

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

Kindergarten

Sunday Morning

Study 30

Saul Sins

Saul Sins

The Objective is the key concept for this weeks lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The “Main passage” is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the “reward box” found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God’s Word.

Objective The goal of this lesson is to demonstrate the importance of obedience and consequences of disobedience through the story of Saul’s sin.

Key Verses

1 Samuel 13:1-14—Main Teaching Passage
1 Samuel 15

Memory Verse - 1 Samuel 16:7b (April Memory Verse)

“For *the LORD* does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

Hook

Give the class a silly command (e.g. everybody cover your eyes with your hands). Note whether or not they listen. Then have a student come up and tell them privately to give a similar silly command. Note again how the students respond.

Because you are an authority, the students (should have) obeyed you. Their peer is not an authority figure, so some may not have obeyed. Point this out. Today, we are going to talk about obedience to authority.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Because Israel asked for a king like the other nations had, we saw last week that God had Samuel anoint Saul as king over Israel. While he was able to have some success in battle (1 Samuel 11), Saul's heart was not pure before God. 1 Samuel 13 and 15 describe the two sins that disqualified Saul from continuing his family's reign, but for time's sake and due to the graphic nature of chapter 15, we will focus this week on chapter 13. Early on in his reign, Saul waged war against the Philistines, who were Israel's constant enemies in those days. Saul and his army went up to fight against the Philistines, but they soon realized that they were outnumbered, so they hid. Samuel had commanded Saul to wait for him seven days, at which point he would offer a sacrifice to the Lord. However, on the seventh day, Samuel had not yet arrived, so Saul offered a sacrifice on his own. As soon as Saul did this, Samuel arrived and demanded an explanation. Saul explained what happened, but Samuel rebuked him for acting foolishly. Because Saul acted on his own rather than obeying the Lord's instructions, Saul and his family would no longer be allowed to rule over Israel. Instead, God was going to select a man after His own heart to lead his people. In chapter 15, Saul would once again fail to obey the Lord, and that sealed his fate. The Lord was going to bring down Saul and raise up a new king who obeyed Him.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

As we have gone through our series on the Old Testament, we have seen many of the characters sin in pretty big ways. Cain murdered his brother. Jacob cheated Esau out of his birthright and blessing. The Israelites worshipped a golden calf in the wilderness. All of these sins were pretty big deals, and each came with some severe consequences. Today's sin, by comparison, does not seem as serious at first. Compared to murder and idolatry, Saul offering a sacrifice to God when he wasn't supposed to might not seem that bad. Unfortunately for Saul, he had to learn the hard way that disobedience to God is not a "small sin," but that God sees obedience as a big deal.

What was so bad about Saul's disobedience? First of all, it showed a lack of trust. Clearly Saul did not believe that Samuel was still coming, or that if he did come, he would be there in time. Samuel said he would come, and Saul should have believed that. Second, Saul was taking matters into his own hands, as if he knew better than God. He determined that it would be better to offer the sacrifice right then and there rather than obey God and wait. Both of these are dangerous mistakes.

LOOK (Continued)

Obedience is a huge deal to God. If God tells us to do or say (or not do or say) something, we are expected to obey what He said, exactly how He said it. Because he failed to obey, Saul lost the right for both himself and his family to rule over Israel. Disobedience, just like idolatry, cheating, and murder in the other stories we read, has major consequences.

A final note of importance in this story is that disobeying Samuel, an authority figure for Saul, was the equivalent of disobeying God. That is important because it shows that obedience to God includes more than just what God says directly. Obedience to God includes obedience to our parents, grandparents, teachers, and other authority figures like the police. When we disobey our parents, we are no better than someone who directly disobeyed the Lord. After all, in Ephesians 6:1, God commands us to obey our parents, so disobeying our parents *is* disobeying God. Disobedience to God, our parents, our teachers, or any other authority is not a small problem, but a big sin.

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking the students to list some people that are difficult to obey. Encourage students to strive to obey those people this week.

Pray: Ask the Lord to help the class be obedient this week. Pray specifically for any students who named someone difficult for them to obey.

Parent Question: Who are some people that it is important to obey?

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on 1 Samuel 13:1-14 by David Guzik

Saul's Disobedience

A. The Philistine threat.

1. (1-2) Saul assembles Israel's first standing army.

Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose for himself three thousand *men* of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mountains of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent away, every man to his tent.

a. **Saul chose for himself three thousand men of Israel:** This was the first "regular" army for Israel. Previously, Israel only had a militia that assembled in times of national threat. Now, for the first time, Israel has a professional army.

b. **A thousand were with Jonathan:** This is the first mention of Saul's son Jonathan. He will become a prominent, and wonderful, part of this book of 1 Samuel.

i. "This is the first place in which this brave and excellent man appears; a man who bears one of the most amiable characters in the Bible." (Clarke)

2. (3-4) Jonathan initiates conflict with the Philistines.

