

BIBLE BRIEFING

“Recipe for Roadkill”

First Kings 13:11-32

1 Kings 13:11 Now an old prophet dwelt in Bethel, and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel; they also told their father the words which he had spoken to the king.

1 Kings 13:12 And their father said to them, “Which way did he go?” For his sons had seen which way the man of God went who came from Judah.

1 Kings 13:13 Then he said to his sons, “Saddle the donkey for me.” So they saddled the donkey for him; and he rode on it,

1 Kings 13:14 and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak. Then he said to him, “Are you the man of God who came from Judah?” And he said, “I *am*.”

1 Kings 13:15 Then he said to him, “Come home with me and eat bread.”

1 Kings 13:16 And he said, “I cannot return with you nor go in with you; neither can I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place.

1 Kings 13:17 For I have been told by the word of the LORD, ‘You shall not eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by going the way you came.’”

1 Kings 13:18 He said to him, “I too *am* a prophet as you *are*, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, ‘Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.’” (He was lying to him.)

1 Kings 13:19 So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water.

1 Kings 13:20 Now it happened, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back;

1 Kings 13:21 and he cried out to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, “Thus says the LORD: ‘Because you have disobeyed the word of the LORD, and have not kept the commandment which the LORD your God commanded you,

1 Kings 13:22 but you came back, ate bread, and drank water in the place of which *the LORD* said to you, “Eat no bread and drink no water,” your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.’”

1 Kings 13:23 So it was, after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, that he saddled the donkey for him, the prophet whom he had brought back.

1 Kings 13:24 When he was gone, a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his corpse was thrown on the road, and the donkey stood by it. The lion also stood by the corpse.

1 Kings 13:25 And there, men passed by and saw the corpse thrown on the road, and the lion standing by the corpse. Then they went and told *it* in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

1 Kings 13:26 Now when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard *it*, he said, “It *is* the man of God who was disobedient to the word of

the LORD. Therefore the LORD has delivered him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke to him.”

1 Kings 13:27 And he spoke to his sons, saying, “Saddle the donkey for me.” So they saddled *it*.

1 Kings 13:28 Then he went and found his corpse thrown on the road, and the donkey and the lion standing by the corpse. The lion had not eaten the corpse nor torn the donkey.

1 Kings 13:29 And the prophet took up the corpse of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back. So the old prophet came to the city to mourn, and to bury him.

1 Kings 13:30 Then he laid the corpse in his own tomb; and they mourned over him, *saying*, “Alas, my brother!”

1 Kings 13:31 So it was, after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons, saying, “When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb where the man of God *is* buried; lay my bones beside his bones.

1 Kings 13:32 For the saying which he cried out by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the shrines on the high places which *are* in the cities of Samaria, will surely come to pass.”

We’ve read from First Kings one of the weirdest accounts in all the Bible. What’s up with the conduct of these two prophets?

I’ll tell you what was up. Jeroboam was king and it was a time of apostasy. Jeroboam’s “religion” incorporated elements from the Law of Moses *and* from the pagan nations that the Jews had conquered. The religion he invented was comfortable, convenient, and not costly, but it wasn’t authorized by the Lord. It was contrary to the revealed will of God in Scripture and it had as its purpose the unification of his kingdom, not the salvation of the people and the glory of God. It was man-made religion and God totally rejected it.

In the first part of First Kings chapter thirteen, God called and commissioned the younger prophet to confront King Jeroboam. He spoke out against Jeroboam with Holy Spirit boldness.

Jeroboam remained hardened in his heart. He ordered the young prophet arrested – but, as he stretched out his hand toward him, it withered. He then invited the young prophet to share a meal with him. But the young prophet declined, saying,

1 Kings 13:8 ...“If you were to give me half your house, I would not go in with you; nor would I eat bread nor drink water in this place.

1 Kings 13:9 For so it was commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'You shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came.'"

1 Kings 13:10 So he went another way and did not return by the way he came to Bethel.

The young prophet had the Word of the Lord; Jeroboam, the apostate, suggested he fall away from that Word, that he depart from following it fully. The young prophet, to his credit, was not affected or influenced by the apostasy of the king.

But he would soon be affected by the apostasy in a different way! And that is one of the important lessons of this odd and unusual story. It examines the awful effects apostasy can have upon our lives and ministries.

We'll look briefly at the *influence* of apostasy; and at the *injury* it causes.

#1 The Influence Of Apostasy (v11-22)

Apostasy is a word we don't use too much. *Apostasy* is a falling away from, or a departing from, the true faith as revealed by God in Scripture.

We're told it will grow in the Last Days, then culminate in the Great Tribulation:

1. It's growth is described by the apostle Paul in Second Timothy 4:1, where he said, *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons...*
2. It's culmination is described by Paul in Second Thessalonians 2:3, where he said, *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.*

Since it characterizes the Last Days; and since we live in the Last Days; we ought to be on our guard against apostasy.

Jude thought so – all the way back in the first century when he wrote his chapter of the Bible. He recognized that apostasy could have a crippling, ruining effect upon your walk with the Lord.

