

引言 INTRODUCTION

As part of human nature, we are curious about our future. We want to know what career we will have, what big things we will achieve and who we will marry, etc. There is a true story about a man in Hong Kong who wanted to control his future. Once he was riding on a bus. He noticed that the vehicle kept following the coach of a funeral home. In many cultures, death brings bad luck. The four digits on the license plate of the car caught the man's attention: 1380. A few days later, there was a horse-race. The man remembered those four numbers. He thought it might be a good idea to place a bet using those figures. After all, 138 in Cantonese sounds like forever rich! One way to bet on horse-race is to pick the top four winners in a certain race in the right orders. The difficulty is high, but so is the payout. Since there was no number zero on any horse, he entered number ten instead. Lo and behold, he won the grand prize. But his fortune did not last long. He thought his good luck would continue. Therefore, he kept betting until he lost everything. Finally, he gained wisdom from the last digit. He wished to get rich forever in an easy way. But it all ended in a zero. In our story today, Saul hoped to learn about his future too. He knew that God had rejected him as a king, and God had chosen David to replace him. The outcome was clear but the process and the timing were uncertain. Unfortunately, Saul found out both unknowns in a horrifying way. God does not want us to predict the future. Rather, He asks us to trust Him because only He can protect our future.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 被恐懼所勝過 Consumed by Fear

The plot is carried over from our last message. Saul was consumed by fear when he saw the Philistines approaching. **Verses 3-6** tell us the causes for his fear. Chapter 29 says a few of the Philistine rulers joined their forces. Saul had fear about an upcoming major battle. At this point, Saul was a paranoid leader. He put capturing David as his top priority. How could a country be strong if its king was incompetent, and he considered a loyal commander an enemy? Another reason for Saul's fear was due to God's rejection. The Lord no longer spoke to him through the usual channels. First, Samuel the prophet had passed away, not to mention Saul slaughtered all the priests at the town of Nob. There was no messenger to convey messages from God. Second, God ceased to talk to Saul in dreams. In the Biblical times, people believed that dream was a means for deities to communicate to them. For example, God talked to Abraham and Jacob in their dreams. Now we are blessed to have the Bible. God will give us instructions when we read His Word and when we pray to Him. Besides prophets and dreams, the third source of divine information was Urim. We mentioned before that Urim and Thummin are two stones for priests to discern God's will. A priest prayed to God by asking yes/no questions, then randomly drew one pebble. Here we see the first irony in the story. Saul asked for help from the God he did not obey. Chinese call it "grab onto Buddha's foot when you are in a rush." Just ask any deity for help when nothing else works. Some non-believers may pray to the God of the Bible, in case He may respond to them. God of course hears everyone's prayer. But He has no obligation to answer people who do not believe Him. Remember how Jesus began the Lord's prayer? He says in

Matthew 6:9: ... **“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.”** God replies those who see Him as their Father. Imagine a neighbor’s kid knock on my door and ask for assistance. I may choose to help him out of compassion but I do not have the responsibility to do so. However, I have a blood relationship with my two sons. I care for them out of love. Whenever we pray, we must bear a submissive heart. God may not give you the things you want. But He will give you the instructions you should follow. We should go to Him with empty hands. However, we often pray while grabbing a remote control. We want to play the boss. We treat the Lord as an 800-number assistant or even a 911 dispatcher. We go to Him only when we have an urgent need. But Jesus should be our 24/7 Lord. He is our Lord every moment. We should obey Him. He does not want your money, incense or roasted pig. He wants your heart. He will give you peace when you commit yourselves to Him wholeheartedly. Many Christians love the promise in Philippians 4:6-7 – **6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.** Before God gives us a solution, He gives us peace. It is an assurance that He is in control. God has the answer when we are burdened by questions and doubts. He has a plan when we are clueless. He knows our future when we are still stuck in our present. If we truly trust God, then we can sleep like a baby in a parent’s arms. The infant feels secure under the protection of the parent. Our Heavenly Father is more powerful and dependable than our earthly parents. He loves us with an everlasting love. Come receive Him, trust Him, and let Him take away your fear.

