Topical Study – Obedience - Old Prophet and the man of God

Read 1 Kings 13:7-32

Let's see what we can learn from this story and study as believers, knowing that we are in a race that is set before us.

If you are to give a title to this study and what you can pick from reading through the passage, what would you give? Let's comment.

A. (1 Kings 13:7-10) The man of God declines Jeroboam's invitation.

Then the king said to the man of God, "Come home with me and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward." But the man of God said to the king, "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. 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.'" So he went another way and did not return by the way he came to Bethel.

Q: Why did the man of God refuse the invitation?

a. **I will give you a reward**: Jeroboam quickly — and naturally, given the circumstances — embraced the man of God as a friend. He wanted to **refresh** and **reward** him, without any *repentance* from the sin the man of God had denounced.

b. **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**: The man of God refused the invitation, based on a prior warning from God. To accept Jeroboam's invitation would demonstrate fellowship with his idolatry.

B. The man of God's disobedience and death.

1. (1 Kings 13:11-17) An old prophet in Bethel invites the man of God to dinner.

Q: Why did the man of God accept the Old prophet invitation but refused king's invite?

a. **Now an old prophet dwelt in Bethel**: It seems that this was a faithful prophet to the LORD. This demonstrates that not every godly person left Israel for Judah; some still remained behind.

b. **Come home with me and eat bread**: This prophet from Bethel invited the unnamed man of God to his home, as Jeroboam had invited him. The man of God refused, under the same reason he refused Jeroboam — that God had specifically told him to return to Judah without accepting hospitality, and to return a different way (also in 1 Kings 13:10).

Q: Should he had fallen for the deception in your opinion?

i. No matter how natural and seductive this enticement was; it was the duty of the man of God to resist it. He had a word from God to guide his actions, and should receive *no other word* except through dramatic and direct confirmation by God's Spirit. His failure at this point ended his usefulness as a man of God.

ii. "When we have received a direct command fresh from the lips of Christ, we must act on it, and not be turned aside by a different suggestion, made to us through the lips of professing Christians… Deal with God at first-hand."

iii. "God never contradicts Himself in His dealings with His servants. Let us be true to His commands, refusing to be deflected from the path of obedience, even by an angel from heaven."

2. (1 Kings 13:18-19) The prophet from Bethel lies to the man of God from Judah.

Q: Who do you think was at fault in this conversation? What do you think the man of God should of done as a believer?

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.) So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water.

a. **He was lying to him**: The prophet from Bethel gave a false word from God, trying to persuade the man of God from Judah to change his course from doing exactly what God told him. **WHY?**

i. "As he found the man of God sitting under an oak, probably *faint* with *fatigue* and *fasting*, for he had no refreshment, his *humanity* might have led him to practise this deception, in order to persuade him to take some refreshment."

ii. "But his sin was great; for he did not only tell a premeditated lie, but also made God a liar, and to contradict himself, and all this without any pretence of necessity, or benefit to himself."

b. **An angel spoke to me**: **Could this be true? Or an outright lie?** Perhaps this was true, and perhaps it was a *deceiving* angel. Satan and his messengers can appear as angels of light to deceive. (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).

c. **So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water**: The man of God from Judah listened to the lie from the prophet of Bethel.

Q: Why do you think the man of God did this?

- The prophet from Bethel was probably older (*an old prophet*, 1 Kings 13:11) 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 did not seem to be an idolater who should be shunned (**Bring him back with you to your house**).
- The prophet from Bethel offered no reward, other than simple food (**he may eat bread and drink water**).

3. (1 Kings 13:20-22) The prophet from Bethel prophesies the doom of the man of God.

Q: Did God still speak through the old prophet? Was that a genuine instruction this time?

a. **The word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back**: This prophet from Bethel spoke a *lie* in the name of the LORD in **1 Kings 13:18**. Now he received a ***true* prophecy** while **the man of God from Judah ate at his table.**

b. **Because you have disobeyed the word of the LORD:** God promised great judgment against the man of God from Judah for **his disobedience.** This was a hard test, but he failed it. He should have **kept the commandment which the LORD your God commanded,** no matter how subtle and innocent the temptation was to disobey.

4. (1 Kings 13:23-25a) The word of the prophet from Bethel is fulfilled.

Q: Why did God use same man to speak a word that was fulfilled?

a. **A lion met him on the road and killed him:** The word — the *second* word — of the prophet from Bethel was fulfilled. He didn't say that the man of God would perish by a lion, but that he would not be buried in the tomb of his fathers.

b. **And there, men passed by and saw the corpse thrown on the road, and the lion standing by the corpse:** This demonstrates that this was no mere accident, but something unique from God. The lion did not attack the donkey (**the donkey stood by it**), nor did he attack the **men** who **passed by**. This lion was on a special mission of judgment from God, and seems to be more obedient than the man of God from Judah was.

5. (1 Kings 13:25b-32) The man of God is given a decent burial and the prophet from Bethel testifies to his prophecy.

Q: Why was this Old Prophet that did evil to the genuine man of God spared from judgement? What can we learn from this?

a. **So the old prophet came to the city to mourn, and to bury him:** The old prophet from Bethel was sympathetic to the man of God from Judah, even in his disobedience and resulting judgment. The prophet from Bethel was not a particularly righteous man or good prophet, having used a lying prophecy to lead the man of God into sin and judgment. He recognized the common weakness of this fellow servant of God.

i. How strange it was for the old prophet to look upon the carcass of the dead prophet, and to realize: "My sin was worse than his." The ways of God's judgment are sometimes past finding out, and only understandable from eternity.

b. **He laid the corpse in his own tomb:** Not in the tomb of the man of God from Judah's fathers, in fulfilment of the previous prophecy.