judges of Israel often had the same experience. This was Gods way of ensuring the victory for Israel.

⁷ He then 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, the same shall be done to his oxen.” Then the dread of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out as one person.

This was the first time that Saul would be leading Israel into battle and he sent a message to all of Israel that could not be any clearer. Saul also wisely invoked the authority of the prophet Samuel in his summons to Israel.

⁸ He counted them in Bezek; and the sons of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah, thirty thousand.

See chart 1110

Number of troops in Israel

Scripture	Year	Event	Troops	Men killed
Joshua 6	1406 BC	Enter Canaan	600,000	
Joshua 6 - 12	1406 to 1400	Takeover of Canaan		- 175,000
Judges 20	1350	Beginning of Judges	425,000	
Judges 20	1350	Civil war with Benjamin		- 65,000
1 Sam 4	1070	War with the Philistines	360,000	
1 Sam 4	1070	Philistines destroy Shiloh		- 34,000
1 Sam 11	1050	Saul is King	330,000	

Verses 9 - 11

⁹ They said to the messengers who had come, “This is what you shall say to the men of Jabesh-gilead: ‘Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, you will be saved.’” So the messengers went and told the men of Jabesh; and they rejoiced. ¹⁰ Then the men of Jabesh said, “Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you may do to us whatever seems good to you.” ¹¹ The next morning Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp at the morning watch, and struck and killed the Ammonites until the heat of the day. And those who survived scattered, so that no two of them were left together.

⁹ They said to the messengers who had come, “This is what you shall say to the men of Jabesh-gilead: ‘Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, you will be saved.’”

This is exactly what happened. The attack from Saul and his men was very early and the battle was over before the heat of the day.

¹⁰ Then the men of Jabesh said, “Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you may do to us whatever seems good to you.”

The message the men of Jabesh gave to Nahash was designed to make him think that he would not encounter any resistance.

¹¹ The next morning Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp at the morning watch, and struck and killed the Ammonites until the heat of the day. And those who survived scattered, so that no two of them were left together.

We are not told why Saul put the men into 3 groups but one might assume it was done this way to ensure that the enemy was completely surrounded.

The morning watch was between 2 and 6am. This way most of the Ammonites would still be asleep and caught off guard.

The victory was complete and those that did survive were dispersed in such a way that not even a small band of them were likely to regroup in order to make an attack.

Verses 12 - 15

¹² Then the people said to Samuel, “Who is he that said, ‘Shall Saul reign over us?’ Bring the men, so that we may put them to death!” ¹³ But Saul said, “Not a single person shall be put to death this day, for today the Lord has brought about victory in Israel.” ¹⁴ Then Samuel said to the people, “Come, and let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there.” ¹⁵ So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal. There they also offered sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

¹⁴ Then Samuel said to the people, “Come, and let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there.” ¹⁵ So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal.

At Mizpah Saul was recognized as king, but there were some who objected to his ability to lead Israel in battle. This time there were no objections and the people offered peace offerings which made it a much more joyful occasion.