

THE DISOBEDIENT PROPHET

BIBLE TEXT : I Kings 13:1-34; II Kings 23:15-18.

LESSON 293 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Kings 13:1-34

¹ And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.

² And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; 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.

³ And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This *is* the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that *are* upon it shall be poured out.

⁴ And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him.

⁵ The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

⁶ And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Intreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as *it was*

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Altar of Sin

1. A man sent by God came to Bethel to denounce Jeroboam's ido-latrous altar, I Kings 13:1;

Hosea 8:11

¹¹ Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin.

2. The man of God foretold the destruction of the altar, and a sign was given, I Kings 13:2, 3;

Isaiah 7:14-16

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

¹⁵ Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

¹⁶ For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

Exodus 3:12

¹² And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this *shall be* a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

Matthew 1:23

²³ Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

3. Jeroboam resisted the Prophet and was stricken of God, I Kings 13:4, 5;

Numbers 12:8-10

⁸ With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

⁹ And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed.

¹⁰ And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam *became* leprous, *white* as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, *she was* leprous.

Acts 13:9-11

⁹ Then Saul, (who also *is called* Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

¹⁰ And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, *thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

¹¹ And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

4. Jeroboam's hand was restored through the Prophet's intercessory prayer, I Kings 13:6.

II Disobedience

1. The king's offer of hospitality was refused by the Prophet, I Kings 13:7-10;

Psalms 94:20

²⁰ Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?

Ephesians 5:11

¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*.

before.

⁷ And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward.

⁸ And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place:

⁹ For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.

¹⁰ So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel.

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

¹² And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah.

¹³ And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon,

¹⁴ And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, *Art* thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I *am*.

¹⁵ Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread.

¹⁶ And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place:

¹⁷ For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.

¹⁸ He said unto him, I *am* a

Proverbs 23:6-8

⁶ Eat thou not the bread of *him that hath* an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats:

⁷ For as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart *is* not with thee.

⁸ The morsel *which* thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words.

2. An old man of Bethel by persuasive lies induced the Prophet to forsake the commandment of God and follow him, I Kings 13:11-18;

Matthew 26:74

⁷⁴ Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

Genesis 27:18-19

¹⁸ And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here *am* I; who *art* thou, my son?

¹⁹ And Jacob said unto his father, I *am* Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.

Luke 22:48

⁴⁸ But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

3. The Prophet of God believed a lie rather than the word of the Lord, I Kings 13:19;

Titus 1:10-16

¹⁰ For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:

¹¹ Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

¹² One of themselves, *even* a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians *are* alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.

¹³ This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;

¹⁴ Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

¹⁵ Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

¹⁶ They profess that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Matthew 15:7-9

⁷ Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

⁸ This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me.

⁹ But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

Matthew 1:6-7

⁶ And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Urias;

⁷ And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa;

Matthew 4:2

² And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

Matthew 6:3-5

³ But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

⁴ That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

⁵ And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

2 Timothy 4:3-4

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

prophet also as thou *art*; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. *But* he lied unto him.

¹⁹ So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water.

²⁰ And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back:

²¹ And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee,

²² But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which *the LORD* did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.

²³ And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, *to wit*, for the prophet whom he had brought back.

²⁴ And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase.

²⁵ And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase: and they came and told *it* in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

²⁶ And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard *thereof*, he said, *It is* the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD: therefore the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn

⁴ And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

2 Peter 2:1-3

¹ But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

² And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

³ And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

III Judgment

1. The man of God received the word of the Lord that he would not finish his journey because of his disobedience, I Kings 13:20-22;

1 Samuel 13:13-14

¹³ And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

¹⁴ But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him *to be* captain over his people, because thou hast not kept *that* which the LORD commanded thee.

1 Samuel 15:22

²² And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams.

1 Samuel 15:23

²³ For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.

2. God's judgment was carried out against the man of God, I Kings 13:23-25;

Leviticus 10:3

³ Then Moses said unto Aaron, This *is it* that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

Numbers 20:2

² And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron.

Numbers 20:24

²⁴ Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah.

1 Samuel 4:18

¹⁸ And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

Acts 5:1-10

¹ But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

² And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy *to it*, and brought a certain part, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

³ But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

⁴ Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou

him, and slain him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake unto him.

²⁷ And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled *him*.

²⁸ And he went and found his carcase cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcase: the lion had not eaten the carcase, nor torn the ass.

²⁹ And the prophet took up the carcase of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him.

³⁰ And he laid his carcase in his own grave; and they mourned over him, *saying*, Alas, my brother!

