

## 16.06 Sauls Disobedience in Battle with Amalek (1 Samuel 15:1-35)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

### Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- “Obedience” song that can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRDS-HnO9N0> or in *Praises*, Vol. 1, p. 72, by Mike and Ruth Greene, published by Majesty Music. (This is the best song on the subject!)
- Two puppets of men could effectively do the dialogue in this story.

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:** Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *vengeance*: paying back for a wrong or injury done
- *obedience*: doing what youre told to do, when youre told to do it, with a right attitude

### Scripture: (ESV)

1 Samuel 15:1 And Samuel said to Saul, “The Lord sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore listen to the words of the Lord. 2 Thus says the Lord of hosts, I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt. 3 Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.”

4 So Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand men on foot, and ten thousand men of Judah. 5 And Saul came to the city of Amalek and lay in wait in the valley. 6 Then Saul said to the Kenites, “Go, depart; go down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt.” So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. 7 And Saul defeated the Amalekites from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt. 8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive and devoted to destruction all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fattened calves and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them. All that was despised and worthless they devoted to destruction.

10 The word of the Lord came to Samuel: 11 “I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments.” And Samuel was angry, and he cried to the Lord all night. 12 And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning. And it was told Samuel, “Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself and turned and passed on and went down to Gilgal.” 13 And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed be you to the Lord. I have performed the commandment of the Lord.” 14 And Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?” 15 Saul said, “They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to the Lord your God, and the rest we have devoted to destruction.” 16 Then Samuel said to Saul, “Stop! I will tell you what the Lord said to me this night.” And he said to him, “Speak.”

17 And Samuel said, “Though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel. 18 And the Lord sent you on a mission and said, Go, devote to destruction the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed. 19 Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the Lord?” 20 And Saul said to Samuel, “I have obeyed the voice of the Lord. I have gone on the mission on which

the Lord sent me. I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction. 21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal.” 22 And Samuel said,

“Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,  
as in obeying the voice of the Lord?  
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,  
and to listen than the fat of rams. 23  
For rebellion is as the sin of divination,  
and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry.  
Because you have rejected the word of the Lord,  
he has also rejected you from being king.”

24 Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. 25 Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may bow before the Lord.” 26 And Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you. For you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.” 27 As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe, and it tore. 28 And Samuel said to him, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. 29 And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret.” 30 Then he said, “I have sinned; yet honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may bow before the Lord your God.” 31 So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul bowed before the Lord.

32 Then Samuel said, “Bring here to me Agag the king of the Amalekites.” And Agag came to him cheerfully. Agag said, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.” 33 And Samuel said, “As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel hacked Agag to pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.

34 Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul. 35 And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the Lord regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.

### **Introduction/Review:**

“I’ll get even with him!”

“I’ll pay her back for what she did to me!”

Sometimes kids say these words and truly mean them. Sometimes they actually do pay back in a bad way when someone has done wrong to them.

But a verse in the Bible tells us not to do that: “Don’t get even, but be patient: for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord” (Romans 12:19; Deuteronomy 32:35). In other words, don’t pay back a wrong; leave it to God. He’ll do a good job of taking care of it.

[Sing “Holding up Hands” found at the end of this lesson.]

Way back when the Amalekites had attacked Israel as they left Egypt and Moses had held up his hands to win the battle, God had said to Moses, “I will totally put out all memory of Amalek under heaven (Exodus 17:15). Later, just before Israel conquered Canaan, God reminded Moses of this promise: “Remember what Amalek did to you . . . when you came out of Egypt . . . how he fought against the weak people who lagged behind, being tired and faint, and he didn’t fear God. When you are at rest in Canaan, you shall blot out all remembrance of Amalek from under heaven” (Deut. 25:17-19).

### **Story:**

*Time for vengeance*

Time had passed—412 years of time (from 1462 B.C. to 1050 B.C.) since God had said the remembrance of Amalek would be blotted out. In all those years God had not blotted out Amalek. But now, through Samuel, God told Saul, “Remember how Amalek fought against Israel on their way from Egypt? Now go and fight Amalek and totally destroy every single living person and animal of the Amalekites.”

Perhaps this vengeance seems cruel to you, but, remember, we were not there. Some scholars have said that disease among some of these people was so bad that it would have killed many among the nations. No matter. God knows and does right, and He now wanted revenge on the Amalekites.

### ***Time for obedience***

Saul gathered 200,000 soldiers from northern Israel and 10,000 men from Judah and went to fight against Amalek. He did a pretty good job of doing what God had said—except one, maybe two little things. If you partly obey, are you really obeying? No. If Mom says to clean up your room and feed the cat and you feed the cat but don’t clean up your room, you have not fully obeyed. Obedience is doing all that you’re told to do, when you’re told to do it, with the right attitude. Saul totally destroyed all the people—except the Amalekite king, Agag. He destroyed all the animals—until he saw some really fine sheep and oxen. ✓“Hmm!” he might have said. “It would be a shame to kill such healthy, high-quality animals. They would be good to eat—even good to sacrifice to the Lord.”

Now, what had God commanded? [Totally destroy all animals.] What did Saul think? [“I’ll keep the best.”] Did he do all he was told to do, when he was told to do it, with a right heart attitude? [No.]

That evening God spoke to Samuel: “Saul is not fit to be king, for he has turned away from following Me and has not done my commandments.”

When Samuel heard this sad news, he prayed and cried to the Lord all night, but in the morning he went out to meet Saul.

