



11

God Rejects Saul as King

Key Theme

- God judges sin.

Key Passages

- 1 Samuel 13:5–14, 15:9; 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

page 5

Students will practice the memory verse using the Memory Verse Cards.



Activity 1: God Rejects Saul Word Scramble

page 5

Students will unscramble key words from 1 Samuel throughout the lesson.



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 as 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: Who/What Am I?

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Students will answer review questions from the lesson and complete the worksheet.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- If you haven't done this, print and cut the Memory Verse Cards from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Print on cardstock if possible.
- Put complete sets into envelopes or small plastic bags.
- You may want to present this as a team activity.

- Memory Verse Poster
- Memory Verse Cards in envelopes or small plastic bags



GOD REJECTS SAUL WORD SCRAMBLE

- Print and cut out the eight words and letters on the God Rejects Saul Word Scramble from the Resource DVD-ROM. Paper clip each word together. Keep the answer key for your use.

- Letters for the eight scrambled words (each word clipped together)
- God Rejects Saul Word Scramble Answer Key



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print one John 14:15 Mini-Poster from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- John 14:15 Mini-Poster
- Student Take Home Sheets



WHO/WHAT AM I?

- Print one Who/What Am I? Worksheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

- Who/What Am I? Worksheet
- Who/What Am I? Worksheet Answer Key
- Pencils



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 put the Memory Verse Cards 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 Cards 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 Word Scramble

MATERIALS

- God Rejects Saul Word Scramble letters, each word paper-clipped together.
- Paper clips

INSTRUCTIONS

Print and cut out the letters from the God Rejects Saul Word Scramble Sheets. Paper clip the letters together and put the completed word on top to help you know which words to pull out during the lesson. Keep the words separate. As you come to the word in the lesson pull the cards out on the floor or table and assign students to unscramble them to make the correct word. Write the completed words up on the board. Review the significance of each word as the students are unscrambling them.

We will be unscrambling letters to make words from our lesson today. As the lesson goes on, I'll pull out a bunch of letters and ask for your help to put them in the right order.

After unscrambling each word, have a student tell you something about the word as review.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

When we finish making all these words during the lesson, we'll have a good review of what God's Word is teaching us about Saul, Samuel, and obedience to the Lord.





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.

➤ Because of the age and ability of 1st and 2nd graders to read and comprehend, we encourage you to read the Scriptures to the students. However, if you have strong readers, by all means have them participate by reading God's Word.

1 Samuel 13:5–8

READ THE WORD

Refer to the History of Israel Poster. Well, we are through the time of the judges. The time of judges lasted about 300 years. Samuel was the last judge. While he was leading, the people wanted a king. God warned them that a king would not be good for them, but they continued to demand one. God finally agreed. The first king of Israel was King Saul. Saul would be the first of many kings who would rule in Israel for about 400 years. The Israelites rejected God as their king and wanted a worldly king instead. And we'll see that God's warning of trouble came true with the very first king, King Saul.

? In fact, here is our first scrambled word. Who knows what this is supposed to spell? He is the main person in our historical account today. **Anyone know who it is?** *Put out the four letters for "Saul." Assign students to put the word together. Write the word on the board, "Saul."*

Good! Now we are going to hear about a group of people called the Philistines. The Philistines were Israel's greatest fear. They were mean warriors and fighters. And they were going to attack Israel! That brings us to our second word! **Bring out the letters for "Philistines."** This word is a little longer. It spells the name of the people who were Israel's enemies! Mean fighters. **Let's put these together.** *Assign students to put the word together. Write the word on the board, "Philistines."*

Listen as I read the first part of the account in 1 Samuel 13:5–8. *Help students find 1 Samuel 13 in their Bibles. Read the passage aloud.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Let's take a closer look at this passage. I'm going to ask you some questions, so we can better understand what God's Word is telling us. Try to find the answers in your Bibles. *Pair up the students who have a Bible with those who don't.*

Observe the Text

Re-read the verses so students can answer the questions from 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.*

It was really big! Can you imagine seeing all those soldiers ready for battle?

