

# Dr. Robert Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 8, 1 Sam. 11-12 – Saul’s Finest Hour, Samuel Confronts the People

## Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

### 1. Abstract of Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 8, 1 Sam. 11-12 – Saul’s Finest Hour, Samuel Confronts the People, [Biblicalelearning.org](https://www.biblicalelearning.org), BeL

**Dr. Robert Chisholm's lecture** analyzes 1 Samuel 11-12, focusing on two key events. **First**, Saul's decisive victory over the Ammonites showcases his leadership and is framed as his greatest achievement, emphasizing God's role in the triumph despite the people's initial reluctance to accept Saul as king. **Second**, Samuel confronts the Israelites, reminding them that their security rests solely on their faithfulness to God, not on having a king, highlighting the ongoing importance of their covenant relationship with God even with a new leader in place. **The lecture** draws parallels between these events and earlier stories from the Book of Judges, demonstrating the cyclical nature of Israel's faithfulness and God's response. **Finally**, the lecture concludes by emphasizing God's continued commitment to his people despite their failings.

**2. 11 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Chisholm, Session 8 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the [Biblicalelearning.org](https://www.biblicalelearning.org) [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → 1 Samuel).**



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### 3. Briefing Document: Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 8, 1 Sam. 11-12 – Saul's Finest Hour, Samuel Confronts the People

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided source, "Chisholm\_Sam\_EN\_Session08\_1Sam11\_12.pdf":

#### Briefing Document: 1 Samuel 11-12

**Overview:** This document summarizes Dr. Robert Chisholm's lecture on 1 Samuel 11 and 12, which he identifies as a single episode with two distinct emphases: Chapter 11 depicts "Saul's Finest Hour," while chapter 12 involves Samuel confronting the people after the renewal of Saul's kingship. These chapters explore themes of leadership, divine intervention, and the covenant relationship between God and Israel.

#### I. 1 Samuel 11: Saul's Finest Hour

- **Context:** This chapter follows Saul's hesitant and somewhat unimpressive public anointing as king in chapters 9 and 10. The people were uncertain if Saul would be a successful leader, and Saul seemed reluctant to embrace his kingship.
- **The Ammonite Threat:** The story begins with Nahash, king of the Ammonites, besieging Jabesh Gilead, an Israelite town east of the Jordan River.
- Nahash demands the right eye of every Israelite in Jabesh as a condition for a treaty, aiming to disgrace them, not blind them completely.
- This demand reveals Nahash's desire to establish a suzerain-vassal relationship with the Israelites.
- The elders of Jabesh ask for seven days to seek help from Israel.
- **Saul's Response and Divine Empowerment:** Messengers reach Saul in Gibeah while he is working in the fields, highlighting his lack of kingly appearance. This is reminiscent of judges like Gideon.
- The story implies an historical connection between Jabesh-Gilead and Saul's tribe of Benjamin, which motivated the people to seek help from there.
- Upon hearing the news and the desperate weeping of the people, "the Spirit of God came powerfully upon him." (Chisholm, page 5)

- Saul, filled with righteous anger, takes a team of oxen, cuts them into pieces and sends them throughout Israel, summoning the people to war. This act is reminiscent of a similar event in Judges 19 but contrasts the motive: unity instead of civil war.
- "He says this is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel. And he aligns himself with Samuel at this point." (Chisholm, page 5)
- "The terror of the Lord falls on the people, and they come together as one." (Chisholm, page 5)
- **Saul's Military Victory:** Saul musters a large army, reminiscent of the unified force against Gibeah in Judges 20, but this time against a foreign enemy.
- Saul divides his men into three divisions and launches a surprise attack on the Ammonite camp at night, achieving a decisive victory.
- The survivors were scattered so that no two were left together.
- **Saul's Leadership and Generosity:** After the victory, some people want to punish those who doubted Saul's kingship initially, but Saul refuses: "No one will be put to death today. For this day the Lord has rescued Israel." (Chisholm, page 6)
- This act highlights Saul's humility and willingness to promote unity rather than vengeance. "He's promoting unity among the people, not taking revenge on those who have challenged him." (Chisholm, page 7)
- **Key Theme:** "The Lord alone is his people's Savior and source of security." (Chisholm, page 7)
- "The Lord has rescued Israel," (Chisholm, page 7), as spoken by Saul himself.
- God's supernatural enablement is the key to effective spiritual leadership. "It's the Lord's supernatural enablement that was the key in this, because remember in verse 6 it was the Spirit of God that came upon him." (Chisholm, page 7).
- Saul's success here is attributed to the Spirit of God empowering him, contrasting with his initial hesitation.

