

UNIT 10 | SESSION 2

SAUL RESCUED ISRAEL

1 SAMUEL 11–13



KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 103:19

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who is our King? Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Saul defeated enemy armies for Israel but failed to obey God. Jesus defeated our greatest enemies—sin and death—and always obeyed God. All who trust in Jesus will be saved and receive changed hearts that desire to obey God.

STORY POINT: Saul was a great warrior but chose to disobey God.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

The beginning of Saul's reign as king over Israel brought great promise. He was a fierce warrior, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, was moved to defeat the Ammonite army. However, Saul's foolish choice revealed that he was not the king the people needed. We see Samuel's warnings come true: an earthly king could never fulfill the role of the eternal God.

What did Saul's disobedience reveal about his view of God? How do we see the need for Jesus in this passage?

Saul's willingness to defend the people of Jabesh and secure a victory over the Ammonites only served to encourage the people's hope in him as their king. All the people went to Gilgal, where they made Saul their king.

After Saul's victory over the Ammonites, Samuel gathered the people of Israel together for a final public speech. Samuel acknowledged the callousness of the people's hearts after the threats of Nahash, going so far as to call their actions evil in the sight of God (1 Samuel 12:17). Samuel reminded the people to continue walking in obedience if they wanted God's protection over them. However, Samuel also added the warning that if they disobeyed God or turned away from God, both they and their new king would be swept away.

A wise proverb reminds us, "Pride comes before destruction, and an arrogant spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18), and Saul's pride led him to a foolish choice. Saul sinned against God by offering a burnt sacrifice on his own accord, rather than waiting for Samuel to perform this duty as priest. Saul did not honor God as holy and ultimately revealed that his heart was not after the things of the Lord but his own selfish desires as king.

Samuel condemned Saul for his foolishness and spoke of the king who would replace him—one who would be a man after God's own heart. Though in the short term, we see this prophetic word fulfilled through King David, its ultimate fulfillment would come through his lineage to bring us King Jesus.

Lead kids to see that only Jesus has ever been able to perfectly obey God and change the hearts of His people. By placing faith in Him as Savior and Lord, we can receive the gift of salvation that leads us to desire the things of the Lord instead of our own selfish gain. Jesus is the perfect King our hearts were made to worship.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "Spot the Difference" activity page

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ pitcher full of water
- ☐ red food color
- ☐ glass cup
- ☐ dry erase marker



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ construction paper
- ☐ cardstock, 2 pieces
- ☐ cups, 2

Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible story coloring page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "Saul Rescued Israel" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 10, Session 2" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ "Temples of Thailand, Part 2" missions video

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "The LORD Is Over All (Psalm 103:19)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ sticky notes



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “Do you ever find it hard to do the right thing? Why?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Spot the Difference” activity page.

| **SAY** “Today, we will see how Saul started out doing what was right before God, but he ended up disobeying God.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: FOLLOW DIRECTIONS



Provide kids with paper and markers. Tell kids that you will direct them to draw four things in order. Explain that they must listen carefully because you will only repeat the list of four things twice. Direct kids to draw a fish, a tree, a smiley face, and a triangle. Allow kids time to draw. Then invite kids to share their drawings, seeing who could follow the directions.

| **SAY** “Was it hard to remember the order and what you were supposed to draw? Following directions can be challenging. In fact, no one perfectly follows God’s commands. We all sin. Today, we will learn how **SAUL WAS A GREAT WARRIOR BUT CHOSE TO DISOBEY GOD**. He didn’t follow God’s directions for making a burnt offering.”

☐ OPTION 2: ALL YOUR HEART

Fill a pitcher with water and add in red food color. Use a dry erase marker to draw a heart on the center of a glass cup. Pour a little bit of the water into the cup, so that it’s just below the heart. Ask kids if the heart is full. Pour a little more water in the cup, allowing a bit of water to be in the heart. Ask kids if the heart is full. Continue adding small amounts of water each time, until you finally fill the heart with water.

| **SAY** “Today, we will learn how Samuel told the Israelites to worship God with all their heart. God doesn’t want some of our hearts; He wants all of our hearts. God knows that obeying Him and following Him with all of our hearts is what’s best for us. However, we’ll see how King Saul didn’t worship God with all of his heart. He chose to disobey God.”





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m excited to share our Bible story with you today. Last week, we learned how the Israelites rejected God and chose Saul to be their king. Today, we will see how Saul started out doing what was right by protecting God’s people from their enemies. But after Saul fought Israel’s enemies, he didn’t obey God’s directions. We’ll learn how **SAUL WAS A GREAT WARRIOR BUT CHOSE TO DISOBEY GOD.** [Display the Story Point Poster.]

