

General Church Education



Saul Proves Himself and Is Accepted as King

1 Samuel 11, 12

Lesson 6

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 5: The Lord Is King of Kings

For ages 10-11

Saul Proves Himself and Is Accepted as King

1 Samuel 11, 12

Teacher Background

Saul proved he would be a good ruler before being crowned king by rescuing the people of Jabesh-Gilead. When the Ammonites threatened to attack Jabesh-Gilead, the inhabitants tried to forge a treaty with them instead of fighting. The Ammonites said they would agree, but would put out their right eyes. The people of Jabesh-Gilead begged Saul for help. Saul roused more than 300,000 people to fight by cutting up a yoke of oxen and sending the pieces throughout Israel. Saul skillfully decimated Ammon by dividing his force into three companies. Saul was then made king in Gilgal. Samuel was angry that Israel wanted a king. He asked the Lord for thunder and rain so Israel would remember to obey Him.

Saul's war against Ammon represents a spiritual battle. The land of Canaan represents heavenly life. Jabesh-Gilead was positioned east of the Jordan River. As a city outside Canaan, it represents more external states. External states are not strong enough to withstand the attack of false ideas that blind our ability to see and do what is really right and good. In this situation people cannot defend themselves against being led into evil.

Focus Points

- Saul saved the people of Jabesh-Gilead from the Ammonites.
- Samuel presented Saul as Israel's king.
- Samuel warned the people of the consequences of disobeying the Lord.

Readings from the Writings

“Each nation with which the Children of Israel waged war signified some particular kind of evil.” *Divine Providence* 251

“The Ammonites' were people with whom good was adulterated and truth falsified through their contempt for, rejection of, and at length total aversion to all interior things.” *Arcana Coelestia* 2468

“The eye corresponds to faith, the left eye to the truth of faith, and the right eye to the good of faith” *Arcana Coelestia* 8910

“Temptations or trials are nothing but battles against evils and falsities, and because evils and falsities originate from hell, they are also battles against hell. Moreover, present in people who are undergoing spiritual trials are evil spirits from hell, who induce those trials. No one is aware that it is evil spirits inducing the temptations or trials.” *Doctrine of the Lord* 33

Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers students the following choices:

Recitation

Learn the Lord's Word by heart.

“Only fear the Lord,
and serve Him in truth with all your heart;
For consider what great things He has done for you.” (1 Samuel 12:24)

Projects and Activities (see back for answers)

Multiple Choice

Complete the statements by choosing the best ending.

Map activity

Use a map to answer questions about the geography of Israel in this lesson.

Additional Project and Activity Choices for Parents and Teachers

Chart the Story

Complete a flow chart to show the setting, the main characters and the problem in this lesson. Online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-saul-proves-himself-and-is-accepted-as-king-flow-chart-1samuel11-12.pdf>

Then think of some of the events that led to the resolution of the problem. To finish, decide what you learned from the story. When you have finished the chart, try to retell the story in your own words.

Discussion: Being Helpful

Saul was helped the children of Israel at a difficult time. This week, encourage students to notice ways they can be helpful to others. Instead of asking “if” they can help, encourage them to ask “how” they can help. How might asking this way make a difference?

