

引言 INTRODUCTION

No matter how old we are, we love to play the game “Simon says.” The host gives commands to the participants. Whenever people hear “Simon says,” they should follow the order right away. People who do not abide by the instructions soon enough, or do things that do not begin with the phrase “Simon says” will be eliminated. The last remaining player will be the winner. The game is a simple test on whether or not people listen to a leader. We have various leaders in daily life. Students should obey their teachers, children follow their parents and employees are directed by their bosses. In the society citizens are expected to submit to the government officials. As Christians, we acknowledge Jesus as our Lord. We should treat Him as the ultimate leader over all things. In 1 Samuel 8, the Israelites asked for a king. The root cause was that they wanted to replace God with a person. Their plan was destined to fail. We need to take heed of the same lesson the Israelites would learn. We will be lorded over by men when we do not want to be led by God. People will become the kind of servants depending on the type of king they ask for.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 反抗神的權柄 Rejection of God’s Authority

Many year had passed since God helped the Israelites defeat the Philistines. God’s people got rid of their idols and returned to Jehovah. God gave them a period of peace. As usual, people’s faith wavers when they face difficulties. Before long the Israelites disobeyed God again. It shows their rejection of God’s authority. Let us read **verse 1-5**. The elders’ request seemed reasonable. Samuel was getting old, and his two sons did not live up to the standards. It was a repeat of Eli’s family. It proves that godly parents do not guarantee devout children. As children grow up, they have to make their own decisions. Dad and mom cannot be with them 24/7. But God is always there when we call onto Him. Therefore, parents can and should continue to pray for their kids that they will walk with the Lord. The elders had a solution in mind, and so they did not even bother to ask Samuel to inquire of God. They wanted Samuel to find a king. What kind of ruler they looked for? He was possibly a military commander who led soldiers to wars. He should be an effective administrator who made his country prosper. Besides, he must be a compassionate leader who cared for his people. Those are noble qualities to ask for in a king. The problem was not about looking for a person to lead the country. The issue was about picking a king like what other nations had. All along, God appointed servants like Moses, Joshua, many judges and Samuel to govern His people. They conveyed instructions from God. Now the Israelites did not want to go through a middleman. They preferred to go directly to a visible person. They wanted to copy the rest of the world, while God had planned to use Israel as a model for other nations. God wanted foreigners to know that He was the one true God. A future king of Israel, David, had the same goal in mind when he confronted Goliath. He said to the giant in 1 Samuel 17:46 – **“This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand..., that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.”** Eventually, David beat Goliath. The victory did not belong to David. He could win because God manifested His power in him. It proved that God was behind Israel. People would be blessed if they depended on Him. But now the Israelites chose to follow the world

