

## SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE

**Scripture:** I Samuel 12:12-13:15

**Materials Needed:**  
Paper for wordstrips  
Copies of worksheet puzzle

**Memory Verse:** I Samuel 15:22

To obey is better than sacrifice and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

**Objectives:** As a result of this lesson, I want my students

To Know—Although Saul was anointed king to fight Israel's battles, when he saw the army in front of him, he didn't wait for Samuel but offered the sacrifice and made excuses for his disobedience. As a result, his kingship was taken away.

To Realize—Fearful circumstances do not justify taking matters into one's own hands and disobeying God's clear instructions.

To Respond by—obediently waiting for God instead of rebelliously taking matters into one's own hands.

### Setting up the Story:

Tell the bridge and background to the story:

Samuel grew up and helped the people know God's ways, but his sons didn't. And the people didn't like his sons. The leaders came to Samuel and said, "We want a king like all the other nations have, who will FIGHT our battles for us!" They didn't want judges leading them anymore.

God showed Samuel who to anoint as the FIRST KING—he was tall and very handsome! His name was SAUL. Why did the people want to have Saul as King? To fight their battles!

Well...time passed, and sure enough, there was an enemy to Israel, and Saul gathered soldiers and guess what?! THEY WON! Who helped them win? GOD DID!!

Samuel had a strong warning for the people and King Saul:

"Fear the Lord and serve Him in truth and with ALL your heart...but IF YOU STILL DO WICKEDLY, both you and your king will be swept away." It was very important for King Saul to OBEY God!

Saul started gathering soldiers to have an army—and he got 2,000 men and Jonathan, his son, had another 1,000. Jonathan took just those 1,000 men and fought some Philistines and WON! Do you think everyone was happy?! Yes! ...well not EVERYONE! The Philistines weren't happy! They gathered their mighty army and their mighty chariots: 30,000! and their mighty horses, 6,000! And they came up to fight the Israelites and just stayed in their camp spread out as far as the eye could see!

NOW the Israelites were SCARED!! And Saul was starting to get scared, too.

**Telling the story:**

- I. What Saul SAW
  - A. Philistines gathered:  
30,000 with chariots and  
6,000 horsemen
  - B. Army fleeing
    - 1. Started with 2-3,000
    - 2. Over 7 days had  
dwindled down to 600
    - 3. His soldiers were very  
afraid: RUN AND  
HIDE—caves,  
thickets, cliffs, cellars,  
pits, across the river

**As you tell the story:**

Write the three titles across the board: What Saul SAW DID SAID

As you tell the story, draw stick figures under each heading.

How would you be feeling if you were one of the Israelite soldiers and you saw this massive army in front of you?! They Philistines hadn't even started fighting them yet! They were just gathering! But the Israelites were SCARED!

And hundreds started disappearing from the army. READ vs. 13:6 Ask: "Where did they hide?" ...anywhere they could find!

Imagine you are still with Saul, what would you be thinking? So on the second day, hundreds more run away and hide. And the third day...more run away.

WHAT IS SAUL WAITING FOR?! Why doesn't he do something?! (get guesses) He is supposed to wait SEVEN DAYS for Samuel! Samuel was the one that God had appointed to make the sacrifice, and no one except Samuel was supposed to do it.

The fourth day...more soldiers run away.

The fifth day...more soldiers run away.

Still no Samuel. Still no Saul. What would you be thinking now if you were still with Saul?!

The sixth day...

- C. Samuel wasn't there yet
  - 1. Saul was supposed to wait 7 days
  - 2. Samuel would offer the sacrifice to secure God's blessing
- II. What Saul DID
  - A. He asks for the burnt offerings and peace offerings
  - B. He makes the sacrifice
- III. What Saul SAID
  - A. Saul GREETs Samuel, who arrives just as the offering finishes. "What have YOU done?"
  - B. Saul blames
    - 1. "The PEOPLE...were scattering."
    - 2. "YOU...didn't come in time."
    - 3. "THE PHILISTINES... were assembling!"
- IV. Kingdom taken away

FINALLY...the SEVENTH DAY came. There were only 600 soldiers left to fight all those Philistines. Saul wakes up that morning- he's looking on the horizon. Who is he looking for?! That afternoon...no Samuel yet. The Philistines are there. MORE soldiers are leaving. Saul might be thinking, "I'm not going to have ANYONE left if I don't DO SOMETHING!" What had God said through Samuel? WAIT. What should Saul do? Let's see what he did do...

At that moment, what should Saul have said? What is the first words out of his mouth in 13:11...I saw that...WHO? The people! And then what?

### Concluding the Story:

Poem to remember the story—  
 The enemy was GREAT.  
 Samuel was LATE.  
 Saul DIDN'T WAIT.

He didn't OBEY.  
 He had lots to SAY.  
 His kingship went AWAY.

(Play review game, described below, using this poem.)

## **SAUL'S FOOLISH CHOICES HELPS FOR THE TEACHER**

### **Personal Application Questions:**

1. Is there a situation you are in in which it feels you "can't wait" for God any longer?
2. Have you been tempted to take matters into your own hands, but still try to secure God's blessings?

### **Application Questions to Think Through for your Students:**

1. How does the phrase, "It's easier to ask forgiveness than permission" apply to your students?
2. How might fighting, name-calling, and arguing be ways of impatiently taking matters into their own hands?
3. How do your students justify their disobedience?

### **Memory Verse:**

Play "Hidden Words" p. 44 for the first phrase of the verse: "To obey is better than sacrifice."

### **Post-Lesson Activity:**

Write the poem on wordstrips and hand one to each child.

The enemy was GREAT.

Samuel was LATE.

Saul DIDN'T WAIT.

He didn't OBEY.

He had lots to SAY.

His kingship went AWAY.

As you say the poem through, ask questions about Phrase 1: "Who was the enemy?" (The Philistines!) How many did they have? (30,000 chariots and soldiers) How many horsemen? (6,000) How many did the Israelites have? (2-3,000) What did MANY of the Israelites do when they saw the Philistines gathered for war? (ran away!)

The next time through the whole poem, ask questions about Phrase 2: "What was Samuel supposed to do?" "How many days was Saul supposed to wait?"

Say the poem through each time and ask questions about the remaining phrases.

**Worksheet p. 58** "Sounds Like" from *Big Book of Bible Puzzles Preteen*.