

1 Kings Chapter 13 Commentary

1Ki 13:1 ¶ "And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. 2 And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee. 3 And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out. 4 And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him. 5 The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD."

God sent a prophet from Judah to reprimand Jeroboam for turning to idolatry. The prophet proclaims that one, born of the lineage of King David, Josiah by name, will burn the priest and men's bones upon this altar of idolatry. This prophesy was fulfilled, according to historians, about three hundred and forty or fifty years later under the reign of Josiah, seen in *2Ki 23:15-20; 15 "Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove. 16 And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchers that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchers, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. 17 Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulcher of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel. 18 And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So, they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria. 19 And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LORD to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel. 20 And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem."*

Why is all this happening to Jeroboam? Remember what God told Jeroboam in *1Ki 11:37-38; 37 "And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. 38 And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee."* Jeroboam has made no attempt to do what God has commanded, and God is reprimanding him.

There is a great warning for God's people in this. God will do what he says, though it may not come speedily, it will come surely. Also, in application to our own lives, if we do what God has commanded, we will have the blessings of God in our lives. If we do not do as God has commanded, we will not have his blessings in our lives, and we will suffer judicial judgments in our lives.

6 "And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Intreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before. 7 And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward. 8 And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: 9 For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. 10 So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel."

Notice, Jeroboam ask the man of God to pray to "*the LORD thy God.*" Jeroboam is not claiming God as his God. Yet, God in his mercy, to validate that this was indeed a man of God, answers the prayer and restores Jeroboam's hand. This should have motivated Jeroboam to turn to the Lord, and to turn from idolatry, but it does not, which signifies that Jeroboam is not of God's chosen as King David was.

Notice, that Jeroboam did not ask of the man of God to pray for his forgiveness, only for the restoration of his hand. He does not ask the man of God to pray to God that God would guide him and establish his kingdom. He has already sunk into idolatry and has no care except for his own will and purpose. Jeroboam does not even give thanks to God for his healing, but he tries to bribe the man of God to become a part of his idolatry.

Jeroboam tries to get the man of God to come home with him so he can give him a reward. The man of God told Jeroboam that God had given him specific instructions of how to carry out God's commandment and he would not go with Jeroboam nor take the reward offered to him.

We should always remember the words of God in **1Sa 15:22** "*And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*" God also has directed us to not take bribes nor rewards for what God has done. Consider **Jude 1:11-13**; **11** "*Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.* **12** *These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;* **13** *Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.*" This gives us a picture of Jeroboam's life. Likewise, God commanded anyone in a position of a judge to not take gifts which would blind their eyes to true judgments.

11 ¶ "Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father. **12** And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah. **13** And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon, **14** And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am. **15** Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread. **16** And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: **17** For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest. **18** He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him. **19** So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water."

We have here an old prophet that chases down the man of God and lies to him. The fact that he lies to the true man of God is evidence that he is probably a false prophet, as we see in **Mt 7:18** "*A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*" and **Jas 3:11** "*Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?*"

He persuades the man of God to come to his house and eat bread and drink water, against the commandment of God. This is a great reminder to us, that we should weigh the words of those who would entice us to do what God has told us not to do, and follow the commandments of God. It is also a reminder that those who claim to be in the Lord's service, but are not, will tempt us, and tell us lies, to turn us from following God's commandment. This is one thing that ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ must watch for very carefully.

We notice that the old prophet said that an angel had spoken unto him, not God. We believe that this angel was the angel of darkness and idolatry, described in **2Co 11:14** "*And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*" This was not a commandment from God, which should have been the only thing that would persuade the man of God to disregard God's commandment. That word of God should also have come to him and not another. We have here a picture of a sin unto death.

20 "And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back: **21** And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee, **22** But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the LORD did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulcher of thy fathers. **23 ¶** And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he

saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back. 24 And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcass was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcass. 25 And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcass cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcass: and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt. 26 And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD: therefore, the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake unto him."