rather than the Lord. Today, many Christians look for a king from the secular world too. They reason that Biblical principles are outdated. God's way does not give the instant results they expect. Believers have little interest in fostering a close relationship with God. They get tired of studying the Bible. Instead, some churches organize classes like floral arrangement, exercise and bingo to attract the general public. Sunday messages should be welcoming to non-believers. Topics like sin and God's judgment should be avoided. People just want some insights on issues like marriage, parenting and success in career. Church leaders borrow ideas from business corporations to plan and promote activities, raise fund and stimulate growth in attendance. What kind of God do they want people to believe? Jesus said that we should be salt and light in the world. Gospel friends come here because they are burdened by sin. Solutions to financial, relational or health issues only deal with the surface. Jesus is the ultimate answer for life. Everything we do in church and in daily life should be about attracting people to Jesus. But the Israeli elders wanted to focus on their king instead. How did God respond to their request? Continue to read **verse 6-8**. Samuel did what any spiritual leader should do when he faces a tough issue: pray to God for advice. The Lord promised to give us wisdom when we seek Him. Solomon asked God for that when he first became a king. Governing a big group of people needs a lot of wisdom. God told Samuel that people's rebellion was nothing new. They had been rejecting His authority since they left Egypt. Their ancestors did not have faith in God. They often grumbled when they had problems. They blamed God for not having their best interest in mind. Therefore, they did not appreciate God's provision. They even wanted to go back to Egypt as slaves! God assured Samuel that people did not reject his leadership but they rejected God's leadership. God told Samuel to let people had their way, just like how God dealt with their ancestors. God asked them not to hoard extra manna because He would give them a fresh supply every morning. They did not listen, and so the manna they stored up turned bad overnight. Their most serious sin was the refusal to enter Canaan because they were afraid of their enemies. They focused on the problems instead of God's promise. Just like in all those disobedient incidents, the Israelites would suffer the consequence for asking for a king. Often God does not stop us when we are about to commit sins. The wisest way for God to treat us is to let go. Even so, God is still very much in control when we go astray. Nothing we do or do not do will mess up His masterplan. When God allows us to sin, it does not mean that He approves our wrong choices. Non-believers always question why there is so much wickedness in the society if there is a real God. It is because God gives us freedom to even reject His authority. God makes humans, not robots. He wants us to realize that we are His children, not slaves. Therefore, God wants us to humbly submit to Him from our hearts. You read your Bible daily, come to church meetings, offer money and serve in the church not only because your pastor and leaders encourage you to. All those actions must originate from your love toward God. Otherwise, any godly habit will not last long. We acknowledge God as our Lord because we realize that we are limited in every aspect. We trust that God knows our deepest needs and He is faithful and capable to provide for us in His timing and fashion.

2. 反映人的愚妄 Reflection of Men's Audacity

Asking for a king was not only a rejection of God's authority. It was also a reflection of men's audacity. Sin is an attempt to override God's ruling. God asked Samuel to give people a heads up in verse 9: **"Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them."** It was the task of a prophet to give people clear

directions from God. Obey God and be blessed, disobey Him and be judged. The choice was theirs. God gave prophet Ezekiel the same assignment. Listen to God's instructions in Ezekiel 3:18-19 – "18 If I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked person shall die for his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. 19 But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die for his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul." We do not like to hear those hard facts. But that is the essence of Biblical truth. There will be contrasting outcomes when we receive or reject God's Word. We need wisdom as we share the gospel to non-believers. Few people like to be reminded that they will go to hell if they do not accept Jesus in this life, although that is God's truth. We can highlight the benefits of salvation. For example, we can be reconciled with God, our status as God's children is restored and we will be under His care. As God requested, Samuel lays out from verse 10 to 18 how the future king would treat his people. I will highlight a few things. The king would draft men to serve as army commanders, labor in other military duties and tend his fields. He would assign ladies to prepare perfume and cook. He would take the best farmland, a tenth of the produce and flocks and servants from his people. People expected their king to provide for their needs and serve them. But the reality was, their king would take the best portions from his citizens and they would serve him. The same outcome can happen in any earthly government. People put their hope in some human leaders. They assume their leaders will make the right decisions and will put people's welfare as the top priority. But the more they rely on the government, their leaders will take more things from them. So goes the saying: power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The Israelites later learned that they made a bad choice when Solomon became king. Under his ruling, people labored seven years to build the temple. They also worked thirteen years to build the royal palace. People voiced their grievance when Rehoboam succeeded as the next king. He did not seize the opportunity to show compassion to his people. Rather, he spoke harshly and announced that he would put an even heavier yoke on them. Thus people rebelled and the nation was split into two. Wicked kings does not mean that kingship is a bad idea. God in His perfect wisdom had expected that people would establish kings. He gave Moses instructions many years ago. The most important commands are in Deuteronomy 17:18-19 – 18 "And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them." The king must duplicate a copy of the Law. He should read it and use it to rule the country. The king was appointed by God as a servant to exercise judgment. The king represented God and not the people. He was not only a military and civil leader, but also a spiritual leader who guided people to follow God. In God's eyes, good kings were those who listened to Him. God maintains the same requirements for leaders today. Good leaders are those who rely on God's Word to deal with everyday matters. Unfortunately, the Israelites elders disagreed. We see their reactions in verse 19-20 after Samuel gave his warnings: 19 But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, "No! But there shall be a king over us, 20 that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles." Three words can summarize their attitude: "I don't care!" They insisted on their demand. God is full of wisdom. He knew that nothing would change their mind once they had hardened their hearts. Therefore, God allowed His people to reap the consequence of their audacity. When people later suffered under the reign of an imperfect king, they called on to God for help. In this country, there is a false hope called

