

1 KINGS 13

YOUNG PROPHET/ OLD PROPHET; YOU'VE GOT TO GO WITH WHAT YOU KNOW

Last week we saw that Jeroboam was acting out of fear – fear that he would lose what God had promised him. There is no reason to believe that will happen as long as we walk in faith and obedience. What we saw Jeroboam do didn't happen over a long period of time. It began almost immediately. Fear can cause us to have a knee-jerk reaction – and that almost never ends well. Jeroboam was looking at his situation in natural, almost logical terms. He simply did what other kings did. The plan God had for him didn't figure into his reasoning. He wasn't walking in faith or obedience. And that is never good. When we claim to be walking as a child of God, we **MUST** walk in faith and obedience.

Jeroboam was hand-chosen by God. The prophet had told him so and the events that immediately followed showed the word from God to be true. Yet, because of what he thought would happen, God's plan was abandoned in the name of logic. Jeroboam defaulted to what other kings normally did. When we follow God, what everyone else does is often not what we are supposed to do. **The supernatural hand of God has been introduced into the equation and that is what we run on – that is to be our default, no matter how it “doesn't make sense to us or those around us.** Because of Jeroboam's actions, things go downhill fast, but as we shall see, God intervenes with a prophet. God attempts to set things back on track. In His grace, He warns Jeroboam. Now we see how Jeroboam responds.

This is a story within a story, where both stories reinforce each other.

1Kings 13:1 And behold, a man of God came out of Judah by the word of the LORD to Bethel. Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make offerings. 2 And the man cried against the altar by the word of the LORD and said, “O altar, altar, thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and he shall

sacrifice on you the priests of the high places who make offerings on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.”³ And he gave a sign the same day, saying, “This is the sign that the LORD has spoken: ‘Behold, the altar shall be torn down, and the ashes that are on it shall be poured out.’”⁴ And when the king heard the saying of the man of God, which he cried against the altar at Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, “Seize him.” And his hand, which he stretched out against him, dried up, so that he could not draw it back to himself.⁵ The altar also was torn down, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign that the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

- Jeroboam is no run of the mill pagan. He is a syncretist. (Explain)
- Jeroboam stands at the altar to sacrifice at the new temple at Bethel, just as Solomon did at the temple in Jerusalem. But Jeroboam’s temple has no legitimacy. God does not reside there.
- Notice that the prophet comes from the southern kingdom of Judah.
- **The prophetic words regarding Josiah, points forward to a time when all the northern Israelite dynasties have come to an end and only the line of David remains to take action against Bethel (2 Kings 22:1 – 23:30).**
- Since Josiah’s reign is a long way off, a sign is given to confirm the prophecy. The altar was torn down and the ashes were scattered.
- This shows that God is not under the authority of Jeroboam just because he has instituted a new worship system.
- And the prophet is not under the king’s control when the king’s hand is withered, as he calls for the prophet’s arrest. Jeroboam should learn from this, but does he?

⁶ And the king said to the man of God, “Entreat now the favor of the LORD your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me.” And the man of God entreated the LORD, and the king’s hand was restored to him and became as it was

before. ⁷ And the king said to the man of God, “Come home with me, and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward.” ⁸ And the man of God said to the king, “If you give me half your house, I will not go in with you. And I will not eat bread or drink water in this place, ⁹ for so was it commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, ‘You shall neither eat bread nor drink water nor return by the way that you came.’” ¹⁰ So he went another way and did not return by the way that he came to Bethel.

- Jeroboam asks the prophet to ask God to restore his hand. The prophet entreats the Lord on Jeroboam’s behalf and his hand is restored.
- As we shall see, Jeroboam just wanted his hand back. Later on, we will see that there is no evidence that Jeroboam was truly repentant. But God restored his hand anyway.
- We should understand Jeroboam’s invitation to eat at the palace as an attempt to buy him off or bribe him. Jeroboam wanted him to reverse the curse. However, the prophet stands his ground, citing his marching orders from God.
- God had given the prophet strict instructions not to eat with anyone and not to retrace his footsteps on the way home. There was a reason for this. God knew someone would attempt to get in his head. There were specific reasons for these instructions. Just as there are/ were when our parents gave us specific instructions as children. There are reasons why God and those charged with raising us say what they say. We ignore them at our peril.