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Vocabulary

yoke of oxen—two large oxen used to pull heavy equipment

frantic—very upset

heeded—obeyed

The Ammonites Threaten Israel

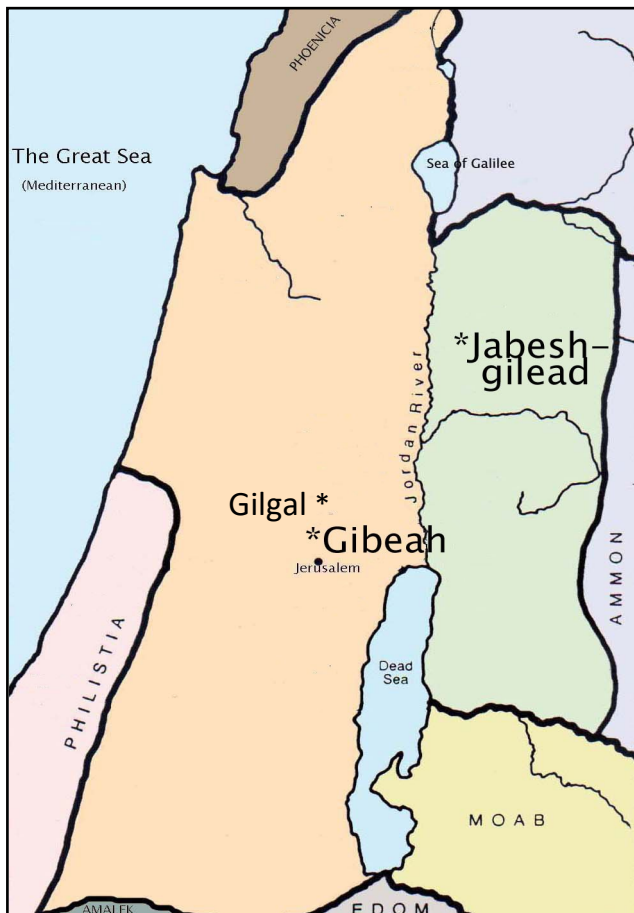
The Ammonites were old enemies of Israel. Years before today’s story a judge named Jephthah beat them in battle. He came from

Jabesh-Gilead, a city on the east side of the Jordan where the tribe of Gad had its home. At the time that this story takes place the Ammonites were strong again, and preparing once more to attack the people of Jabesh-Gilead.

The men of Jabesh-Gilead were not strong enough to fight by themselves. So they approached Nahash, leader of the Ammonites, and offered to be his servants if he would not attack them. Nahash agreed, but he made a terrible demand:

“On this condition I will make a covenant with you, that I may put out all your right eyes, and bring reproach on all Israel.” (1 Samuel 11:2)

The name Nahash means “serpent”. What kind of a man do you think he was? Why would he threaten to do such a terrible thing?



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Nahash wanted to make sure that the men of Jabesh-Gilead could not fight. The desperate men of Jabesh-Gilead begged him to wait for seven days so they could send messages throughout the land of Israel asking for help. If no one would come to save them, then they would give themselves up. When people heard the messengers they became frantic.

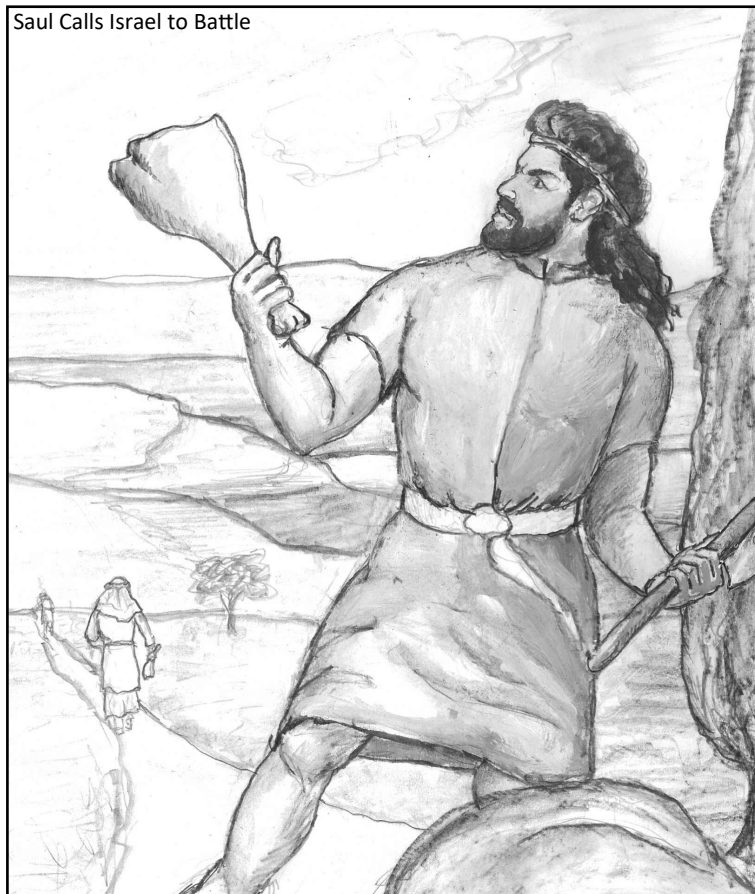
Saul Gathers an Army

When Saul heard what the Ammonites were demanding, he was very angry. But this gave him a chance to show his power to be a strong leader who could help Israel fight its enemies. He sent messengers through the land to call out all the men who were strong enough to go to war. He needed the fighting men to support him so he did something that would make them afraid to refuse. He took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces. He gave the pieces to the messengers who showed them to the people and told them Saul's warning.

