

# Saul Is Rejected By God

1 Samuel 15:10-35

## MEMORY VERSE

1 SAMUEL 15:22

“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.”

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Styrofoam cups, masking tape and two old books.

A ball of yarn for each group of six kids, masking tape and a pen.

Construction paper, glue, scissors and the memory verse template.

## ATTENTION GRABBER!

### “Samuel Says”

In this activity you will play a variation of “Simon Says.” The theme of our lesson today is **obedience is better than sacrifice**. This activity will help to reinforce that theme.

For older children, just state the theme to them a couple of times. For younger children, write the theme on the chalk or dry erase board. Explain to the children that you will say a word. If that word is in the theme, the children should all stand up. If that word is NOT in the theme, the children should remain sitting (or sit down if standing). For the younger children, you can allow them to look at the board as you have everyone stand up to practice.

Have several words written down before class, including each of the words from the theme. Here’s an example of how the game works: Say, “Samuel says better. Is “better” part of the theme for today? Yes! Everyone should be standing because it’s part of the theme.” Now say, “Samuel says truth, this is not part of the theme, everyone should sit down if the word does belong to the theme.” After you have practiced, have younger kids turn their back to the board and start the game. Some words that you can use in addition to the words in the theme are love, joy, altar, greater,

nicer, if, maybe. Play a few rounds of the game until you feel that all of the children have a good understanding of the theme. This is a good exercise for hearing and doing the Word of God as we learn from today's lesson.

## LESSON TIME!

God had promised Joshua that the Amalakites would be destroyed because of their evil ways. The Amalakites had defied God by attacking the Israelites and refusing to allow them to cross their land when they came out of Egypt. God sent Saul and his army against them. Samuel gave Saul definite and clear orders from God not to take captives and to destroy *everything*. But Saul flat out disobeyed God. He not only took the king captive, but he kept everything of value. He also erected a monument to himself. Rather than giving the honor and glory to God, Saul set himself up as a great king, a hero who had won the battle by conquering the enemy.

God was grieved that He selected Saul as king because Saul had refused to obey and follow Him. Saul, however, was a part of God's plan. Prior to Saul, God had been their king and ruled through His judges and prophets. When the people demanded a physical king, He gave them exactly what they wanted and demanded. Saul was a big, strong, and handsome man that they could follow with pride, "a king" just like the nations around them. But, Saul did not have the heart for the people or for God. God does not look at the outer appearance; He looks at our hearts, our motives.

Because Saul refused to obey and was taking the glory and honor that belongs only to God, Saul lost God's blessing. God rejected Saul as king and anointed another who would love and honor God and take care of God's people. **Obedience is better than sacrifice.**

1 SAMUEL 15:10,11

Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying,

"I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments." And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night.

Samuel was a prophet of God sent to lead God's people. God had instructed Samuel to anoint Saul as king. When Saul turned from God in disobedience, Samuel was sent by God to reject Saul as His chosen king. **Obedience is better than sacrifice.**

1 SAMUEL 15:12-16

So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal."

Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD."

But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."

Then Samuel said to Saul, "Be quiet! And I will tell you what the LORD said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak on."

The next morning, Samuel went looking for Saul but was told that Saul had gone to Mount Carmel to set up a monument to himself. Saul was parading around and wanted everyone to give him praise for the victory that God had given to the nation. Samuel finds out that Saul had already left for Gilgal.

When Samuel reached Saul, Saul greeted him but lied about what he had done. Saul even said that he had "obeyed the command" of the Lord. Samuel replied by asking about the sounds of the sheep and cattle that Saul had kept for himself in direct disobedience of God's command. When Saul realized that Samuel knew, he tried to blame the soldiers for his sins and then claimed the reason they kept only a few of the sheep and cattle was to sacrifice them to God, which was not true. Samuel told Saul to stop lying. God knows everything. He told Saul to listen to what God had told him.

Sometimes we like to try to make excuses for our sin and disobedience. We do not want to admit that we were wrong or that we sinned. We may even try to blame our sin on others or say that we really meant to serve God, but it just is not as it appears. We may also believe that we are being obedient, but not be *completely* obedient in what the Lord has asked us to do. We need to be careful to do exactly as the Lord commands us. **Obedience is better than sacrifice.**

## **Mission Impossible Relay**

The object is for the children to go on a mission for the Lord. But they will have to listen very closely to the directions.

