

# Saul Disobeys Twice

1 Samuel 13:1-15; 15:1-35



## bible verse

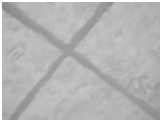
Committing to memory

### Psalm 119:34

I will obey God's laws with all my heart.



December 12, 2010



## story lesson

Bible story

With the charge and commission set, Saul takes the helm of kingship in the land of Israel. Never before had the people of Israel followed a king, but they would soon learn how. It was a wicked thing for the people to choose a king at this time, but nevertheless, the Lord told them that the kingdom would be blessed if the king and the people obeyed God. The opening verse in chapter 13 is an archetypical statement that is found hereon in as each king is introduced and recorded in the reams of history. We will see this time and time again. "Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-two years" (1 Samuel 13:1).

### Disobedience #1

Saul had around 3,000 men total—2,000 with him and the other 1,000 with his son Jonathan. Jonathan attacked a Philistine outpost. The Philistines then assembled to fight Israel with many, many people—"as numerous as the sand on the seashore" (1 Samuel 13:5).

**\*\*seashore\*\*** *If you will remember, this was the same word that was used to tell Abraham how many descendants he would have and that he would be the father of many nations. This word implies that the Philistines had a lot, I repeat, a lot, of people to fight against Israel.*





When the men of Israel saw this massive amount of people that were against them, they were terrified and hid in caves. Saul waited at Gilgal (while all his troops were quaking in fear) for the appointed seven days that were set by Samuel. Samuel was going to offer a sacrifice to the Lord and ask for his counsel. Toward the end of those seven days of waiting for Samuel, the men of Israel began to lose heart and scatter. So Saul took it upon himself to act. He offered up the burnt offering.

And just as he was finishing the offering, Samuel arrived.

“What have you done?” asked Samuel.

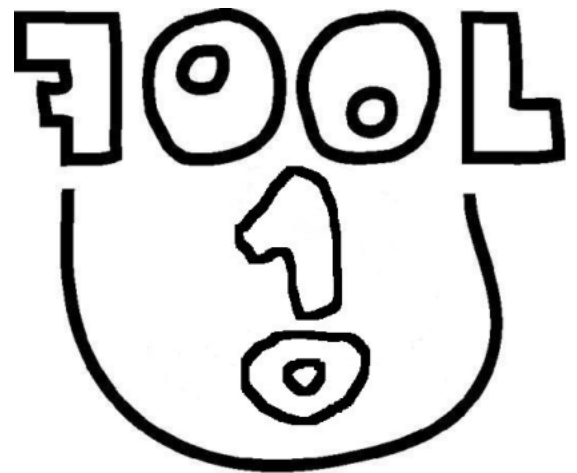
“Saul replied, ‘When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash, I thought, “Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the Lord’s favor.” So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering.’

“You acted foolishly,” Samuel said. ‘You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord’s command’”

(1 Samuel 13:11-14).

Saul took matters into his own hands when Samuel did not arrive and he saw his men scattering and that was disobedient. It was ‘foolish.’ And so judgment was pronounced when Saul disobeyed:

- Saul’s dynasty is rejected
- Saul’s kingdom will not endure
- Saul’s descendants will not sit on the throne as king



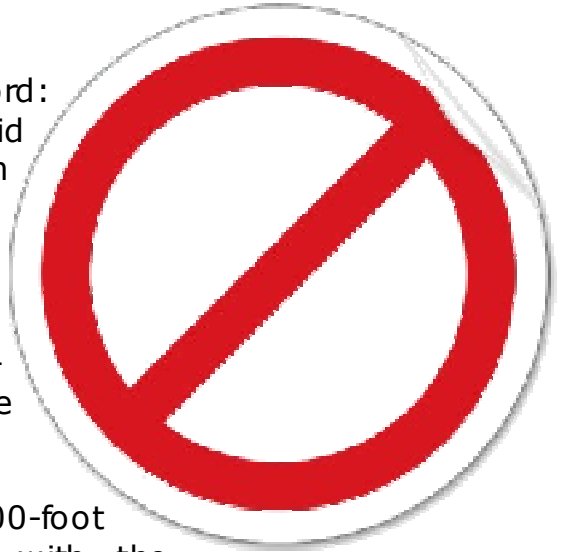
If Saul would have obeyed, then God could have worked with Saul, but he did not. This is disobedience #1.

1 Samuel 13:16-22 explains that Israel had no weapons to fight with because when the Philistines had oppressed them, they had taken away their all their blacksmiths. They became dependent upon the Philistines to provide plowshares, axes, and sickles. “So on the day of the battle not a soldier with Saul and Jonathan had a sword or spear in his hand; only Saul and his son Jonathan had them” (1 Samuel 13:22).



