

King Jeroboam : Confronted by God's Word

EBC.....Evening message.... Oct 3 2021

1 Kings 13:1-34

In this morning's message we saw how Jeroboam created his own way of worshiping God...it had the outward appearance of a true religion...but it was false.

Jeroboam changed the place of worship...he changed the object of worship...he changed the priesthood and he changed the calendar...not all reformations are good

And through the entire account God has remained silent....that is about to end...in Chapter 13 ...verse 1God sends an unnamed prophet to tell Jeroboam exactly what God thinks of his new brand of worship.

V1) 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.

As we read this morning...Bethel was one of the convenient sites set up for this false worship.

When you read this account of a*a king standing by an altar to make offerings*..... I can't help but think back to when Solomon dedicated the temple in 1 kings chapter 8. The construction of the temple was complete and the ark of the covenant was placed inside...scripture tells us the glory of the Lord filling the temple as evidenced by the smoke that appeared....God clearly blessed that temple dedication...verse 66 says the people went home joyfully and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had shown...what a difference obedience to the Lord makes.

So here we have Jeroboam....perhaps copying Solomon's dedication service to introduce his new form of worship...standing at his illegitimate altar during a feast that he simply made up

God will make His presence known here as well...and it will not be His glory being revealed...but his extreme displeasure in what Jeroboam is doing.

V2) 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".

Do you notice what the prophet zeroes in on as far as judgement?...it is the altar....there was a entire laundry list of things that God could have pointed out as wrong...but it is the altar and the ashes within it that God judges ..why...I believe it is because the altar was at the **heart of the offence**....the altar speaks of sacrifice for sins....the entire Jewish sacrificial system was a type...a shadow of things to come....they all point to Christ....who would one day cry.. *It is finished*..and put an end to all sacrifices.

Jeroboam's man-made religion had deviated so far from what God prescribedthat it was an insult to the work of Christ...most specifically the atonement...hence the altar is singled out.

Many false religions often make their greatest error in truth concerning the **person and work of Christ**.

The altar in mentioned twice....more than likely to signify both altars....this one in Bethel and the other in Dan

Then an amazing prophecy is given....one that would be fulfilled over 300 years later....the record of this is in 2 Kings ...we find in

chapter 23 King Josiah...a godly king...purging the land of idolatry and comes to Bethel.....verse 20 says *"And Josiah sacrificed all the priests of the high places who were there, on the altars, and burned human bones on them."* ...we see a literal and exact fulfillment take place.

We often think of bible prophecy as something yet to come....well that is true..the very nature of prophecy deals with the future....but many prophecies recorded in the Bible have come to pass. In fact Pastor Scott and I were discussing this passage and he mentioned that every prophecy **given** within the book of I and 2 kings was **fulfilled** in 1 and 2 Kings...in other words we are not waiting for any of these prophecies o come to pass....what does this tell us?...what God promises he fulfills...what God says **will happen... happens**. We should take great comfort and encouragement from the many prophecies already fulfilled.

V3) 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."

So we see an immediate sign that would be given ... for those people in attendance that day ... to confirm the man of God's words as being from God....the altar is torn down and the ashes poured out.

V4) 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.

Jeroboam attempts to stop both the message and the messenger...but his hand becomes paralyzed...men may try to stop

God message...but it is futile....it is foolish to think we can stop God's word from going forth.

V5) 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.

What was the significance of the ashes being poured out?...Leviticus 6:11 tells us the priests were to carry the ashes outside the camp to a **clean place**....the ashes here simply pour out onto the ground...God is judging not only the **altar**...but the **sacrifices** made on the altar.

V6) 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.

Notice Jeroboam asks the **prophet** to pray for him that he might be healed...he asks the very man who is bringing judgement to intercede on his behalf.....why...why not ask any of his own priests to pray?...he knew his religion was useless to help....his religion was powerless...**who** you are trusting in becomes vitally important in the **moment of crisis**.

You may have had this sort of thing happen in your life....family members or friends who do not believe in God...but when trouble comes to them... they ask you to pray for them...a subtle recognition that they know what you have is real.

Also note he asks the prophets to pray to **your** God....and think this is very telling...this reveals Jeroboam's relationship with God...he **knew about God**...but he **did not know God personally**.

Do you find it amazing that God would heal him?.....healing given to this one who is so ungrateful....so ungodly...one who is leading the entire nation into idolatry.

In Leviticus 10 Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu offered strange or unauthorized fire to the Lord...death was immediate

In 1 Chronicles 13....Uzza tried to steady the ark when the oxen stumbled....death was immediate

In Acts 5 Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit...death was immediate

...but here God not only **saves** Jeroboam the immediate judgement of death...but **provides** a gracious and merciful healing....I think of all the miracles of healing in the Bible ...this may be one of the most unexpected and surprising.

God is clearly demonstrating to Jeroboam...not only am I a God of truth...but **I am a God of great mercy.**

V7) And the king said to the man of God, "Come home with me, and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward."

This is not the desired response.....the proper response here is repentance...God was doing everything to expose Jeroboam's heart...to show him his sin...but there is no sorrow or contrition.

