

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

## *Kings and Prophets*

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### THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL

I Samuel 9-10; 13:1-14, 15:1-23

Elementary Lesson

Year One, Quarter Four, Lesson One

[0400]

AIM: to use the story of Saul to teach my class that **pride** will destroy their lives.

OBJECTS TO HAVE:     A picture of a bicycle  
                              The word "**PRIDE**" printed in bold letters on a piece of paper  
                              A picture of a crown  
                              Your Bible

POINT OF CONTACT: How many of you have ever ridden on a bicycle? Do you remember the first time you ever tried to ride on a bicycle all by yourself? It was **a little bit scary**, wasn't it? You were probably afraid that you might fall off and hurt yourself. I remember the first time I ever tried to ride a bicycle. I held onto the handlebars as tightly as I could, and I didn't take my eyes off of the ground in front of me. As the bike wobbled back and forth, I was trying with all of my might just to keep from falling over. But the more that I carefully rode along with my eyes on the road, the better I became at riding a bicycle.

Do you know that you are much safer when you are **a little bit nervous** about doing something like that? When you have to concentrate and give it everything you have in order to get it right, usually you will do just fine. Do you know when it starts to get dangerous? When you think you are really good at something, and you stop trying hard. When you rode your bike for a while, and one day you let go of the handle bars and said, "Look, mom, no hands!" that's when you had the best chance of crashing. When you think you are so good at something that you stop being as careful as you used to be, that's when you are in trouble. That is called **pride**. The Bible says, "**Pride** goeth before destruction." That means that when you start thinking too highly of yourself, that's when you are about to fall.

Today I am going to tell you about someone who started out doing well, but one day he became filled with **pride**; and his **pride** caused him to fall.

STORY: The Bible tells us that the children of Israel wanted a king. They had never had a king before. God had been their leader, and God had always provided them with prophets, judges, and priests to help lead them. Samuel was one of the greatest leaders that Israel had ever had, but Samuel was getting old, and the people thought that there would be no one to take his place. So the people told Samuel that they wanted a king. Samuel brought their request to God, and God said that they could have a king, though God warned them that they might not like him once they got him.

God picked out a man to be the first king of Israel. He was a good man and a strong man, and most importantly, he was a godly man. His name was *Saul*. Saul did not want to be the king. In fact, Saul never even thought about being the king. But God set it up for Samuel to choose Saul to be the first king of Israel. Here is how he did it.

Saul's father was a farmer, and he owned many animals. One day Saul's father noticed that two of his donkeys were missing. Saul's father said to Saul, "Son, I need you to take one of our servants with you, and go find these two donkeys that have wandered off." Saul obeyed his dad, and went to find the donkeys. Saul and the servant looked everywhere. They looked in the mountains, the valleys, the riverside, the forests, the fields...they were gone for a long time looking for those two lost donkeys. Finally Saul said to the servant, "If we don't go home soon, my father is going to think WE got lost, and he'll send somebody out looking for US!" The servant said, "I have an idea...Samuel, the man of God lives not too far from here. Samuel gets answers from God. Let's go ask Samuel where the donkeys are. I'll bet he can tell us!" So that's what they did.

But God had planned all of this. You see, God used these lost donkeys to bring Saul right to Samuel. So before Saul got there, God told Samuel, "Samuel, I am going to bring to you the man who is going to be the king of Israel."

Saul walked into town that day, and he saw an old man standing by a gate. Saul said, "Excuse me, sir, can you please tell me where the preacher lives?"

That old man answered, "Yes, I can. I am the preacher, young man. Now, don't worry about your father's donkeys. Your father has already found them." That was strange...Saul hadn't even told Samuel about the donkeys yet. How did he know? Samuel knew because God had told him. Samuel continued speaking to Saul. "God sent you to me, because you are going to be the king of Israel. You are the man God has chosen to be king. You are the leader in Israel."

Saul couldn't believe his ears. He said, "What? ME? I'm just a nobody! You want ME to be the king? You must be mistaken!" That is how Saul started out. He was meek and humble. In fact, when the day came for Samuel to introduce

Saul to the people, they couldn't find Saul. Samuel said, "Ladies and gentlemen of Israel, I present to you your first king, Saul, the son of Kish!" And nobody was there! Samuel said, "Where is he? Where did he go?" And the Lord told Samuel, "He's hiding over there behind that pile of stuff." Saul started out shy and quiet and humble.