2. 帶期望去諮詢 Consulted with Hope

Saul was consumed by fear. Since he could not get help from God, he consulted another source with a hope to get answers. **Verses 7-11** tell us his plan. Here, we see the second irony of Saul. He broke the law he wrote. Verse 3 says Saul did not allow any fortune-teller in the nation. But he looked for such spiritual help anyway. Nowadays, we have a saying: “Rules for thee, not for me.” Some government officials think that they are above the law. Since God no longer spoke to Saul, he sent his men to look for a medium. They answered instantly that there was a lady in Endor. Saul changed to plain clothes and he traveled with two assistants at night. Obviously, he did not want anyone to know about this trip. The medium was hesitant to take Saul’s business because she was afraid to violate the king’s order. In verse 10, Saul guaranteed her safety by swearing in God’s name. This is the biggest irony in the passage. Saul swore to the God he no longer believed. Many people do the same thing today. Government officials sworn-in by placing their hands on a Bible. Witnesses in court ask for God’s help to tell the truth. They will go through the motion if it makes them look more trustworthy. The medium was ready to begin her ritual. Saul asked her to summon Samuel. He had a good standing with God. Surely Samuel could get some insider information from the Lord. Here is the fourth irony we see in the passage. Saul asked a pagan practitioner to call up the spirit of a God follower. People do irrational things when they are desperate. The Bible clearly forbids us to consult a medium. God warns His people in Leviticus 19:31 – **“Do not turn to mediums or necromancers; do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them: I am the Lord your God.”** At that time, the Israelites were ready to enter into Canaan. People there worshipped many false gods. They also practiced witchcraft. God did not want His people to get involved in those wicked rituals. Several thousand years later, Satan has not changed his tactics. He uses supernatural power to enslave people. Those who believe in superstition want to know the future so that they can control their destiny.

How great it will be for people to know the next lottery numbers or predict the stock market? On the flip side, they also want to foresee coming misfortunes. Here are some legitimate questions to ask: how can you change the outcomes if certain things are destined to occur? How does it make you feel if you cannot avoid those bad things? For example, you will smash your car, you will be laid off from work, or a friend will betray you. Foreknowledge will only make you depressed. It is like a death-sentence inmate feeling hopeless while waiting to be executed. God does not want us to know the future. He invites us to walk with Him by faith. Saul tried whichever way that might work to look into the future. Many people have such buffet-style faith. In case one idol fails, they still have plan B and C, etc. But God demands our total loyalty. If you claim to follow Jesus, then obey Him with all your heart. God does not only know our future, He holds our future. Psalm 139:15-16 read: **15 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.** He who creates our life also sustains it by His grace. We did not come into the world by chance. Some people believe in fatalism passively. To them, life is full of helplessness. That is not what the Bible says. God has a purpose for each of us. Life is an exciting adventure to know Him. Indeed there will be minor mishaps and even major losses. While certain experience does not make sense to us, it does make sense to God. He connects all the dots and leads us to the direction He wants us to go. He is always there for us no matter what will happen.

3. 因犯罪受責備 Condemned for Sin

Saul got his wish. The medium called up Samuel. But as it turned out, Saul did not get the answers he wanted to hear. Rather, he was condemned for his sin. **Verses 12-15** is a fascinating account. Bible scholars debate whether Samuel actually showed up. Those who deny it have a good case. Samuel was a man of God. It was impossible for a pagan worshipper to bring a servant of God back. Spiritists work with demons to deceive people. Perhaps the medium saw an evil spirit disguised as Samuel. She then made up some stories to fool Saul. After all, everyone knew that Samuel was an old man and robe was a common attire at that time. Now we look at the arguments that support it was indeed Samuel. First, the Bible author affirms it in verse 15 that **“Samuel said to Saul.”** But the strongest evidence is that the content of the prophecy came true. Continue to read **verses 16-19**. Eventually, the Israelites lost the battle. Both Saul and his three sons perished. It was likely that God allowed Samuel to be called upon. He intended to use the prophet’s words to condemn Saul. Samuel reiterated several things. First, Saul disobeyed God’s clear command for not completely eradicated the Amalekites. The story is recorded in chapter 15. Saul spared the king of the enemies and he kept the best sheep and cattle for himself. Second, because of all that, God had rejected Saul. David would replace Saul as the next king. Everything Samuel said was finally fulfilled. It is a litmus test to verify that a message was from God. Moses gave related instructions in Deuteronomy 18:21-22 – **21 “And if you say in your heart, ‘How may we know the word that the Lord has not spoken?’ – 22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.”** Many messengers would claim to speak for Jehovah. The Israelites had to discern who was a real deal. Fulfillment of a prophecy validates the source. Satan cannot predict the future. But he can deceive people with some vague information. A medium will say: “I see that you will live a long life.” But how long is considered long? Or the master may predict that his client will meet a girl

