

## 引言 INTRODUCTION

Last time we looked at the role-model of a godly family. Elkanah took his family to an annual trip to worship God at the tabernacle. He and his wife Hannah gave their son Samuel away to serve God while he was still a young toddler. Today we compare that with a completely opposite picture in Eli's two sons. They had no love for God. When people see misbehaving children, the first thing they will ask is how they are raised. That is before they blame the neighborhood, the school and friends. Children are gifts from God. He entrusts parents some important tasks to help their kids to receive Jesus, and love and obey Him. Just like a school cannot replace a home to convey moral values, a church cannot substitute parents to instill spiritual values. Parents are accountable to God as for how we bring up our children. The spiritual lesson in our passage today is evident: God will honor those people who honor Him.

## 解釋 EXPLANATION

### 1. 蔑視 Contempt

We will study the passage by pondering on three words. The first word is contempt. **Verse 12-15** tell us how Eli's two sons showed contempt to God. Verse 12 sums it all. The two men were "worthless" to God because they contributed nothing to His Kingdom. Also, they did not know God. They had some knowledge of God but they had no personal relationship with Him. Their spiritual condition explains their wicked deeds. First, they defiled animal offering. They asked servants to snatch meat while it was still boiling. They specified that they wanted raw meat. Perhaps they preferred some medium-cooked barbecue steaks. They did not only ask for meat, they even wanted animal's fat. In those days, people had little idea about cholesterol and heart disease. They considered fat as the best part of meat. For the same reason, fat was only reserved for God in animal sacrifice. Leviticus 7:25 says: **"For every person who eats of the fat of an animal of which a food offering may be made to the Lord shall be cut off from his people."** The two men did not only steal from the people they served. They stole it from God for personal enjoyment! It is like employees using a church van for family vacation, or hosting a private party in a church gym. They misuse God's properties. Besides seizing meat, the two men also engaged in immorality. Read verse 22: **Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting.** They had a bad reputation over the whole nation. They showed contempt to the sacrificial system and to God's requirement for purity. Some Israelites would definitely stumble in their faith as a result. They might wonder why bother to worship God at the tabernacle when part of their offering would be taken away. While the two men were messing around, we cannot help but ask where Eli was. He did convict his sons in **verse 23-25**. Eli's rebuke was perhaps too little and it came too late. His sons had hardened their hearts toward God. In verse 25, Eli compares sinning against another person with sinning against God. The point is that a person can present a guilt offering to God and provide compensation to the people being offended. But what can be done if the wrong-doer treats animal sacrifice with contempt? Eli could have openly disqualified his two sons from priesthood. In fact, their sins were punishable by death according

to God's Law. But Eli condoned the rebellion of his sons. God gives us parents, especially the fathers, an obligation to train up our kids with His Word. We need to give them the right guidance before it is too late. A bad habit is like a tree seedling that pops up at a wrong spot. It will gradually grow up to become a big tree if you do not pull it out in time. We know there is a lot of bad influence in the world. One study says three-quarters of the children growing up in a Christian home will depart from their faith after they go to college. That is alarming! We must help children solidify their faith from early on. Do not be so naïve that they will automatically choose God after they grow up. A pastor told me that his kids must go to church as a family when they were still living at home. I can tell you that sometimes my kids complain that they do not want to come because the program seems boring or their buddies are not here. I will encourage them to make the most of their learning opportunities. While they cannot control what others will do, they must cultivate their personal relationship with God. Bringing our children to the church is just part of the picture. They spend most of their time at home. They need to see parents applying God's truth in their lives. For example, they must witness forgiveness, honesty, compassion and patience from you. Otherwise, they will conclude that Biblical principles are only theories and stories that are irrelevant to daily life. Parents must be the spiritual leaders at home. A healthy relationship with God will benefit our kids for the rest of their lives.