³¹ And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God *is* buried; lay my bones beside his bones:

³² For the saying which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which *are* in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass.

³³ After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became *one* of the priests of the high places.

³⁴ And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut *it* off, and to destroy *it* from off the face of the earth.

2 Kings 23:15-18

¹⁵ Moreover the altar that *was* at Bethel, *and* the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place

conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

⁵ And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

⁶ And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*.

⁷ And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

⁸ And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

⁹ Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband *are* at the door, and shall carry thee out.

¹⁰ Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her husband.

3. The man of God was buried by the false prophet who claimed him for a brother, I Kings 13:26-32.

4. The judgment of God was carried out against the altar of Jeroboam and Jeroboam's house as was predicted, I Kings 13:33, 34; II Kings 23:15-18; Isaiah 46:5-11.

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NOTES

Idolatry and Disobedience

Our lesson on Jeroboam's altar and the disobedient Prophet has much of value for the Christian today. In it we learn again that "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34) and that His judgment will fall with the same severity upon one of His own who sins against Him as it will upon an idol worshiper. The words of the Prophet Samuel when he denounced Saul for his violation of the word of the Lord seem very pertinent to this lesson: "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (I Samuel 15:22, 23).

The twofold manifestation of God's judgment in this lesson is remarkable because it was directed against two deadly evils: namely, idolatry and a compromising of the word of the Lord. We have learned from past studies that idol worship was not tolerated, in the least degree, among God's people. Israel was supposed to be "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD," and as such was expected to be entirely separated unto Him and His cause. There is no alternative with God but to pronounce judgment upon all such idolatrous worship as Jeroboam instituted. His idolatrous altar was wilfully and purposely established to lead Israel away from the worship of Jehovah that he might further his personal aims and ambitions. When the man of God came to cry out against this altar of sin, and gave a sign of the coming judgment of God, this was the final message of God to an apostate and reprobate king. It has often been said that being apostate is accomplished in two stages: first, man leaves God, and finally, God leaves man. Judgment is the last phase of God's dealings with men; and for Jeroboam the day of mercy was about gone.

No Compromise

God had told His messenger that he was to "eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way" that he came, while in the process of delivering his message. When the king desired the Prophet to tarry with him, the Prophet refused, which was the right attitude and action to take. Unfortunately, the Prophet of God did not continue his refusal to partake of the fare of this

he brake down, and burned the high place, *and* stamped *it* small to powder, and burned the grove.

¹⁶ And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that *were* there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned *them* upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.

¹⁷ Then he said, What title *is* that that I see? And the men of the city told him, *It is* the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel.

¹⁸ And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria.

idolatrous people. The Lord has said, "When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it" (Ezekiel 33:13).

An old man of Bethel caught up with the Prophet as he sat under an oak; and by telling him lies the old man persuaded the Prophet to return with him. Obedience became sin! While the Prophet was partaking of this man's fare, the word of the Lord came that death was the penalty for the transgression. This man of God who fell prey to the lies of a false prophet may not have been the first such victim, but he is a good example of what happens to the man who forsakes the truth of God to believe and follow a lie. One of Satan's most successful devices to destroy men's souls has been his impersonation of Christ's ambassadors. He often comes as an angel of light; and it is no marvel if his ministers are transformed to resemble an angel of light. (See II Corinthians 11:14, 15.)

The foolishness of following dreams, visions, prophecies, revelations, lights, or any other so-called manifestations of God's Spirit without subjecting all such things to the word of the Lord cannot be overemphasized. God's Word is the highest, most complete, and all-encompassing revelation that God will make to man of His will until He comes again. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

God does sometimes lead His people in marvellous and supernatural ways, as He led Israel out of Egypt by a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night; but when He does use such things, they are always in accordance with the Word of God. God is glorified in these things; and never do they contradict what God has said in His Word. Hordes of false prophets are abroad in the world today, emissaries of Satan, all claiming to be endowed with peculiar spiritual gifts and specific knowledge of the will of God that are not expressed in the Bible. Many people have been beguiled, as was the Prophet of our lesson, into following these false prophets because of their smooth stories and glib tongues.

Fellowship with Iniquity

The man of God, in turning away from the commandment of the Lord to follow a teller of lies, not only sinned but became a partaker of the evil deeds of his associate. He set a public example by partaking of the fare of this false prophet and having fellowship with him. He was destroying the separation of the true body of Christ from all that was fraudulent and evil and which operated under the guise of religion. The children of God are forbidden to fraternise with all manner of men who merely claim to be followers of Christ but who are not. Paul, wrote to the church at Ephesus, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). John the Beloved wrote to the saints, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 10, 11). (Read also Galatians 1:8.) The old man of Bethel certainly did not bring the truth to the Prophet of God but a lie of his own conceiving.