with long hair and pale skin, or a guy who wears glasses and works on computer. There are millions of people that match those criteria! The goal is to manipulate information to keep people hooked. They are tricked to believe that those mediums indeed have some secret knowledge. Such false news blinds people from seeking the true God. Only our God is sovereign. All that He says in the Bible will happen precisely. Every prophecy about Jesus had taken place except one: His second coming. When Jesus was in the world, He told the disciples that He did not know the exact time of His return. It was concealed by the Father. Therefore, if anyone declares that he can predict the date, then he must be more powerful than Jesus! In other words, their messages must be fake. Jesus' coming is a great news to His believers but a bad news to those who do not know Him. It is like a boss getting back from a long trip. Those who worked hard will talk about their accomplishments. They will be rewarded for their diligence. In contrast, those who hardly worked will have little to report and they will be punished. Jesus promised us that followers will receive prizes according to their faithfulness. However, non-believers will be condemned for their sins. The outcome will be an eternal punishment. Receive Jesus today before it is too late. Do not follow Saul's example! He had hardened his heart. He was shocked by the bad news. He fell on the ground and trembled in fear. The medium then prepared a big meal for Saul and his servants. She and the assistants urged Saul repeatedly before he was willing to eat. It turned out to be the last supper for Saul. He returned home the same night, waiting for disasters to unfold.

結論 CONCLUSION

God does not want us to predict the future. Rather, He asks us to trust Him because only He can protect our future. Our message began with the story of a man who wanted to control his future. But it came to a sad ending. There was another person who was curious about his future too. He visited a fortune-teller. The master examined the man's face, and he read his palm. Then he told his customer some general good news about his career, finance and marriage. Next, he said: "But for some reason, I cannot tell what will happen to you after you reach 40. Please don't worry. Perhaps the insight has not been revealed to me. Feel free to check with me later." As you can expect, the news put a weight on the man's heart. He worried day and night that something bad might happen. He wondered: "Will I get a terminal disease, encounter a weird accident or a thief will take my life when robbing me?" Nothing unusual happened after some time. The man even forgot what the medium told him. A few years later, a good friend led the person to Christ. It happened on his 40th birthday. Then he realized why the fortune-teller could not see anything beyond that moment. It was because Jesus saved him. From then on, his life was in the hand of God. Dear friends: will you put your hope in some unknown force called fate? Or will you put your trust in the Almighty God by faith? Accept Jesus today, and your eternal life will begin instantly. The Lord will watch over your every step. He promised us an abundant life.

引言 INTRODUCTION

作為人性的一部分，我們對自己的未來充滿好奇。我們想知道自己會從事什麼職業、會有什麼偉大的成就、會跟什麼人結婚等等。有一個真實的故事，說有一個香港人想要掌握自己的未來。有一次他坐公共汽車。他注意到車子一直跟著一部殯儀館的車。在許多文化中，死亡會帶來不吉利。那個人注意到車牌上的四個數字：1380。幾天後，有一場賽馬。他想起那四個數字。他打算用那些數字來投注。畢竟，138 在廣東話唸起來像一生發！賭博賽馬的一種方式是順序猜測前四名優勝者。難度高，但獎金也高。因為沒有零號的馬匹，所以他填入十號。結果，他中了頭獎。但他的財富並沒有維持很久。他以為他的好運會持續下去。因此，他一直賭到輸光為止。終於，他從最後一個數字中領悟智慧。他希望以輕鬆的方式一直贏，但最終是以一個零收場。在我們今天的故事中，掃羅也希望知道他的未來。他明白神拒絕了他作王，並且揀選了大衛來代替他。結果很明確，但是他不清楚過程和時間。很可惜，掃羅以一種令人毛骨悚然的方式知道這兩個未知數。神不要我們預知未來。祂期望我們相信祂，因為只有祂才能保障我們的未來。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 被恐懼所勝過 Consumed by Fear

