

Dr. John Oswalt, Kings, Session 11, Part 3, 1 Kings 12-13, Part 3

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We look now to chapter 13, which picks right up on what we've just heard. Jeroboam made offerings on the altar that he built in Bethel. So, God says to a man of God, who came from Judah to Bethel, as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make an offering.

Interestingly, we don't know the name of this man, but we know he was a man of God. That's the same terminology that is used by Elijah and Elisha. This is a man who has been appointed by God.

This is a man who has been filled with God. This is a man who has given himself to cooperate with God in God's great purposes. And so, he was told, Altar, altar, this is what the Lord says.

A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David on you. He will sacrifice the priests of the high places who make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you. This is a sign the Lord has declared the altar will be split apart, and the ashes on it will be poured out.

Jeroboam heard it. He stretched out his hand from the altar. He's up there on the altar making a sacrifice, stretched out his hand and said, seize him.

But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up and he couldn't pull it back. You don't want to mess around with God. Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the Lord.

And then the king said to the man of God, intercede with the Lord your God. Pray for me that my hand may be restored. So, the man of God interceded with the Lord, and the king's hand was restored, and it became what it was before.

Wow. The grace of God. A judgment is pronounced.

A result predicted. A sign was given. And nevertheless, God was willing to be interceded with and was willing.

My goodness. Wouldn't you think, wouldn't you think in a moment like that, Jeroboam would say, oh God, forgive me. We're not going to rebuild this temple, this altar that's falling apart here.

We're going to get rid of those golden bulls. God, we're going to follow whatever guidance you have for us. No.

Come home with me for a meal. I'll give you a gift. No repentance.

Friends. This all too easily describes us. We have sinned.

We have done something wrong. We've experienced some unfortunate results. We pray.

The result is changed. And we say, oh, glad for that. Let's go home and eat.

No repentance. When God graciously blesses you when you have sinned. Oh, oh, at that moment, fall on your face and repent.

That's why he is kind. That's why he extends his favor. Not so we can continue on.

But so that we'll quit. So that we'll stop. Jeroboam doesn't do it.

The man of God answered the king, even if you were to give me half your possessions, I wouldn't go with you. Nor would I eat bread or drink water here. I was commanded by the word of the Lord, and you must not eat bread or drink water or return by the way you came.

So, he took another road. He didn't return by the way he'd come to Bethel. This guy is going to do it.

He's obedient. But now what? Look what happens. And I won't take the time to read it, but you can read it on your own.

It's a fascinating little story. There's a there's a prophet. Now, again, I think this is a it's interesting.

He's called a prophet, not a man of God, a prophet. I rather suspect this guy's a professional. He's gone to prophet university.

He's got a Ph.D. in prophecy. He knows how to read omens and do divination. And he hears about this.

He says, wow, this is this guy is really gifted in my business. He's really into my profession. I'd like to I'd like to meet this guy.

He asked him to come home with him and have a meal. The man says, no, I can't do that. The Lord has told me I've got to go home without eating or drinking, and I've got to go by a different road.

The guy says, I'm a prophet, too. And an angel said to me, by the word of the Lord, bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water. He was lying to him.

So. The man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house. I love the Bible.

I love the way in which some of these stories are told. After this long, long lead-in, we've had 17 verses here about how this guy has obeyed God, how God has worked through him, and how he has refused the offer of the unrepentant king.

And now, one little sentence. So, the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house. What? What? Yes.

He doesn't say to God. Is this a true prophet? He doesn't ask God, have you altered your will? Now, I cannot guarantee this, but I think I know what happened. He is hungry.

He is thirsty. He's dying here. And here comes an open door.

Oh, God has opened the door for me. Oh, thank you, God. I want to say to you once again.

Like Jeroboam. He did not ask God. He did not say, God, is this guy telling the truth? Have you changed your will? Now, God can do that.

I don't want to say it that way. Have you changed your command? He didn't ask. The door was open.

It's obvious. Let's do it. I want to say to you.

