

Exegetical Notes – 1 Samuel 11:12-15

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1 Samuel 11:12-15

Verse 12

The people then said to Samuel, “Who was it that asked, ‘Shall Saul reign over us?’ Turn these men over to us so that we may put them to death.”

- Saul successfully defeated the Ammonites at Jabesh Gilead. The Ammonite army was routed and slaughtered (see verses 11-12).
- When Saul was anointed king over Israel, there were some men who opposed the idea (see 1 Samuel 10:26-27).
- After the battle at Jabesh, the people of Israel wanted to execute those who had opposed Saul as king. They wanted to destroy anyone who was not supportive of the new king.

Verse 13

¹³ But Saul said, “No one will be put to death today, for this day the LORD has rescued Israel.”

- Saul, acting in the spirit, prevented the execution of his enemies. His first act as king was the rescue of Jabesh. His second was the saving of his enemies from death.

Verses 14-15

¹⁴ Then Samuel said to the people, “Come, let us go to Gilgal and there renew the kingship.” ¹⁵ So all the people went to Gilgal and made Saul king in the presence of the LORD. There they sacrificed fellowship offerings before the LORD, and Saul and all the Israelites held a great celebration.

- Then, SAMUEL, not Saul, led the people of Israel to Gilgal to worship God. There was a great “praise party.” The people, under Samuel, thanked God, not Saul, for the victory.
- There is a clear division of duties here. Saul is Israel’s political/military leader. Samuel is their religious leader. The sacred trumps the secular. The king is guided by the prophet, not the prophet by the king.

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