



God Rejects Saul as King

11

Key Theme

- God judges sin.

Key Passages

- 1 Samuel 13:5–14, 15:7–9, 15:22, 15:26, 15:35, 16:14; John 14:15

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe how Saul disobeyed God.
- Identify the consequences of Saul's disobedience.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

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Students will place a bookmark at 1 Samuel 13 and 15. Students will practice the memory verse using the Memory Verse Strips.



Activity 1: God Rejects Saul as King Class Notes

page 5

Students will complete the God Rejects Saul as King Class Notes as you study the lesson. Pass out the class notes before you begin to teach.



Studying God's Word

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Saul repeatedly chose to disobey God and do things his own way. As a result, God rejected him from being king over Israel. The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and Samuel left his side. God desired obedience over sacrifice from Saul just as He desires obedience from us.



Activity 2: The Leader's Troubles

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Students will role play some biblical leaders' troubles. The leader's advisors will suggest solutions to the troubles. The leader will decide which advice to follow.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- Cut paper into strips for each student to mark today's study passages in 1 Samuel 13 and 15.
- If you haven't done this, print and cut the Memory Verse Strips from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Print on cardstock if possible.
- You may want to present this as a team activity.

- Memory Verse Poster
- Paper strips
- Memory Verse Strips in envelopes or small plastic bags



GOD REJECTS SAUL AS KING

- Print one God Rejects Saul as King Class Notes from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

- God Rejects Saul as King Class Notes for each student
- God Rejects Saul as King Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.

- Student Take Home Sheets



THE LEADER'S TROUBLES

- Print and cut out at least three copies of each of the three events on The Leader's Troubles Scripts from the Resource DVD-ROM.
- Print one The Leader's Troubles Teacher's Copy for your use.

- The Leader's Troubles Scripts for students
- The Leader's Troubles Teacher's Copy



Memory Verse

1 Samuel 16:7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

► **Pace your lesson!** Use the clocks to mark the time you want to finish each section. This will help you stay on track and finish on time. You may need to shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Before you begin to prepare for your lesson this week, please prepare your heart and mind by reading 1 Samuel 13:1–15 and 15:10–31. Prior to this account, the people had demanded a king so they could be like the other nations (1 Samuel 8:5). God demands that His people worship Him alone as king; He will not share His glory with another (Isaiah 42:8). In demanding a man-king, the people were rejecting God and His kingship. God warned them that life would not be easy for them under worldly kings, but they would not listen. Now Israel was to be under human kings for the next 400 years. Saul was chosen by God to be the first king of Israel (1 Samuel 9:17).

Our passage today in 1 Samuel 13 picks up two years after Saul became the king. Israel was afraid of the multitude of Philistines who seemed about to attack. Saul was in Gilgal, and the people with him were trembling with fear (1 Samuel 13:7). Saul felt the need to offer a burnt offering to request the Lord's protection in the coming conflict. However, Samuel, as the Lord's priest and prophet to Israel, had told Saul to wait for him seven days (1 Samuel 10:8), and Samuel had not yet arrived.

Disregarding Samuel's instructions, Saul decided that it would be better to offer the sacrifices himself rather than to wait for Samuel (1 Samuel 13:9). This might appear reasonable. Saul was apparently seeking to honor the Lord and seek His protection, and the people were scattering from him (1 Samuel 13:11). However, when Samuel arrived, he made it clear that Saul had acted foolishly (1 Samuel 13:13). Saul had not obeyed the Lord. In spite of what Saul perceived as real, imminent danger, he should have obeyed and trusted God to prevail. The anxiety and concern Saul felt over the Philistines was the product of his lack of trust in God, which led to his disobedience. And we will see that God's priority is always a trusting, obedient heart, not the outward performance of religious duty.

