

If God Is King

如果上帝是王

October 4, 2020

1 Samuel 8 撒母耳记上第 8 章

We have been considering the stories of 1 and 2 Samuel—the God who frames the stories of our lives. We began with Hannah, watched her nurture and release Samuel, and listened as the boy learned to say, “Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.” By chapter 8, decades have passed. Samuel is old. The boy who learned to listen now stands before a nation that is finding it increasingly difficult to listen.

我们一直在思想《撒母耳记上、下》中的故事——那位塑造我们人生故事的上帝。我们从哈拿开始，看见她怎样养育撒母耳，又怎样放手把他献给上帝；我们也听见这个孩子学会说：“耶和华啊，请说，仆人敬听。”到了第 8 章，几十年已经过去。撒母耳老了。那个曾经学习聆听的孩子，如今站在一个越来越不愿意聆听上帝的民族面前。

Before we come to the elders’ request, remember what has happened. Israel once carried the ark of the covenant into battle as though the presence of God could be managed like a weapon. The Philistines captured it and placed it beside Dagon, their god. By morning Dagon had fallen on his face. The ark brought trouble wherever the Philistines sent it, until they finally sent it back. It is a strange, almost humorous story, but its point is serious. Israel could not use God. The Philistines could not hold God captive. God does not need us to protect Him. He is King.

在我们来看长老们的请求之前，先回想一下前面发生了什么。以色列人曾把约柜抬到战场上，好像上帝的同在可以像武器一样被他们操控。非利士人夺走了约柜，把它放在他们的神大衮旁边。第二天早晨，大衮竟然脸伏于地倒在约柜前。约柜被送到哪里，哪里就遭殃，最后非利士人只好把它送回去。这故事有点奇怪，甚至带着几分幽默，但它的信息非常严肃：以色列不能利用上帝；非利士人也不能把上帝囚禁起来。上帝不需要我们来保护祂。祂才是王。

Then in chapter 7, Samuel calls Israel back to the LORD. The people put away their false gods, and God delivers them from the Philistines. Samuel’s leadership bears fruit. The nation has seen what happens when it turns toward God. Yet the next chapter opens with a new fear: what will happen when Samuel is gone?

然后到了第 7 章，撒母耳呼召以色列人归向耶和华。百姓除掉偶像，上帝便救他们脱离非利士人的手。撒母耳的带领结出了果子。这个民族已经亲眼看见，当他们回转归向上帝时，会发生什么。可是到了下一章，一个新的恐惧出现了：如果撒母耳不在了，怎么办？

So, what might this story be revealing to us. 那么，这个故事可能正在向我们揭示什么呢？

Their choice reveal the condition of their hearts 他们的选择显露了他们内心的光景

"Samuel appoints his sons, Joel and Abijah, as judges. But they do not walk in his ways. They pursue dishonest gain, take bribes and pervert justice. The elders have reason to be concerned. Their complaint is not invented, and Samuel cannot ask the nation to overlook corruption simply because the offenders are his sons.

撒母耳立他的两个儿子约珥和亚比亚作士师，但他们却不行父亲的道路。他们贪图不义之财，收受贿赂，冤枉正直。长老们确实有理由担心。他们的忧虑不是凭空捏造出来的，撒母耳也不能因为犯罪的是自己的儿子，就要求全国的人忽视这种败坏。

There is a word here for parents, especially parents of adult children. Samuel gave his sons names reflect Samuel's faith, but names cannot guarantee character. We can teach, model, pray, warn and love; we cannot live another person's faith for them. Where we have wounded our children, we ought to admit it and seek forgiveness. Yet we are not sovereign over their choices. If a son or daughter has taken a path that troubles you, do not measure the whole of your parenting by that one fact. Keep loving, keep praying, and entrust to God what you cannot control.