1Kings 13:11 Now an old prophet lived in Bethel. And his sons came and told him all that the man of God had done that day in Bethel. They also told to their father the words that he had spoken to the king. ¹² And their father said to them, “Which way did he go?” And his sons showed him the way that the man of God who came from Judah had gone. ¹³ And he said to his sons, “Saddle the

donkey for me.” So they saddled the donkey for him and he mounted it. ¹⁴ And he went after the man of God and found him sitting under an oak. And he said to him, “Are you the man of God who came from Judah?” And he said, “I am.” ¹⁵ Then he said to him, “Come home with me and eat bread.” ¹⁶ And he said, “I may not return with you, or go in with you, neither will I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place, ¹⁷ for it was said to me “by the word of the LORD, ‘You shall neither eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by the way that you came.’” ¹⁸ And he said to him, “I also am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, ‘Bring him back with you into your house that he may eat bread and drink water.’” But he lied to him. ¹⁹ So he went back with him and ate bread in his house and drank water.

- The prophet from Judah left Bethel and was going home a different way. But another man, referred to as an old prophet, (he may have been legitimate or he may have been one of Jeroboam’s appointees), told him that God had spoken to him by an angel and led him away to his house for a meal.
- The prophet from Bethel acted on his own. But he will hear from the LORD.
- Now look at what happens.

***1Kings 13:20** And as they sat at the table, the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back. ²¹ And he cried to the man of God who came from Judah, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Because you have disobeyed the word of the LORD and have not kept the command that the LORD your God commanded you, ²² but have come back and have eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which he said to you, “Eat no bread and drink no water,” your body*

shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.”²³ And after he had eaten bread and drunk, he saddled the donkey for the prophet whom he had brought back.²⁴ And as he went away a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his body was thrown in the road, and the donkey stood beside it; the lion also stood beside the body.²⁵ And behold, men passed by and saw the body thrown in the road and the lion standing by the body. And they came and told it in the city where the old prophet lived.

- Once the two men are back at the house, God speaks to the old prophet (from Bethel). The young prophet, (from Judah) disobeyed, placing himself in the position that God wanted to avoid. Once again, we should see the meal as an attempt to bribe the young prophet and reverse the curse. The old prophet would suffer when the prophecy came to pass.
- The lion and the donkey – animals don’t behave this way. The lion had killed the prophet but didn’t eat him. He also didn’t eat the donkey and the donkey didn’t run. This signifies to everyone in the story, as well as us, that God is moving. This isn’t an ordinary occurrence.
- But the other guy lied! Why doesn’t God deal with him? The young prophet was deceived!
- That is where our minds tend to go, but there is a lesson to be learned. The young prophet got his marching orders from God. Why should he expect to get secondary orders – a change of plans from someone else? Trust and obey!

1Kings 13:26 And when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard of it, he said, “It is the man of God who disobeyed the word of the LORD; therefore the LORD has given him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word that the LORD spoke to him.”²⁷ And he said to his sons, “Saddle the donkey for me.” And they saddled it.²⁸ And he went and found his body thrown in the road, and the donkey and the lion standing beside the

body. The lion had not eaten the body or torn the donkey. ²⁹ And the prophet took up the body of the man of God and laid it on the donkey and brought it back to the city to mourn and to bury him. ³⁰ And he laid the body in his own grave. And they mourned over him, saying, “Alas, my brother!” ³¹ And after he had buried him, he said to his sons, “When I die, bury me in the grave in which the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. ³² For the saying that he called out by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel and against all the houses of the high places that are in the cities of Samaria shall surely come to pass.”

- The old prophet recovers the body of the young prophet and takes it to his home in order to bury him. Just as the word of the Lord said, he wouldn't be buried in his own grave.
- The old prophet recognizes the legitimacy of the young prophet and confirms the prophecy he had given.

