

Saul and Sons Die on Mount Gilboa

1 Samuel 31



Old Testament 5
Part 2: Samuel and King Saul

SUNDAY MORNING

Old Testament 5 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

1 Samuel 31; 1 Chronicles 10:1-13; 2 Samuel 1

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: "[W]e should not trust in ourselves but in God" (2 Corinthians 1:9b).

OLDER CHILDREN: "Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you who hope in the Lord" (Psalm 31:24).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- ["You Are My Father"](#)
- ["God's Love is Like a Circle"](#)

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [Judges and King Saul](#) Bible fact cards (provided under "O.T. 5 Bible Facts" on curriculum Web site)
- "Summary of the Bible" from "[Kids Prep](#)" CD by Jeff Miller
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- David in Hiding A Beka Flash-a-Card Series (DISCLAIMERS: use the cards, *not the lesson book*; on card 1.7, note that Saul did not enter the cave to sleep)
- Pictures of athletes and other professionals to illustrate the final point in the lesson

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

Even if bad things happen to me, God will always be there to help. I need to always believe in Him and not give up.



LESSON STARTS HERE

TEACHING ALERTS:



- In this lesson, the subject matter is mature: Saul kills himself. Discuss the subject in an age appropriate manner, keeping in mind that suicide is a subject our children need to be aware of and warned against in our increasingly God-forsaken society. We should teach the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27), including 1 Samuel 31, although the way a subject is approached may be different for different ages.

INTRODUCTION:

We’ve been talking about how Saul started out as a good king but then turned bad. Tell me some of the good things he did. What were some bad things he did, and why did he do them? (Examples: chasing David because he was jealous, disobeying God, etc.) Things never turn out well for those who disobey God. Either things will go badly for them in life, or after life. This lesson will show us how that was true for Saul.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. The application of this lesson, as well as the story itself, is closely related to the previous lesson. Review briefly Saul’s visit to the woman at Endor and Samuel’s message to Saul.
2. The powerful Philistine army had gathered near Shunem, prepared for battle against the Israelites. The Israelite army was camped not far away at Mount Gilboa (10-15 miles from Endor). The Philistines were a very powerful, idol-worshipping people who lived near the Mediterranean Sea. They had a much more organized, well-equipped, and well-trained army than did the Israelites. They were skilled in the use of iron to make weapons and chariot wheels. In contrast, the Israelites, until the time of Solomon, did not really have the strength of numbers nor the equipment needed to defeat powerful enemies like the Philistines. They did have God on their side, as long as they obeyed Him. But because their king continued to disobey God, God was not going to help them with this battle. [This is the third recorded battle between Saul’s army and the Philistines.]
3. The battle went very badly for the Israelites; they retreated (ran away). Three of Saul’s sons (Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua) were killed.
4. Saul was badly wounded by Philistine arrows. He did not want to be taken prisoner, tortured, or put on display by his enemies. Knowing that his sons were dead, and that he was also in danger, Saul gave up. He gave up on himself and on God. He asked his armor bearer to kill him, but the man refused. So Saul decided to fall on his own sword and kill himself. His armorbearer then did the same.



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[King Saul—Killed by a Philistine and an Amalekite?](#)” and “[Did All of Saul’s House Die Together?](#)” on the Apologetics Press Web site for responses to alleged Bible discrepancies regarding circumstances surrounding Saul’s death.



NOTE: Only one son of Saul, Eshbaal or Ishbosheth, was left after this battle. 1 Chronicles 10:6 says that Saul, his three sons, and “all his house” died, but 2 Samuel 2:8-10 tells us that another of Saul’s sons, Ishbosheth, was not killed. He was later appointed King of Israel (later, the northern kingdom) for two years before David took control of a united kingdom. In fact, Ishbosheth and David ruled concurrently (David ruled over Judah—2 Samuel 2:10). The phrase “all his house” in 1 Chronicles 10:6 is likely referring to those individuals from his household (e.g., servants and armorbearer) that accompanied him to battle. 1 Samuel 31:6 supports that position.

5. When the Israelites living in nearby towns heard that Saul and his sons (legitimate heirs to the throne) were all dead, they hurriedly left their towns, and their Philistine enemies came to live in the Israelite towns.



DICTIONARY: **Beth-shan** means “house of quiet,” and it was located at the end of the valley of Jezreel.

6. The Philistines took the armor, the bodies, and the severed heads from Saul and his sons and displayed them in a temple of their idol (Dagon) and on the city wall of **Beth-shan**. Not long thereafter, some brave men from Jabesh-gilead, east of the Jordan River, came at night to retrieve the bodies for burial. The people of Jabesh-gilead did this out of respect and gratitude for Saul defending their town from the Ammonites (1 Samuel 11:1-11). [Share only as much of this information with your students as you think is age-appropriate.]
7. King Saul decided that life was not worth living: that his problems were too big. God was not helping him any longer, because he had disobeyed and not repented wholeheartedly (changed his heart and his life). In contrast, consider the apostle Paul and the many difficult problems that he endured during his lifetime. He suffered a great deal because of his efforts to teach others about Jesus. [Read 2 Corinthians 1:8-10 and 5:8-10 with older children.] At one point in his life, Paul wrote to the Christians in Philippi that he was ready to go on to heaven to be with God. But he knew it was important for him to stay on Earth (to live as long as he could) so that he could help the early Church and continue to teach. Read Philippians 1:19-24.
8. We know that athletes, musicians, scientists, doctors, teachers, etc. have to work very hard to be good at what they do. They have hard jobs, and sometimes they get discouraged because of problems they have. But if they want to be the best, they never give up. We want to be the best people we can be for God. So we must never stop trying to live as He wants us to, even when we have problems or become discouraged (Read Ecclesiastes 9:10; Colossians 3:23). There is no problem so big that God cannot help us. And He **will** help us, if we will continue to trust Him and never lose hope.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Key](#).