Once a person who knows the truth of God accepts Satan's substitute for the Word of God, he seldom returns to his true faith in Christ. There are many verses of Scripture that warn men, in the most urgent language, of the danger and penalty for those who forsake the truth of God to follow the lies of Satan. God had forewarned His Prophet against this very possibility, that he might

not be taken unawares and cause the wrath of God to come upon himself; even as He warned Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden that the day they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they would surely die. We know from our lesson that the Prophet of God believed this warning, because of his refusal to accept Jeroboam's hospitality. A little later he forsook the warning because one claimed to have a message from God concerning him that he himself had not received.

While God usually reveals His will to the individual concerned, by His Spirit and the Word of God, He can also reveal His will to us through ministerial counsel. God's ministers are ordained as shepherds of the flock of God. When an issue is questionable or in doubt, the will of God can usually be ascertained by seeking advice and counsel from God's ministry.

Seeking advice from the ministry is according to the Word of God. Paul told the saints: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17). An exhortation in the Old Testament states: "Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper" (II Chronicles 20:20). (Read also II Corinthians 10:8; 13:10; Acts 15:1-6.) Advice received from God's ministers will be in accordance with the Word of God, and more often than not will be quoted from the Word of God.

This was not the situation at all with the Prophet of God. He was met by a stranger who claimed to be a man of God. Evidently the Prophet of God accepted this man's claim without putting forth any effort to discern the truth of the stranger's statements. The saint of God is not left without help to discern between the false and the right. The Spirit of God and the Bible are the two infallible guides in the world wherewith the saint of God can detect his Master's voice and will. God expects us to listen to the Spirit of God and examine by the Word of God those who come to us in this manner, that we might know whom we are to accept or reject. For a soul to forsake the known will of God is a folly of the worst kind. He should test the authority or truth of every message that comes to him. If the witness and guidance of the Spirit of God are ignored and disobeyed, the Spirit of God will leave that soul, and that soul will become a prey of the devil. (Read II Timothy 2:26.)

This present-day evil of men's turning away from the truth and the instruction and guidance of God, to listen to the lies of false prophets, will reap a terrible harvest. False doctrine will become widespread and reach its climax in the reign of the Antichrist during the Great Tribulation. The Antichrist shall declare himself to be God, and men will believe him. The Bible states: "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. . . . God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thessalonians 2:10-12). Because men turn from the truth, God will make them believe a lie, ensuring their just damnation. Because they will not follow Christ, they shall be made to serve Satan. (Read Isaiah 8:6-8.)

We do not know just how much understanding the Prophet of God had of such matters as fellowshiping with teachers of lies, but God had warned him in regard to tarrying and eating with another in this land. That warning by God should have been enough to guide him, and it was sufficient if the Prophet of God would have heeded it. God is never unjust nor unmerciful. When

the man of God was destroyed by a lion, that was the just judgment of God. His fellowship with the false and lying prophet was such a serious breach of all that God had commanded him that the judgment of God fell upon him for his disobedience.

To presume on God's mercy and deliberately indulge in sin is the great transgression. The Psalmist prayed to be kept from such a terrible sin (Psalm 19:13). But in these days just prior to the return of Jesus Christ to earth, it seems that many are unafraid of God's judgment upon such presumption. Many openly embrace and help to preach false doctrine, and as a result they become ensnared by the devil, and will, in the end, suffer a like condemnation.

In these last days, when all manner of religions abound – the vast majority of them being only the philosophies and fancies of men — the Christian will do well to follow the example of the saints of God who heard Paul preach. They went to their homes and "searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). We can rest in confidence and peace of soul in the words of Jesus that "if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17). That soul who desires to know the will of God and the truth of God will hear the voice of God and will not be deceived; but the one who listens to every talebearer who claims the name of Christ, without trying the spirits by the Spirit and the Word of God, will soon be swallowed up in the snare of Satan.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did the Prophet come to cry out against the altar of Jeroboam?
2. Of what two evils are we warned in this lesson?
3. Why did the man of God disobey the Lord's command?
4. Why did the judgment of God come upon this man of God?
5. How is the Christian to know who really is from God and who is not?
6. What will happen to the soul that forsakes the truth of God to believe a lie?
7. Why will people believe a lie in the last days rather than the truth?
8. What does the Bible tell us about having fellowship with false prophets?