election. People get disappointed every two to four years. They long for better leaders who truly care about their well-being. Their dream never comes true, because humans are self-centered. In the subsequent history of Israel, even the noblest kings had their flaws. David committed adultery and murder, and his son Solomon followed many foreign wives to worship idols. Jesus was the only perfect King. He exercised true justice and righteousness. He brought us an everlasting peace through His death. He conquered sin and Satan on the cross. He reiterated His mission in the world in Mark 10:45 – “**For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**” He did not take anything from us. Instead, He gave up everything for us. That is the example He set for us. The greatest leader must also be the humblest servant. Only the One who had it all had the freedom to forsake it all. You may be a leader at home, at work or in the church. What kind of leader do you want to be? Surely, your role is to give out orders to your subordinate so that the team will accomplish a common goal. But we should learn from Jesus. Treat people with compassion. See them as teammates and not just workers. Be mindful of their limitations and needs. Be ready to step in and help finish their tasks. Show appreciation for good work done, and be gentle in pointing out people’s mistakes. Then they may wonder: “Where does that kind of love come from?” That will open up a gospel conversation. Tell them that you have a Master above you. He loves us with an everlasting love.

結論 CONCLUSION

People will become the type of servants depending on the kind of king they ask for. The Israelites wanted to have a king like other nations had. In the end, they got their wish. Many of the future kings were tyrants who did not love God nor their people. Citizens became more like slaves than countrymen. When people put all their hope in a person, that leader would turn into their idol. King David cautions us in Psalm 16:4 – **The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply...** There will only be distress and dissatisfaction when we replace God with an idol, be it a false god or a human leader. David knew that the wisest choice was to make God his King. God only gives the best gifts to those who put their trust in Him. That includes both physical and spiritual blessings. This psalm foreshadows Jesus Christ, the King of all kings. We see a hint in verse 10: **For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.** Jesus died for our sins on the cross. But His body did not decompose in the ground. He rose from the death. He is now sitting on the right side of the Father in heaven. This King calls us to be His followers. He promised to give us grace in this life and hope for eternity. He puts us in the world to witness for His Kingdom and to invite people to become His citizens. They must confess their sins and accept Jesus by faith to be their King.

引言 INTRODUCTION

相信任何年齡的人都喜歡玩「西蒙說」的遊戲。主持人向參加者發出命令。每當人們聽到「西蒙說」時，他們應該立即遵守命令。不馬上遵守指示，或做不以「西蒙說」開始的事情的人將被淘汰。最後剩下的參加者便是冠軍。這個遊戲是測試人們對領袖的服從。我們在日常生活中有不同的領袖。學生要聽老師的指示，孩子要聽父母的話，員工要聽老闆的吩咐。在社會上，市民需要服從政府官員。作為基督徒，我們承認耶穌是我們的主。我們應該把祂當作一切事情的終極領袖。在撒母耳記上第 8 章，以色列人要求一個王。根本的原因是他們想用一個人代替神。他們的計劃注定會失敗。我們需要留心以色列人將會學到的教訓。當我們不想被神帶領時，我們就會被人支配。我們所渴望的王會決定我們成為怎樣的僕人。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 反抗神的權柄 Rejection of God's Authority