? **What did the Israelites do when they saw this army?** *1 Samuel 13:6. They were really scared; they hid in caves, thickets, rocks, holes, and pits.*

➤ Each time you take out a word, assign students to unscramble the word, help them if necessary, and read it aloud. Write the words on the board.

? King Saul ran, too! And he was waiting for someone to come. Who was he waiting for? *1 Samuel 13:8. Samuel.*

? Who was Samuel? Can you tell me? *Allow discussion.*

Samuel was God's prophet. Samuel had anointed Saul as king for God. Samuel was the one who spoke for the Lord. And Samuel had told King Saul to wait for him; he was coming. King Saul was not supposed to do anything until Samuel got there. That brings us to our next word! *Bring out the letters for "Samuel."* These letters spell the name of the great prophet of God—the man King Saul was supposed to wait for. Let's put these together. *Assign students to put the word together. Write the word on the board, "Samuel."*

King Saul didn't want to wait for Samuel. He was afraid of the Philistines. He wanted to hurry up and make an offering or sacrifice to God, so God would bless the people and protect them.

? But what did Samuel tell King Saul? *1 Samuel 13:8. To wait for him.*

That's right, and King Saul wasn't allowed to make the offering or sacrifice to God. Only Samuel could make the offering because he was the Lord's prophet—and King Saul knew this. Saul had waited seven days for Samuel to come. But he still wasn't there. Let's see what King Saul did! Turn to 1 Samuel 13:9–12. *Read 1 Samuel 13:9–12 aloud.*

1 Samuel 13:9–12

? Who said, "Bring a burnt offering?" *1 Samuel 13:9. King Saul.*

? And what did Saul do with it? *1 Samuel 13:9. He made the offering.*

That brings us to another word! *Bring out the letters for "offering."* This spells what King Saul was doing to get God's blessing and protection. Let's put the word together. *Assign students to put the word together. Write the word on the board, "offering."*

? Who was the only one allowed to make the offering? *Samuel.*

? Who showed up right after Saul made the offering? *Re-read 1 Samuel 13:10 if necessary. Samuel.*

Discover the Truth

Saul disobeyed God by offering a sacrifice when he knew he wasn't supposed to. He took matters into his own hands instead of waiting on Samuel. When Samuel asked him what he had done, Saul made excuses for his sin.



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 to attack

the Amalekites. Samuel told Saul that God wanted the Amalekites completely destroyed!

That brings us to another word! *Bring out the letters for "Amalekites."* The Amalekites were enemies of God, and God wanted Saul to destroy them completely! Let's put the word together. This is another tricky one so I'll write it on the board to help you out. *Assign students to put the word together. Write the word on the board, "Amalekites." Have the students repeat the word a couple times.*

God wanted every single Amalekite person, animal, and thing totally gone! The Israelites were not to keep or bring back anyone or anything. So Saul gathered the people and attacked the Amalekites. But you tell me if it sounds like Saul obeyed God and destroyed everyone and everything!

Read 1 Samuel 15:9.

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? Remember, God told Saul to destroy everything. Saul was not to spare anything or anyone. Did Saul listen? *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 animals; and all that was good.*

Discover the Truth

Saul got rid of the animals and things that were no good. But, he kept what he wanted! He did not listen to God's command. Sometimes it is difficult to completely 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 wanted to make his own choices instead of listening to God. Twice, he did exactly the opposite of what God commanded him to do! First, he made the sacrifice himself to God for protection—knowing that only Samuel was allowed to do that. And then, he spared the king of Amalek 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!

So, Saul continued to disobey God. That brings us to another word! *Bring out the letters for "disobeyed."* This spells what King Saul was doing by not listening to God. Let's put the word together. *Assign students to put the word together. Write the word on the board, "disobeyed."*



READ THE WORD

God had chosen Saul to be king and gave him success. 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 tests and disobeyed. Any disobedience to God is sin, and God must judge all sin. God judged Saul's sin.