And Jonathan attacked the garrison of the Philistines that *was* in Geba, and the Philistines heard of *it*. Then Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear!" Now all Israel heard it said *that* Saul had attacked a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel had also become an abomination to the Philistines. And the people were called together to Saul at Gilgal.

a. **Jonathan attacked the garrison of the Philistines:** Jonathan was a remarkable military leader. He repeatedly demonstrated the ability to lead a successful attack. Yet this attack merely wakened the Philistines. Israel had enjoyed the "peace" of subjected people: everything will be fine as long as you take your place of subjugation. Through this attack, Jonathan proclaimed, "We won't take our place any longer."

i. It clearly says, **Israel had become an abomination to the Philistines.** As long as the Israelites stayed in their weak, defeated "place," the Philistines thought they were great guys. But as soon as the Israelites show some boldness in the LORD, and are willing to battle against the LORD's enemies, the Philistines consider the Israelites **an abomination!**

ii. The same principle is true spiritually in our lives. We don't war against armies of Philistines; our enemies are *principalities ... powers ... the rulers of the darkness of this age ... spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places* ([Ephesians 6:12](#)). But our spiritual enemies have the same attitude as the Philistines. As long as we are weak and subjected to our spiritual enemies, they don't mind us at all. They may even kind of like us. But as soon as we show some boldness in the LORD, and are willing to battle against the LORD's enemies, our spiritual foes consider us **an abomination!** If peace with devil is more important to you than victory in the LORD, you will often be defeated and subjected.

b. **In Geba:** Archaeologists have found this Philistine fortress at **Geba** (also known as *Gibeah*). The archaeological evidence shows that it was destroyed but then later rebuilt by Saul, and then became his palace and fortress.

c. **All Israel heard it said that Saul had attacked a garrison of the Philistines:** Plainly, Saul is taking the credit for Jonathan's bold attack on the **garrison of the Philistines**. This is a bad sign in the heart and character of Saul. His own sense of insecurity will not allow any of his associates (even his own son!) receive credit. He needs to drink in the praise like a thirsty man drinks water.

d. **And the people were called together to Saul at Gilgal:** King Saul gathers the nation together at Gilgal to prepare for battle against the Philistines.

3. (5-7) The Philistines prepare their army.

Then the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which *is* on the seashore in multitude. And they came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth Aven. When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits. And *some of* the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he *was* still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

a. **Thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude:** The Philistines, angered by the Israelites, gather a huge army to crush their rebellious servants.

i. **Thirty thousand chariots** is a huge number, and many people have doubted the accuracy of this number. "This number seems incredible to infidels; to whom it may be sufficient to reply, that it is far more rational to acknowledged a mistake in him that copied out the sacred text in such numeral or historical passages, wherein the doctrine of faith and good life is not directly concerned, than upon such a pretense to question the truth and divinity of the Holy Scriptures, which are so fully attested, and evidently demonstrated. And the mistake is not great in the Hebrew, *schalosh* for *shelishim*; and so indeed those two ancient translators, the Syriac and Arabic, translate it, and are supposed to have read in their Hebrew copies, *three thousand*." (Poole)

b. **When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger:** Jonathan had been bold enough to launch the initial attack against the Philistines. But the men of Israel are not bold enough to now stand strong against their enemy. In great fear (**the people were distressed**) they hide anywhere they can (**in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits**) or they flee across the Jordan River (**to the land of Gad and Gilead**). This is a low point for Israel!

i. Probably, many of them had thought "What we really need is a king. A king would solve our problems." Now they have a king and the problems are still there. We often think things will "fix" problems when they won't at all. "And hereby God intended to teach them the vanity of all carnal confidence in men; and that they did not one jot less need the help and favour of God now than they did before, when they had no king." (Poole)

c. **As for Saul, he was still in Gilgal:** Saul's position as king had been confirmed at Gilgal ([1 Samuel 11:15](#)). He is still there, many months later ([1 Samuel 13:1](#)). It may be that Saul wanted to keep living the glorious day when Samuel recognized and confirmed him as king before the entire nation. But now, since he is king, the men of Israel are expecting greater things from him.

d. **The people followed him trembling:** They still honored Saul as king, but they are really frightened! It must be better to have **trembling** followers than no followers at all, but how much better if Israel would have really trusted the LORD here!

B. Saul's unlawful sacrifice.

1. (8-9) Saul offers the burnt offering.

Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. So Saul said, "Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me." And he offered the burnt offering.

a. **He waited seven days:** Saul had been in Gilgal for many months. In the press of the current crisis, every day now took on much more importance. He knew the Philistines were assembling a huge army against him, and that once they were organized they would be much harder to beat. Saul probably felt that a quick response gave them the best chance to win the battle.

b. **According to the time set by Samuel:** Samuel had told Saul to wait for him at Gilgal. Then Samuel would preside over sacrifices, and Israel would be spiritually prepared for battle.

c. **But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him:** This added to Saul's anxiety. First, the waiting for Samuel was stressful, because he felt time was his enemy. Second, **the people were scattered from him**, feeling that the battle wouldn't be fought and that the plan wasn't working out.

i. We might just imagine that in the early part of the week, Saul explained his thinking in a pep talk to the troops: "Men, we're going into battle against the Philistines. They have more men, more chariots, more horses, and better swords and spears than we have." So we have to trust God and make a quick attack before they can get organized. Soon Samuel will come and lead us in sacrifice before God. Then we'll go out and whip the Philistines!" But it didn't happen like that. The days dragged on, and Samuel hadn't come yet. The troops were losing confidence in Saul as a leader, and beginning to scatter. Saul felt he was in a lot of trouble!

d. **And he offered the burnt offering:** This was plainly sinful. First, Saul plainly disobeyed Samuel. Second, Saul was a king, not a priest, and only priests were to offer sacrifices. Saul had no business doing what only a priest should do.

i. History shows how dangerous it is to combine religious and civic authority and God would not allow the kings of Israel to be priests and the priests to be kings. In [2 Chronicles 26](#), king Uzziah tried to do the work of priest and God struck him with leprosy.

ii. Clearly, out of fear, out of panic, out of not knowing what else to do, Saul does something sinful. "If Saul was among the prophets before, will he now be among the priests? Can there be any devotion in disobedience? O vain man! What can it avail to sacrifice to God, against God?" (Trapp)

2. (10-12) Samuel arrives and Saul tries to explain what he has done.

Now it happened, as soon as he had finished presenting the burnt offering, that Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him. And Samuel said, "What have you done?" And Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* you did not come within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered together at Michmash, then I said, 'The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the LORD.' Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering."

a. **As soon as he finished offering the burnt offering:** Saul decided to perform the sacrifice not more than an hour before Samuel arrived! If he would have trusted God and waited one more hour, how different things could have been! The last moments of waiting are usually the most difficult, and tempt us most to take matters into our own hands.

b. **Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him:** Saul is really overstepping his bounds now. Literally, the Hebrew says that Saul wanted to *bless* Samuel - perhaps as a priest blesses someone! Now Saul *really* sees himself as a priest!

i. In wanting to *bless* Samuel, Saul may also be trying to show Samuel how spiritual he is. He is like a child who gets caught with his hand in the cookie jar, and then says to mom, "Let's pray!"

c. **Samuel said, "What have you done?"** Samuel knew Saul had done something wrong. He could probably smell the sacrifice in the air! But Samuel was not looking for reasons or excuses. There were no valid reasons or excuses. All Samuel wanted to hear was confession and repentance.

d. **And Saul said:** Saul's response is a classic example of excuse making and failure to trust God.

i. **I saw that the people were scattered from me:** "I had to do something to impress the people, and gain their support back." But if Saul would have obeyed and trusted God, God would have seen him to victory over the Philistines with or without the people. It is true, that many of the Israelites may have admired Saul for offering the sacrifice. "My, there's a man of action! He gets things done! I never understood why the priests were so special anyway." But Saul could have great numbers in all the polling data, and if God were not with him, it would all crumble. He should have been more concerned with pleasing God instead of pleasing the people.

ii. **You did not come within the days appointed:** "You see Samuel, it was really your fault. If you would have come earlier, I wouldn't have needed to do this." But if Saul would have obeyed and trusted God, God would take care of Samuel and the timing. Even if Samuel was totally in the wrong, it didn't justify Saul's sin. We often try to blame our sin on someone else.

iii. **The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the LORD:** "We really needed God's help against the Philistines, and we needed it now, so I had to do it." But if Saul would have obeyed and trusted God, the LORD would take care of the Philistines. Saul could have **made supplication to the LORD** in any number of ways. He could have cried out the LORD for the whole nation with a humble heart, but instead he did the *one* thing he must not do: offer a sacrifice.

iv. **Therefore I felt compelled:** "I had to. It just seemed like the right thing to do. I couldn't wait any longer." Even though Saul **felt compelled**, he was not supposed to be ruled by his feelings. He didn't have to sin, though he felt like it.

d. The whole manner of Saul's explanation makes it clear that this was no misunderstanding. He didn't say to Samuel, "Did I do something wrong?" He knew exactly what he was doing, and probably had thought of the excuses ahead of time.

3. (13-14) Samuel proclaims God's judgment upon Saul's household.