Divide the children into two groups. Have them form two lines at one end of the room. Place two rows of cups (Styrofoam will work) 3 ft. apart in the middle of the room length wise. Set a tape strip for a starting line. Have the children line up behind the line. Using two old books (one's you are willing to have fall on the ground), have the children place the book on their heads. When you say go they are to balance the book on their heads and weave in and out of the cup "obstacle" course and return. Next they are to pass on the book to the next child who will do the same thing. If the groups are uneven, have the first child go a second time to make it even. Younger ones may need to hold the books.

Only give the children the instructions once. After the relay, ask the children how well they think that they followed instructions. Why is it important to follow instructions? What happens when we do not follow instructions?

### 1 SAMUEL 15:17-23

So Samuel said, "When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel?"

"Now the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.'

"Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?"

And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

"But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."

Then Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king."

In essence, Samuel is saying, "When you had a proper view of yourself and were humble before the Lord, did you not become the head over all of Israel? The Lord was the one who made you king. God sent you on a mission. You were to go to war and destroy the Amalakites and everything they owned because they were evil. Why did you not obey? Why did you keep everything of value, the things that did not belong to you, which God told you to destroy?"

Saul refused to repent and accept the responsibility for his sin. He tried to rationalize and excuse himself. He said he destroyed the Amalekites just like he was told to do. He also said that he only brought back one hostage, the king, just like the other nations would do. He blamed the people for taking the sheep, cattle, and the plunder. He tried to excuse himself by claiming he was going to sacrifice these animals to the Lord.

Samuel replied that God has more pleasure in obedience to His Word than the sacrifice of animals. He is more interested in our listening to Him than the burning of the fat of sheep. Rebellion against God is as bad as witchcraft. Pride and stubbornness are as bad as worshipping idols. Because he rejected the Word of God, Saul was rejected by God. **Obedience is better than sacrifice.**

### 1 SAMUEL 15:24-31

Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.

"Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD."

But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."

And as Samuel turned around to go away, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore.

So Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.

"And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not a man, that He should relent."

Then he said, "I have sinned; yet honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD your God."



So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul worshipped the LORD.

Finally, Saul admitted that he had disobeyed God's commands and Samuel's instructions. He said that he feared the people and obeyed their voice. That was not true; he was the one who gave the commands. He was finally admitting that he sinned, but he was not taking the responsibility. Saul asked for Samuel's forgiveness even though he had not truly repented or asked for God's forgiveness. He was still looking to man instead of looking to God. **Obedience is better than sacrifice.**

Saul should have realized, a person can not fool God. God is able to look at our hearts and know exactly what is going on. Samuel stood firm. Saul had rejected God's Word. He had been rejected as king. As Samuel started to leave, Saul grabbed at him. He caught his clothing and it tore. Samuel used this as a symbol to show Saul that he had lost his kingdom and God's blessing. Samuel also told him that his kingdom would be given to another who would honor and obey God's Word.

God always stays true to His Word. He never lies. He is not a man that He changes His mind or His Word. Saul finally admitted his sin; he asked Samuel to come back with him so that he would look good to the leaders of the people. Could it be that Saul thought more highly of man's opinion of Him than of God's opinion? Note, Saul says, "that I might worship the Lord *your* God." Saul, perhaps, addresses God as "Samuel's God" because he was not experiencing a personal relationship with God himself.