## 2. 滿足 Content

While Eli's two sons showed contempt to God, Elkanah's family was content with God's plans. We see a sharp contrast between the two families in [verse 18-21](#). Despite the bad example of two priests, Elkanah, Hannah and Samuel just carried on their duties. Contentment will fill our hearts when we enjoy what God entrusts us to do. We do our best for God and let Him take care of the rest. Two things of note in verse 18. First, Samuel was ministering before the Lord, unlike Eli's two sons who turned their back to God. But what can a little boy do? He was not strong enough to slaughter an animal, or tall enough to lay the sacrifice on the altar. He was unable to teach people the Law because he was still learning ABC. He could pick up some firewood or serve as Eli's messenger. God does not evaluate our work based on the size of the tasks or the results. It brings me a smile every time I pass by the kitchen on Friday and see a team of young people cleaning up. We have a lot to learn from them. Nothing is insignificant in the house of God if we put our hearts into it. Besides ministering before the Lord, Samuel was also wearing an ephod. It is part of the wardrobe for a priest according to Exodus 28. An ephod is like a vest. There were two gemstones on each of the shoulder areas. The names of six tribes of Israel were engraved on one stone, and the other six on the second stone. Exodus 28:12 tells us the significance: **“And you shall set the two stones on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, as stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel. And Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord on his two shoulders for remembrance.”** It symbolizes that a priest is shouldering the nation as he approaches God. Besides those two stones, there were twelve other gemstones at the front of the Ephod, each representing one tribe. The spiritual meaning is the same: a priest brings his people to God. What Samuel had was surely not a full-size ephod that Eli wore. But it implied that Samuel was a priest-in-training. It is like kids putting on little chef-hats and aprons aspiring to become cooks. The special clothing gives meaning to the role. The same is true when a sport-player puts on his jersey, a soldier in his uniform or a judge wears his robe. Similarly, you put on Christ at all times if you are a Christian. If you take pride in your relationship with Jesus, you will display godly characters through your attitude, speech and deeds. As Samuel continued to

grow, he would need bigger clothes. Therefore, Hannah brought a new robe to him once a year when the couple visited him. It is hard to imagine how much Elkanah and Hannah would miss their son. God blessed them with not one, but five children to make up for the loss of Samuel. Of course, there is no such thing as replacement because every child is equally special. But at least Hannah could enjoy motherhood with multiple kids. God will replenish what we offer to Him. Perhaps He will give you a raise at work, or He provides you a way to save money. For example, God preserves your health so that you can work as usual. He protects your home and cars from wear and tear. Your kids get scholarships to cut down tuition. Elkanah's family walked closely with God. Verse 26 summarizes Samuel's development with a positive note: **Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and also with man.** Samuel did not only expand in size. God's love and people's delight in him also increased. God's definition of a blessed childhood is different from ours. Samuel did not get the best food, clothes and toy. He never went to Disney. There is nothing wrong about those enjoyment. But love from people and affirmation from God are more precious than material blessings. We should set the same goals for our kids. They will naturally grow up, but they should also grow in God's wisdom. Hence, not only will people say that they are good boys and girls, but they are also well-loved by God.

### 3. 定罪 Condemn

Eli's two sons showed contempt to God. Elkanah's family felt content serving God. The third word we will consider is condemn. There is a consequence to sin. We do not like to hear it. But since it is in the Bible, God wants us to learn from it. God sent a messenger to condemn Eli. Let us listen to **verse 28-29**. That man of God reminded Eli that God picked the tribe of Levi to serve Him. It is an utmost honor to become priests. They were responsible for three major ministries. First, "to go up to my altar," means to present offerings to atone for sins. Second, "to burn incense" symbolizes praying for God's people. Third, "to wear an ephod" represents bringing Israel to God as we said earlier. A priest was a mediator between God and His people. However, Eli's two sons served themselves rather than serving others. They even stole the portion that was reserved for God. They defiled the sacrificial system and defamed God. An analogy is showing contempt in court. Everyone must stand when the clerk says: "All rise!" No one can talk unless giving permission. People address the judge as "your honor." Any violation can be treated as a contempt to the legal system. Similarly, every sin is an insult to God because sin tarnishes His holiness. Eli and his sons failed as leaders. Occasionally, we also hear some prominent Christian leaders fall to sin. They founded big churches or ministry organizations. They wrote books and delivered great sermons. All of a sudden, scandals broke out that were later confirmed. Some of those leaders issued public apologies and stepped down. Others settled accusations with compensation or were punished by the law. They hurt people and damaged the name of God. Jesus once said: **"More will be required from whom more is given. (Luke 12:48)"** The higher the position people reach, the more humble they should become. God put them there to serve Him and His people. Those leaders should not abuse their authority to take advantage of others. God knows our weaknesses and so does Satan. We must depend on God instead of ourselves. No matter what God calls us to do, we should do it faithfully. Since Eli failed to discipline his sons, God would judge the family. We will continue to read **verse 30-31**. The principle of **"those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed"** also applies in human relationship. People will show favor to those who treat them well. But while people can