這個故事的情節是連接上一週的信息。掃羅看見非利士人逼近，便被恐懼所勝過。第 3-6 節告訴我們他害怕的原因。第 29 章說幾個非利士的首領組成聯軍。掃羅想到即將到來的大戰便害怕。在目前，掃羅是個神經質的領袖。他把抓住大衛作為他的首要任務。一個君王無能，而且視忠臣為敵人，國家怎能強大？掃羅懼怕的另一個原因是神的棄絕。神停止用一般的方式向掃羅說話。首先，先知撒母耳已經過世，掃羅也殺光挪伯城的所有祭司。因此沒有使者傳達神的信息。第二，神不再透過夢與掃羅說話。在聖經時代，人們認為夢是神明與他們交流的一種途徑。例如，神藉著夢與亞伯拉罕和雅各交談。現在我們有福氣擁有聖經。當我們閱讀神的話語並向祂祈禱時，神會給我們指示。除了先知和夢，第三種神傳達信息的來源是烏陵。以前我們說過烏陵和土明是祭司辨別神旨意的兩塊石頭。一位祭師向神詢問是與否的問題，然後隨意抽一顆石頭。在這裡，我們看到了故事中的第一個諷刺。掃羅向他不順服的神求助。中國人稱之為「臨時抱佛腳」。當一切方法都不管時，就隨便找一個神明尋求幫助。一些非信徒可能會向聖經中的神禱告，希望祂會回應。神當然能聽到每個人的祈求，但是祂沒有義務回答不相信祂的人。還記得耶穌是如何開始主禱文的嗎？祂在馬太福音 6:9 節說：…「**我們在天上的父，願人都尊你的**

名為聖。」神回應那些承認祂為天父的人。就像鄰居的孩子敲我的門並尋求幫助。我可以出於同情而選擇幫助他，但我沒有責任這樣做。但是，我和我的兩個兒子有血緣關係。我出於愛關心他們。每次我們禱告時，必須帶著順服的心。神不一定會給你想要的東西，但是祂會給你應該聽從的指示。我們應該張開雙手到祂面前。然而，我們常常一邊祈禱一邊拿著遙控器。我們想做老闆。我們把主當作 800 號碼的服務員，甚至是 911 調派員。只有當我們有緊急需要時，我們才會去找神。但耶穌應該是我們的 247 主。祂每分每秒都是我們的主人。因此，我們必須順服祂。神不要你的錢、香火、烤豬。祂只要你的心。當你全心全意地委身於祂時，祂會給你平安。許多基督徒都喜歡腓立比書 4:6-7 – **6 應當一無掛慮，只要凡事藉著禱告、祈求，和感謝，將你們所要的告訴神。7 神所賜、出人意外的平安必在基督耶穌裡保守你們的心懷意念。**在神解決問題之前，祂先賜給我們平安。祂保證祂仍然掌管一切。我們的心中有疑問和困惑，神已經有答案。當我們毫無頭緒時，神有祂的計劃。當我們卡在目前的困境時，祂已經知道我們的未來。如果我們真的信靠神，我們就可以像嬰兒睡在父母的懷裡一樣。嬰兒在父母的保護下感到安全。我們的天父比我們地上的父母更強大、更可靠。祂以永遠的愛來愛我們。來接受祂，相信祂，讓祂帶走你的恐懼。