And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you. For now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him *to be* commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."

a. **You have done foolishly:** This is a stronger phrase than we might think. Samuel is not saying that Saul is unintelligent or silly; the Bible speaks of the fool as someone morally and spiritually lacking.

b. **You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you:** Despite all the excuses, all the reasons, all the blaming of someone else, the bottom line is still the bottom line. Samuel

puts it plainly: **you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God.** God commanded you to do something, and you did the opposite.

i. Can not the same be said of all us? **You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you.** Yet there is forgiveness with God, but it is given to the humble heart. It has yet to be seen if Saul will humble himself before God and seek forgiveness and restoration.

c. **For now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever:** The whole point in being a king was to establish a dynasty, where one's sons would sit on the throne afterwards. God tells Saul that his descendants will not reign after him. Though he is a king, he will not establish the monarchy in Israel.

d. **But now your kingdom shall not continue:** We might have expected that Saul would be "impeached" as king right then and there. After all, Samuel uses the word "**now**." But Saul will actually reign another 20 years. He will still be on the throne as a king, but it will never be the same, because the end of his kingdom is certain.

i. Was this an over-reaction to what some might think was a rather small sin? "To disobey God in the smallest matter is sin enough: there can be no sin little, because there is no little God to sin against." (Trapp)

ii. "Men see nothing but Saul's outward act, which seems small; but God saw with how wicked a mind and heart he did this; with what rebellion against the light of his own conscience, as his own words imply; with what gross infidelity and distrust of God's providence; with what contempt of God's authority, and justice, and many other wicked principles and motions of his heart, unknown to men. Besides, God clearly saw all that wickedness that yet lay hid in his heart, and foresaw all his other crimes; and there had far more grounds for his sentence against him than we can imagine." (Poole)

iii. Because the actual judgment for this sin was so far off, we should regard Samuel's pronouncement of judgment as an invitation to repentance. Many times, when God announces judgment, He will relent if His people repent. "Though God threaten Saul with the loss of his kingdom for this sin, yet it is not improbable that there was a tacit condition implied, as is usual in such cases ... to wit, if he did not heartily repent of this and of all his sins." (Poole)

e. **The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be commander over His people:** Though God has rejected Saul, He has not rejected Israel. Because God loves Israel, he will raise up a king, **a man after His own heart.**

i. Saul was a man after Israel's heart. He was all about image and prestige and the things men look at. But God will now give Israel a man **after His own heart**, and raise that man up to be king.

ii. It would be easy to say that the kingdom was taken from Saul because of his sin. And on one level, that was certainly the case. But it was more than that. After all, didn't David sin also? Yet God never took the kingdom from David and his descendants. Because the issue was bigger than an incident of sin, the issue was being a man after God's own heart.

iii. "As for David, though he was not without his failings, - and those foul ones too, some of them, - yet for the main, his heart was upright, not rotten, as Saul's was." (Trapp)

f. What then does it mean to be **a man after His own heart**? We can discover this by looking at the man who was *not a man after His own heart* and comparing him to the man who *was a man after His own heart*.

i. *A man after God's heart honors the LORD.* Saul was more concerned with his will than God's will. David was a man after God's heart in the way that he knew God's will was most important. Even when David didn't do God's will, he still knew God's will was more important than his own was. All sin is a disregard of God, but Da-

vid sinned more out of weakness and Saul more out of a disregard for God.

ii. *A man after God's heart enthrones God as king.* For Saul, Saul was king. For David, the LORD God was king. Both David and Saul would have thought sacrifice important before the battle. But David thought it was important because it pleased and honored God. Saul thought it was important because it might help him win a battle. For Saul, God would help him achieve his goals. For David, God Himself was the goal.

iii. *A man after God's heart has a soft, repentant heart.* When Saul was confronted with his sin, he offered excuses. When David was confronted with his sin, he simply said *I have sinned against the LORD* ([2 Samuel 12:13](#)).

iv. *A man after God's heart loves other people.* Saul became increasingly bitter against people and lived more and more unto himself. David was a man after God's own heart in the way that he loved people. When David was down and out, he still loved and served those who were even more down and out than himself ([1 Samuel 22:1-2](#)).

g. **The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart:** God was *looking* for this kind of man, and God found this man in an unlikely place. In fact, at this time, he wasn't a man at all! God is *still looking* for men and women **after His own heart**.

i. When we think of **a man after His own heart**, many of us think that this is a title reserved for a few "super-spiritual" folks. It isn't for *us*. We want these kinds of people around us, but we never think we can be one of them. We aren't spiritual enough. But look at David: a warrior who killed hundreds of men with his own hands, a fugitive, a traitor, a man who had seasons of backsliding, an adulterer, a murderer. Yet he could be called **a man after His own heart**. If David can have our sins, then we can have his heart. We can love God and pursue Him with the kind of focus and heart David had.