

# Saul And His Sons Die In Battle

1 Samuel 31

## MEMORY VERSE

1 SAMUEL 15:23

“Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king.”

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Sunflower seeds and popcorn (un-popped and popped).

Two sheets of green construction paper for each child, hole punch, yarn, construction paper scraps, marker, pipe cleaners and glue.

Light Blue construction paper (1 sheet per three children), markers or crayons, glue and various types of large seeds or beans.

## ATTENTION GRABBER!

### Reaping and Sowing

Bring to class some sunflower seeds and un-popped popcorn.

To introduce today’s lesson talk about seeds. Ask the children about sunflower seeds. “What will happen if I plant these seeds?” (They grow into sunflower plants.) “Can they grow into any other kind of plant?” (No.) “Why not?” (Because a seed will only produce a plant after its kind). “Can a sunflower seed become a pine tree?” (No.) Do the same thing showing the popcorn seeds. Explain that whatever seed that is planted will always grow into the same plant or tree as what was planted.

It is the same way in our lives. Read Galatians 6:7-8 to your class. If we sow to our flesh then we will reap bad things. If we sow to the Spirit then we will reap good things. Our lesson today shows us that principle very well. We will be studying the death of King Saul and in it learn that Saul harvested what he planted in life, and it wasn’t very good. **We will always reap what we sow.**

As an option you can allow the children to enjoy some popped popcorn later in the class time.

## **LESSON TIME!**

Because King Saul led a life of disobedience and he refused to repent, he lost God's blessing. We have been studying Saul, the first king of Israel. He started off pretty well in his reign and service to the Lord, but after a while his heart turned away from the Lord. He began to sin greatly against God and His people. After a while God rejected him and his family. Saul is now paying for all of His sins and we will see in our story that Saul and his son will die in battle.

We will also learn in today's lesson some valuable lessons about sowing (planting) and reaping (harvesting). God loves us very much and desires to bless us. He wants to have a relationship with every one of us through His Son Jesus. If we will only turn to Him and walk in His ways, then our lives will be filled with wonderful blessings.

But if we decide in our hearts to turn away from Him, it doesn't mean that He doesn't love us. But there are results or things that will happen when we turn away from Him. If we plant good seeds, then good plants will grow. But if we plant bad seeds or weeds, then we will only get a crop of weeds and no fruit. In our lives if we only do bad things, then bad things will come as a result of it. It comes down to our choice whether or not we are willing to give our lives to the Lord.

King Saul made a decision in his heart not to obey God. He wanted to blame everyone else for his own sin against God. Sometimes people today will do the same thing. They will blame everyone else for bad things that happen in their lives, when really it is a result of their own bad decisions and sin. We need to understand that we are responsible before the Lord for our own actions.

Unfortunately we will also see that Saul's sin didn't just affect him, but it also affected his family. In our story today, Saul is killed by the Philistines, along with his son Jonathan and many other Israelites. The choices we make, whether good or bad, don't just affect us, they affect so many other people.

If only Saul would have obeyed, none of these bad things would have happened. He could have lived under God's blessing and protection. So one of the greatest lessons we can learn in our lives is the lesson learned in our story today: **We will always reap what we sow.**

### 1 SAMUEL 31:1

**Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa.**

Our story takes place during a time when there was a war between the Israelites and Philistines. The Philistines were winning so the Israelites started retreating and ran from the Philistine army. Many of the Israelites were killed on Mount Gilboa.

It was only about 10 years or so earlier that David had stood up to the giant, Goliath. David had won a mighty victory over the enemy of Israel because he put his trust in the Lord. How things had changed because Saul refused to trust in and follow the Lord. Now they no longer had God's protection over them and the enemy was winning.

The Israelites ran from the Philistines and many of them died. How our enemy wants to try to attack us. We are the strongest when we are following the Lord and putting on His full armor. When we live a life of disobedience we can open ourselves up to attack. Even at this time, if only Saul had turned to the Lord, how the battle might have turned out much differently. **We will always reap what we sow.**

## 1 SAMUEL 31:2-6

Then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. And the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons.

The battle became fierce against Saul. The archers hit him, and he was severely wounded by the archers.

Then Saul said to his armorbearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me." But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it.

And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword, and died with him.

So Saul, his three sons, his armorbearer, and all his men died together that same day.

The Philistines closed in on Saul and killed his three sons. Then they went after Saul and wounded him badly. Since Saul was critically injured and could not escape, he asked his armor-bearer to kill him so that he would not be captured and tortured by the heathen army. His armor-bearer was afraid so Saul took his own life. Saul's armor-bearer was responsible to take care of Saul. When Saul died he also took his own life and died with Saul. Saul, his sons, his armor-bearer and his entire army died the same day.

This is one of the saddest endings to a man who began so well. When Saul was first made king, he followed and relied on the Lord. He wanted to do what was right and the Lord blessed him. But his heart turned away from the Lord and he ended up dying along with many others.

Sometimes we may think that when we sin that it will only affect us. But that isn't true. Our enemy (Satan) will want you to believe that, but the truth is that our sin against God will affect others. Saul's sin affected three of his sons in that they also died with him on the battle field. Don't be fooled, if we live a life of sin and rebellion towards God, others will be affected.

### 1 SAMUEL 31:7

And when the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley, and those who were on the other side of the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

When the other Israelites saw that the Israelite army was defeated and Saul and his sons were dead, they fled from their homes. They all took off in order to hide.