2. 帶期望去諮詢 Consulted with Hope

掃羅被恐懼所勝過。既然得不到神的幫助，他便帶期望去諮詢另一個專家。我們在第 7-11 節看到他的計劃。在這裡，我們看到了掃羅的第二個諷刺。他違反自己下的命令。第 3 節說，掃羅不允許國內有通靈的人，但是他卻去找靈媒。這就正如俗語說：「只許州官放火，不許百姓點燈」。今天一些政府官員也凌駕於法律之上。由於神不再與掃羅說話，他只好派人去找靈媒。他們立即回答說隱多珥有一個巫婆。掃羅換上便衣，晚上帶著兩個助手出發。顯然，他不想讓任何人知道他的行蹤。靈媒不敢接掃羅的生意，因為她怕違抗王命。在第 10 節中，掃羅奉神的名起誓以保證她的安全。這是這段經文中最大的諷刺。掃羅向那位他不再相信的神起誓。今天很多人都做同樣的事情。政府官員把手放在聖經上宣誓就職。法庭上的證人求神幫助他們說出真相。如果這樣做使他們看起來更可靠，他們做樣子也無所謂。巫婆準備開始她的儀式。掃羅叫她去召喚撒母耳。他與神有良好的關係，他肯定能從神那裡得到一些內幕消息。這是我們在這段經文中看到的第四個諷刺。掃羅請一位行法術的異教徒去召喚一個神的跟隨者。人在絕望的時候會做出沒有理智的事情。聖經明確禁止我們去靈媒。神在利未記 19:31 警告祂的子民：「**不可偏向那些交鬼的和行巫術的；不可求問他們，以致被他們玷污了。我是耶和華你們的神。**」那時，以色列人準備進入迦南。那裡的人崇拜許多假神，他們還行巫術。神不希望祂的子民參與那些邪惡的儀式。幾千年以來，撒但從來沒有改變他的策略。他使用超自然能力來網綁人的心靈。迷信的人想知道未來，以便掌握自己的命運。人們想知道下一次六合彩的號碼或預測股市的走勢。另一方面，他們也想預知不幸的事件。我們必

須問一些合理的問題：如果某些事情注定要發生，你如何改變結果？如果你無法避免一些不幸的事情，你會有何感覺？例如，你將會撞壞車子，你將會被解僱，或者朋友將會背叛你。預知只會讓你心情沮喪。就像一個死刑犯在等待被處決時感到絕望。神不要我們預知未來。祂邀請我們憑信心與祂同行。掃羅嘗試任何可行的方法想要看見未來。許多人都嘗試這種自助餐式的信仰。萬一一個神明不靈，他們還有第二和第三個後備計劃。但是神要求我們完全的忠誠。如果你要跟隨耶穌，那麼就要全心全意地順服祂。神不僅知道我們的未來，而且祂掌管我們的未來。詩篇 139:15-16 說：**15 我在暗中受造，在地的深處被聯絡；那時，我的形體並不向你隱藏。16 我未成形的體質，你的眼早已看見了；你所定的日子，我尚未度一日，你都寫在你的冊上了。**創造我們生命的主也藉著祂的恩典維持我們的生命。我們不是偶然來到這個世界上的。有些人消極地相信宿命論。對他們來說，生活充滿了無奈。但聖經不是這樣說的。神對我們每個人都有祂的計劃。生命歷程是認識祂的探索。我們的確會碰到小的事故甚至重大損失。雖然某些經歷對我們來說沒有意義，但神有祂的心意在其中。祂把所有的點連接起來，帶領我們走向祂指引的方向。無論發生什麼事，神總是在我們身邊。