Just because a door is open, does not mean that is the will of God. Take the time to ask. Take the time to get guidance.

So that you're doing it God's way and not your own way, God could have done that. God could have, in fact, said, okay, you've obeyed me to this point.

That's wonderful. So now you can go home with this guy and eat and drink. But the prophet didn't ask.

He just did it. Now, I want to say to you. What we're seeing here is God at work.

We're seeing a God who knows the future. You've rejected the house of David. But I'm here to tell you.

That down the road there. 300 years. 300 years.

A son of David named Josiah. Is going to desecrate this altar with the bodies.

The corpses. Of those priests who served on it through the years. God knows the future, folks.

A second thing is. God's mills grind very slowly. But they grind very fine.

It's going to take 300 years. For the final judgment to come on these actions of Jeroboam. Yeah.

Yeah. But it's coming. It's coming.

So, in our own lives. If judgment doesn't fall on us the moment we commit sin. Don't you dare believe, it's therefore not going to come. It's going to come.

So, what's going on? They discover him on the way. He's been killed by a lion. The lion is standing over his body.

The lion hasn't touched the donkey. That the guy was riding. Wait a minute.

Wait a minute. This isn't fair. Nothing happens to the old liar.

But this guy. What's going on? Well, number one. God is in charge.

Not you and me. And God decides justice. Not you and me.

But. I think I know what's going on here. Oh, did you hear?

Did you hear that guy who came up here. And said all those harsh words about our altar and about our king.

Did you hear. He said he couldn't eat and drink with the king. But he ate and drank with one of our prophets.

And he went home, and nothing happened. Right. Some of you may be pastors.

The word of God is upon you. And you have a terrible responsibility. To whom much is given, much is required.

And so, it was with that man. But what about the old liar? Why did he get away without anything?

As far as we know from the text. Happening to him. I think the answer is.

Once again. To be close to God. Is to be in a dangerous position.

Have you noticed that Jesus had almost nothing. To say to the Sadducees. The Sadducees were the power brokers.

In the kingdom of Judea, during Jesus' lifetime, these are the high priests.

These are the people who are running the show. And Jesus has virtually nothing to say to them. I think the point is.

They're so far outside the pale. There's not much to be done about them. I think that's the case with this man.

Oh yes. Oh yes. Judgment will come.

But doesn't need to fall on him right now. He's outside the gates. He's outside the perimeter.

We're not messing with him. On the other hand, Jesus had.

Very stern. Harsh words. For the best people in the kingdom.

The Pharisees. And you remember—some three thousand Pharisees accepted Jesus after the resurrection and the ascension. And Pentecost.

It's because they were close to him that he had—these harsh, judgmental words.

To say to them. To try to get their attention. And bring them back.

But the Sadducees. There's no point messing with them. I think that's what's going on here.

This old guy. He's so far from knowing God. Not even any point.

In dealing with him. So. What can we say?

Is an overall. Lesson here. In terms of the picture.

Of the two nations. I think. That is the man from Judah is representative and the man from Israel is also representative.

At this point. In the history of the two kingdoms. Judah. It may be far more right. More rooted.

In what God wants. And what God is saying. Israel is already on the road to destruction. But. But.

If the Judeans. Listen to Israel. And follow them. They, too, will follow in Israel's destruction, which is exactly what happened. Judah got another 150 years of grace.

After the Northern Kingdom. Had fallen. But they walked in the same path.

In the end. And their destruction was the same. I think here at the very beginning we have.

An illustration of that point. Judah is more right. More in touch with God than Israel, the Northern Kingdom is. But if Judah should listen to Israel, then Judah's destruction is as sure as Israel's.

And that's where we're headed. Thank you so much.

Let me pray.

Dear heavenly Father. Thank you for your word. Thank you for the challenge, for the admonition, for the warning, and for the blessing that comes through its pages.

Thank you, Father. Help us not to take counsel of our fears. Help us to guard our choices. Help us to be willing to stand for you.

In the beginning in order that we may be able to stand for you to the end. In your name, we pray. Amen.