Saul's life changed for the worse because he trusted in his own wisdom over God's wisdom. He disobeyed the holy God. Let's see what happened to Saul after he disobeyed. *Read 1 Samuel 13:13–14.*

1 Samuel 13:13–14

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? This was not good news from Samuel to King Saul was it? What did Samuel call Saul because of his sin? *1 Samuel 13:13. Foolish.*
- ? Why did Samuel say Saul was foolish? Saul didn't keep something. What was it? *1 Samuel 13:13. The Lord's commandments.*
- ? And what would happen to Saul's kingdom? *1 Samuel 13:14. It would not continue.*

Discover the Truth

God had to punish Saul's sin. Saul disobeyed. And now God would take the kingdom away from him. God was going to find someone else to be the king. God wanted a man who would obey Him. The Bible says God looked for a man who loved God and wanted to please Him. God would find that man. And God would take the kingdom and all its blessings away from King Saul because King Saul would not obey.

That brings us to another word! *Bring out the letters for "kingdom."* This spells what God took away from King Saul because of his disobedience. This was how God judged King Saul. Let's put the word together. *Assign students to put the word together. Write the word on the board, "kingdom."*

God demands obedience from His people. And because God is holy, He must judge disobedience—sin—in the lives of His people.

- ? That brings us to our last scrambled word! *Bring out the letters for "judge."* This spells what God must do when His people disobey Him. Let's put the word together. *Assign students to put the word together. Write the word on the board, "judge."*

Refer to the words that have been unscrambled as you present the next section.

So let's look at our words. King Saul was the main person in our lesson today. The Philistines came to attack Israel with a huge army. The people were scared. King Saul had instructions to wait for Samuel, the prophet of God, but he did not! Instead Saul made the offering himself. That did not please God. Saul had disobeyed. And he disobeyed again when God told him to attack and destroy the Amalekites. Saul did not kill the king, and he saved the finest things from them for himself. God was angry at Saul's disobedience. He had to judge him. God did that by taking the kingdom from Saul.



HOLY

(Refer to Attributes poster)



Who/What Am I?

MATERIALS

- Who/What Am I? Worksheet
- Who/What Am I? Worksheet Answer Key
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Students will complete the worksheets as a class.

Pass out the worksheets. To finish up today's lesson we are going to complete these worksheets together. We've already talked about all of this. I want you to fill in the correct word on your worksheets. Everybody ready? Help with reading the statements.

Give time for the children to write from the word bank on the worksheet.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

We learned today that Saul did not obey God, and he was punished as a result of his disobedience. God demanded obedience of His kings just like He demands obedience from His children today. Often the things He asks seem hard. But He is God, and we must trust Him. If He asks us or leads us to do something, He will show us how to do it.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

We heard today how Saul disobeyed God twice when he took matters into his own hands. He was impatient and made excuses for his actions. He made an offering without waiting for Samuel, the priest and prophet of God. This did not please God. Then Saul disobeyed God again when he saved the life of the king of Amalek and brought back the good things from the land including all the sheep, cattle, and animals. God had commanded that they destroy everything and everyone. Because of Saul's disobedience, God had to punish him. The Lord took away his kingdom and would put someone else in his place.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

We might wonder what all this has to do with us. After all, it happened over 3,000 years ago! Well, we don't have our own prophet like Saul did, do we? But, let's think a minute. We are supposed to obey and trust God—just like Saul was supposed to. God has given us His Word and all of His commands. He wants us to live by this book—the Bible. *Hold up your Bible.*

? One of the many attributes of God is that He does not change. What attribute is that? Can anyone tell me? *Refer to the Attributes of God Poster and discuss. God doesn't change—He is immutable.*

That's right. And that means the God we have today is the very same God Saul had to obey. God still demands obedience to His commands, and He still judges sin.

? Can one of you read this for me? This is something Jesus said in the book of John. John 14:15. *Put the John 14:15 Mini-Poster up on the board and have a student read it.*

Thanks! Now let's read it together. *Allow for a response.* If our hearts love God—really love Him—we will try to keep His commandments. God's commandments are His rules for our lives. We find them in His Word, the Bible! We won't do a perfect job of it because we are sinners, and only Jesus was perfect. But we can get to know Him better. And the more we know and love Him, the 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 children 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.