这里也有一句话要对作父母的说，尤其是儿女已经成年的父母。撒母耳给儿子取的名字反映了他的信仰，但名字不能保证一个人的品格。我们可以教导，可以以身作则，可以祷告，可以提醒，也可以爱他们；可是我们不能替另一个人活出他的信仰。如果我们曾经伤害过自己的儿女，就应该承认，并寻求他们的饶恕。但我们并不能掌控他们的选择。如果你的儿子或女儿走上了一条令你担忧的路，不要因为这一件事，就否定自己整个作父母的人生。继续去爱，继续祷告，把你无法掌控的事交托给上帝。

The elders come to Samuel and say, in effect, "You are old, your sons are not like you, so appoint a king to judge us like all the nations." Their need for just leadership is legitimate. Their proposed solution reveals something deeper. They want a king like their neighbours have—a visible figure who will go before them and fight their battles. They want to know what the future will look like, and whom they can count on.

长老们来到撒母耳面前，大意是说：“你已经老了，你的儿子又不像你，所以请为我们立一个王来治理我们，像列国一样。”他们需要公义的领导，这个需要本身没有错。但他们提出的解决办法，却显露出更深层的问题。他们想要一个像邻国那样的王——一个看得见的人物，可以走在他们前面，为他们争战。他们想知道未来会是什么样子，也想知道自己究竟可以依靠谁。

Lets be clear here, a human king was not beyond God's purposes. Hannah's song had already looked forward to a king and to the Lord's anointed. The question in chapter 8 is what kind of king Israel wanted, and what place that king would have in their hearts. Would a king serve under God, or would he become a substitute for trusting God? That is where the tension lies. The people had a good reason to be worried, but fear was shaping their answer. The question in 1 Samuel 8 is what Israel expects its king to do. Will he serve under God's rule, or will the people turn him into a substitute for trust in God?

我们先说清楚：人间的君王并不在上帝的旨意之外。哈拿的颂歌早已预示君王，也预示耶和华的受膏者。第 8 章真正的问题，不是“以色列可不可以有王”，而是“以色列想要怎样的王”，以及“这个王在他们心中会占据什么位置”。这个王会在上帝的权柄之下服事，还是会成为他们用来取代信靠上帝的对象？张力就在这里。百姓确实有理由担忧，但恐惧正在塑造他们的答案。

《撒母耳记上》第 8 章真正的问题，是以色列期待这个王为他们做什么：他会在上帝的统治之下服事，还是百姓会把他变成取代信靠上帝的替代品？

Samuel is displeased, and he does something wise with his displeasure: he prays. God tells him, "It is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me from being king over them." That must have hurt. After years of faithful ministry, Samuel could easily have made the whole matter about himself. God gives him a larger perspective. The people are turning away from the One who has led them through the wilderness, raised up judges, and rescued them again and again.

撒母耳很不高兴，但他做了一件很有智慧的事：他去祷告。上帝对他说：“百姓不是厌弃你，乃是厌弃我，不要我作他们的王。”这句话一定很刺痛撒母耳。服事了这么多年，他很容易把整件事都看成是对自己的否定。但上帝把他的眼光拉得更远。百姓正在离开那位曾带领他们经过旷野、兴起士师、一次又一次拯救他们的上帝。

Samuel's ministry matters, but Israel's future does not depend on Samuel being indispensable. There is freedom in that for anyone who leads, including pastors. We serve faithfully, but we cannot make people respond to God. We are not the Messiah, and the church does not belong to us.

撒母耳的服事当然重要，但以色列的将来并不取决于撒母耳是不是一个不可取代的人。这对所有作领袖的人，包括牧者，都是一种释放。我们要忠心服事，却不能强迫人回应上帝。我们不是弥赛亚，教会也不属于我们。

Their desire for a king “like other nations “ was really an ambition to choose their own leader, rather than wait on God to raise one up for them. In reality their wish to be like other nations was: Their choice revealed the condition of their hearts - as does the kind of choices we make.

他们想要一个“像其他列国一样”的王，其实是想要自己选择领袖，而不是等候神为他们兴起一位。事实上，他们想要像其他列国一样，这个选择正显明了他们内心真实的光景——正如我们所作的选择，也常常显明我们的内心。

So that is why God's word is so important for you and I. 所以，对你我来说，神的话语是何等重要。

Psalms 119:11 I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. Verse 105 says Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path

诗篇 119:11： 我将你的话藏在心里，免得我得罪你。”第 105 节又说： 你的话是我脚前的灯，是我路上的光。”

Just as a plant naturally grows toward the sunlight, our everyday choices bend toward whatever holds our deepest affection. They softly tell the story of what our hearts love most.