1Kings 13:33 After this thing Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but made priests for the high places again from among all the people. Any who would, he ordained to be priests of the high places. ³⁴ And this thing became sin to the house of Jeroboam, so as to cut it off and to destroy it from the face of the earth.

- After the withering of his hand and what had happened to the young prophet, Jeroboam continued to go his own way. He didn't listen.
- Bethel will indeed be destroyed, though it is still a little way off in the future.

APPLICATION:

As I stated earlier, we have a story within a story here. The issue with Jeroboam at the beginning set up the story of the young prophet/ old prophet. Both stories

share a common theme. Do you know what it is? Both stories deal with a lack of obedience, though the disobedience comes for different reasons.

Jeroboam's disobedience comes from fear – a lack of trust. And as he has begun to live in that lack of trust and obedience, his pride has taken hold of his heart. He has now determined to do as he wishes. He sees himself as the ruler of Israel, without having to bow to the will of God, the one who put him there. Once again, that never ends well. As we will see, Jeroboam and the northern kingdom will pay the price for this. Jeroboam is leading his people into direct conflict with God.

Though none of us are kings of a nation, we too can lead others astray. Our actions have consequences. They will have consequences when we follow God and they will have consequences, always bad ones, when we disobey. And it isn't just a matter of God getting mad and wanting to spite us when we disobey. It is that getting out of the will of God CANNOT be good for us. If God knows all and sees all, and He is just, the only way our stories can end well is if we trust Him and obey! That is simple logic. God isn't on a temper tantrum here.

And what of the young prophet? Did he deserve to die at the jaws of a lion just because he was deceived? Isn't that unjust? Can't we all be deceived? Yes, we can be deceived. But remember, the stories we have in the Bible are there to teach us theology.

The young prophet was given his marching orders directly from God to protect him from the very thing that killed him. Yes, he was given a story that sounded good. It supposedly involved a word of God from an angel. Was this a lie? Yes, it was. But it was a lie, painted with religious overtones that went directly against what God had told him.

When the enemy moves, he doesn't usually come at us looking like the Halloween costumes we see every year. He doesn't look like what we see in the movies. He is subtle and he cloaks his words in religious garb. He even does nice things on occasion. After all, he has to sell his plan. That is why it isn't always easy to tell who is telling the truth. It isn't always easy to determine who is a friend and who is a foe.

So, what are we to do? We are to go with what we know. Neither Jeroboam nor the young prophet did this. They were both sidelined from the plan of God by

other things, even though they had heard directly from God. In the case of Jeroboam, it was what he thought would happen despite what God had told him. Fear and then pride, both grew in his heart. The results were ugly.

As for the young prophet – he was sidelined by a lying prophet, who cloaked his words in hospitality and religious sentiment. Not even a prophet is immune to the effects of disobedience. His radar should have gone up as soon as he heard something to the contrary of what God had told him. Sadly, he followed the old prophet.

But both men could have avoided their bad endings by simply believing what God had told them. It really is that simple. God's words were given to both men in order that they avoid the very things that brought them to their ends. And the same goes for us today.

We are to constantly learn. We are to constantly listen. But when we have been given specific marching orders and instructions, especially when we believe we have heard from God, then we have to go with that until we are sure we have heard differently. We have to go with what we know.

When we are studying the Biblical narrative, we see that God doesn't usually intervene until someone is messing up His plan. Jeroboam was definitely going astray and thereby he was leading the nation of Israel astray. The young prophet was being deceived by the old prophet and God then spoke through the old prophet to let the young prophet know he had failed. The old prophet acted on his own, originally, but God then spoke through him in order to confirm the prophecy He had given through the young prophet, as well as to confirm the warning God had given him to the young prophet, in the first place.

We have to go with what we know until God has made it clear that something has changed. That is the rule. If we are doing what God has truly told us to do, we cannot go wrong. And we have to stand on that, despite what we see, what we fear, what we hear, or who may come along and say differently, no matter how well they say it.

Go with what you know. Trust and obey. As the song says, "There is no other way."