Saul's sin affected himself, his family and the nation that he was called to rule over. He was supposed to help his nation. A godly leader will be a blessing to any nation, but an ungodly leader will only bring problems upon any nation. Saul's sin was felt by the entire nation of Israel in that the Philistines over ran many of their cities on this day. **We will always reap what we sow.**

### 1 SAMUEL 31:8-10

So it happened the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa.

And they cut off his head and stripped off his armor, and sent word throughout the land of the Philistines, to proclaim it in the temple of their idols and among the people.

Then they put his armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths, and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan.

The next day when the Philistine army came to take the valuables from the bodies, they discovered the bodies of Saul and his three sons. They cut off Saul's head and took off his armor. They sent messengers all over their land to proclaim their victory over Saul and his army. They put his armor in their temple of their idols and strung the bodies up on the wall of Beth Shan for all to see to show their victory over the Israelites and their God.

Saul's defeat meant victory for the enemy. How Satan likes to show off if he wins out over a life. How sad it is that the enemies of God and those who served false gods won the battle this day. Again, it didn't have to be that way if only Saul had obeyed. **We will always reap what we sow.**

## **Sowing His Word in Our Heart!**

The object of this craft is to show the children good things to sow into their hearts in order to produce fruit for the Lord.

Using two sheets of green construction paper (to represent growth) cut out two large hearts. Using a hole-puncher, punch holes around the sides and bottom of the heart (not on top). Put the two hearts together and using yarn, lace through the holes that were punched into the heart. You should now have a heart pocket. On other sheets of construction paper (please use scrap sheets instead of full ones in the supply room) cut out several shapes of large seeds. You can do this before class. Write different good things to sow onto the paper seeds (or allow the children to write them). You can write things such as: read your Bible, pray, obey parents, fellowship with other Christians, serve others, etc.

Next get 3 - 5 pipe cleaners and have the children (or have pre-cut) different shapes of fruit. On the shapes of fruit should be written different fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, self-control, etc. Have the children glue the fruit to the pipe cleaner stems. As an option you can glue a small magnet to the back of the heart.

Have all of the children get together when the craft is complete and explain that the seeds represent good seeds that we can sow into our hearts (reading Bible, etc.). The fruit represents what will come out of our hearts when we sow the right things. As a final thing have the children write (or help them write) "We will reap what we sow" on the front of the heart.

### 1 SAMUEL 31:11-13

Now when the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul,

all the valiant men arose and traveled all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth Shan; and they came to Jabesh and burned them there.

Then they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

When the people of Jabesh Gilead heard about what had happened to Saul, all their brave men traveled all night to Beth Shan. They took down the bodies of Saul and his sons and took them back to Jabesh where they gave them a proper burial. Then they went without food, mourned for Saul and his sons, and worshipped God for seven days.

When Saul first became king so many years ago he had helped the people of Jabesh Gilead. Saul must have always had a special place in their hearts. This one act of kindness on the part of the people from Jabesh Gilead shows that Saul did plant a good seed and good



fruit came out of that. There were people who cared about giving him a proper burial. The people from Jabesh Gilead can be commended for their service to Saul.

There is a saying, “Those who live by the sword will die by the sword.” If you live a violent and unlawful life in disobedience to God, unless you repent you will reap what you sow. You will get caught up in a violent life style and will pay for your sins both now and into eternity like Saul did.

God cannot be fooled. He knows what is in our hearts. How we live is our choice. We can obey His way and live in His blessing or reject Him, be rejected by Him, and die in our sins. It is our decision.

If we ask Jesus into our lives as Savior and Lord, He will forgive us and bring us into His family. He will always be with us and will guide us. Even when things get rough, we can always depend on Him.

God loves us and wants what is best for us. He will always take care of His people. Since Saul rejected God’s love, God anointed a new king who would love God and will care for and lead the people in obedience to the ways of God. That king is David who we have already studied about somewhat and will be studying more about in the future.

God has included Saul’s life and death in the Bible for us to learn from it. Saul shows us that it is important that we serve and obey the Lord. His life also shows us the results of choosing to walk away from Him. **We will always reap what we sow.**

Remember, God still loved Saul and he could have repented and turned back to God at any time. But he refused. Many times we will bring things onto ourselves through our disobedience. Let’s say someone robs a bank. When they are caught they have to go to jail. God still loves that person and if they turn to Him and accept

Jesus then they are saved and will go to heaven. But they still have to serve time in jail because of their bad choices. They will reap what they have sown.

God wants us to do what is right. He loves us and will forgive us. He has a wonderful plan for every one of our lives. Let's obey Him and walk with Him. He will direct our paths, and we will find that those are great paths to be on, paths of blessing.

The same principle in Saul's life that he reaped what he sowed is true in a life of obedience. If we plant good things and obedience then good fruit will come out of our lives that will bless the Lord and others. **We will always reap what we sow.**

## Watch Your Seed Grow

Before class cut several sheets of light blue construction paper into three strips length wise. Cut enough strips so that each child has one strip. After giving a strip to each child have them fold the strip into four equal squares (like an accordion). Open back up and have the children draw soil in the bottom square, a long stem with leaves in the center squares and a flower in the top square. Get a variety of large seeds and have the children glue a seed at the bottom of the stem. On the back of the strip have them write (or help them) "We will" on the first square; "always reap" on the second; "what we" on the third; "sow" on the last square.

After the craft, perhaps during snack time, use one of the crafts to demonstrate the theme. Show how that a plant begins with a seed. Then it begins to grow (show the next square) and grow some more (show the next square) until finally it becomes a beautiful flower (show the final square). Explain to the children that when we sow good things in our lives that beautiful things will result.

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to be obedient to God's word. Ask the Lord to help the children to make right choices which will lead to a blessed life. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.