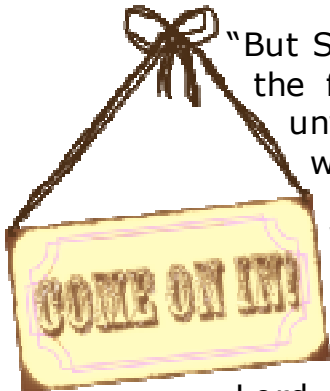
## Disobedience #2

Samuel went to Saul with some instructions from the Lord: "[The Lord] will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys" (1 Samuel 15:2-3). Saul's instructions were clear—destroy everything, do not leave anything behind or take anything for yourselves.



Saul went to the city of Amalek with around 210,000-foot soldiers. He saved the Kenites who were living with the Amalekites because they had treated the Israelites with kindness when they had come up out of Egypt, but Saul attacked the Amalekites that day and took King Agag of the Amalekites, prisoner. Saul and the army did all the Lord had commanded them and they destroyed everything, leaving everything behind, not sparing a thing.

If only that were true, then Saul's fate would have turned out differently. But alas, Saul did not obey:



"But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed" (1 Samuel 15:9). Uh-oh.

When Samuel was in prayer the word of the Lord came to him: "I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions" (1 Samuel 15:11). Samuel spent the rest of the night troubled and crying out to the Lord. Early the next day, Samuel went looking for Saul. Someone told him that Saul had gone down to Carmel where he set up a monument for himself in his honor and was headed toward Gilgal.

"When Samuel reached him, Saul said, 'The Lord bless you! I have carried out the Lord's instructions'" (1 Samuel 15:13). Really?! You really want me to believe that?!

"But Samuel said, 'What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?'" (1 Samuel 15:14).

Well, Saul said, the soldiers spared the best to sacrifice to the Lord your God, and the rest we totally destroyed. Isn't that right, guys? Yep, his troops answered, that's right.



Then Samuel relayed the word of the Lord to Saul:

"Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel. And he sent you on a mission, saying, 'Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; make war on them until you have wiped them out.' Why did you not obey the LORD? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the LORD?" (1 Samuel 15:17-19).

**To obey  
is better  
than to  
sacrifice.**

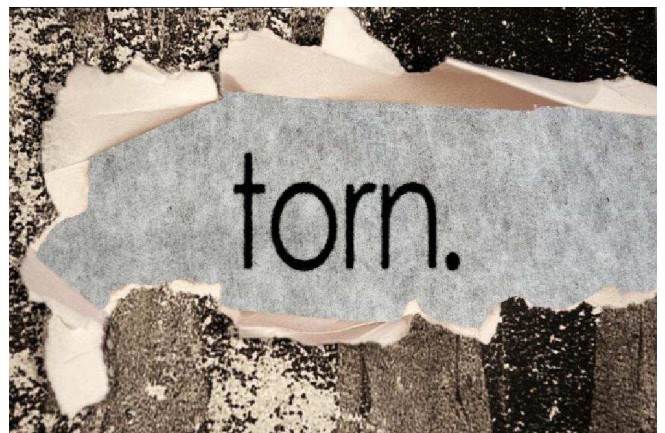
Saul then defends himself: "I did obey," he said. "I did what you told me to do. We killed everything but the best of the stuff in order to sacrifice it to God." To which Samuel tells Saul the infamous line: "to obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Samuel 15:22) – which means that God desires obedience over any sacrifices that you could bring him. You cannot circumvent obedience in order to satisfy your own desires in the process. The motive of your heart is clear—you would much rather take the best stuff in the name of the Lord, than destroy it in the name of the Lord in obedience.

Judgment against Saul is pronounced—"because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king" (1 Samuel 15:23).

- Saul is rejected
- Saul is denied kingship

All because of his utter disdain for the word of the Lord.

Then Saul confesses to Samuel: "I have sinned. I have violated the Lord's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them" (1 Samuel 15:24). Saul wants Samuel to forgive his sin and to come worship the Lord with him. Samuel refuses and reiterates the pronouncement of judgment: "I will not go back with you. You have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you as king over Israel!" (1 Samuel 15:26). Samuel turned to leave and Saul caught the edge of Samuel's robe and tore it. This gave Samuel the opportunity to prophesy upcoming events in the overall working of God's kingdom on earth: "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors—to one better than you. He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind" (1 Samuel 15:28-29). Saul again asked for forgiveness and begged Samuel to come worship the Lord with him. Samuel did go and worship with Saul. Samuel also killed King Agag before the Lord.



Samuel left the presence of Saul for the last time. Samuel did not see Saul again during his lifetime. Samuel mourned for Saul and "the Lord was grieved that he had made Saul king over Israel" (1 Samuel 15:35). This was disobedience #2.



## life application

Making it real

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### The Lord's Will

It seems that no matter what we choose (wise or unwise decisions), we are always to still obey and God will work. So, when you are faced with a difficult decision leaning one way or the other and you are struggling to figure out what the Lord's will is, it is clear: make a decision the best you can and then obey. Even if it turns out to have been the not-so-wise decision, you are not out of the Lord's will or sinning. You learn from your mistakes and then obey. Always obey.