If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Let’s ask God to give our hearts and minds understanding as we hear His Word: ‘Lord, thank You for Your Word. Help us have ears to hear and hearts to receive Your truth. Give us hearts that desire to obey Your Word. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “Let’s review our big picture question: **Who is our King?** Do you remember the answer? [Allow responses.] The answer is, **Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.** Let’s say the answer again together: **Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.**

We learned how Israel wanted a king like other nations, so God gave them Saul. Saul looked like a king and was a great warrior who fought against Israel’s enemies, but he wasn’t a good, all-powerful king. Jesus conquered the enemies of sin and death and never disobeyed God. He is the one true King who rules over all. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “Samuel was the last judge to lead Israel. Samuel was also a prophet. During most of Samuel’s leadership, Israel did not have a king. However, God’s people saw how all the nations around them had kings. They wanted a king to rule over them too. So, the people chose Saul to be king. Last week, we learned that when the people chose Saul, they rejected God as their king. Today, we will see how Saul led the Israelites to have victory over their enemies, the Ammonites and Philistines. But we’ll also see that Saul disobeyed God. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 11–13. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Saul Rescued Israel.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

SAUL RESCUED ISRAEL

“Israel had enemies from other nations. One of their enemies was the Ammonites. Nahash was a leader of the Ammonite army. He and his soldiers surrounded a town in Israel named Jabesh-gilead. Nahash threatened to hurt the people of Jabesh-gilead if they did not surrender to him.

The elders of Jabesh-gilead sent messengers throughout Israel to ask for help to defend their city.

When Saul heard the people needed help, the Spirit of God came powerfully on him, and Saul was angry. He gathered a large army and came and defeated Nahash and all his soldiers. All the people were glad Saul was king!

Then Samuel gave a final speech to all of Israel. He said, “Here is the king you have chosen. If you fear the LORD, worship and obey Him, and don’t rebel against His commandments, then both you and your king will follow the LORD. However, if you disobey the LORD, His hand will be against you just as it was against your ancestors. Worship the LORD with all your heart, and do not turn away from Him. He will not abandon His people.”

Then the Philistines gathered to fight against Israel, so Saul summoned all his troops to join him at Gilgal. He waited seven days for the scheduled time that Samuel had set, but Samuel had not arrived. Saul’s troops began to leave him because they were afraid. So, Saul said, “Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings.” Then he offered the burnt offering.

As soon as Saul finished making the burnt offering, Samuel arrived and said, “What have you done?”

Saul answered, “When I saw that the troops were leaving and you had not come at the scheduled time, I forced myself to make the burnt offering.”

Samuel said, “You have been foolish. You have not kept the command the LORD gave you. Your family would have reigned over Israel forever, but now God has found another leader, a man after his own heart. He will rule over the people because you have not done what the LORD commanded.” Then Samuel left him.

Christ Connection: Saul defeated enemy armies for Israel but failed to obey God. Jesus defeated our greatest enemies—sin and death—and always obeyed God. All who trust in Jesus will be saved and receive changed hearts that desire to obey God. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Emphasize it: Use your tone of voice to emphasize Saul’s disobedience. Remind kids we all disobey God because we all sin.

Clap hands or boo: When Saul led Israel to have victory over the Ammonites, lead kids to clap their hands. When Saul disobeys God, lead kids to “boo.”



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Why were the Israelites afraid? Why did they need help? **[Allow responses.]** The Israelites had enemies, including the Ammonites. Nahash, the Ammonite army’s leader, wanted to hurt God’s people. So, God’s people were afraid and needed rescue from their enemies.

How did God help His people? **[Allow responses.]** The Holy Spirit came powerfully on Saul, and he was angry that Nahash wanted to hurt God’s people. Saul came up with a battle plan, and with God’s help, was able to defeat the Ammonites. Saul was a great warrior who saved his people in battle, and the Israelites were glad Saul was king.

Later, Samuel gave a final public speech to God’s people. He reminded the people how they begged for a king even though God was already their King. Then Samuel gave the people instructions. What did he tell them to do? **[Allow responses.]** Samuel told the Israelites to obey God and worship Him with all their hearts. If the people did this, God would be with them.

When the Israelites had to face another enemy, the Philistines, Saul again showed that he was a great warrior and led the people in victory. But Saul also disobeyed God. How did Saul disobey? **[Allow responses.]** Saul didn’t wait for Samuel to arrive, and Saul made a burnt offering. Only a priest was allowed to make a burnt offering, and Saul wasn’t a priest. **SAUL WAS A GREAT WARRIOR BUT CHOSE TO DISOBEY GOD.**

When Samuel arrived, he told Saul that he had disobeyed the Lord. Samuel told Saul that God would have allowed Saul and his family to rule over Israel forever, but because of his disobedience, God would establish another king over Israel. Saul defeated enemy armies for Israel but failed to obey God. Jesus defeated our greatest enemies—sin and death—and always obeyed God. All who trust in Jesus will be saved and receive changed hearts that desire to obey God.”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Saul disobeyed God. We all disobey God because we are sinners. Our sin separates us from God and has the punishment of death. But Jesus came to rescue us from sin and death. When we trust in Him, He forgives our sin and gives us life in Him. Have you trusted in Jesus? ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 10, Session 2” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Why is it so hard to not sin?
2. What right response can we have toward God when we sin?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

SAY “Around 95 percent of people in Thailand are Buddhist. The country has thousands of Buddhist temples, and the Buddhist beliefs are part of the nation’s culture. Most of the 23 national holidays, traditions, and everyday activities of the people are tied to Buddhism. Thai people can struggle to turn away from Buddhism to Jesus because the Buddhist beliefs are such a big part of their everyday lives.”