Saul continued to establish his reign over Israel. He fought against his enemies on every side (1 Samuel 14:47–48). He had not, however, learned the lesson of obedience to the God and Creator of all things. The events of 1 Samuel 15 show again Saul's tendency to trust his own judgment rather than to obey God. In this chapter, Israel fought against and defeated the Amalekites. God had clearly commanded Saul to destroy all of that tribe, including women, children, and livestock (1 Samuel 15:3). But again Saul considered his

own wisdom above God's wisdom. In disobedience to God's direct command, Saul kept the king and the best of the livestock alive, presumably for the purpose of showing off the defeated king and making sacrifices to God (1 Samuel 15:15). Samuel confronted Saul again with God's priority, declaring plainly that God desires obedience from His people more than even the sacrifices that are meant to honor Him (1 Samuel 15:22). Saul not only disobeyed, but as king, he also set an example for the people of Israel that God would not tolerate trusting self as opposed to trusting God.

Saul suffered severe consequences for his disobedience. The Lord rejected him from being king over Israel (1 Samuel 15:26). The Lord promised that the kingdom of Israel would be taken from him and given to a neighbor who was better than he (1 Samuel 13:14, 15:28). Saul would no longer benefit from the wise counsel of Samuel, his friend and God's prophet and priest (1 Samuel 15:35). The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the Lord troubled him (1 Samuel 16:14).

As we consider the life of Saul and his failure to trust and obey God, we know that the unchanging God still demands obedience from His people. In very simple terms, John 14:15 states this critical biblical principle: "If you love Me, keep My commandments." A heart that loves God will produce a life that keeps His commands—not perfectly, but characteristically.

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Saul did not realize several things that God intended to accomplish in the commands that He gave. God intended to show the glory of His guardianship of the nation of Israel by the complete destruction of the Amalekites, who had treacherously harried the Israelites after God had delivered them from Egypt (Exodus 17:8–16). This may seem harsh to us, but God intended a particular display in history of His complete and jealous protection of His people, Israel.

Furthermore, God designed Israel's history to prepare the way for the coming Messiah, Jesus. Jesus alone may carry the offices of prophet (His words carry God's authority—Matthew 17:5), priest (He offered Himself for our sins—Hebrews 7:26–27), and king (He is the King of kings—Revelation 19:16). Saul's presumption in performing the role of priest in the sacrifice at Gilgal was contrary to God's purpose to preserve the honor of His Son, who alone is worthy of all of these offices. It is

true that Saul may not have understood God's purposes fully, and in that regard, we may find ourselves sympathizing with him. However, the issue that is inescapable is that of simple obedience.

We find ourselves quite often without the ability to see how things will turn out—in situations that make obedience to God seem impractical or (to our minds) impossible. Yet God clearly calls us to obey, and He commands us to obey even (or especially!) when we cannot discern how that obedience will either benefit us or glorify God. Seen in the proper perspective, such a situation is precisely when our trust in God can be fully displayed. It is far easier to obey God when the benefit of obedience is clear. Such obedience coincides with self-interest. In the book of Job, Satan accused Job of obeying God, not because he loved and trusted Him, but because Job saw that it was in his own best interest to obey (Job 1:9–11). Of course, Job continued to worship God even after everything was taken from him, giving us an example to follow.

The heart that truly loves and trusts God will act in obedience simply because it accepts that God is good and His commands are right, regardless of the apparent outcome. Such obedience demonstrates a heart that believes that God does not need to explain Himself—that whatever He commands is good. In that kind of obedience and trust, God is glorified.

In the end, a disposition of the heart to love God inclines us to honor Him with our obedience, and it is that kind of heart that God seeks. Saul's heart was inclined to obey God in the way that Saul thought best, rather than to unconditionally trust that God's commands were good. We must be careful not to repeat Saul's mistake.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Precious Redeemer and Living Word, thank you for providing such a great salvation. How I long for the day when you rule as King. In the meantime, help me and my students to grasp that you desire our obedience above any sacrifice we can bring. Convict us through your Word that we would choose your way over ours—your way, according to your holy Word. Holy God, for the students in my class that don't know you as Lord, please convict them of their sins so they would become truly repentant and long for the forgiveness and the love of the Savior.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will mark their Bibles at 1 Samuel 13 and 15 with strips of paper.
- They will put the Memory Verse Strips in order and recite the verse together and/or to each other. They may work individually or in teams.