自從神幫助以色列人打敗非利士人以來，已經過了很多年。神的子民除掉他們的偶像，回歸耶和華。神給了他們一段太平時期。像平常一樣，人們在遇到困難時信心便會動搖。沒多久，以色列人再次違背神的旨意。這就表現出他們反抗神的權柄。讓我們讀第 1-5 節。長老的要求似乎很合理。撒母耳年事已高，他兩個兒子都達不到標準。這是以利家族的翻版。這證明敬虔的父母並不能保證敬虔的孩子。隨著兒女的成長，他們必須自己做決定。爸媽不可能 24 小時都在他們身邊。但是當我們呼求神之時，祂總是在那裡。因此，父母可以也應該繼續為孩子禱告，讓他們保持與主同行。長老心中已經有了解決方案，因此他們也懶得去請撒母耳求問神。他們希望撒母耳立一個王。他們在到底期望什麼樣的領袖？他可能是一位帶領士兵打仗的元帥。他應該是一個有效的管理人才，使國家繁榮興旺。他必須是一個關心人民和有同情心的領袖。這些都是對於王合理的要求。他們的問題不在於尋找領導國家的人，乃是在於要求一個像其他國家一樣的王。一直以來，神任命摩西、約書亞、許多士師和撒母耳等僕人來管理子民。他們傳達神的指示。現在以色列人不想通過中間人。他們寧願直接去找一個看得見的領袖。他們要模仿其他國家，而神的心意卻是要使以色列成為其他國家的榜樣。神要讓外邦人知道祂是獨一的真神。未來的君王大衛在面對歌利亞時也有同樣的目標。他在撒母耳記上 17:46 中對巨人說：「今日

耶和華必將你交在我手裏...，使普天下的人都知道以色列中有神。」最後，大衛打敗了歌利亞。勝利不屬於大衛。他能贏是因為神在人的身上彰顯祂的能力。這證明神站在以色列的背後。人若倚靠祂，就能蒙福。但現在以色列人選擇跟隨世界的標準而不是跟隨主。今天，許多基督徒也在跟隨世界的標準。他們認為聖經的原則已經過時了。神的方式不能帶來立時的結果。信徒缺乏興趣與神培養緊密的關係。他們也厭倦了學習聖經。一些教會舉辦插花、運動和賓果遊戲等活動來吸引大眾。主日的信息要使非信徒覺得順耳，應該避免討論像罪和審判的主題。人們只是想對婚姻、教養子女和事業成功等課題有興趣。教會領袖借用企業的經營方式來計劃和推廣活動、募款和增長人數。他們希望人們相信的是什麼樣的神？耶穌說我們應該是世上的鹽和光。福音朋友來到這裡是因為他們背負著罪的重擔。解決財務、人際關係或健康等問題只是表面的需要。耶穌是生命的終極答案。我們在教會和日常生活中所做的一切都應該是為了吸引人們信靠耶穌。但是以色列的長老們把注意力集中在一個王的身上。神如何回應他們的請求？繼續閱讀第 6-8 節。撒母耳做了任何屬靈領袖在面臨棘手問題時應該做的事情：向神尋求指示。當我們尋求祂時，主應許賜給我們智慧。所羅門剛登基時向神求智慧。治理一大群人需要很多智慧。神告訴撒母耳，人們的叛逆並不是什麼新鮮事。自從他們離開埃及以來，他們就一直反抗祂的權柄。他們的祖宗不相信神。當他們遇到問題時便經常抱怨。他們指責神沒有為他們的利益著想。因此，他們不感謝神的供應。他們甚至想要回埃及做奴隸！神向撒母耳保證，人們並沒有拒絕祂的領導，而是拒絕神的領導。神告訴撒母耳答應他們的要求，就像神對待他們的祖宗一樣。神要求他們不要儲存嗎哪，因為祂每天早上都會給他們新鮮的供應。他們不聽，所以他們收集的嗎哪在這二天便變壞了。他們最嚴重的罪是害怕敵人而拒絕進入迦南。他們只看到眼前的問題而忘記了神的應許。就像在那些背逆的事件中一樣，以色列人會承擔要求王的後果。當我們選擇要犯罪時，神不一定會阻止我們。神對待我們最有智慧的方法就是放手。但是縱使我們偏行己路，神仍然掌管我們的生命。無論如何，我們都不會打亂祂的計劃。當神允許我們犯罪時，並不等於祂認可我們的錯誤選擇。非信徒質疑如果神真的存在，為何社會上有那麼多邪惡的事。這是因為神給了我們充分的自由，甚至可以反抗祂的權柄。神造人，而不是造機器人。祂希望我們明白我們是祂的孩子，而不是奴隸。因此，神希望我們從心裡謙卑地順服祂。你每天閱讀聖經，參加教會聚會，奉獻金錢並在教會中事奉，不僅是因為你的牧師和屬靈領袖鼓勵你這樣做。所有這些行動必須出於你對神的愛。否則，任何敬虔的習慣都不會長久。我們承認神是我們的主，因為我們意識到自己在各個方面都是不足。我們相信神了解我們最深層的需要。祂是信實的，並且有能力以祂的時間和方式供應我們。