pretend to be friendly, God knows our hearts through and through. He is also gracious and patient to wait for us to turn back in sin. But God will exercise judgment to those who are stiff-necked. God decided to do a few things to Eli's family. First, God would remove his family from priesthood and install other people as replacements. That eventually happened when king Solomon fired Abiathar, the last priest that came from Eli's descendants. Second, God would cut short the earthly life of Eli's offspring. The death of Eli's two sons on the same day would be a sign of God's judgment. That came true in chapter 4 when the Israelites lost in a battle with the Philistines. Thirty thousand people were killed, including Eli's two sons. When Eli heard the bad news, he fell backward, broke his neck and died too. That was a sad ending to a priest's family. With the decline of Eli and his sons, God gradually raised Samuel as the next leader. Unfortunately, history repeated itself later. Samuel's two sons were corrupt when he became old. People thus requested Samuel to find a king to lead them. But of course, no human leader is perfect. God wants us to turn to Him in our despair and frustration. Ultimately, our hope is in Jesus. He offered Himself on the cross as our atoning sacrifice. He bridges over the chasm of sin and leads us to God. He never stops interceding for us in heaven. Jesus is the exalted High Priest.

## 結論 CONCLUSION

We see a big contrast between the two families. Eli condoned the sins of his two sons. God eventually judged his family. Elkanah and Hannah fully supported Samuel to serve God. They were subsequently blessed by God to have multiple folds. God will honor those who honor Him. This Biblical principle was evident in the life of Eric Liddell. He was an Olympic champion runner from England. The great movie "Chariots of Fire" was based on his stories. Liddell was born in China by a Scottish missionary couple. The whole family were devout Christians. Liddell was gifted in sports. He was chosen to represent his country in the 1924 Paris Olympics. He was considered a strong favorite for the 100-meter race. Liddell later learned that the heats of the event would take place on a Sunday. He refused to participate because he firmly believed that he should treat the Lord's Day as holy. He did not budge amidst intense pressure from the people high up. Subsequently, Liddell was able to enter for the 400-meter race as a consolation. By then, he only had a few months to get ready for the Olympics. On the day of the final race, a teammate gave Liddell a note, on which he quoted 1 Samuel 2:30 – "those who honor me I will honor." Eventually, Liddell not only won a gold medal, he also broke the world record. Liddell afterward fulfilled his commitment and went to China as a missionary, where he later met his wife. Liddell's family was forced to leave when war broke out. But he determined to stay in China. In 1945, Liddell died of a brain tumor in a Japanese internment camp at the age of 43. A witness recalled Liddell's last word on his bed: "Surrender." He surrendered everything to the Lord. A young family lost their husband and dad. But countless people were inspired to imitate after Liddell's example. God will honor those who honor Him.

## 引言 INTRODUCTION

上次我們看一個敬虔家庭的模範。以利加拿每年都會帶家人去會幕敬拜神。當撒母耳還是個小孩的時候，以利加拿和妻子哈拿就將他送去事奉神。今天，我們從以利的兩個兒子看到一幅完全相反的畫面。他們不愛神。當人們看到反叛的孩子時，他們首先會問父母親是怎樣教他們的。人們不會先去責怪鄰居、學校和朋友。孩子是神所賜的禮物。神給予父母一些重要的任務。他們必須幫助孩子接受耶穌，愛神並順服祂。就像學校不能代替家庭來傳遞道德的價值觀，教會也不能代替父母來灌輸屬靈的價值觀。有一天父母要向神交帳，到底他們是如何養育小孩的。今天我們經文中的屬靈教訓是顯而易見的：神會尊重那些尊重祂的人。