The old prophet receives a message from God to give to the man of God. It is not good news, and tells the man of God, because you disobeyed the commandment of God, you will not make it home, nor be buried in the sepulcher of your fathers. The old prophet saddles his ass and lets the man of God go on his way. Then he was met by a lion and killed. The old prophet hears of it and goes and gets the body and buries him in his own tomb.

We are given New Testament instruction from Jesus about this in **Joh 14:15 ¶ "If ye love me, keep my commandments."** A reminder that though God had used the man of God to deliver the prophesy, and to heal Jeroboam's hand, because he listened to the voice of a deceiver he suffers the judicial judgment of God in short order.

The lesson for us: we will often be tempted by many different people, even those of our own house, to go against the word of God. The lesson is: if God gives you a message to deliver, deliver it and do all that God has commanded.

27 "And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled him. 28 And he went and found his carcass cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcass: the lion had not eaten the carcass, nor torn the ass. 29 And the prophet took up the carcass of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him. 30 And he laid his carcass in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother! 31 And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulcher wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones: 32 For the saying which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass."

The old prophet has his sons saddle him an ass and goes and finds the carcass of the man of God. He brings it home and puts the carcass in his own grave. He also instructed his sons to bury his bones in the grave with the man of God.

The old prophet declares that the prophesy of the man of God will surely come to pass. How can the old prophet know this? Because when the man of God disobeyed God's commandment, God's judicial judgment came to pass swiftly. Thus, the old prophet that the man of God was a true man and what he had prophesied would come to pass.

At this point I want to point out that our Prophet, Priest, and King, Jesus Christ, has declared by the word of God that He will return to get all of God's people and take them to the place He has prepared for us, and we can rest in full assurance that it will come to pass. We just do not know when. At the same time King Jesus will destroy all idolatry and cast the idolators into the eternal lake of fire. As we think upon this scene set before us: we remember that Jesus did not let anyone, even Satan himself, turn Him from doing God's will completely, giving us the example of how to live our own lives as children of God.

33 "After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places. 34 And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth."

Jeroboam, even given this warning from God, and seeing the proof that it was God who rent the altar and poured out the ashes, and the man of God praying and restoring his hand, does not turn to God nor repent of his idolatry. He simply goes deeper and deeper in the clutches of Satan and leads Israel to continue in idolatry.

Where do we see Jesus in this chapter? Just as surely as the prophesy of the man of God came to pass, we see Jesus fulfilling all of the prophesy of himself, and his works that he would do coming to pass. We understand

that judgment is coming to this world of sin, at the return of Christ. We do point out that for Israel, at this point, the number of the bad is far greater than the number of the good, which reminds us of the prophesy of scripture in ***Ro 9:27 "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:"*** and in ***Ro 11:5 "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."*** These scriptures tell us plainly that not all people are going to heaven but a remnant. A remnant of Israel in ***Ro 9:27***, and a remnant of the Gentiles in ***Ro 11:5***.

However, these are not words to cause us to despair but affirm our wills to be conformed to the will of God the Father. Though the number of the saved may be small comparably small to the number of unsaved, on earth in time, that remnant collectively will be more than man can number, seen in ***Re 7:9-10; 9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.***" Praise and glory to our Saviour and King Jesus for our eternal salvation. Hallelujah! Amen!

In summary of this chapter: we look at the New Testament Church in the world today. We see and understand that there are ministers who will preach lies to accomplish their will. A great warning for us all to carefully weigh what is said and preached to us, and the motive behind it. Why? Because we see the New Testament church has been infiltrated by those whose preach unsound doctrine to gain notoriety for themselves, to gain numbers to their flocks for their glory, to test the faith of God's people, to prove if God's people are truly reading and studying the King James Bible, so they have the truth of God to weigh all things by.

Wherefore, let us be diligent to adhere to the word of God, and give all glory and honor to our Saviour and King, Jesus Christ. Amen!