Play the missions video. Explain that missionaries have been in Thailand for almost 200 years, yet very few of the people are Christians. Many people living in Thailand have never heard about Jesus, and they do not know anyone who is a Christian.

Share how Mark Patenaude and his wife served as missionaries in northern Thailand for 18 years. Tell kids that Mark shared how Thai people who become Christians often face shame and persecution from their families and friends for leaving the religious beliefs of their families. However, the younger generation of Thai people are more interested in learning the good news about Jesus, and a growing number of them are trusting Jesus as their Savior. In some cases, these new Christians have opportunities to tell their older family members the good news about Jesus and help them see how they can follow Jesus. Pray for the missionaries and Thai Christians as they help others know about the one true God and His Son, Jesus.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Before this activity, write out the key passage on sticky notes. Write one word per note and place them around the room. Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 103:19 together.

SAY “God is Ruler over all. He has all power and all authority. He is the true King. Let’s continue learning our key passage that reminds us of this truth.”

Challenge kids to search around the room and gather all the sticky notes. Once all the notes are found, work together as a group to read the notes and arrange them in the correct order. If you have a large group, form kids into smaller groups and assign each group a certain color sticky note to find.

Lead kids to sing “The LORD Is Over All (Psalm 103:19).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “Thank You, Lord, for sending Jesus, the perfect and sinless King, to conquer sin and death. Give us the desire to honor and obey You. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles, and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Invite kids to practice finding Old Testament and New Testament books, such as Ezra, Isaiah, John, and Ephesians. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 1 Samuel 12.

Consider pointing out the location of Israel (F10) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 1 Samuel 12:24 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “ Samuel realized his time as Israel’s prophet was ending. He reminded the people of how they rejected God as their King and chose Saul to be their king. The people realized how they had sinned against the Lord, but Samuel told the people not to be afraid. He encouraged them to keep following the Lord and directed the people of Israel to worship the Lord with all their hearts.

Samuel told God’s people that the Lord had done great things for them. God has done great things for us too. While we were sinners, God sent Jesus to save us from our sin. When we trust in Jesus, we are forgiven and through the power of the Holy Spirit can obey God. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ What are ways people disobey God? ”

Answers will vary. Remind kids that everyone sins and disobeys God. Even if we think we are a “good” person, we are not perfect like God. People tell lies, hurt one another, say mean words, act selfishly, and so much more. Encourage kids to remember that God knows their sin but made the way for them to be forgiven.

SAY “ Why does God want us to obey Him? ”

Discuss how God always knows what is best. He is our Creator and King; He made us to be with Him and His way is always good. Tell kids that obedience to God shows that we believe He is King and His way is best. When we obey God, we are led toward God and toward life with Him. Remind kids that our obedience does not save us but shows we love God.

SAY “ How can we worship God with all of our hearts? ”

Tell kids that we can worship God with all of our hearts by putting Him first in our lives and making Him our greatest treasure. God doesn’t want some of our hearts; He wants all of our hearts because only God is worthy of our worship. Nothing else in this world can save us or make us fully happy. Only faith in Jesus gives us hearts that want to love God above everything else.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: GIVE ME YOUR HEART

Before the session, cut two hearts from construction paper. Then cut each heart into 10-12 small pieces, making sure the pieces can easily be put back together into a heart shape. Place each set of pieces in individual cups. Form kids into two teams and give each team a cup, cardstock, and glue.

At your start, challenge kids to arrange the pieces back into the shape of a heart. Encourage kids to lay out the pieces on the cardstock, determining the heart shape. Then direct kids to glue the pieces down. The first team to make a heart wins.

SAY “ Today, we learned how Samuel told the people to worship God with all of their hearts. **SAUL WAS A GREAT WARRIOR BUT CHOSE TO DISOBEY GOD.** Saul didn’t worship God with all of his heart. Instead of putting God first and obeying God, Saul made the burnt offering. He did what he wanted to do rather than what God wanted him to do. When we disobey God, we can ask for forgiveness. We can also ask God to help us love Him above everything else and obey Him. ”

☐ OPTION 2: IS IT A COMMAND?



Tell kids that God gives us commands to follow in the Bible. Remind kids that God’s Word is true and His commands are for our good. Line kids up at one end of the room. Challenge kids to determine if the statement you call out is a command from God or not. If it is a command, tell kids to take a step forward toward you. If it is not a command, tell kids to remain in place. If kids respond incorrectly, they must go back to the start line. Play until one kid is the first to reach you. Consider using the following examples and add more of your own:

- Love one another (John 15:12)
- Go to bed early
- Do not steal (Exodus 20:15)
- Forgive one another (Colossians 3:13)
- Do not be afraid (Isaiah 41:10)
- Never have a messy room

SAY “ Only King Jesus perfectly obeyed all of God’s commands. Like Saul, we all disobey God. But when we trust in Jesus, God takes away our sin and gives us hearts that want to obey Him. ”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.