Here comes Saul down the road to Gilgal, ✓maybe to sacrifice with thanks to God for his victory. Here comes Agag behind Saul, ✓perhaps with a chain around his neck. Listen to all the animals: “Moo, moo; baaa, baaa.”

Saul sees Samuel and says, “May the Lord bless you. I have performed the commandment of the Lord.”

Samuel answers, “What does this bleating of the sheep and lowing of oxen mean?”

Saul answers, “The people wanted to save the best animals to sacrifice to the Lord *your* God, and the rest we have totally destroyed.”

Samuel: “Stop right there, and let me tell you what the Lord told me last night.”

Saul: “Go ahead.”

### ***Time for punishment***

Samuel: “When you were humble, the Lord made you head of the tribes of Israel and anointed you king over Israel. The Lord sent you to go and totally destroy the sinners, the Amalekites. Why, then, didn’t you obey the voice of the Lord but instead grabbed these animals and did evil in God’s sight?”

Saul then did what you and I do—protest that we have done no wrong: “I have obeyed the voice of the Lord and have gone where He sent me and have brought back Agag and have totally destroyed the Amalekites. But the *people* took the best that should have been totally destroyed to sacrifice to God in Gilgal.”

Samuel: “Does the Lord like offerings and sacrifices more than obeying His voice? Look! To obey is better than sacrifice and to listen (obey) than to offer a sacrifice. Rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as self-willed sin and idol worship. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has rejected you from being king!”

Saul: “I have sinned because I was afraid of the people and listened to them. Please pardon my sin and go

with me so that I may worship the Lord.”

Samuel: “I will not go with you because God has rejected you.”

Samuel turns to walk away from Saul, but Saul grabs Samuel’s coat (robe), and it rips. Samuel now turns to speak to Saul: “The Lord has ripped the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to someone better than you. The Lord is the Strength of Israel, and He will not lie or change His mind.”

Saul, worried about appearances, says, “I have sinned, but honor me now, please, in front of the leaders of my people, and go with me to worship the Lord *your* God.”

Samuel goes with Saul, and Saul worships. But what about Agag, the Amalekite king? Samuel takes care of that issue by slaying Agag in Gilgal.

Then Samuel goes home to Ramah, and Saul returns to his home in Gibeah. The two never see each other again, but Samuel continues to grieve for Saul.

### **Lessons from this lesson:**

- We see Jesus:  
In contrast to Saul, Jesus completely obeyed God, even unto the death of the cross (Philippians 2:9).
- Obedience is very specific, leaving no latitude for one’s own adaptations to God’s commands.
- God has “no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live” (Ezekiel 33:11).

### **Activities:**

- Play dough: oxen; sheep; crowns; chain
- Snack: Cooked cubes of beef and/or lamb
- Review stories of people who “got even”: [Cain, Moses, Esau, Jacobs sons with Shechem.] Who did *not* get even? [Joseph, Moses, Samuel.] Who else said, “The people made me do it”? [Aaron when he built the golden calf.]
- Play “Simon Says.” Give simple commands. If the command is prefaced by “Simon says,” students must do it. If the leader does not say, “Simon says,” and the student does the action, that student is out of the game. Use Bible activities for commands such as “Say the first five books of the Bible”; “Look up John 3:16”; “Tell the name of one of the judges”; “Make the sound of sheep in the story,” *etc.*
- Review questions: (Game: A student who answers a question correctly may make the sound of sheep or cattle.)
  1. Tell two of the three parts of the definition of *obedience*. [Doing what we’re told to do, when we’re told to do it, with a right attitude.]
  2. What was Saul’s mission—the command from God? [Utterly to destroy the Amalekites.]
  3. Why were the Amalekites to be destroyed? [Because they had attacked feeble Israelites when coming out of Egypt.]
  4. Who is responsible to get even? [God alone.]
  5. If it’s God’s responsibility to get even, what is our part? [To leave it with God.]
  6. How did Saul partially obey? [Slew most of the people and animals.]
  7. How did Saul disobey? [He saved King Agag and the best animals.]
  8. What was wrong with saving King Agag and the best animals? [It was not what God had commanded.]
  9. What was Saul’s punishment for his disobedience? [He would not remain king.]
  10. What happened to King Agag? [Samuel slew him.]

**Memory Verse[s]: (ESV)**

- 1 Samuel 12:20–25: And Samuel said to the people, “Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. And do not turn aside after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, for they are empty. For the LORD will not forsake his people, for his great name’s sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you a people for himself. Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you, and I will instruct you in the good and the right way. Only fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you. But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king.”

**Handwork:**

- Print page 6 from the following site (which has the wrong title but is actually about Saul’s disobedience): [Joseph Helps Pharaoh \(weebly.com\)](http://weebly.com). Follow instructions on page 5 to make a chain with the words, “To obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Samuel 15:23).

**vengeance**

**obedience**

# Map of Philistine Cities and Conquests



# Holding Up Hands

Marilyn Alexander

1. The A - mal - e - kites fought the fee - ble in Reph - i - dim one day. When  
5 2 When - Mo - ses got tired, he just could not hold up his hands an - y more; So  
10 Mo - ses held his hands up high, the bat - tle went his way. Hold - ing up hands,  
13 Aa - ron and Hur set him down and then held up his hand as be - fore.  
16 Hold - ing up hands; Pray for those who fight in the Air Force, in the  
Ar - my, in the Coast Guard, in the Mar - ines, in the Na - vy. Hold - ing up hands,  
Hold - ing up hands. The Lord will al - ways do right! The Lord will al - ways do right!



