## 解釋 EXPLANATION

### 1. 蔑視 Contempt

我們從三個用詞來思考這段經文。第一個字是蔑視。第 12-15 節告訴我們以利的兩個兒子如何蔑視神。第 12 節總結了一切。神看他們是「惡人」，因為他們對神毫無貢獻。此外，他們不認識神。他們可能對神有一些表面的知識，但並沒有與祂建立個人關係。他們的屬靈狀況解釋了他們的惡行。首先，他們玷污了祭物。他們要求僕人趁肉還在煮的時候就把它搶走。他們指明只要生肉。也許他們喜歡吃半熟的烤牛排。他們不僅要肉，甚至要動物的脂肪。那時，人們對膽固醇和心臟病一無所知。他們認為脂肪是肉最好的部分。因此，在獻祭中脂肪是獻給神的。利未記 7:25 說：「無論何人吃了獻給耶和華當火祭牲畜的脂油，那人必從民中剪除。」這兩個人不只從他們所服務的人那裡偷肉，他們甚至偷取神的份作個人享受！就像員工開教會的車全家去度假，或是在教會的體育館舉行私人派對。他們濫用神的資源。那兩人除了搶肉之外，他們還犯了姦淫。第 22 節說：以利年甚老邁，聽見他兩個兒子待以色列眾人的事，又聽見他們與會幕門前伺候的婦人苟合。他們在全國的名聲都不好。他們蔑視獻祭的制度和神對聖潔的要求。於是，他們肯定會絆倒一些以色列人的信心。他們也許會想，如果部分獻的肉會被拿走，為什麼還要去會幕敬拜神？當兩個人在任意妄為的時候，我們不禁要問以利在哪裡？他的確在第 23-25 節中責備兩個兒子。但以利的警告也許太輕微，也來得太晚了。他的兒子們對神的心已經剛硬。在第 25 節中，以利將得罪人與得罪神作比較。一個人可以向神獻上贖罪祭，並賠償被冒犯的人。但是，如果犯錯的人蔑視獻祭的話，又能如何補救呢？以利本可以公開取消兩個兒子祭司的資格。事實上，根據神的律法，他們的罪會被判死刑。但以利姑息了兒子們的罪。神給我們父母，尤其是父親，有責任用

聖經來培育孩子。我們需要趁早給他們正確的指導。一個壞習慣就像一棵樹苗生長在不適當的地方。如果不及時把它拔掉，它會逐漸長成一棵大樹。我們知道世界上有很多不良的影響。一項研究發現，四分之三在基督徒家庭長大的孩子在上大學之後會離棄他們的信仰。這是令人震驚的！我們必須幫助孩子從小就鞏固他們的信仰。不要天真地以為他們長大後會自動選擇神。一位牧師告訴我，當他的孩子還住在家裡時，他們必須一起去聚會。我可以告訴你，有時候我的孩子抱怨他們不想來，因為他們覺得聚會無聊，或者他們的朋友不在這裡。我會鼓勵他們盡量珍惜他們學習聖經的機會。雖然他們無法控制別人會做什麼，但他們必須培養與神的個人關係。把孩子帶到教會只是家長部分的責任。小孩大部分時間都在家裡。他們必須看到父母在生活中應用神的真理。例如，他們必須注意到父母的饒恕、誠實、同情心和忍耐。否則，他們會認為聖經的原則只是理論和故事，與日常生活不切實際。父母必須是家裡的屬靈領袖。與神健康的關係會使孩子終生受益。