2. 反映人的愚妄 Reflection of Men's Audacity

要求立王不僅是反抗神的權柄，也是反映出人的愚妄。犯罪就是試圖推翻神的統治。神在第 9 節要求撒母耳提醒人們：「故此你要依從他們的話，只是當警戒他們，告訴他們將來那王怎樣管轄他們。」先知的任務是傳達從神而來的指示。順服神便得到祝福，違背祂將會受到審判。神把選擇權交給人。神給了先知以西結同樣的責任。請聽神在以西結書 3:18-19 中的吩咐：18「我何時指着惡人說：他必要死；你若不警戒他，也不勸戒他，使他離開惡行，拯救他的性命，這惡人必死在罪孽之中；我卻要向你討他喪命的罪。19 倘若你警戒惡人，他仍不轉離罪惡，也不離開惡行，他必死在罪孽之中，你卻救自己脫離了罪。」沒有人喜歡聽到這樣的事實。但這就是聖經真理的本質。接受或拒絕神的話之時，會有截然不同的結果。當我們向非信徒分享福音時，我們需要有智慧。很少有人願意被提醒，如果他們今生不接受耶穌便會下地獄，儘管那是神的真理。我們可以強調救恩的好處。例如，我們可以與神和好，我們恢復神兒女的地位，神會眷顧我們。按照神的要求，撒母耳從第 10 到第 18 節列出將來王會如何對待他的人民。我把內容稍為總結一下。王會徵召男人擔任軍隊指揮官，從事其他軍事任務並為他耕田。他會指派女士們準備香膏和做飯。他會從人民那裡拿走最好的農田、十分之一的農產品和羊群並分派他們作僕人。人們期望他們的王滿足他們的需要並為他們服務。但事實是，王會從人民那裡得到一切最好的，並要為他服務。同樣的結果也可能發生在任何地上的政權。人們把希望寄託在一些領袖身上。他們以為領袖會做出正確的決定，並將人民的福祉放在首位。但是他們越依賴政府，領袖就會從他們那裡拿走更多的東西。俗語說：權力腐敗，絕對的權力絕對腐敗。當所羅門登基時，以色列人後來終於省悟，他們做了一個錯誤的選擇。在所羅門的統治下，人們用了七年的時間建造聖殿。他們還用了十三年的時間蓋皇宮。當羅波安繼位時，人們表達他們的不滿。他沒有抓住機會向人民表示同情。相反，他說話嚴厲，並宣布他會使他們負更重的軛。於是人民起義，國家一分為二。邪惡的君王並不意味著立王是一個壞主意。神有完全的智慧，祂早已知道人們以後會想要立王。許多年前，神給了摩西指示。最重要的命令是在申命記 17:18-19 – 18「他登了國位，就要將祭司利未人面前的這律法書，為自己抄錄一本，19 存在他那裏，要平生誦讀，好學習敬畏耶和華—他的神，謹守遵行這律法書上的一切言語和這些律例。」王必須抄寫一份律法。他必須閱讀並使用律法來治理國家。王是被神委派執行審判的僕人。王代表神而不是代表人民。他不僅是軍事和民事的領袖，也是帶領人民跟隨神的屬靈領袖。在神的眼中，聽從祂的便是好君王。神對今天的領袖也有同樣的要求。依靠神的話語來處理日常事務的人便是好的領袖。可惜以色列的長老並不同意。他們聽到撒母耳的警告後在 19-20 節回應：19 百姓竟不肯聽撒母耳的話，說：「不然！我們定要一個王治理我們，20 使我們像列國一樣，有王治理我們，統領我們，為我們爭戰。」我們可以用三個字來概