就像植物自然会朝着阳光生长一样，我们每天所作的选择，也会自然地倾向我们内心最深所爱、最看重的东西。我们的选择，往往在不知不觉中诉说着一个故事——显明我们的心究竟最爱什么。

Trading trust in God for the illusion of security. 用对安全感的幻想，交换对上帝的信靠。

God tells Samuel to warn the people what a king will take. He will take their sons for his army, their daughters for his service, their fields and harvests, their servants and flocks. You shall be his slaves.” Listen to that repeated word: take. The king who promises to secure their freedom may consume the life they are trying to protect.

上帝吩咐撒母耳警告百姓，这个王将会“夺取”什么。他会征用他们的儿子去当兵，征用他们的女儿服事他，拿走他们的田地和收成，拿走他们的仆人和牲畜。“你们也必作他的仆人。”留意那个一再出现的字：拿走、夺取。那个承诺给他们安全与自由的王，最终可能反过来吞噬他们原本想要保护的生活。

For generations Israel had lived under the reign of God, led by prophets and judges. They had not lived perfectly. Far from it. But God kept calling them back, defending and providing for them. Living under His rule required trust and responsibility. They had to make godly choices without a king standing over every decision. Sometimes we find that kind of freedom frightening. We would rather have a system we can see, even if it asks more and more of us.

世世代代以来，以色列一直活在上帝的治理之下，由先知和士师带领。他们当然活得并不完美，远远不是。但上帝不断呼召他们回转，也不断保护和供应他们。活在上帝的统治下，需要信靠，也需要承担责任。他们必须在没有一个君王替他们决定每件事的情况下，作出敬虔的选择。有时候，这种自由反而令我们害怕。我们宁愿要一个看得见的制度，即使这个制度会向我们索取越来越多。

This does not mean that government is bad or that leadership does not matter. Good government can restrain evil, protect the vulnerable and serve justice. A capable leader can bring stability to a church or community. But a government cannot make us righteous, and a pastor cannot remove every uncertainty. When we ask a human leader to save us from fear, we place a burden on that person that no person can carry.

这并不是说政府不好，也不是说领导不重要。好的政府可以抑制罪恶，保护弱小，维护公义。一个有能力的领袖，也可以给教会或群体带来稳定。但政府不能使我们成为义人，牧者也不能消除人生所有的不确定。当我们期待一个人的领导来拯救我们脱离恐惧时，我们其实把一个任何人都承担不起的重担放在他身上。

I once heard a story of a young man arguing politics with a woman on a bus. As their discussion grew heated, he asked, Can your government make me love you?" It can make laws, collect taxes and punish wrongdoing. Those things matter. But it cannot make a bitter heart forgiving, or a proud heart humble. We must not ask politics to do the work of God in the human heart.

我曾听过一个故事：一个年轻人在巴士上和一位女士争论政治。两个人越说越激动，年轻人最后问她：“你的政府能够使我爱你吗？”政府可以制定法律，可以收税，也可以惩治罪恶。这些都很重要。但政府不能使一个苦毒的心变得愿意饶恕，也不能使一个骄傲的心变得谦卑。我们不能要求政治去完成只有上帝才能在人心里完成的工作。

And churches must hear this warning too. In an anxious season, it is tempting to search for a leader impressive enough to make us feel safe. Of course character, wisdom and competence matter. We ought to look for them. But a faithful pastor points us toward God; he or she cannot become the church's source of security. If we expect a leader to carry that weight, we will eventually wound both the leader and the congregation.

教会也必须听见这个警告。在焦虑的季节里，我们很容易去寻找一个足够出色、足够有魅力的领袖，让我们重新感到安全。当然，品格、智慧和能力都很重要，我们也应该认真寻找这些素质。但一个忠心的牧者，是把人指向上帝；他或她不能成为教会安全感的来源。如果我们期待一个领袖承担这样的重量，最后受伤的往往既是领袖，也是整个教会。

Their desire to choose a king of their own was a choice to conform to the culture around them - to be like everyone else...

他们想要自己选择一个王，其实就是选择向周围的文化看齐——变得和大家一样……

Using strategy to veil disobedience 用“策略”来遮掩不顺服

There is another phrase in the elders' request that should make us pause: like all the nations." Israel does not only want a king. They want to look like everybody else.