You see, that's what it means to be humble. It means that you don't see yourself as being some big shot, somebody who is so important. The person who is proud thinks he is better than everybody else, he thinks he is more important than everybody else, he thinks he deserves the attention. The proud person is always thinking about how others view him; the humble person is always thinking about what his responsibility is to others. When Saul began, he was not thinking about what people thought of him; he was thinking about what people needed from him. He was humble when he started out.

But it was just two years later that Saul's **humility** turned to **pride**. Saul's **pride** turned him into a completely different person. Here is an example of what Saul's **pride** did to him:

One day Saul was leading the armies of Israel in battle against the Philistines. The armies of Israel were not doing very well in the battle. The Philistines had a very large army, with many horses and many chariots. Many of the Israelite soldiers were discouraged. Some of them ran away from the battlefield, and others of them were hiding in caves and in the forest. The army of Israel needed God to help them. Samuel had told Saul that he was coming to offer a sacrifice to the Lord and to pray for the Lord's help. Samuel was the priest. He was the only one who was allowed to offer a sacrifice. Those were the rules that God had made. But while Saul was waiting for Samuel to come, he began to get impatient. Saul began to think, "I'm the king. I don't need to wait for Samuel. Samuel's just a priest. He's not the king like me. Anything the priest can do, the king can do." So Saul went ahead and offered a sacrifice himself, even though he knew that he was not supposed to.

About the time that the sacrifice was finished, Samuel arrived. Samuel told Saul, "You knew that I was coming; why didn't you wait?" And Saul answered, "I just thought that it ought to be done right away. I couldn't wait for you any longer." Saul's **pride** led him to disobey God's man and God's word. Saul had gone from being a **humble** man who said, "I'm just a nobody! You want ME to be the king? You must be mistaken!" to being a **proud** man who said, "I'm the king. I don't need to wait for Samuel. I'll offer a sacrifice if I want to."

You see, the first thing that **pride** does is that **it causes you to be disrespect the people that you are supposed to respect**. You are supposed to respect your mom and dad, but when you get **proud** like Saul did, you talk back to them and treat them badly. You are supposed to respect your teachers, but when you get **proud** like Saul did, you treat them badly and say foolish things to them. You are supposed to respect the preacher, but when you get **proud** like Saul did you roll your eyes while he is preaching, and you speak disrespectfully to him. **Pride** causes you to disrespect the people that you are supposed to respect.

The next thing that Saul did came during another battle. God had told Saul to go and defeat the Amalekites. God told Saul to kill the entire army, and to completely destroy everything that the army owned. Saul took the army of Israel and he obeyed God's command—until the battle was over. Once the battle was over, Saul thought, "You know, it would be a shame to kill all of these good animals. We should take them home and put them on our own farms." That might sound like a good idea, but it was not what God had said to do. But Saul decided that he knew more than God did, so he told his men to keep the animals alive. Then someone came to Saul and said, "Saul, Samuel is coming." Saul said, "Quick, hide the animals." Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said, "We have killed all of the animals, just like God said." But Samuel could hear the cows and the sheep in the background. Samuel said, "If you have obeyed God, what are these animals that I am hearing?" Then Samuel told Saul that, once again, his **pride** had caused him to disobey.

That is the second thing that **pride** causes you to do—**it makes you break the rules that you used to keep**. You look at the rules that your parents have set for you and you say, "That's dumb, I'm not going to do that." You look at the rules at school, at church, and at the laws of the land, and you say, "Those rules are dumb." **Pride** makes you say that. But be careful, you are just about to fall when you get like that.

Not long after that, Saul began to hurt the people around him, those who were closest to him. He began to do things that broke his children's hearts, disappointed his friends, and destroyed his followers. He did this all because of **pride**.

Now, because of Saul's **pride**, God said, "I am going to take Saul's kingdom away from him and give it to someone else." Saul's reign would be cut short, and when he died, his son would not be taking his place, as was supposed to happen. Why? All because of **pride**.

Kids, don't ever let **pride** destroy your life. Tell God every single day, "Lord, I need you to help me." As long as you tell God that you need Him, He will keep you from getting **proud**.