括他們的態度：「我不管！」他們堅持自己的要求。神是充滿智慧的。祂知道一旦人的心變剛硬，便無法改變他們的想法。因此，神讓祂的子民自食其果。當人們後來在王的統治下受苦時，他們便向神求救。在美國，有一種虛假的希望叫做選舉。人們每兩到四年就會失望一次。他們渴望有真正關心他們利益的領袖。他們的夢想永遠不會實現，因為人都是自我中心的。在隨後的以色列歷史中，即使是最高尚的君王也有缺陷。大衛犯姦淫和謀殺，他的兒子所羅門跟隨許多外邦妻子敬拜偶像。耶穌是唯一完美的君王。祂執行真正的公義。藉著祂的死帶給我們永恆的平安。祂在十字架上戰勝了罪和撒旦。祂在馬可福音 10:45 重申了祂在世上的使命：「**因為人子來，並不是要受人的服事，乃是要服事人，並且要捨命作多人的贖價。**」耶穌沒有從我們拿走任何東西。相反，祂為我們捨棄了一切。這就是祂為我們樹立的榜樣。最偉大的領袖也必須是最卑微的僕人。只有擁有一切的那一位才有自由放棄一切。你可能在家中、工作場所或教會中擔任領袖。你想成為什麼樣的領袖？當然，你的角色是向下屬傳達命令，使團隊實現共同的目標。但我們應該向耶穌學習，以恩慈待人。將別人視為隊友，而不僅僅是雇員。注意他們的不足和需要。隨時準備幫助完成他們的任務。讚賞他們好的表現，並溫和地指出別人的錯誤。然後他們可能會想：「這份愛是從哪裡來的？」這就開啟了福音的對話。告訴他們在你之上有一位主人，祂以永遠的愛愛我們。

結論 CONCLUSION

我們所渴望的王會決定我們成為怎樣的僕人。以色列人想要和其他國家一樣擁有自己的王。最終，他們如願以償。未來的許多的王都是暴君，他們不愛神也不愛他們的子民。人民活得更像是奴隸。當人們將所有希望寄託在一個人身上時，那個領袖將變成他們的偶像。君王大衛在詩篇 16:4 中告訴我們：**以別神代替耶和華的，他們的愁苦必加增...**。當我們用偶像代替神的時候，不管他是假神還是一個人，最終只有痛苦與愁煩。大衛知道最有智慧的選擇是讓神成為他的王。神會給那些信靠祂的人上好的賞賜，包括物質和屬靈的祝福。這首詩預告了萬王之王耶穌基督。我們在第 10 節中看到了一個暗示：**因為你必不將我的靈魂撇在陰間，也不叫你的聖者見朽壞。**耶穌為我們的罪死在十字架上。但是祂的身體沒有腐爛。祂卻從死裡復活，現今坐在天上父神的右邊。這位君王呼召我們成為祂的跟隨者。祂應許賜給我們今生的恩典，並永恆的盼望。祂差遣我們在世上見證祂的國，並邀請人們成為祂的公民。他們必須承認自己的罪，並憑信心接受耶穌成為他們的王。