

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.



PREPARE

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

- ☐ "Story Point Mix Up" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ hula hoops, 2

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ "Thaumatrope" printable, 1 per kid
- ☐ straws, 1 per kid



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set
- ☐ world map



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ dry erase board
- ☐ dry erase marker
- ☐ eraser

Journal and Prayer

- ☐ Journal Page
- ☐ "True or False?" activity 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)



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** “Who are some people you look up to? Why do you look up to them?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Story Point Mix Up” activity page.

| **SAY** “Today, we will see how the Israelites looked up to Saul and were happy he was their king. However, we’ll also learn that Saul was not a perfect king, and he disobeyed God.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: HULA RESCUE



Form kids into two teams, and designate one kid from each team as the Rescuer. Provide each Rescuer with a hula hoop. Direct the Rescuers to stand at one end of the room while their teammates line up at the other end of the room. The Rescuers will run to their teammates and “rescue” the first kid in line by placing the hula hoop over them. Then they will walk back to the other side. The kid who was rescued becomes the Rescuer and will rescue the next kid. Play continues until all kids have been rescued and brought to the other side of the room. The first team to rescue all the kids on their team wins.

| **SAY** “Today, we’ll learn how the Israelites needed to be rescued from their enemies. We’ll see how God gave Saul a heart to rescue the Israelites. However, we’ll also learn that **SAUL WAS A GREAT WARRIOR BUT CHOSE TO DISOBEY GOD.** Being a great warrior doesn’t matter much when someone doesn’t obey God. All people need a perfect Savior to rescue them from sin. Let’s learn how God provided His perfect Son, Jesus, to rescue anyone who trusts in Him.”

☐ OPTION 2: KING OF OUR HEARTS

Provide each kid with a “Thaumatrope” printable, scissors, glue, a plastic straw, and tape. Lead kids to cut out both images on the printable. Place the images back to back, so they are visible. Then glue the images together, leaving a bit of space at the bottom to insert the straw between the papers. Use tape to secure the straw to the thaumatrope. Invite kids to roll the straw between their hands so that the thaumatrope spins back and forth, revealing how the crown looks like it is inside the heart.

| **SAY** “As we hear our Bible story, we’ll learn how Samuel gave a final speech to the people of Israel before Saul became king. Samuel warned the people to obey God and worship Him with all their hearts. Unlike Saul, who was not a perfect king, Jesus is the only King worthy of worship. When we trust in Him as Savior and Lord, we desire to worship Him with all of our hearts.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





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 began to lead God’s people. 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?** What answer did we learn? [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**.

There is no other king like King Jesus! Jesus not only created the world, but when He came to the earth He created, He always did what was right and good. Jesus always obeyed God. Today, we will see how Israel’s first king—King Saul—was disobedient to God. Saul helps us understand how no earthly power or ruler can save us. Only Jesus can save us from our sin. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

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

SAY “After Israel settled in the land of Canaan, they decided they wanted a king. God’s people rejected God as King and instead wanted a king like the other nations around them. God gave the people Saul as king, but Saul was not always obedient to the Lord. Today, we will see that God gave Saul the power to rescue Israel from their enemies; however, he also chose to disobey 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

Thumbs down: Challenge kids to give a thumbs down when they hear how Saul did something disobedient to the Lord.

Explain it: Tell kids it was sinful for Saul to make the burnt offering because he was not a priest. Explain how only a levitical priest, like Samuel, was authorized to make a burnt offering to the Lord.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Nahash the Ammonite was a wicked man who wanted to hurt God’s people. Who gave Saul the desire to conquer Nahash and the Ammonites? Look at 1 Samuel 11:6. [Ask a volunteer to read aloud 1 Samuel 11:6.] The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit came over Saul and caused him to be angry against Israel’s enemy. Ultimately, Saul was a warrior who conquered the Ammonites and rescued Israel. The people were overjoyed at his victory and celebrated that Saul was their king.

Later, another enemy of Israel—the Philistines—gathered to fight against Israel. So, Saul once again assembled his troops to fight. Saul waited seven days for Samuel to join him, but his troops grew restless and were afraid of the Philistines. How did Saul grow impatient and disobey God? Look at 1 Samuel 13:8-9. [Ask a volunteer to read aloud 1 Samuel 13:8-9.] Saul decided to handle things his own way and in his own timing. **SAUL WAS A GREAT WARRIOR BUT CHOSE TO DISOBEY GOD.**

When Samuel arrived, he told Saul that he had disobeyed the Lord. What was the consequence of Saul’s disobedience? Look at 1 Samuel 13:13-14. [Ask a volunteer to read 1 Samuel 13:13-14 aloud.] 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 “ Sin has serious consequences. When Saul’s troops became impatient and afraid, Saul decided that his way was better than God’s way. Anytime we sin, we are revealing how we think our way is better than God’s way. Saul was an imperfect king, but later, God would send the perfect King—His Son, Jesus. All who trust in Jesus are forgiven of their sin and receive eternal life. ”

(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?

