

CALVARY CHAPEL OF PHILADELPHIA

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

KINDERGARTEN

TEACHER'S PACKET

SUNDAY MORNING

Study 30

Saul Sins



Saul Sins

The Objective is the key concept for this week's 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 verses 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.

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?

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.

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

FURTHER STUDY

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

SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE

A. The Philistine threat.

1. ([1 Samuel 13:1-2](#)) 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 had a professional army.

b. **A thousand were with Jonathan:** This is the first mention of Saul's son Jonathan. He will be a prominent and wonderful part 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. ([1 Samuel 13:3-4](#)) 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 meekly surrender to the Philistines 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. As soon as the Israelites showed boldness and courage against the LORD's enemies, the Philistines considered 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 and courage against the LORD's enemies, our spiritual foes consider us **an abomination**. If peace with the 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 later rebuilt by Saul and became his palace and fortress.

c. **All Israel heard it said that Saul had attacked a garrison of the Philistines:** Saul plainly took credit for

Jonathan's bold attack on the **garrison of the Philistines**. This was 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) to receive credit. He needed to drink in praise like thirsty men drink water.

3. ([1 Samuel 13:5-7](#)) 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, gathered a huge army to crush Israel.

i. **Thirty thousand chariots** is a massive number, and some doubt 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 acknowledge 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, *shalosh* 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 was bold enough to launch the initial attack against the Philistines, but the men of Israel were not bold enough to now stand strong against their enemy. In great fear (**the people were distressed**) they hid anywhere they could (**in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits**) or they fled across the Jordan River (**to the land of Gad and Gilead**). This was a low point for Israel.

i. Probably many of them 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 was confirmed at Gilgal ([1 Samuel 11:15](#)). He was still there many months later ([1 Samuel 13:1](#)). It may be that Saul wanted to keep re-living the glorious day when Samuel recognized and confirmed him as king before the entire nation. Now that he was king, the men of Israel expected greater things from him.

d. **The people followed him trembling:** They still honored Saul as king, but they were 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. ([1 Samuel 13:8-9](#)) 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 was in Gilgal for many months. In the press of the current crisis, every day now seemed much more important. 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 told Saul to wait for him at Gilgal. Then Samuel would pre-

side over sacrifices and Israel would be spiritually ready 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 may 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 didn't come. 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. Out of fear, out of panic, out of not knowing what else to do, Saul did something clearly 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. ([1 Samuel 13:10-12](#)) **Samuel arrives and Saul tries to explain what he did.**

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 trusted God and waited one more hour, how different things could have been! The last moments of waiting are usually the most difficult and they powerfully tempt us to take matters into our own hands.

b. **Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him:** Now Saul really overstepped his bounds. Literally, the Hebrew says that Saul wanted to *bless* Samuel — perhaps as a priest blesses the people. Now Saul *really* saw himself as a priest, first offering sacrifice and then giving a blessing.

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 his mother, "Let's pray!"

c. **Samuel said, "What have you done":** Samuel knew Saul did something wrong. He could probably smell the sacrifice in the air. But Samuel did not look for reasons or excuses because 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. Line upon line, Saul made his sin worse with excuses.

i. **I saw that the people were scattered from me:** "I had to do something to impress the people and gain back their support." But if Saul had obeyed and trusted God, God would have seen him to victory over the Philistines with or without the people. Perhaps many Israelites 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." Saul could have positive response in the polling data but if God were not with him, it would all crumble. He should have

been more concerned with pleasing God instead of the people.

ii. **You did not come within the days appointed:** “You see Samuel, it was really your fault. If you came earlier, I wouldn’t have done this.” But if Saul 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 sinning.

v. The whole manner of Saul’s explanation makes it clear this was no misunderstanding. He didn’t say to Samuel, “Did I do something wrong?” He knew exactly what he did and probably thought of the excuses ahead of time.

3. ([1 Samuel 13:13-14](#)) 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 did not mean Saul was 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 was still the bottom line. Samuel put it plainly: **you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God.** God commanded him to do something, and he did the opposite.

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 sat on the throne afterwards. God told Saul that his descendants would not reign after him. Though he was a king, he would not establish the monarchy in Israel.

d. **But now your kingdom shall not continue:** From these words we might expect Saul to be “impeached” as king right then and there. But Saul would 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. This was no 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. 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.” (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 rejected Saul He did not reject Israel. Because God loved Israel He would raise up a king, **a man after His own heart.**

i. Saul was a man after Israel’s heart. He was all about image, 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 the next king.

ii. It would be easy to say that the kingdom was taken from Saul because he sinned and on one level, that was true; but it was more than that. David also sinned yet God never took the kingdom from David and his descendants. The issue was bigger than an incident of sin; the issue was being a man after God's own heart.

f. **A man after His own heart:** What does this mean? We can discover this by looking at the man who was *not a man after His own heart* (Saul) and comparing him to the man who *was a man after His own heart* (David).

i. *A man after God's heart honors the LORD.* Saul was more concerned with his will than God's will. David 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. All sin is a disregard of God, but David 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 knew sacrifice before battle was important. But David thought it was important because it pleased and honored God. Saul thought it was important because it might help him win the battle. Saul thought God would help him achieve his goals. David thought that God 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 confessed his sin and repented ([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, but David loved people. When David was down and out he still loved and served those who were even more down and out ([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. If David had some of our sins then we can have his heart. We can love and pursue God with the kind of focus and passion David had.