This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided a template on the Resource DVD-ROM you can use to make Memory Verse Strips to be put in order each week. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



God Rejects Saul as King Class Notes

MATERIALS

- God Rejects Saul as King Class Notes for each student
- God Rejects Saul as King Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Print the class notes for each student. Pass them out at the beginning of class. Have students fill in the blanks as you study today's lesson.

We will be completing the class notes as we study the Bible passages. Try not to

work ahead. Fill in the blanks as we come to them. I'll let you know when to fill in something.

After filling in each point /question on the class notes, have the students re-read the statement together or call on individual students to read it.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

When we finish our class notes, we will see that Saul disobeyed God and God rejected Saul as king.



Studying God's Word

► Use the History of Israel Poster included with your teacher kit to show your class where the biblical accounts you study chronologically fit into this timeline.

READ THE WORD

Refer to the History of Israel Poster. Well, we are through the time of the judges. This period of judges lasted about 300 years. God raised up 13 different judges to lead His people. Samuel was the last judge. During his leadership, the people demanded a king. God warned them that a king would not be good, but they continued to demand one. God finally agreed, and Samuel anointed the first King of Israel—King Saul. Saul would be the first of many kings who would reign in Israel for a period of about 400 years. The Israelites rejected God and His kingship and asked for a worldly king. Trouble quickly followed as we'll see today.

We'll start today hearing about the Philistines. The Philistines were Israel's greatest fear. They were fierce warriors. Jonathan, Saul's son, had attacked the Philistines successfully. But now the Philistines were fighting back. That's where we will begin reading.

Let's read 1 Samuel 13:5–12 together. *Divide the passage for members of the class to read aloud.*

1 Samuel 13:5–12

EXAMINE THE WORD

I'm going to ask you some questions, so we can better understand what God's Word is telling us. Look in your Bibles to find the answers. I'll tell you where to look.

Observe the Text

- ? How large was the Philistine army? 1 Samuel 13:5. *30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, people as numerous as sand on the seashore.*
- ? How did the Israelites react when they saw this army? Where did they hide? 1 Samuel 13:6–7. *They were very scared; they hid in caves, thickets, rocks, holes, and pits. They trembled and fled.*
- ? King Saul knew they were in big trouble. He was waiting for someone at this point. Who was Saul waiting for? 1 Samuel 13:8. *Samuel.*
- ? How long had he already waited? 1 Samuel 13:8. *Seven days.*

Yes, Saul had waited seven days for Samuel. Saul was in trouble. As king, he wanted to protect his people. They were all running scared from the Philistines. Saul wanted to offer a sacrifice to God. A sacrifice to God would bring God's blessing and protection on the people. But according to God's Law, only Samuel could make the sacrifice—God had chosen Samuel to be His prophet and priest. The Israelites were scared because

they knew the fierce Philistine army was coming at them. They were running, panicking, hiding in the rocks. Saul had waited seven days for Samuel, and Samuel still wasn't there.

- ? So what did Saul do? 1 Samuel 13:9. *Made the offering himself.*
- ? Who came right after Saul made the offering? 1 Samuel 13:10. *Samuel.*
- ? How did Saul explain the sacrifice to Samuel? 1 Samuel 13:11–12. *He made the sacrifice because Samuel had not come, the people were scared, and the Philistines were gathered ready to attack.*

Discover the Truth

So, what was Saul's sin? Look at #1 on your class notes.

What will you put in there? *Allow discussion. Have students answer # 1 on the class notes. Disobeyed.*



READ THE WORD

It seems Saul just wasn't very good at obeying God. Turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel 15, and I'll show you what I mean. In this account, Saul was headed for another battle. This time the Israelites were going against Amalek and his people, the Amalekites. Samuel told Saul that God wanted the Amalekites completely destroyed! He wanted everyone and everything gone! Saul gathered the people and led the attack. That's where we'll begin reading.

Let's read 1 Samuel 15:7–9 together. *Choose a student to read verses aloud.*

1 Samuel 15:7–9

EXAMINE THE WORD

So, what did Saul do? We'll ask some questions and find out exactly what happened here.