“Whoever does not go out with Saul and Samuel to battle, so it shall be done to his oxen.” (1 Samuel 11:7)

Everyone who heard Saul's threat was afraid. So all the men went out to fight.

Saul Defeats the Ammonites



Saul gathered 330,000 soldiers. He divided them into three groups so they could attack from three directions at once. They attacked at dawn and took the Ammonites by surprise. The battle lasted all morning. Many of the Ammonites were killed and those who survived ran away.

Saul Is Established as King

After the battle Samuel called the people together at Gilgal. Saul had proved that he was a great warrior and leader, and now Samuel presented him to the Israelites as their king.

“Indeed I have heeded your voice in all that you said to me, and have made a king over you.

And now here is the king, walking before you.” (1 Samuel 12:1, 2)

Samuel Criticizes the Israelites

But Samuel criticized the people for rejecting the Lord and demanding a king. He asked why they not satisfied with having Lord's prophet and judge as their leader. He reminded them that he had faithfully served the Lord. He asked if he had ever done any wrong to anyone and the people agreed that he had not. But still they wanted a king.

Samuel called on the Lord to send the people a sign so they would know he was telling the truth by telling them that they should not have asked for a king. He promised,

“I will call to the Lord, and He will send thunder and rain, that you may perceive and see that your wickedness is great....” (1 Samuel 12:17)



This was an unusual sign. It *never* rained and stormed during the dry season when the wheat was harvested. The Israelites were frightened and begged Samuel to pray for them.

As a prophet Samuel's job was to teach the people and warn them about what would happen if they disobeyed the Lord. So Samuel comforted the terrified Israelites, and reminded them,

“the Lord will not forsake His people... Moreover, as for me... I will teach you the good and the right way.”

But he also warned,

“Only fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all your heart... but if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king.” (1 Samuel 12:24, 25)

The story of Israel includes many battles. While you may not become a soldier or go to war, you will fight battles too. Our battles are against evil spirits who try to get us to do what is wrong. When feel them attacking us we can ask the Lord for help. He will give us the strength to fight our spiritual battles like king Saul helped Israel.

Activity Overview

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“Only fear the Lord,
and serve Him in truth with all your heart;
For consider what great things He has done for you.” (1 Samuel 12:24)

Projects and Activities (answers at back)

Choose one or two.

Multiple Choice

Complete the statements by choosing the best ending.