3. 因犯罪受責備 **Condemned for Sin**

掃羅如願以償。靈媒把撒母耳叫來。但事實證明，掃羅並沒有得到他想聽到的答案。相反，他因自己的罪受到責備。**第 12-15 節**是一段很奇特的記載。聖經學者辯論撒母耳是否真的出現了。那些否定的人有很好的理由。撒母耳是神的僕人。異教徒不可能把神的僕人叫來。招魂的人是與邪靈合作來欺騙人。也許那個靈媒看到了一個偽裝成撒母耳的靈。然後她編造了一些故事來欺騙掃羅。任何人都知道撒母耳是個老人，長袍在那個時候是很常見的裝束。現在我們來看支持它確實是撒母耳的論點。首先，聖經作者在第 15 節中肯定「**撒母耳對掃羅說**」。但最有力的證據是預言的應驗。繼續閱讀**第 16-19 節**。結果，以色列人打敗仗，掃羅和他的三個兒子都陣亡。很可能是神允許撒母耳被呼召出來。神打算用先知的話來責備掃羅的罪。撒母耳重申了幾件事。首先，掃羅違背了神明確的命令，沒有完全消滅亞瑪力人。事件記載在第 15 章。掃羅饒了那個王的性命，而且為自己留下最好的牛羊。由於這一切，神棄絕了掃羅。大衛將取代掃羅成為下一任的王。撒母耳所說的一切最後都應驗了。這是驗證信息是否來自神的試金石。摩西在申命記 18:21-22 給出了相關指示：**21 「你心裡若說：『耶和華所未曾吩咐的話，我們怎能知道呢？』22 先知託耶和華的名說話，所說的若不成就，也無效驗，這就是耶和華所未曾吩咐的，是那先知擅自說的，你不要怕他。」**許多使者自稱是耶和華的代言人。以色列人必須辨別誰才是真正的先知。預言的應驗證實了信息的來源。撒旦無法預知未來。但是他可以用一些模稜兩可的話來欺騙人。靈媒會說：「我看出你會長壽。」但是多長才算是長呢？或者一個算命師說他的客戶會遇到一個長頭髮和皮膚白的女孩，或者一個戴眼鏡並從事電腦工作的男士。有數百萬人符合那些條件！他們的目的是操縱信

息來愚弄人。人們被騙去相信那些靈媒確實有一些秘密消息。這些謊言攔阻人尋找真神。只有我們的神是掌管萬有的主。祂在聖經中所說的一切都會準確地發生。關於耶穌的所有預言都已經發生，只有一個除外：就是祂的再來。當耶穌在世上時，祂告訴門徒祂不知道祂什麼時候回來。那個奧秘被天父隱藏了。因此，如果有人聲稱他能預測耶穌回來的日期，那麼他比耶穌還厲害！換句話說，他們的預言一定是假的。耶穌的再來對信徒來說是個好消息，但對那些不認識主的人來說卻是個壞消息。就像老闆出遠門歸來一樣。那些努力工作的人會匯報他們的成果。他們的勤奮將得到回報。相反，那些閒懶的人將沒有什麼可報告的，他們將受到責備。耶穌應許我們，祂的跟隨者會按照他們忠心的程度獲得獎賞。然而，非信徒將因他們的罪受到責備，而且是永遠沉淪。今天就接受耶穌吧，免得為時已晚。不要像掃羅，他的心早已剛硬。他受到壞消息的震驚。他倒在地上，嚇得渾身發抖。靈媒隨後為掃羅和他的僕人準備了一頓豐盛的晚餐。她和助手們再三催促掃羅，他才肯吃。結果這是掃羅最後的晚餐。他當晚回到家中，等待災難的發生。

結論 CONCLUSION

神不要我們預知未來。祂期望我們相信祂，因為只有祂才能保障我們的未來。在開始時，我們提到一個想要控制自己未來的人。他以悲慘收場。另外有一個人也對他的未來好奇。他拜訪了一位算命先生。大師看看那個人的臉，他看了他的手掌。然後他告訴他的客戶一些關於他的職業、財務和姻緣的好消息。接著，他又說：「但不知為何，我不知道你 40 歲以後會怎樣。請放心。也許我還沒有得到上天的指示。歡迎你有空時再來找我。」你能想像，這樣的消息肯定壓在那個人的心中。他白天黑夜都在擔心會發生什麼壞事。他想：「我會不會患絕症，飛來橫禍，或是被小偷奪去我的性命？」一段時間後沒有任何異常發生。他甚至忘記了靈媒告訴他的事情。幾年後，一位好朋友帶領他信耶穌，正好發生在他 40 歲生日那天。然後他想通為何算命先生看不到他之後的事情。因為耶穌救了他。從此，他的生命就掌握在神的手中。親愛的朋友們：你會寄望於所謂命運的未知力量嗎？還是你願意憑信心接受全能的神？如果你今天就接受耶穌，你的永生便立即開始。主會看顧你的每一步。祂應許我們豐盛的生命。