

I Kings 13 Handout

This chapter is about Jeroboam and his sins, followed by a very bizarre story.

Verse 1

We are told a man of God came to Judah, by what? _____

We are going to read this phrase nine times in this chapter.

The man of God finds Jeroboam at the altar.

Verse 2-3

The man of God proceeds to give a prophecy, by what? _____

Regarding what? _____

Who would be born from the house of David? _____

We are told that Josiah would destroy Jeroboam's religious system. This prophecy is predicting something in the future. How far, no one knows. How could anyone know if it would come to pass or not? This prophecy wasn't fulfilled for another 340 years (2 Kings 23:15-20).

What are we told the man of God gave that day though? _____

Since this prophecy wouldn't be fulfilled for hundreds of years, there needed to be an immediate sign to confirm the word to those present-day hearers.

The sign would be the altar splitting apart and the ashes on it poured out.

According to the Mosaic Law, the priests would carefully carry away the ashes from the altar for disposal to a clean place (Leviticus 1:16, 4:12, 6:10-11). The destruction of the altar and pouring out of the ashes would symbolize God's control over Jeroboam and his rejection of his religious system.

Verses 4-5

Jeroboam's reaction is to silence the man of God rather than respond to the message. Like every message of judgment, there is an unspoken invitation to repentance. Jeroboam, however, doesn't seem to accept this invite.

What happened when Jeroboam stretched out his hand? _____

By doing this, God seems to be showing how His power and authority are greater than the kings, and God was sovereign over them.

We see two other things happen at this time:

- Altar was split and the ashes were poured out
- This was according to the sign given by the man of God

These things happened by what? _____

Verse 6

What does Jeroboam want the man of God to do? _____

Notice Jeroboam's word choice here: "Intercede with the Lord **your** God" Isn't this Jeroboam's God as well?

We learn that the man intercedes and Jeroboam's hand is restored.

Verses 7-10

We see Jeroboam invites the man of God to come and eat with him and he wants to give him a gift.

What is the man's reaction? _____

How do you think it would look if the man accepted a gift and then dined with Jeroboam after what had just happened?

He goes on to say that he was commanded, by what? _____

We get three things he must not do:

- Not eat bread
- Not drink water
- Not return the same way he came

We are told he took a different way back .

Verses 11-17

Who do we find is living in Bethel? _____

Many of the faithful in Israel left when Jeroboam brought the nation under his own system of worship, but this old prophet obviously chose to stay.

His sons tell him what the man of God had done and said to the king. When he finds out which way the man went, he sets out to find him, which he does.

What does the old prophet invite the man to do? _____

Once again the man of God replies with what he had been told by what?

Verses 18- 19

The man introduces himself as a prophet as well.

Who does he claim spoke to him? _____

By what? _____

He claims that the Lord told him to bring the man of God back to his home to eat and drink.

What do we learn though? _____

The man of God went with him and ate and drank in his house.

We see how the old prophet tries to turn the man away from what God had told him to do, by lying about God's revelation to him. The younger prophet chose to listen to bad counsel rather than obeying a direct word from the Lord.

Some reasons why the man of God might listen to the lie from the old prophet of Bethel:

- The prophet from Bethel was most likely older and had the respect of the man of God.
- The prophet from Bethel identified with the man of God (I too am a prophet as you are).
- The prophet from Bethel claimed a spectacular experience (an angel spoke to me).
- The prophet from Bethel claimed to speak for the LORD (by the word of the LORD).
- The prophet from Bethel offered no reward, other than simple food (he may eat bread and drink water).

No matter how it seemed, it was the man of God's duty to resist the invitation from the old prophet and listen to what God had specifically told him. God is not going to contradict himself.

Verses 20-22

What happens as they are sitting at the table? _____

He gives a list of things that the Lord says:

- You defied the word of the Lord
- Have not kept the command God gave
- Came back and ate bread and drank water where he was told not to

There are consequences to what he does. He won't be buried in the tomb of his ancestors. In the ancient Near East, the way a person was buried showed whether their life was honorable or not. It would have been a disgrace to be buried away from one's ancestors.

Verses 23-24

What happens to the man on his way home? _____

Verses 25-28

Word gets back to the old prophet.

He knows this happened because the man of God defied the Lord. So he sets out to find the body just like it was described. Notice the specifics - lion kills the man, and then just stands next to it along with the donkey. Would this be typical behavior for a lion? How about the donkey?

It is clear that this is an unusual situation; that God had sent the lion to judge the younger prophet.

What do you think would have happened if God had not judged the younger prophet for his disobedience?

Verses 29-32

The old prophet brings the body back. **What are we told he does?**

What does he tell his sons to do? _____

He goes on to say that the message the man of God declared, by what?

Verses 33-34 READ

Did any of these events change Jeroboam?

He continued in his evil ways. He allowed anyone who wanted to become a priest to do so on the high places.

At this time, God commanded a strict separation between kings and priests. Jeroboam blurred the line greatly. His disregard for what God had required when it came to Israel's priesthood was appalling. By instituting his own priestly system, he was responsible for its continuing practice which would eventually lead to Israel's captivity by Assyria.

What did Jeroboam's sin lead to? _____

We see how God's prophecy and judgment on Jeroboam as well as its signs did not lead the king to repentance. We also see how the fate of the disobedient prophet was a precursor to what will eventually happen to the nation of Israel itself.

We are left clueless about many details in this chapter, but the writer is clear about what matters: the word of the Lord and its fulfillment in due time. We saw nine times how either the writer or one of the characters refers to the 'word of the Lord'.

This phrase referred to:

- Orders given to the man of God
- What he preached about
- An alleged word of God
- A true word of God
- A word spoken by the old prophet
- What the Lord spoke
- What the Lord commanded

We saw how Jeroboam had been given a great opportunity to become a great king of Israel, especially in light of what God promised in I Kings 11:

"Then it shall be, if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you."

Jeroboam did not obey God and honor His commandments, and therefore never fulfilled his potential or promise.

Even at the end of the Kingdom of Israel, Jeroboam's sin was remembered:

II Kings 17:21-23

"For He tore Israel from the house of David, and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. Then Jeroboam drove Israel from following the LORD, and made them commit a great sin. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from

them, until the LORD removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day.”

Just as David is held out as a measuring stick for kings to live up to, Jeroboam became the prototype of disobedient kings in Israel. Where David was blessing and life, Jeroboam was poison and death.

There is a phrase that was used to describe many of the kings that came after Jeroboam: “He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin.” There is a list of about a dozen kings that this applies to that we see from the rest of the book of I Kings and into II Kings. There is only one king that was worse than Jeroboam and that was Ahab (I Kings 16:30-31).

How do we discern God's true voice amidst the many voices we hear today?

How does this narrative affect your understanding of God's grace and judgment?

In what ways does the story of the man of God serve as a warning for believers?

What can we learn from the actions of the old prophet?

What practical steps can we take to ensure that we stay obedient to God's word and do not allow deception to derail us from our spiritual journey?