

Saul Rescues Jabesh

1 Samuel 11

by Don Falkos

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The King of the Ammonites cruelly oppressed the people of Gad and Reuben who lived east of the Jordan River. He gouged out the right eye of every Israelite living there, except for a few thousand men who escaped to Jabesh Gilead in the territory of Manasseh. He laid siege to Jabesh demanding surrender. "You will become subject to me, and I will gouge out the right eye of every one of you."

They asked for seven days to consider his terms. Then they sent messengers throughout Israel asking to be rescued. The news reached Saul as he was returning from the fields with his oxen. The Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon Saul, and he became very angry. He took his two oxen and cut them into pieces, which he sent throughout Israel with a message. "This is what will happen to the oxen of anyone who refuses to follow Saul and Samuel into battle!"

The people were afraid of Saul's anger and came out together in overwhelming numbers ready to fight. Then Saul sent a message to Jabesh Gilead, "Before noon tomorrow, you will be rescued."

The people of Jabesh rejoiced. They told the Ammonites, "Tomorrow we will surrender to you, and you can do to us whatever you wish."

Before sunrise, Saul attacked the camp of the Ammonites and slaughtered them. Only a few escaped.

Bloodlust gripped the people. They wanted to execute anyone who opposed Saul's kingship. But Saul said, "No one will be put to death today, for today the Lord has rescued Israel!"

All the people rejoiced that Saul was their king.