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. ”



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

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)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 103:19 together.

SAY “Knowing God’s Word helps us live for Him. Scripture can transform our hearts through the power of the Holy Spirit so we desire to follow Jesus and obey His commands.”

Invite one kid to stand in front of the group. Direct her to lead kids in saying the key passage while also performing motions. Lead the kids to repeat the words of the key passage and follow the motions she performs. Repeat this activity, choosing a new leader each time.

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**





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. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 1 Samuel 12. Explain that the book of 1 Samuel records the history of God's people in the land of Canaan. Tell kids that the book helps us understand how Israel went from having judges as their leaders to having kings rule over them.

Consider comparing the Old Testament Mediterranean Map to a modern-day map to help kids understand where this story took place. (Tip: Locate the areas in and around modern-day Israel [F10]). Choose a volunteer to read aloud 1 Samuel 12:20-24, or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “ Samuel knew the people had done evil when they rejected God and requested a human king. Saul would never be the perfect king the people needed to save them from their sins. However, Samuel directed the people of Israel to serve the Lord with all their hearts, remembering all the ways He had faithfully cared for them. He reminded the people that the Lord will not abandon His people.

In all the years that passed, God never abandoned His people. God knew He would send Jesus to be the perfect King who not only saves people from sin, but who also gives those who trust in Jesus new hearts that desire to obey Him. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ What does it mean that God will not abandon His people? ”

Share how this means God promised to always be with His people. Explain that this promise is not for every person but only for those who trust in Jesus. No matter what circumstance believers find themselves in, they can trust God to be with them.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 94:14.)

SAY “ How did Saul's impatience lead to sin? ”

Remind kids how Saul grew impatient that Samuel had not shown up and saw how his troops were afraid. Discuss how Saul's impatience led to him sacrificing the burnt offering. Rather than trust the word that came from God's prophet, Samuel, Saul chose to trust in his own plan. Share how our plans are never better or greater than God's. Encourage kids to wait on the Lord and trust in His timing. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isa. 55:8-9.)

SAY “ Why did Saul's sin have consequences? ”

Tell kids that all sin has consequences. Some consequences of sin are immediate, while other consequences may appear later. Discuss how the ultimate consequence of sin is eternal death in hell. Share how those who trust in Jesus escape eternal death and receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 5:24.)

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: FOLLOW GOD'S WORD

Form kids into two teams. Think of a book of the Bible, and write blanks for the name of the book on a dry erase board. Then, draw a stick person on the board including a head, arms, legs, two eyes, a nose, two ears, a mouth, and hair. Challenge kids on each team to work together to fill in the letters of the book of the Bible. Invite a kid from one team to call out a letter. If he guesses a letter that is in the name, place it in the correct blank. If the letter is not in the word, erase one part of the stick person. Continue until one team has figured out the name of the Bible book or until the stick person is completely erased. Repeat, as time allows, with different books of the Bible.

SAY “ Samuel told the Israelites to follow God’s commands and obey them. The Bible is God’s Word to us, and as we read it, God uses His Word to help us become more like Jesus. We don’t obey God’s commands to earn salvation, but our obedience to God’s commands shows that we love Him. ”

☐ OPTION 2: WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE?



Read a list of scenarios to the kids. After each scenario, invite kids to raise their hands and offer an excuse someone might give to get out of doing what is asked. Suggested examples include:

- A parent asks a kid to clean her room.
- A teacher asks a kid to solve a math problem on the board.
- A flight attendant asks a person to switch seats with someone.
- A friend asks you for a piece of your candy.

SAY “ SAUL WAS A GREAT WARRIOR BUT CHOSE TO DISOBEY GOD. Saul made an excuse after he wrongly gave the burnt offering. We cannot give God excuses for our sin and expect Him to forgive us. We only find forgiveness for our sin when we trust in Jesus as our Savior. Let’s be encouraged to turn to Jesus when we sin and remember the sacrifice He made so we can be forgiven once and for all. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel, and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, thanking God for the forgiveness we have in Jesus. As time allows, lead kids to complete “True or False?” on the activity page.