Ages 2-5:

- “[Saul Dies Coloring Sheet](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- “[Who Am I?](#)” activity (provided in activity sheets): Describe a character from this unit’s lessons

and ask the children to guess who it is. Show pictures that you have used in class to give hints if necessary.

1st-2nd Graders:

- “[Who Said...?](#)” activity (quotes provided in activity sheets): On strips of paper or cardstock, write quotes from characters in this unit. Put the strips of paper in a bowl or large can, and let the children take turns taking them out. The child (or teacher) then reads the quote and tells who said it. **Or** the kids could “fish” for the quotes. Write the quotes on fish cutouts, attach a paperclip to each one, and put them behind a screen or in a large bowl. Children can take turns “fishing” with a small pole or dowel that has a string with a magnet on the end.
- Memory Verse Review: Divide the class into two teams. As each team has a turn, give one key word from a verse. If the team can say the verse with that clue, they get five points. If they need another word, they get four points; if you give them a third word, they get three points and so on. The teams take turns with the verses until all the verses have been said.
- “[Who Am I?](#)” activity (provided in activity sheets): Describe a character from this unit’s lessons and ask the children to guess who it is. Show pictures that you have used in class to give hints if necessary.

3rd-4th Graders:

- “[Who Said...?](#)” activity (quotes provided in activity sheets): On strips of paper or cardstock, write quotes from characters in this unit. Put the strips of paper in a bowl or large can, and let the children take turns taking them out. The child (or teacher) then reads the quote and tells who said it.
- Memory Verse Review: Divide the class into two teams. As each team has a turn, give one key word from a verse. If the team can say the verse with that clue, they get five points. If they need another word, they get four points; if you give them a third word, they get three points and so on. The teams take turns with the verses until all the verses have been said.
- “[Who Am I?](#)” activity (provided in activity sheets): Describe a character from this unit’s lessons and ask the children to guess who it is. Show pictures that you have used in class to give hints if necessary.
- Give the children a list of scriptures or parts of scriptures that contain the words “hope,” “trust,” or “diligence,” and a concordance. Ask them to find the book, chapter, and verse where those words can be found.

EXAMPLES:

“...hope of eternal life promised ages ago...” (Titus 3:7)

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord.” (Jeremiah 17:7)

“Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you who hope in the Lord.”
(Psalm 31:24)

“...rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer” (Romans 12:12)

“...as a helmet, the hope of salvation...” (Ephesians 6:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:8)

“...rejoicing of the hope...” (Hebrews 3:6)

“My hope is in You...” (Psalm 39:7)

- Have the children read the following:
 - 1 Samuel 29-31 (as well as chapters 26-28 if they have not done so this quarter) [This

could be assigned Sunday, to be completed by Wednesday.] Print out copies of the 1 Samuel 26-31 quiz from AP's [Advanced Bible Reader](#) site for the children to take.

- *David and the Kingdom of Israel*, Contemporary Bible Series, Scandinavia Publishing

SONGS:

“YOU ARE MY FATHER” ([Click to Hear](#))

(Tune: “You Are My Sunshine”)

By: Sarah Richey

You are my Father,
My Heavenly Father.
You are the one and the only God.
And I will worship and always love You,
Because you are the one true God.

You are my Jesus,
My only Jesus.
Because You loved me, You died for me.
And now I love You, and I'll obey you,
So I can live in heaven with You.

“GOD’S LOVE IS LIKE A CIRCLE”

[See Internet for words and tune]

*Author Unknown: Please contact us through the feedback button for this lesson if you are aware of any copyright information for this song.

*** IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE “SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE CURRICULUM WEB SITE.



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WEDNESDAY EVENING

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PERSONAL APPLICATION:

Even if bad things happen to me, God will always be there to help. I need to always believe in Him and not give up.



INTRODUCTION:

Review [O.T. 5 Bible Facts Flashcard](#) (provided under “O.T. 5 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review Sunday’s lesson (see [O.T. 5 Review Questions](#) for example questions)
2. Emphasize that “**hope**” is not just wishing for something. It is looking forward to something with expectation. It requires **diligence**, i.e., never giving up. Talk to the kids about the hard work it takes to become a great athlete or doctor, etc. (“What happens when you don’t do well on a test or strike out playing ball, etc.?”)

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—**BEFORE** CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

See Sunday morning’s lesson

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