### Excuses

Sometimes we try to rationalize what is okay to do and not okay to do. We know what is right and wrong, but as fallible human beings we try to run right alongside the line of obedience and disobedience. We may even cross over into disobedience and still call it obedience because we have a good explanation. Yet even good intentions are still disobedience. And that displays what your heart looks like—hard or soft.



## questions

remembering

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- 1. Who was the first king of Israel?** King Saul
- 2. Who was the main prophet when Saul was king?** Samuel
- 3. What did King Saul do wrong the first time?** He did not wait for Samuel like he was supposed to...King Saul sacrificed on his own
- 4. What did King Saul do wrong the second time?** He did not completely destroy everything he was supposed to...King Saul and his men kept the best stuff
- 5. Did King Saul ever see Samuel again?** No and yes.



## coloring sheet

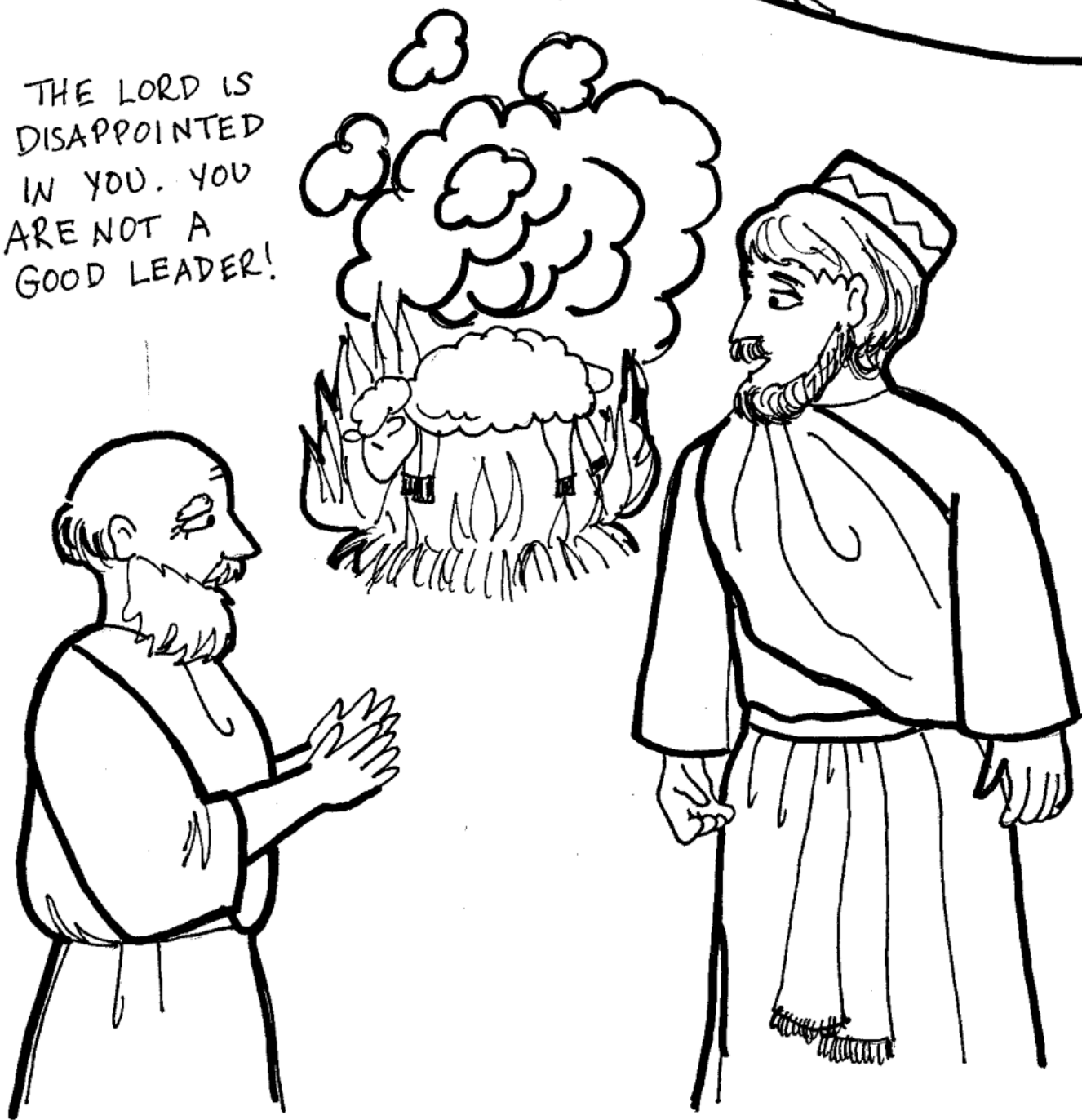
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THE LORD IS  
DISAPPOINTED  
IN YOU. YOU  
ARE NOT A  
GOOD LEADER!



Saul Disobeys Twice