## 2. 滿足 Content

以利的兩個兒子蔑視神，以利加拿的家人卻滿足於神的計劃。我們在**第 18-21 節**看到兩個家庭之間的鮮明對比。儘管有兩個祭司的壞榜樣，以利加拿、哈拿和撒母耳繼續盡他們的本份。當我們享受神託付我們去做的事之時，我們的心就能滿足。我們為神盡力，然後把結果交給祂。第 18 節有兩件事值得注意。第一，撒母耳侍立在耶和華面前，不像以利的兩個兒子背棄神。但是一個小男孩能做什麼呢？撒母耳不夠強壯，不能殺動物預備獻祭。他也不夠高，無法把祭物放在祭壇上。他也不會教導律法，因為他還在學習語言。他可以撿些木柴，也可以充當以利的信差。神不會根據工作的大小或結果來評估我們的事奉。每次我週五經過廚房看到一群年輕人在打掃衛生時，都會帶給我喜樂。我們有很多地方可以向他們學習。如果我們全心投入，在神的家中沒有什麼是微不足道的。除了在主面前事奉之外，撒母耳還穿著以弗得。根據出埃及記 28 章，以弗得是祭司衣服的一部份。以弗得像一件背心。在兩邊的肩帶上各有一顆寶石。以色列六個支派的名字刻在一顆寶石上，另外六個支派刻在第二塊石頭上。出埃及記 28:12 告訴我們其中的意義：「**要將這兩塊寶石安在以弗得的兩條肩帶上，為以色列人做紀念石。亞倫要在兩肩上擔他們的名字，在耶和華面前作為紀念。**」它像徵著一位祭師肩負著整個國家來到神面前。除了這兩塊寶石之外，以弗得前面還有十二顆寶石，每顆代表一個支派。其中的屬靈含義是一樣的：祭師把他的子民帶到神面前。撒母耳所穿的大概是尺寸比較小的以弗得。但它暗示他是在接受訓練中的祭師。這就像孩子們戴上小廚師帽和圍裙，渴望成為廚師。特殊的服裝賦予角色意義。當一名運動員穿上球衣，一名士兵身著制服或一名法官穿著他的長袍時，他們都很清楚自己的身份和責任。同樣，如果你是基督徒，你在任何時候都是披戴著基督的。如果你重視與耶穌的關係，你的態度、言語和行為自然會表現出敬虔的品格。隨著撒母耳繼續成長，他需要更大的衣服。因此，當這對夫婦每年去看他時，哈拿都會帶一件新袍子給他。以利加拿和哈拿肯定

會很想念他們的兒子。往後神賜福給他們，賜予他們五個孩子，以代替撒母耳。當然，沒有替代的孩子，因為每個小孩都同樣獨特。但至少哈拿可以享受做母親的喜悅。神會補償我們獻給祂的東西。也許神會讓你加薪，或者祂給你一些省錢的方法。例如，神保護你的健康，這樣你就可以照常工作。祂保護你的房屋和汽車一切正常。或是你的孩子拿到獎學金節省學費。以利加拿的家人與神緊密同行。第 26 節用積極的語氣總結了撒母耳的成長：**孩子撒母耳漸漸長大，耶和華與人越發喜愛他。**撒母耳不只長大，神和人對他的喜愛也同時增長。神對幸福童年的定義與我們不同。撒母耳沒有得到最好的食物、衣服和玩具。他從未去過迪士尼。這些享受本身並沒有錯。但人的愛和神的肯定，比物質的祝福更寶貴。我們應該為我們的孩子設定相同的期望。他們自然會長大，但他們也應該不斷增加屬神的智慧。如此，不僅別人會稱讚他們是好孩子，他們也是被神所愛的。