Observe the Text

- ? Whom did Saul attack? 1 Samuel 15:7. *The Amalekites.*
- ? Remember, God told him to destroy everything. Saul was not to spare anything or anyone. So, did Saul do that? 1 Samuel 15:9. *No.*
- ? What did Saul do? Look closely in 1 Samuel 15:9. *He spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites, the best sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs and all that was good.*
- ? Saul was unwilling to do something. What was that? 1 Samuel 15:9. *He was unwilling to utterly destroy everything.*

Discover the Truth

Poor Saul! He would not trust the Lord and obey Him! We just saw in these two important battles—against the Philistines and against the

Amalekites—that Saul trusted himself and his own wisdom over God’s. Twice he did exactly the opposite of what God commanded him to do. Twice he disobeyed God’s command to him. First, he made the sacrifice himself to God for protection—knowing that only Samuel was allowed to do that. And then, he spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites, and kept all of the best sheep, oxen, lambs, fatlings—he kept all that was good in the land for himself, even after God said to destroy it all!

- ? How will you fill out #2 on your class notes? *Allow discussion. Have students answer #2 on their class notes. Disobeyed.*

1 Samuel 15:22

So, Saul continued to disobey God. But Saul knew better. He had learned from Samuel that the Lord desires and delights in something. What is that? Someone read 1 Samuel 15:22 for me. *Have a student read the verse.*

- ? What does the Lord desire and delight in? *Allow discussion. Have students answer #3 on their class notes. Obedience.*

Yes, we see from these Scriptures that God wanted Saul to obey! God wanted Saul to trust Him alone! And God wants us to obey Him, too!



READ THE WORD

God had chosen Saul to be king. And God had granted Saul success in his new position. But God’s prophet Samuel had made it clear that Saul MUST obey God. God put Saul in several circumstances to test whether he would be obedient to Him alone. And, as we already saw, Saul failed the test and disobeyed. Any disobedience to God is sin and God must judge all sin. God judged Saul’s sin. Saul’s life changed because he trusted his own wisdom over God’s wisdom. He disobeyed the holy God. Let’s see what Saul’s disobedience brought to his life. We are going to read 1 Samuel 13:13–14. *Assign students to read one passage at a time. Ask the questions below after each verse is read.*

1 Samuel 13:13–14

EXAMINE THE WORD

As we answer these questions, we will finish the class notes.

Observe the Text

- ? *Assign someone to read 1 Samuel 13:13. What did Samuel call Saul because of his sin? Foolish. Have students answer #4 on the class notes. Foolish.*

- ? Assign someone to read 1 Samuel 13:14. **What did Saul fail to keep?** *The commandment of the Lord. Have students answer #5 on the class notes. Commandment.*
- ? **And what would happen to Saul's kingdom?** *1 Samuel 13:14. It would not continue. Have students answer #6 on the class notes. Continue.*
- ? **Yes, God would look for someone else to be king. What type of man would God now look for?** *1 Samuel 13:14. A man after God's own heart. Complete #7 on the class notes. Heart.*

This man after God's own heart would be the new king. He would be the commander over God's people in place of Saul because Saul had disobeyed.

Turn to 1 Samuel 15:26. Someone read that for us. *Assign a reader.*

1 Samuel 15:26

- ? **What did Saul reject?** *The Word of the Lord. Have students answer #8 on their class notes. Word, Lord.*

- ? **And what did the Lord reject?** *1 Samuel 15:26. Saul. Have students answer #9 on their class notes. Saul.*

- ? **Not only that, Saul lost a dear friend and counselor. Turn to 1 Samuel 15:35. Assign a reader. Who would never see Saul again?** *Samuel. Have students answer #10 on the class notes. Samuel.*

1 Samuel 15:35

- ? **One last verse. Turn to 1 Samuel 16:14. Assign a reader. What left Saul?** *The Spirit of the Lord. Have students answer #11 on the class notes. Spirit, Lord.*

1 Samuel 16:14

- ? **What came over Saul for the rest of his life?** *1 Samuel 16:14. A distressing spirit from the Lord. Have students answer #12 on the class notes. Distressing.*

Discover the Truth

Again, let's remember that God demands obedience from His people. And that God will judge disobedience—sin—in the lives of His people. Saul suffered many consequences because He would not trust God. His kingdom was taken from him; he lost his friend and advisor, Samuel; the Spirit of the Lord was taken from him; and we see that he was left with a distressing spirit that troubled him. God demands obedience over sacrifice. He demanded obedience from Saul and He demands obedience from us.