Jeroboam is more concerned with appeasing the prophet... than obeying the word spoken.

Jeroboam wants an audience with the **messenger**....come home...lets have dinner....but completely ignores the most important thing....the **message.**

V8) 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.

V9) for so it was 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.”

The prophet from Judah had a twofold challenge from God....he must first proclaim the word of God....and secondly he must avoid any form of fellowship...he was to be faithful to **speak** and faithful to **act**....it was a two part sermon...by eating with the king...having fellowship...would effectually undue everything he just said.

I like what Donald Wiseman says...*To eat with the king would have been tantamount to a withdrawal of judgement.*

I think this highlights an important truth in how we are to live....what we **say** must be consistent with how we **act** and how we **act** must be consistent with what we **say**.

Warren Wiersbe says this...*A compromising servant of God muddies the waters and confuses the saints.*

V10) So he went another way and did not return by the way that he came to Bethel.

It is here we expect the story to end....the man of God has done what was asked....he was faithful to proclaim and obey.

But then we have a very strange twist to the story...and are presented one of the more bizarre accounts in the word of God and introduced to a very strange character in this old prophet.

V11) 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 their father the words that he had spoken to the king.

Many commentators are unsure what to make of this old prophet....was he a false prophet?...was he a true prophet gone bad....what is his story?...and certainly there are more questions than answers about this unnamed prophet....but I think if we just focus on what he says and does it will help us navigate and understand text.

His sons were at the Jeroboam service that day and recount all that happened to their father....how the man of God interrupted the service....the altar splitting ...Jeroboam's hand paralyzed then healed...the amazing prophecy about king Josiah and the bones being burned...I like what Ralph Davis says calls this...this is one of the... *you will never believe what happened at church today*....stories...you should have been there Dad

V12) 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.

V13) And he said to his sons, “Saddle the donkey for me.” So they saddled the donkey for him and he mounted it.

Why the old prophet wanted to meet the man of God we are not told.

V14) 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.”

V15) Then he said to him, “Come home with me and eat bread.”

This is now the second invitation to dinner the man of God has received today.

V16) 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,

V17) 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.”

God’s words to the prophet are repeated numerous times in this passage...this informs us the word that he was to obey was very **clear** and very **specific**...it was not some vague recommendation or suggestion ...it was a direct command that the man of God knew very well. So if it is disobeyed he cannot claim ignorance.

V18) 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.

This certainly speaks to the day and age we find ourselves in today....false messengers of God....claiming to speak for God...they say they have a word from the Lord....the Lord spoke to me....

1 John 4:1 says...*”Beloved, Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world”*.

John says test the spirits....how do we do that?...the surest test is this.....does their message line up with the word of God?.....we see in this account a clear contradiction...God told the man of God ...do not eat or drink with anyone in Bethel...this old prophet is claiming God told him that he should come home and eat and drink with him in Bethel...they both cannot be right...and that is the point...God’s word never contradicts itself. The spiritual antennae of the man of God should have sensed something wrong here.

....this old prophet said an angel told him...Paul possibly had this account in mind when he tells the Galatians not to believe any contrary message...even if delivered by an angel.

V19) So he went back with him and ate bread in his house and drank water

This short verse simply says he went back...why did he give in ..seemingly so easy...no protest.....there are many possible reasons...but the text does not tell us why...just that he did...he gave in...he disobeyed God’s word.

V20) And as they sat at the table, the word of the Lord came to the prophet who had brought him back.

So now the old prophet proclaims a **true** message from the Lord....and this is it in verse 21...

V21) And he cried to the man of God who came to him 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,

V22) 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.”

V23) And after he had eaten bread and drunk, he saddled the donkey for the prophet whom he had brought back.

This verse says they finished eating their meal....I think I would have lost my appetite after hearing this latest prophecy. But this verse **consummates the disobedience**....remember the command was to not eat and drink.

V24) 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.

V25) 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.

It wasn't just the gory mess that piqued the interest of the passersby...it was the eccentric lion that caused them to retell the story back in town.

V26) And when the prophet who 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.”

The old prophet recognizes right away **who** was killed and **why**...it was God's judgement on the man of God.

V27) And he said to his sons, “Saddle the donkey for me.” And they saddled it.

I am not sure if the sons are growing weary of all the donkey saddling...but this is the second time this day they had to saddle the donkey for their father.

V28) 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.

This is strange behaviour for a lion...killing but not eating...in fact consider how many meals that lion passed up that day?...the man of God...the donkey...the townspeople passing by...and then finally the old prophet returning to retrieve the body....

This unconventional behaviour of the lion was God’s way of saying **this was no accident...this is my judgement** on the man of God from Judah who disobeyed My word.

V29) 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.

V30) And he laid the body in his own grave. And they mourned over him, saying, “Alas, my brother!”

V31) 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.