长老们的请求中，还有一句话值得我们停下来思想：“像列国一样。”以色列不只是想要一个王，他们想让自己看起来和大家一样。

It seems like a good strategy didn't it. Other countries have systems that they use to keep things going, why not us? Why do we have to be different? Lets use tested systems and avoid their pitfalls. This way we don't have to wait around for the next prophet God will raise - and who knows how long it

听起来不是一个很好的策略吗？别的国家都有自己的制度，可以让国家继续运作，为什么我们不可以？为什么我们一定要与众不同？我们可以采用那些已经验证过的制度，避开别人犯过的错误。这样一来，我们也不必一直等上帝什么时候再兴起下一位先知——谁知道要等多久呢？

We know that pressure—to fit in, to be like everyone else, not to stand out. That is exactly what Israel says in 1 Samuel 8: ** Give us a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.** On the surface, it sounds reasonable. They want stability. Security. A clear leader. A system that seems to work for everyone else.

我们都知道那种压力——想融入人群，想和大家一样，不想显得与众不同。这正是以色列在《撒母耳记上》第 8 章所说的：“求你为我们立一个王治理我们，像列国一样。”表面上，这听起来很合理。他们要的是稳定、安全、清楚的领导，以及一个看起来在别人那里行得通的制度。

But sometimes what we call strategy is really disobedience dressed in respectable language. We do the same thing. Our child says, Everyone else is doing it." Adults are not much different—we simply give better explanations. We compare homes, careers, children's achievements, even churches. We spend money we do not have to maintain an image we cannot sustain. We convince ourselves that we are simply being wise, practical, or realistic.

但有时候，我们所谓的“策略”，其实只是穿上了体面外衣的不顺服。我们也会这样。孩子会说：“大家都这样做。”成年人其实也差不多，只不过我们会给自己一个更漂亮的解释。我们比较房子、事业、孩子的成就，甚至比较教会。我们可能花自己没有的钱，只为了维持一个无法长久维持的形象。然后我们说服自己：我只是有智慧一点、现实一点、实际一点而已。

But comparison can make God's provision look inadequate simply because someone else has something different. That was Israel's problem. They were not merely asking for better leadership. They wanted the security of what everyone else had rather than the uncertainty of trusting God.**And that is the danger: we can call it strategy when, underneath, we have already decided that God's way is not enough.

可是，比较会使上帝已经给我们的供应显得不够，只因为别人拥有的和我们不一样。这正是以色列的问题。他们不只是要求更好的领导，他们真正想要的是别人所拥有的那种安全感，而不是继

续活在信靠上帝所带来的不确定中。这就是危险所在：我们可以把它叫作“策略”，但在内心深处，我们其实已经认定——上帝的道路不够好。

****Paul tells us in Romans 12 not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Think of a mold pressing material into its shape. That is what comparison can do to us: it presses our lives into somebody else's pattern. God's transforming work moves deeper. It takes time—prayer, Scripture, obedience, repentance, community—and changes us from within. He is forming people who can listen and love, not merely people who appear successful.**

保罗在《罗马书》第12章告诉我们，不要效法这个世界，只要心意更新而变化。你可以想象一个模子，把材料不断压成它的形状。比较也是这样，它会慢慢把我们的人生压进别人的模式里。可是上帝的更新更深。这个过程需要时间——借着祷告、圣经、顺服、悔改和群体生活，上帝从里面改变我们。祂正在塑造一群能够聆听、能够去爱的人，而不只是塑造一群看起来很成功的人。

The real issue with these elders is control. They want a system they can see, a king they can point to, an army they can organize, a structure they believe will manage the risk.

这些长老更深层的问题，其实是控制。他们要一个看得见的制度，一个可以指给人看的王，一支可以组织起来的军队，一个他们相信能够管理风险的结构。

And we can fall into the same trap. There is nothing wrong with planning. There is nothing wrong with strategy. But strategy becomes dangerous when it becomes a substitute for trust. And that was Israel's temptation - to use strategy to secure for themselves what God was asking them to trust Him for.