### 3. 定罪 Condemn

以利的兩個兒子蔑視神。以利加拿的一家卻滿足於事奉神。我們要考慮的第三個用詞是定罪。罪是有後果的。我們不喜歡聽。但既然它寫在聖經中，神希望我們從中學習。神派了一位使者去責備以利。讓我們看 28-29 節。那位神人提醒以利，神揀選了利未支派來事奉祂。成為祭司是莫大的榮幸。他們負責三項主要的事情。首先，「燒香」象徵為神的子民禱告。第二，「在壇上獻祭」是為人贖罪。第三，正如我們之前所說，「穿以弗得」代表將以色列帶到神面前。祭司是神和祂子民之間的中保。然而，以利的兩個兒子服事自己，而不是服事人。他們甚至偷走了屬於神那部分的祭肉。他們玷污了祭祀制度，並褻瀆神。一個類似的例子是蔑視法庭。當職員宣佈說：「全體起立！」時，每個人都必須站立。除非得到許可，否則沒有人能說話。人們稱呼法官為「法官大人」。任何違規的行為都可能被視為蔑視法律制度。同樣，任何罪都是對神的羞辱，因為罪玷污了祂的聖潔。以利和他的兒子們沒有盡到他們的本份。偶爾，我們會聽到一些有名的基督徒領袖犯罪跌倒。他們創立了大教會或事工組織。他們寫書或是有精彩的講道。但忽然之間，醜聞爆發，後來並得到證實。其中一些領袖公開道歉並下台，其他人賠償他們所侵犯的人或是受到法律的制裁。他們傷害別人，也損害了神的名。耶穌曾經說過：「**多給誰，就向誰多取。**」（路加福音 12:48）一個人坐得越高，就應該越謙虛。神把他們放在那裡是要服事神和服事人。那些領袖不應該濫用職權來利用他人。神知道我們的弱點，撒旦也知道。我們必須依靠神而不是我們自己。無論神呼召我們做什麼，我們都應該盡忠職守。由於以利沒有管教他的兒子，神便審判這個家庭。我們繼續看第 30-31 節。「**尊重我的，我必重看他；藐視我的，他必被輕視**」這個道理也適用於人際關係。人們會善待那些善待他們的人。但是，雖然人可以假裝友善，但神卻完全地了解我們的心。祂有恩典和耐心等待我們在罪中回頭。但神會審判那些頑梗不肯認罪的人。神決定對以利一家採取行動。首先，神會革除他們祭司的職務，並安排其他人來代替。在所羅門王在位時，他解雇了以利後裔的最後一位祭司亞比亞他。

其次，神會縮短以利後代的壽命。以利的兩個兒子在同一天死亡將是神審判的預告。在第 4 章，當時以色列人被非利士人打敗。三萬多人被殺，包括以利的兩個兒子。當以利聽到這個壞消息時，他向後摔倒，折斷脖子而死。這對祭師的家庭來說是一個悲慘的結局。隨著以利和他兒子們的衰落，神逐漸提升了撒母耳為下一任領袖。很可惜，後來歷史重演了。撒母耳年老時，他的兩個兒子都腐敗了。人們因此要求撒母耳立一個王來領導他們。但是，當然，沒有任何領袖是完美的。神希望我們在絕望和沮喪中轉向祂。最終，我們的希望是在耶穌身上。祂在十字架上獻上自己成為我們的贖罪祭。祂跨越罪的鴻溝，帶領我們到神面前。祂不斷在天堂為我們代求。耶穌是我們超越的大祭司。

## 結論 CONCLUSION

我們看到兩個家庭之間巨大的差別。以利姑息了兩個兒子的罪，最終被神審判。以利加拿和哈拿卻完全支持撒母耳事奉神。他們隨後得到神多重的祝福。神會尊重那些尊重祂的人。我們在埃里克·利德爾的生平中看到這個聖經原則。他是來自英國的奧運冠軍賽跑選手。著名的電影《烈火戰車》就是根據他的故事改編的。利德爾在中國出生，他的父母是蘇格蘭的宣教士。全家人都是虔誠的基督徒。利德爾在運動方面很有天賦。他被選中代表國家參加 1924 年的巴黎奧運會。他被認為是 100 米比賽的熱門人選。利德爾後來知道預賽是在周日舉行。他拒絕參加，因為他堅持應該把主日當作聖日。在高層人士的壓力之下，他仍然不肯讓步。隨後，利德爾改為參加 400 米比賽。到那時，他只剩下幾個月的時間來做準備。在決賽的那天，一位隊友給了利德爾一張字條，他在上面引用了撒母耳記上的經文：「尊重我的，我必重看他。」最終，利德爾不僅拿到金牌，他還打破了世界紀錄。利德爾後來履行他的承諾，去中國宣教，並在那裡認識他的妻子。戰爭爆發時，利德爾的家人被迫離開。但他決心留在中國。在 1945 年，利德爾在日本拘留營死於腦瘤，他只有 43 歲。一名目擊者回憶起利德爾在床上的遺言：「降服」。他降服於主的手中。一個年輕的家庭失去了丈夫和父親。但無數人受到利德爾的啟發。神會尊重那些尊重祂的人。