Why does the old prophet want to be buried next to the man of God?...**it is because he believes everything the man of God spoke is true and will come to pass...**including the part about

Josiah burning the bones on the altar. ...and that is exactly what happened ...In 2 Kings 23:17 we read...*Then Josiah said, "What is that monument that I see?". And the men of the city told him, "It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and predicted these things that you have done against the altar at Bethel". And Josiah said, "Let him be, let no man move his bones". So they let his bones alone, along with the bones of the prophet who came out of Samaria.*

The prophet from Samaria was the old prophet. His bones were preserved from defilement by being buried with the man of God's bones.

V32) 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."

We now see the old prophet believes the word proclaimed by the man of God.

V33) After this thing Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but made the priests for the high places again from among all the people. Any who would, he ordained to be priests of the high places.

After this thing...after the powerful witness of the word of God...Jeroboam did not turn..he did not repent.

V34) 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.

There is a lot happening in this passage and it is easy to become lost in the details of the narrative....it is easy to become

sidetracked with many unanswered questions....but what I find helpful in breaking down narrative passages like these it is to look for repeating words and phrases

...I don't know if you like highlighting your Bibles.... but I find it very instructive ...if you were to circle the phrase...*Word of the Lord*... or *thus saith the Lord*...you will have a lot of circles...15 of them....the word of God dominates this passage. It is front and center...it is the theme of this passage. In fact there is a very strong contrast with the message from this morning....the end of chapter 12 emphasizes man's ways...he made an image..he made altars...he made priests...he made a festival....this chapter confronts Jeroboam and his false ways ...with truth...he is confronted with the word of the Lord. It does not matter what man thinks...what ultimately matters is....what does **God** say!

Chapter 13 begins and ends with Jeroboam. I don't think we should be sidetracked by the two prophets...the two prophets are not named...they are just **part** of the narrative, not **the** story...any attempt to make more of them does injustice to the text...the narrative is about Jeroboam and his response to the word of God.

At the **beginning** Jeroboam is confronted by the man of God ...judgement is pronounced....healing is provided.....but there is no repentance...he rejects the revealed word.

And at the **end** of the chapter...in response to God's speedy judgement on the man of God who disobeyed the word of God...Jeroboam continues to do evil ...he continues to reject the powerful witness of the word of God.

Do you also notice in this passage there seems to be an emphasis on the road travelled...or the direction one takes...consider these phrases.... the man of God came from Judah...why not just say from Judah...but he **came** from Judah...there is directional intent....the prophet is told to not come home the same road he takes...the two sons happened to notice what direction the man of God took...the old prophet asks which way did he go?...and the old prophet is said to have **brought him back** to his house...this occurs 7 times...the prophet is not just **old**...but he is identified as the **prophet who brought him back**.

I believe this direction motif culminates in verse 33....*After this thing Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way*...that is the heart of repentance...to stop going in the direction you are going ...turn and follow God....this verse seems to take in all that has occurred in this narrative and calls for Jeroboam to consider his waysand to consider the witness of the word of God in his life ...and turn to God...to repent.

Sadly...Jeroboam does not repent...but goes back to his old ways ...he continues down the road he is already on...he does not change direction....he continues away from God....**this** after all the witness of the word of God in his life.

More than likely this portion of scripture was intended for the Jews living in exile...the Jews in Babylon would have been the first readers of this account.....scripture's historical narratives not not intended as mere history lessons...but to teach us **lessons from history**...it is not the history...but the lesson we learn from history....the Jews would be reminded of why they were in exile....this passage is emblematic of the recurring pattern...prophets being sent to the nation and a call for them to repent...to turn back to God...to obey the covenant laws...and the people's refusal to heed the prophet's warning....and God did exactly what he said he would do ...bring them into exile.

God's speedy judgement on the man of God from Judah who disobeyed would be a solemn lesson.....we might complain...why wasn't the old prophet judged...he lied...his deception led to the man of God's death...it does not seem fair...but the text does not go there....the text wants us to focus on this one truth only...**disobedience is judged...**

God is demonstrating the importance of obedience to the Word of the Lord...turn from your evil ways and repent.....before it is too late....

Isaiah 55:6,7 says...*"Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near; let the wicked forsake his way. and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.*

...God's grace and mercy is not indefinitely held out for those who disobey....there is a point where God says ..enough.

This is fulfilled in the next chapter....God judges the house of Jeroboam....God ends his dynasty...the one that would have been a sure kingdom like David's...if...if only Jeroboam had obeyed the word of the Lord.

I think the Jews in Babylon could also take **comfort** from this passage because it would remind them, as well as us today, that God's word is faithful and true.....everything that God said would happen in this account...happened. The Jews reading this would know that there were many more promises concerning them that were yet to be fulfilled...yes they were in exile....but they had a future...the promised Messiah would come...just as God said.

We look back at see even more prophecies fulfilled....yes the Messiah has come....and the suffering servant died on our behalf

and rose again....and when He says He is coming again...we have no reason to doubt Him.

As I close tonight...we realize that the word of God is certainly under attack...many mock it...many simply do not believe it...many say it is irrelevant for our times...sadly... many Christians are adopting a low view of scripture....but take heart dear believer...in this chapter we see the word of God rejected...disobeyed and abused...but nothing will change the faithfulness...the truthfulness and power of the word of God...

Close in prayer