而我们也会掉进同一个陷阱。计划本身没有错，策略本身也没有错。但当策略取代了信靠，它就变得危险。以色列的试探正是在这里：他们想用自己的策略，为自己取得那些上帝正在要求他们凭信心交托给祂的东西。

Even then, God does not give up on them.即使如此，上帝仍然没有放弃他们。

After Samuel's warning, the people still refuse to listen. No! We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles." They have heard the cost, and they still want what they can see.

撒母耳警告以后，百姓仍然不肯听。他们说：“不然！我们定要一个王治理我们，使我们像列国一样，有王治理我们，统领我们，为我们争战。”他们已经听见代价，却仍然坚持要一个自己看得见的保障。

Samuel takes their words back to the LORD. And then comes the surprising answer: Listen to them and give them a king." God allows them to make the choice He has warned them about.

撒母耳把百姓的话带回到耶和华面前。然后，上帝给了一个令人意外的回答：“你只管依从他们的话，为他们立王。”上帝容许他们作出一个祂已经警告过他们不要作的选择。

We should not rush past that. God's patience does not make their choice wise. Israel's kings will often prove painfully inadequate; even the better kings will be flawed. The consequences will be real. Yet God does not cancel His covenant or stop working among His people. He meets them in the life they have

chosen and continues His redemptive purpose there. Grace is not the removal of every consequence. Grace means God does not abandon us when we have chosen badly.

我们不要太快跳过这里。上帝的忍耐，并不等于他们的选择就是智慧的。以色列后来的许多君王会令人痛苦地看见，他们是多么不可靠；即使比较好的王，也仍然有严重的缺陷。后果是真实的。然而，上帝并没有因此废掉祂的约，也没有停止在祂百姓中间工作。祂进入他们自己所选择的人生处境里，仍然在那里继续祂救赎的计划。恩典并不是把一切后果都拿走。恩典乃是：即使我们作了错误的选择，上帝仍然没有离弃我们。

That story will eventually awaken a longing for a different King. Jesus does not come to take fields and children for His own advantage. He gives Himself for His people. He enters a world that rejects Him and bears that rejection on the cross. Here we see what God's kingship looks like most clearly: authority exercised in self-giving love.

这个故事最终会唤醒人对另一位王的渴望。耶稣来，不是为了自己的利益夺取人的田地和儿女；祂反而把自己赐给祂的百姓。祂进入一个拒绝祂的世界，并在十字架上亲自承担那份拒绝。在这里，我们最清楚地看见上帝的王权是什么样子：真正的权柄，是在舍己的爱中彰显出来的。

So I want to bring the question home. If God is King,
所以，我想把这个问题带回到我们自己的生命里。如果上帝是王——

If God is King:

如果上帝是王：

If God is King, how does that translate into my family life?

如果上帝是王，这会怎样影响我的家庭生活？

If God is King, how does that translate into my work life?

如果上帝是王，这会怎样影响我的工作生活？

If God is King, how does that translate into my financial life?

如果上帝是王，这会怎样影响我的金钱和财务生活？

If God is King, how does that translate into my relationships?

如果上帝是王，这会怎样影响我的人际关系？

If God is King, how does that translate into the choices I have to make this week and month?

如果上帝是王，这会怎样影响我这个星期、这个月必须作出的选择？

If God is King, what changes do I have to make in my life?

如果上帝是王，我的生命中有哪里需要改变？

It is one thing to sing that Jesus is Lord. It is another to let His lordship rearrange our habits, our ambitions and the way we treat people on Monday morning. We may discover places where we, too, would rather have manageable security than trust. If we do, let us not hide from Him. The God who spoke to Samuel is still patient with His people. We can listen again. We can bring our fear to Him. And we can take the next faithful step under the care of our King.

唱“耶稣是主”是一回事，让祂真正作主，重新安排我们的习惯、野心，以及我们星期一怎样对待身边的人，又是另一回事。我们也许会发现，在某些地方，我们宁愿拥有自己能够掌控的安全感，也不愿意信靠上帝。如果真是这样，不要躲避祂。那位曾向撒母耳说话的上帝，今天仍然耐心对待祂的百姓。我们可以重新聆听。我们可以把恐惧带到祂面前。也可以在我们君王的看顾之下，踏出下一步忠心的脚步。