The Leader's Troubles

MATERIALS

- The Leader's Troubles Scripts for the students
- The Leader's Troubles Teacher's Copy

INSTRUCTIONS

Assign three students for each of the three events on The Leader's Troubles Scripts. Give each of the actors the appropriate event. The students will role play the events as presented. The leader will announce his trouble to his advisors. The advisors will each present a solution to the trouble. The leader will decide what he must do.

The leader's people (the rest of the class) will respond with cheering and thumbs up if they agree with the leader's decision or booing and thumbs down if they disagree with the leader's decision.

God often asked the people of Israel to do some things that seemed rather odd. I want you to role play the event you received and see what the response will be from God's people. These events cover today's lesson with King Saul and another event we studied about Joshua. *Have the students come up to the front of the class as they role play each event.*

If you agree with the leader's decision, you can cheer. If you disagree, boo and give him a thumbs down.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

God often asked the people of Israel to do things that did not make sense, didn't He?

The three scenes we just witnessed show us that.

In Event 1, King Saul should have waited for Samuel, like God commanded. Instead, he took matters into his own hands, made the sacrifice without Samuel, and lost his kingdom.

In Event 2, about Joshua and the battle of Jericho, the more logical approach by the world's standards would be to agree with Advisor 1 and attack at night under the cover of dark. But Joshua obeyed God even though it seemed a bit odd to march around the city in broad daylight and in full view. Because Joshua obeyed, the city was taken by God's power!

In Event 3, God told King Saul to destroy everything. King Saul wanted to do what HE thought was best. Not what God had commanded. And again, he disobeyed. God judged him for his disobedience.

Often the things God asks us to do don't seem to make sense. But He is God and we must trust that what He asks us to do is what He wants us to do. If He asks us or leads us to something, He will show us how to do it. God always demands that HIS commands be obeyed— even today!





Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Saul disobeyed God twice when he took matters into his own hands. He offered a sacrifice without waiting for Samuel, the priest and prophet of God. This did not please God. Then he saved the life of the king of the Amalekites and brought back the good things from the land. God had commanded that they destroy everything and everyone.

Because of Saul's disobedience, God had to punish him. The Lord took away Saul's kingdom and would put someone else in his place; Samuel left Saul and never saw him again; and the Spirit of the Lord left Saul. Instead, Saul was given a distressing spirit that troubled him the rest of his life.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

We might think that what Saul did doesn't really affect us today. It happened a long time ago. We aren't being called by God. And we certainly don't have our own prophet telling us what the Lord wants us to do. But, let's think a minute. We are called to obey and trust God just like Saul was. God has given us His Word and all of His commands. He wants us to live by this book—the Bible. We don't need our own prophet. Saul didn't have the complete Bible. We do, and we are called to live by it!

? **What is God like?** *Refer to the Attributes of God Poster and discuss that He doesn't change—He is immutable.*

He is the very same God today as He was in Saul's time. He will not ever change. He still demands obedience to His commands. He still must judge sin. And we still must suffer the consequences of our disobedience.

Jesus explained this truth in the New Testament very simply. In John 14:15, Jesus said this. "If you love me, keep my Commandments." If our hearts love God—really love Him—we will keep His commandments. We won't do a perfect job of it because we are sinners and only Jesus was perfect. But our lives will be different because we want to obey Him. He will give us the ability to obey Him. As we know Him better, we will love Him more. As we love Him more, we will want to obey Him.



IMMUTABLE

(Refer to Attributes Poster)

John 14:15

➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the students to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

1 Samuel 16:7 But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”



GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God. He loves us and helps us obey Him by the power of His Holy Spirit.
- Ask God to help us to show our love for Him by taking His Word seriously, remembering it, and obeying it.