It was courageous of the young prophet to resist Jeroboam's offer to fall away from the Word; but it was a no-brainer! Jeroboam was a full-blown apostate. The young prophet wasn't ready, however, to resist the same offer when it came from within his own ranks.

One of the problems with apostasy is that it can come from within our own ranks. When Jude wrote, he was concerned about apostates who had crept in among the believers:

Jude 1:4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Apostasy is the key that interprets this strange tale.

1 Kings 13:11 Now an old prophet dwelt in Bethel, and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel; they also told their father the words which he had spoken to the king.

1 Kings 13:12 And their father said to them, "Which way did he go?" For his sons had seen which way the man of God went who came from Judah.

1 Kings 13:13 Then he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." So they saddled the donkey for him; and he rode on it,

- being changed to bring change -

This old prophet was not very spiritual; he was not really walking with the Lord. Was he, too, an apostate, unbeliever?

It seems to me more contextual that the old prophet was a believer who was himself influenced by Jeroboam's apostasy.

He was a believer and had a genuine gift of prophecy. I therefore conclude that he is the first victim of apostasy in our story.

Is there anything we might learn from him that might help us protect ourselves from becoming victims?

There are two things we might note:

1. First, he was living in **Bethel**, in close proximity to the pagan altar at which Jeroboam worshipped.
2. Second, his own **sons** were present at that pagan altar when the young prophet appeared there unannounced.

There is, then, a proximity warning. Don't get too close to apostates! You are much more easily influenced than you think.

There is also a participation warning. Be careful what you participate in! Don't go running after everything you hear about as a happening in Christianity.

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1 Kings 13:15 Then he said to him, "Come home with me and eat bread."

1 Kings 13:16 And he said, "I cannot return with you nor go in with you; neither can I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place.

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Haven't you ever been lied to by Christians? I've had false prophecies spoken to me by folks who were considered spiritual.

- being changed to bring change -

Let me pause and say this. A lot of people who seem most spiritual, in the sense that they operate in the gifts of tongues and prophecy, really are *never* held accountable for what they say.

What I'm saying is this: There are a lot of Christians who are just like this old prophet. They purport to speak for the Lord; but, since what they say is either unscriptural or never comes to pass... They are liars.

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1 Kings 13:20 Now it happened, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back;

1 Kings 13:21 and he cried out to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Because you have disobeyed the word of

the LORD, and have not kept the commandment which the LORD your God commanded you,
1 Kings 13:22 but you came back, ate bread, and drank water in the place of which *the LORD* said to you, “Eat no bread and drink no water,” your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.”

It bothers me, as it does you, that God would give a genuine prophecy to such a scoundrel. But He did; and He does still use those who are sinning.

Don't miss the point. As weird as this seems, it makes sense. The young prophet fell victim to the influence of Jeroboam's apostasy upon the old prophet. Apostasy had crept-in among them and was wreaking havoc.

The young prophet had God's Word. It was all that he needed to remain faithful. But instead he received another word that was contradictory.

This is why it is so important to study God's Word verse-by-verse, book-by-book, in its entirety. God will *not ever* contradict Himself! His Word is the final word on all the things people suggest as winds of doctrine blow through the Church.

#2 The Injury Of Apostasy

(v23-32)

No use being mad at the old prophet; the young man knew better. As he departed, he must have understood that he had to die. He had pronounced a severe judgment upon Jeroboam for the king's disobedience to the Word of God. How much worse was the young man's own disobedience? If God was going to judge the king, He must also judge His servant.

Why didn't God also judge the old prophet? The closer you are to God – the higher the standard He holds you to in your conduct. Think of Moses when God told him to speak to the Rock, but Moses struck it instead. It may seem severe, but for ruining God's metaphor about Jesus, Moses was killed by God prior to entering the Promised Land.

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There was the man of God, between a **donkey** and a **lion**. What a picture this paints! As Geno pointed out in his studies through Nahum, the lion can have several representations. Here it represents Satan, our adversary, as he goes about as a roaring lion, seeking to devour you.

Notice that the lion didn't devour the young prophet. It was a miracle – but also a truth. Satan seeks to devour you, but has been defeated by the Lord. He can do only so much. It's a lot; but it's regulated by the Lord.

The donkey represents serving God. There was the man of God, between serving and succumbing. He had succumb due to the influence of apostasy. In his case, he was dead. It speaks to us of the terrible injury to our service, and to our walk, if we succumb to the influence of apostasy.

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1 Kings 13:31 So it was, after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons, *saying*, "When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb where the man of God *is* buried; lay my bones beside his bones.

1 Kings 13:32 For the saying which he cried out by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the shrines on the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, will surely come to pass.”

God’s Word would come to pass. Not one Word of His will ever become void! It’s encouraging to know God’s Word will stand especially in the face of the growing apostasy of these Last Days.

Stay, or get, grounded in God’s Word. Hold others accountable for their teaching, or their counsel, and their use of the gifts. Don’t be so gullible. Develop a healthy skepticism.

Serve; do not succumb!