## II. 1 Samuel 12: Samuel Confronts the People

- **Renewal of Kingship:** After Saul's victory, Samuel calls the people to Gilgal to "renew the kingship" (Chisholm, page 8) and solidify Saul's rule. This is also an opportunity for Samuel to step aside as the primary leader.

- **Samuel's Defense:** Samuel addresses the people to establish the integrity of his leadership before stepping down. He challenges them to bring any accusations against him of dishonesty or corruption, asking, "Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed?" (Chisholm, page 9)
- The people confirm that he has been an honest leader.
- **Rehearsal of Israel's History:** Samuel recounts Israel's history, emphasizing God's consistent deliverance of them through figures like Moses, Aaron, and the Judges.
- He points out that when Israel forgot God and turned to idols, they faced oppression, but when they repented, God sent a deliverer.
- "Whenever you've been insecure and oppressed, it was because of your sin. But then when you repented and you cried out, the Lord would deliver you." (Chisholm, page 11)
- **Challenge to the People:** Samuel reminds the people that their desire for a king was rooted in a lack of trust in God as their true king.
- "When you saw that Nahash, king of the Ammonites, was moving against you, you said to me, no, we want a king to rule over us, even though the Lord, your God, was your king." (Chisholm, page 11)
- He explains that their new king doesn't guarantee their security. Obedience to God is still paramount.
- "If you fear the Lord and serve and obey him and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the Lord, your God, good." (Chisholm, page 11)
- **Sign from God:** To underscore his message, Samuel calls on God to send thunder and rain during the wheat harvest, an unusual time for such weather, as proof that Samuel's words are true.
- The people are awed by this sign and ask Samuel to intercede for them, confessing that they have "added to all our other sins the evil of asking for a king" (Chisholm, page 13).
- **Samuel's Intercession:** Samuel assures them that God will not reject them if they turn back to him, emphasizing God's covenant commitment and his mercy.

- “For the sake of his great name, the Lord will not reject his people, because the Lord was pleased to make you his own.” (Chisholm, page 13).
- He promises to continue praying for them, fulfilling his role as their intercessor, similar to Moses in the past.
- He warns them that both they and their king will perish if they persist in doing evil.
- **Key Theme:** “The security of God's covenant people depends on their allegiance to the Lord, who remains committed to them.” (Chisholm, page 14)
- Even when his people rebel, the Lord offers them security in exchange for their renewed covenantal allegiance to him.
- “It's not so much about a king, it's about obedience.” (Chisholm, page 14)

### III. Conclusion

These chapters provide a pivotal moment in Israel's history, where the people's desire for a king is juxtaposed with God's ongoing call for their obedience and trust. Saul's victory demonstrates the power of God's Spirit and the need for divine enablement in leadership. Samuel's confrontation underscores the importance of remaining faithful to the covenant relationship with the Lord, regardless of having a king. It's clear that “the Lord remains faithful to his covenant commitment, even when his people prove unworthy” (Chisholm, page 14). The chapter ends with a foreshadowing of future challenges.

## 4. Study Guide: Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 8, 1 Sam. 11-12 – Saul’s Finest Hour, Samuel Confronts the People

### 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 8 Study Guide: 1 Samuel 11-12

#### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What event prompted the people of Jabesh Gilead to seek help from the Israelites, and what were the terms of their potential agreement with Nahash?
2. Why does the text suggest the messengers from Jabesh Gilead went to Gibeah specifically?
3. How does Saul respond to the news from Jabesh Gilead, and what action does he take to gather an army?
4. What tactical decision does Saul employ in the battle against the Ammonites, and what previous biblical figure is this tactic reminiscent of?
5. What is significant about Saul’s response to those who questioned his kingship after the victory over the Ammonites?
6. What is the primary theme of 1 Samuel 11, and how does it relate to the people’s desire for a king?
7. What does Samuel aim to accomplish by recounting his leadership and service to the people in 1 Samuel 12?
8. What historical events does Samuel recount in 1 Samuel 12, and why does he do this?
9. What sign does Samuel ask God to perform, and what is the significance of this request?
10. What key message does Samuel leave with the people in 1 Samuel 12, and how does it relate to their new king?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The Ammonite king Nahash besieged Jabesh Gilead, threatening to gouge out the right eye of every inhabitant as a condition for a treaty. This mutilation would bring disgrace upon all Israel.