Samuel was close to the Lord and could see the pride in Saul's life, even when Saul was blind to it. Samuel reminded Saul that when he was humble, God had exalted him. Now, Saul had become big in his own eyes and refused to obey God. Let us be careful of pride. Pride is blinding. Sadly, the last person to ever recognize pride is the person who has it. We think we are doing okay when everyone

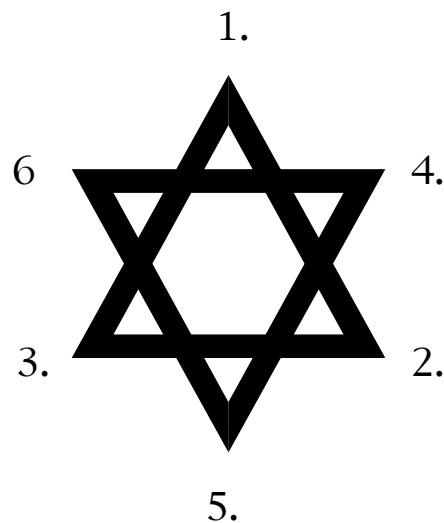
else can spot pride in our lives. May we never become “big” in our own eyes; may we keep our eyes upon Jesus, our example.

## Star Of David

For this activity you will need a ball of yarn for each group of six kids, masking tape and a pen. The object of this activity is to help the children to memorize the memory verse as they guess what star they are making.

For each group of six children write the numbers 1 through 6 on masking tape pieces. Place one number on the floor just in front of each child. It is important how you number them. Begin with number 1 and then the child immediately to their left will be number 4, to their left will be number 2, to their left will be number 5, to their left will be number 3 and to their left will be number 6. See the diagram below.

Example of sitting positions for “Star of David” activity.



Next, have each group sit in a 3 - 4 ft circle. Have the child sitting in front of #1 hold the end of the yarn. They should place the end under the piece of masking tape labeled #1. Have them say the first word of the verse (“to obey is better than sacrifice, 1 Samuel 15:22), pass the ball of yarn to #2, that person tapes the yarn under their small piece of masking tape, says the second word then

passes the yarn on to number three. Child #3 should then repeat the process and pass the ball back to child #1. Cut the string and place both ends under child #1's tape. Pass the ball of yarn to child #4 and repeat the process through children #4 - #6. Ask the groups if they can name the star. When God rejected Saul, He already knew who would be the next king. Who is this star named after? (David) Who was the next king? (David) Was David obedient to God?

### 1 SAMUEL 15:32,33

Then Samuel said, "Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me." So Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."

But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

Samuel had to finish the job that God had assigned to Saul. The Amalakite king, Agag, deserved the death penalty because of the murders and the evil he had done. Samuel carried out the justice that was deserved by putting Agag to death.

God's will was still accomplished, but it was done through someone else other than whom God had intended. God has a plan for our lives. If we are disobedient, His plans will always continue with or without us. His kingdom will never rise or fall based on what we do or do not do. The blessing of obedience is all ours when we realize how wonderful it is that He would even want to include us in His plans. Let us be responsible and obey Him. **Obedience is better than sacrifice.**

1 SAMUEL 15:34,35

Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul.

And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.

Then Samuel and Saul returned to their homes. Samuel never went to see Saul again, even though he mourned for him.

Saul not only disobeyed God's command, but he lied, trying to cover his sins. Even after he was caught, he made excuses and tried to blame others. He blamed his army and later, the fear of his people. When he finally admitted his sin, he downplayed it by saying that he only sinned a little—"only one captive and only a little plunder to sacrifice to God." He never truly took responsibility for his actions or humbled himself in repentance to God. **Obedience is better than sacrifice.**

It is more important to God that we obey and follow Him than to make sacrifices in His name. God loves us and wants what is best for us. He has reached out to us through His Son, Jesus. If we turn away from Him and reject His salvation, we will be rejected. He knows everything about us. He can not be fooled. He does not want excuses, He wants us to love and obey Him. God looks at our hearts and our motives.

## Obedient In All We Do

Often the Bible will use the symbol of our hands to illustrate what we do. For example, we should set our hands to doing God's work. Part of this is obeying what He commands us to do. This craft will show that we should obey the Lord in everything that He wants us to do.

Fold a piece of construction paper in half. Have each child outline their hand. Line up their little finger on the edge of the fold. Cut around the thumb and the fingers, but do not cut the side where the little finger is. After cutting around your outline (again leaving the area near the little finger as a connecting point), unfold it to make two hands. Glue on to another sheet of construction paper as a background. Using the enclosed template, you can cut out the memory verse and glue it onto the hands.

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to obey the Lord no matter what. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

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