

Handout: 1 Samuel Lesson 4

Saul will be tested by war and his military success against the Ammonites will lead to the renewal of kingship in a religious ceremony at Gilgal in the “presence of Yahweh” (chapters 9:1-11:15). Thus, in a three-part pattern within the narrative of 1 Samuel chapters 10-11, Saul is chosen as Israel’s first human king:

1. Private anointing by Samuel (1 Sam 10:1).
2. Divine election by lot at the National Assembly (1 Sam 10:17-24).
3. Renewal of kingship in a religious ceremony (1 Sam 11:12-15).

The fourth Dead Sea Scroll of 1 Samuel, designated 4QSam, is one of the most dramatic finds among the Biblical scrolls discovered at Qumran. It has three and a half lines that were missing from the Massoretic Text, the Septuagint, and all other existing Biblical manuscripts. However, Josephus’ account of the war with King Nahash of the Ammonites documents that the missing passage was in the ancient form of the Old Testament Book of Samuel that he used (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 5.5.1 [68-71]). The missing paragraph reads: *Nahash king of the Ammonites oppressed the Gadites and the Reubenites viciously. He put out the right eye of all of them and brought fear and trembling on Israel. Not one of the Israelites in the region beyond the Jordan remained whose right eye Nahash king of the Ammonites did not put out, except seven thousand men who escaped from the Ammonites and went to Jabesh-Gilead. Then after about a month, ...* The next line is what is designated verse 1 in our text.

Saul’s victory over the Ammonites in chapter 11 has consolidated his support among the people. Now opposition is no longer tolerated and the people demand that those who treated Saul without respect must be put to death. Saul gives three responses to the call for retaliation:

1. He calls for forgiveness and reconciliation.
2. He gives all the credit for the victory to God.
3. He obediently responds to Samuel’s call for an assembly of national reconciliation at Gilgal.

Samuel’s discourse to the people in chapter 12:

Part I: Introduction and vindication of his years of leadership (verses 1-5).

Part II: A Survey of Israel’s History (verses 6-11).

Part III: Samuel’s Warning to the People (verses 12-19).

Part IV: Samuel’s Encouraging Conclusion and Final Warning (verses 20-24).

Saul’s failure at Gilgal in chapter 13:

1. He was commanded to wait seven days for Samuel to come to offer sacrifices.
2. He disobeyed the command and made the decision to offer the sacrifices himself, taking on the prerogatives of the priesthood.
3. His sin is an echo of the sin of Adam and Eve in deciding himself what was right contrary to the commands of God through His prophet. Like Adam and Eve he will lose his “kingdom” as Adam and Eve lost Eden.