Map Activity

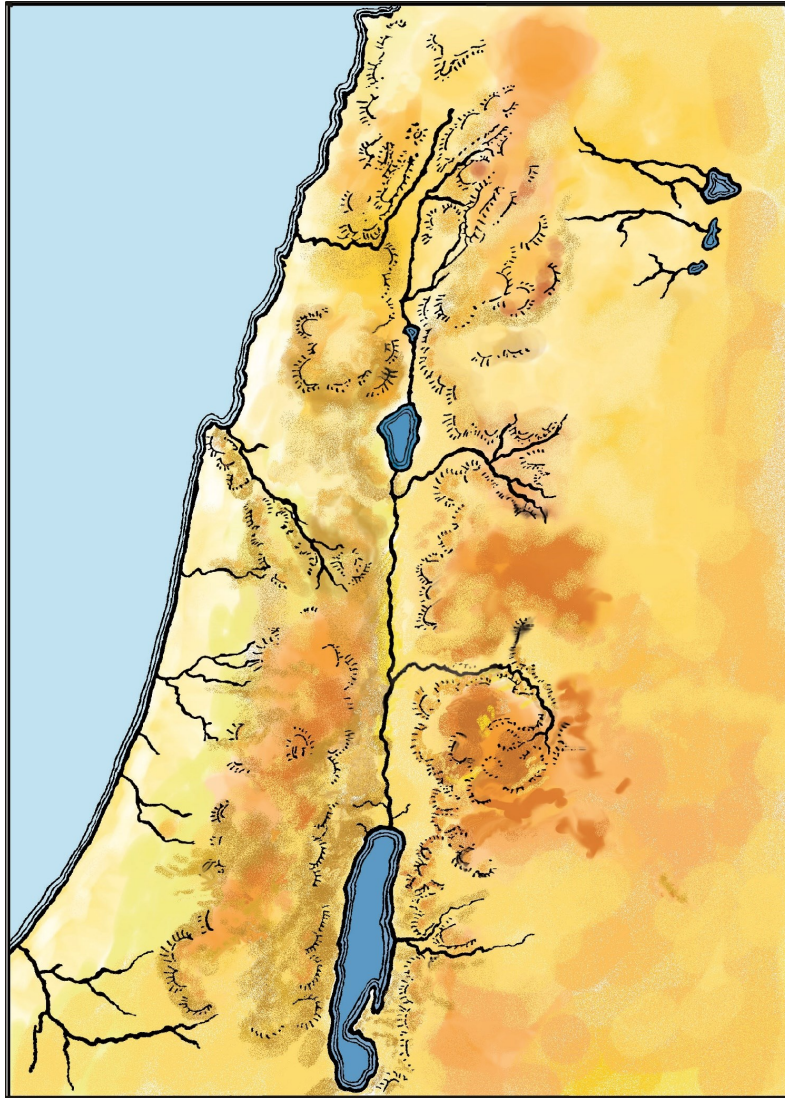
Use a contour map to answer three questions about the geography of Israel.

Multiple Choice

Complete the statements using the best endings. Circle your choice.

1. The Ammonites were old enemies of the Children of Israel. They came up to fight against the city of...
 - a. Jabesh Gilead in Gad.
 - b. Mizpah.
 - c. Jerusalem.
2. Nahash, the Ammonite leader, agreed to make the people of this city his servants instead of fighting them if the people were willing to...
 - a. give him a lot of money.
 - b. cut out their right eyes.
 - c. worship his gods rather than the Lord.
3. When the people of the city heard the terrible thing Nahash threatened they...
 - a. sadly agreed.
 - b. ran and hid in the hills outside the city.
 - c. sent messengers to all of Israel for help.
4. When Saul heard what was happening he ...
 - a. was greatly angered and the spirit of the Lord was with him.
 - b. was frightened.
 - c. went to see Samuel.
5. Then Saul cut two oxen into pieces and sent the pieces throughout the land and said...
 - a. "Come and help us plow the fields that we may have food."
 - b. "Whoever does not go out... to battle, so it shall be done to his oxen."
 - c. "Go and get the ark of the covenant and bring it to do battle with the Ammonites."
6. Saul, as the leader of the people,...
 - a. divided them into three companies, attacked the Ammorites at the morning watch, and scattered the survivors.
 - b. went into battle first and found Nahash, the Ammorite leader, and killed him.
 - c. sent plagues of boils on the Ammorites.
7. After the victory the Children of Israel went to Gilgal and...
 - a. recognized Saul their king.
 - b. made sacrifices and peace offerings.
 - c. greatly rejoiced.
 - d. all of the above.

Map Activity



1. Looking at the map, why do you think the Ammonites wanted to conquer Jabesh-Gilead?

2. Saul was in Gibeah when he heard about the problem in Jabesh-Gilead. Use the map key to estimate how far he had to travel to help them. _____

3. What kind of land did Saul travel over to get there? Hint: the highest land is orange, the lowest land is white. Include any rivers he had to cross.

4. Before the battle, Saul gathered his soldiers in the city of Bezek. He sent a message to Jabesh-Gilead saying he would help the people there. Put a star next to the city of Bezek.

Answers

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Multiple Choice Questions

1. a, 2. b, 3. c, 4. a, 5. b, 6. a, 7. d.

Map Activity

1. Jabesh-Gilead was in a strategic location.
2. 60 miles.
3. Saul descended into a valley, crossed the Jordan River and climbed a mountain.