2. There was an ancient connection between Jabesh Gilead and Gibeah due to an event in Judges where the people of Jabesh Gilead were spared after a civil war and some of their women married the surviving Benjaminites. Because of this, there were likely people in Gibeah with ties to Jabesh Gilead.
3. Saul is initially out farming when he learns of the situation. He is enraged by the news, and the Spirit of God comes upon him, prompting him to cut up oxen and send the pieces throughout Israel as a call to arms.
4. Saul divides his army into three divisions for a surprise night attack on the Ammonite camp. This tactic is reminiscent of Gideon's actions in Judges against the Midianites.
5. Saul prevents the execution of those who questioned his kingship, showing mercy and emphasizing that the Lord delivered Israel, thereby promoting unity among the people.
6. The main theme of 1 Samuel 11 is that the Lord alone is the Savior and source of security for Israel, and this directly contradicts the people's desire for a king to feel safe rather than trusting in God.
7. Samuel aims to demonstrate his integrity and honesty as a leader as he prepares to transition out of his leadership role. He wants to ensure the people do not have any unresolved grievances with his service to them.
8. Samuel recounts the history of Israel from their time in Egypt, the period of the judges, and up until their request for a king. He does this to remind them of God's faithfulness, their own unfaithfulness, and that God had always been their true king.
9. Samuel asks God to send thunder and rain during the wheat harvest, a very unusual event, to prove to the people that his message was from God and that requesting a king was an act of rebellion.
10. Samuel emphasizes that the security of God's covenant people depends on their allegiance to the Lord, not the new king. He warns them that obedience to God is still paramount and that disobedience will lead to God's discipline.

## Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the leadership styles and motivations of Saul in 1 Samuel 11 and Samuel in 1 Samuel 12. How do their actions and words contribute to the larger narrative of Israel's transition to a monarchy?
2. Analyze the significance of the "Spirit of God" in 1 Samuel 11. How does its presence shape Saul's actions and role as king, and what implications does this have for understanding divine enablement in leadership?
3. Discuss the role of historical memory and precedent in 1 Samuel 11 and 12. How do events from the book of Judges, both positive and negative, inform the understanding of Saul's victory and Samuel's rebuke of the people?
4. Explore the tension between the people's desire for a king and Samuel's emphasis on the Lord as their true king in 1 Samuel 12. How does this tension reflect the broader themes of trust, security, and faithfulness in the text?
5. Evaluate the concept of covenantal faithfulness as it is presented in 1 Samuel 12. How does Samuel's message to the people reveal the conditions of this covenant, and what are the implications for the relationship between God, the people, and their king?



## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Ammonites:** A people group living east of the Jordan River who were often in conflict with Israel.
- **Jabesh Gilead:** An Israelite town east of the Jordan River, with historical ties to the tribe of Benjamin.
- **Gibeah of Saul:** Saul's hometown, located in the territory of Benjamin.
- **Nahash:** The Ammonite king who besieged Jabesh Gilead and demanded the mutilation of its people.
- **Suzerain-Vassal Treaty:** A type of treaty in which a more powerful ruler (suzerain) makes an agreement with a lesser ruler (vassal), where the vassal owes allegiance and pays tribute to the suzerain.
- **Spirit of God:** The divine power or presence of God that empowers individuals for specific tasks or roles.
- **Gilgal:** A place where the Israelites renewed the kingship of Saul after his military victory.
- **Intercessor:** Someone who pleads with God on behalf of others, often acting as a mediator between God and people.
- **Covenant:** A binding agreement or relationship, particularly between God and his people.
- **Baals and Ashtoreths:** Canaanite gods and goddesses that the Israelites were tempted to worship, symbolizing idolatry.

