



A Prophet Who Didn't Listen

1 Kings 13 tells a story of a prophet sent to Bethel to prophesy against the evil Jereboam had brought into the Northern kingdom of Israel (**1 Kng 12.26-31**). As Jereboam stood by his altar the man of God spoke stating, *“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.”* (**1 Kng 13.2**). When Jereboam attempted to take hold of the man of God he was stricken so that his arm “dried up” and could not be moved (**1 Kng 13.4**). As an added sign that this was the word of the Lord the altar was split and the ashes poured out (**1 Kng 13.3,5**). Jereboam then asked the man of God to “intreat” the Lord to heal him, which was done, after which Jereboam asked the man to come and “refresh” himself (**1 Kng 13.7**). The prophet informed Jereboam he had been instructed not to eat or drink anything there, nor to return by the same way that he had come (**1 Kng 13.9**). Later an older “prophet” lied to the man and tricked him into coming home and eating with him for which the prophet lost his life (**1 Kng 13.11-24**). There are several things that can be learned from this story. The man who was sent to speak against Jereboam knew the command that the Lord had given him but allowed himself to be deceived. He had seen the power of the Lord in the action God took against the king and the rending of the altar. In spite of the things he had seen, and the fact that he had been spoken to and charged by God to perform this task, he did not completely obey. Reading the scriptures we may think that the prophets were incapable of sin. There are those today who believe that once one comes to an understanding of the scriptures and obeys them initially, that allowances can be made in areas that have personal appeal to them. Some may allow themselves to be deceived by those who claim to speak truth when in fact they are being lied to. Knowing what the scriptures say is not enough. One must determine to hold to them and not be deceived by error. The man of God in this story lost his life because he

chose to disregard the word of the Lord. In the same manner it is possible for those who think they are “saved” to allow themselves to be influenced by what others want or by their own weakness. The religious world is filled with the social pressure and demands of what people want to hear and accept. This leads to the formation of doctrines and practices that God does not approve of and will eventually cost us our souls if we continue in such things. The Lord commanded the prophet not to return by the way he had come. He did this at first, but allowed himself to be swayed from the path. In our lives there are many things that may try to convince us that a way other than the one directed by God is better. This is the problem that the Pharisees had during the day that Christ was on the Earth. Christ, quoting the prophet Isaiah, stated, *“Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”* (**Matt 15.7-9**). The dangers of weakness, temptation, failure to adhere to God’s commands and the pursuit of human interests in the name of religion is nothing new. During the first century this was a problem for Christians then as well as now. Paul warned of this danger in his address to the Ephesian elders and other disciples (**Acts 20.28-29**). John warns of false teachers and others (**1 John 2.23-24**), as does Peter (**2 Pet 2.1**). Jude writes concerning false teachers and admonishes us to defend the faith (**Jude 3**). These are only a few of the statements that are made in the scriptures. The prophet that disobeyed God was killed by a lion for his lack of faithfulness. We must watch for the lion that seeks to devour us (**1 Pet 5.8**) and remain steadfast at all times in God’s word.

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