Let's learn our memory verse: **Psalm 1:3** – *And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

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## THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL

I Samuel 9-10; 13:1-14, 15:1-23

Teen and Adult Lesson

Year One, Quarter Four, Lesson One

[0400]

*Teacher, choose one of the following truths to expand upon in teaching this portion of Scripture to your teen/adult class. Teach and apply the truth that you choose using statements and illustrations that are most helpful and applicable to your students.*

- I. **GOD KNOWS HOW TO CALL YOU.** 9:1-17. Saul's father lost his donkeys so that Saul would eventually cross paths with Samuel. All of these circumstances happened to bring Saul to Samuel. God knows how to get in touch with you. God knows how to get your attention. He knows how to call you. He knows how to answer your prayer. Trust God to keep His Word when He says, "Call unto me and I will answer thee." He knows where you are, and He knows how to contact you.
- II. **FOCUS ON THE RESPONSIBILITY IN FRONT OF YOU, AND GOD WILL SHOW YOU HIS BEST FOR YOU.** Saul's job was to find the donkeys. He wasn't candidating to be king; he was all wrapped up in finding his father's donkeys, because that was his job. When you become focused on the menial tasks that lie right in front of you, God will use that to lead you to what He really has for you. You don't find your future by dwelling on your future; you find your future by focusing on the task at hand. Dream big, but don't get so wrapped up in your dreams that you neglect the daily responsibilities, for it is the fulfilling of your daily responsibilities that is going to take you to your dreams. Ecclesiastes 5:3 says, "A dream cometh through the multitude of business."
- III. **GOD WILL ALWAYS EQUIP YOU TO DO WHAT HE CALLS YOU TO DO.** People often fear to answer God's call, thinking that they are not capable; but the Bible promises, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." I Thessalonians 5:24. Notice that God gave Saul a new power (10:6a), a new character (10:6b), a new heart (10:9c), and a new influence (10:26). God doesn't always call the equipped, but He always equips the called.
- IV. **WE NEVER GET SO BIG THAT WE NO LONGER HAVE TO FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS.** I Samuel 13:1-14. Picture the humble young Saul, so timid that he hardly thought himself worthy to come into Samuel's presence, and not even considering the possibility that he might be the man to be the king of Israel. Now, just two years later, he has grown important enough in his own sight that he can override the instructions given him by God's man. Notice that the instructions that he followed when he was humble ("wait for seven days" 10:8) were the same instructions he violated when he grew proud (13:8-10). Though he waited the seven days in 13:8, neither Samuel nor God's Word ever gave him clearance to do the work of a priest. It is only pride that makes a man overstep the boundaries of his authority.
- V. **HOW YOU TREAT GOD'S WORD DETERMINES HOW GOD TREATS YOU.** When Saul was little in his own sight, he had great respect for the Word of God, and God exalted Saul. 15:17. But when Saul grew proud, he rejected God's Word, and God rejected Saul's house from possessing the throne. 15:22-23.

# The Rise and Fall of Saul

I Samuel 9-10; 13:1-14, 15:1-23

[0400]

## *Israel's First King is Destroyed by Pride*

### I. I SAMUEL 9-10 Saul Anointed King

9:1-13 Saul searches for his father's donkeys

9:14-27 Saul meets Samuel

10:1-16 Samuel anoints Saul to be king

10:17-27 Samuel introduces the new king to Israel

### II. I SAMUEL 13:1-14 Saul's Disobedience

13:1-6 Israel's army is in a difficult spot

13:7-12 Saul oversteps his spiritual boundaries

13:13-14 Samuel declares the end of Saul's reign

### III. I SAMUEL 15:1-23 Saul's Rebellion

15:1-3 The LORD instructs Saul, "Utterly destroy the Amalekites"

15:4-9 Saul defeats the Amalekites, but spares some as spoil

15:10-15 Samuel confronts Saul for his disobedience

15:16-23 The LORD declares Saul's actions "rebellion"

*And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

**Psalm 1:3**

# THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL

I Samuel 9-10, 13, 15

[0400]

Unscramble these key words and phrases from today's Bible lesson.

REALSI      \_\_\_\_\_

MELUSA      \_\_\_\_\_

GNIK      \_\_\_\_\_

LUSA      \_\_\_\_\_

SKONDEY      \_\_\_\_\_

TILUMIHY      \_\_\_\_\_

IDERP      \_\_\_\_\_

ECARSIFIC      \_\_\_\_\_

EICEOBEND      \_\_\_\_\_

GMOINKD      \_\_\_\_\_

*And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

**Psalm 1:3**

# THE RISE AND FALL OF SAUL

I Samuel 9-10, 13, 15

[0400]

*The answers to today's puzzle*

REALSI      I S R A E L

MELUSA      S A M U E L

GNIK      K I N G

LUSA      S A U L

SKONDEY      D O N K E Y S

TILUMIHY      H U M I L I T Y

IDERP      P R I D E

ECARSIFIC      S A C R I F I C E

EICEOBEND      O B E D I E N C E

GMOINKD      K I N G D O M