## 5. FAQs on Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 8, 1 Sam. 11-12 – Saul's Finest Hour, Samuel Confronts the People, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

### FAQ: 1 Samuel 11-12 - Saul's Finest Hour & Samuel's Confrontation

1. **Why is 1 Samuel 11 considered "Saul's Finest Hour," and what prompted this?**
  - 1 Samuel 11 showcases Saul's decisive leadership and military prowess in rescuing the Israelite city of Jabesh Gilead from the Ammonite king Nahash. Nahash had threatened to gouge out the right eye of every Israelite in the city as a condition for surrender, a humiliation he sought to inflict on the entire nation. This crisis served as the catalyst for Saul's strong, Spirit-empowered response. Previously, Saul had been hesitant, but the gravity of the situation and the spirit of God coming upon him ignited his courage and leadership abilities.
1. **What was the historical connection between Jabesh Gilead and Gibeah that made Jabesh-Gilead seek help from Saul?**
  - The connection goes back to the book of Judges, where a civil war nearly wiped out the tribe of Benjamin, of which Saul was a member from Gibeah. The men of Jabesh-Gilead, who did not participate in that war, had their women kidnapped and given to the remaining Benjaminites as wives. This created a kinship between the two cities, making Jabesh-Gilead's appeal to Gibeah for help a natural recourse in their dire situation.
1. **How did Saul rally the Israelites, and what parallels exist with the events in Judges?**
  - Saul, empowered by the Spirit of God, demonstrated his authority by cutting up a team of oxen and sending the pieces throughout Israel with a message declaring that the same would happen to any oxen owner who did not join him in fighting Nahash. This act was reminiscent of the Levite who cut up his concubine's body in Judges to call the tribes to arms. However, the contrast highlights a new era: Saul rallies Israel to rescue their brothers, not to wage civil war. Additionally, the unification of Israel to fight a common enemy echoes the unification against Gibeah in Judges, although with a more positive outcome.

**1. What was the significance of Saul's victory and his declaration that "the Lord has rescued Israel?"**

- Saul's acknowledgement that "the Lord has rescued Israel" is key. The people had sought a king as a means of feeling secure but this victory served as a reminder to them that it was the Lord, not a king with a standing army, who was their true source of security. It emphasized that the Lord was fully capable of delivering his people from enemies and that their trust should be in Him alone. This victory also paved the way for the formal renewal of Saul's kingship at Gilgal.

**1. Why did Samuel feel it was necessary to confront the people in 1 Samuel 12 after Saul's victory?**

- Despite the victory and renewal of Saul's kingship, Samuel knew that the people's security was ultimately tied to their allegiance to the Lord, not to any earthly king. He wanted to remind them that their request for a king had stemmed from a lack of trust in God's ability to protect them. Samuel used this occasion to challenge the people to stay true to the Lord and not to depend solely on their new king and also to defend his own honesty and leadership as he was about to move aside.

**1. What specific points did Samuel use to demonstrate his integrity as a leader?**

- Samuel calls for the people to testify if he had ever wronged them. He directly asks if he had taken anyone's ox, donkey, cheated, or oppressed anyone or taken a bribe. The people affirmed that he had never done such things; they acknowledge his integrity. This is his way of stepping aside with a clear conscience and a demonstration that he was different from his sons.

**1. How does Samuel remind the people of God's faithfulness, and what is the significance of the thunder and rain during the wheat harvest?**

- Samuel recounts their history, emphasizing that the Lord had consistently delivered them from oppression during the Judges period after they cried out to him and repented, contrasting their pattern of rebellion and repentance with the idea that a king will keep them safe. The unusual thunderstorm and rain during the wheat harvest, a dry season, served as a powerful sign to them and the public that the Lord was still in control. Samuel was trying to show the people that asking for a king was wrong and that they needed to trust in the Lord rather than their chosen king for their safety and security. The sign caused the people to be in awe of the Lord and Samuel.

1. **What is the central message of 1 Samuel 11-12 regarding security and leadership, and how does it apply to modern readers?**
  - The central message is that true security comes from allegiance to the Lord, not from human leaders or institutions. Even when God's people rebel, God still offers security in exchange for their renewed allegiance and covenantal faithfulness. God is committed to them even when they prove unworthy. Furthermore, spiritual leaders need to be empowered by God and should lead in a way that points people back to God, not just themselves. This principle is timeless: our trust and reliance should be in the Lord, our source of true security, not in our own power, governments or leaders. It highlights that godly leadership is ultimately the result of God's empowerment, not just human capability.