

# OpenTheo

## 1 Kings 13 - 14



### 1 Kings - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg provides an overview of 1 Kings 13 and 14, focusing on the story of the unnamed prophet sent to Jeroboam to deliver a message from God. Despite being supernaturally protected and given a sign, the prophet made a mistake in accepting an unverified word from God that went contrary to what he already knew. This highlights the importance of discernment and staying true to God's previous instructions rather than being swayed by alternative messages. Gregg cautions against blindly following unverified sources claiming divine authority.

## Transcript

Now we're turning to 1 Kings 13. In the previous chapter, the kingdom divided. There was a revolt against Rehoboam.

No doubt a justified one and also one that was of the Lord. God, as a judgment upon Solomon for his apostasy, had predicted that Solomon's kingdom would be divided. But not in his day, but in his son's day.

His son Rehoboam, who is the only son of Solomon we know of by name, became the king, but he did not reign for long over the whole nation of Israel because within a few days' time the northern ten tribes split off and became an independent nation and appointed Jeroboam to be their leader, their king. Unfortunately, Jeroboam was unwise and built golden calves. These were intended to keep people from thinking that they needed to go to Jerusalem to worship, knowing that if they would go to Jerusalem to worship, they'd be, well, in the territory of Judah again, in Rehoboam's territory, and that they would be drawn, perhaps inwardly, by sentiment and by the traditions of their past and all, to regularly become part of Judah and Jerusalem's worship.

So he made alternative worship sites at Dan and Bethel. He set up gold calves. Now, we read a very interesting story in chapter 13 of how a man of God was sent from Judah up into Israel to rebuke Jeroboam.

I'm not sure why God didn't send a prophet from Israel. It's not as if there weren't any. There were.

There was a prophet, Elijah, for example, that we will soon be introduced to, and Elisha. They were prophets in the northern kingdom. But in this case, a prophet from the southern kingdom was called to rebuke the king of the north, Jeroboam.

It says, Behold, a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the Lord, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. This is where one of the two golden calves were, and therefore it was an unacceptable form of worship. Although he did say that the golden calves were to be recognized as representing Yahweh rather than, say, some other pagan deity, yet God had given two commandments at the beginning of the Decalogue.

One was you shall have no other gods before me, and the other is you shall not make any graven image about it and worship it. One was, of course, saying you must only worship the true God, which no doubt Jeroboam would say was what he was intending to do. But the second commandment was you shall not worship God using idols or images, and this, of course, he violated.

And he did so also by changing other ordinances that God had ordained, including the festivals and the priesthood. He appointed priests who were not Levites, probably because the Levites objected to his setting up these alternative shrines. They were, of course, attached to the temple.

Although they lived elsewhere in the country, they were attached to the temple service in Jerusalem, and the setting up of these gold calves probably offended many of the Levites. And as a result, they probably were either punished or else they retired and were replaced by people who were not Levites. It's also unlikely that they were supported by the tithes.

Since the Levites were no longer serving as the priests, it's not likely that the nation then tithed to them, and so the Levites would be in a bad way. Many of these Levites, we believe, would have gone down to Judah and attached themselves to the temple again where they could function as they were supposed to. But Jeroboam, of course, corrupted the priesthood by appointing as priests people who were not Levitical priests.

Also, he changed the festivals for some reason. In place of the Feast of Tabernacles of the seventh month, he set up a feast of his own for a week long, I think in the fifth month, if I'm not mistaken. Just a different time.

He innovated and changed the law of Moses in many ways, and thus he became the object of rebuke and a predicted judgment. Now, the prophet that came and confronted Jeroboam was a mighty prophet. Signs and wonders were done through him.

He's one of the few prophets, one of the two that we know of, who made a prediction about somebody who would do something in the future, hundreds of years in the future,

and gave the name of the person who would do it. In this case, he mentions that Josiah, the king Josiah, will come and desecrate this altar in Bethel. That did happen 300 years later, and it was king Josiah who did it.

So, this prophet really had an inside line with God. The only other case we know of, of a prophet being able to name an individual who's going to do something hundreds of years later, was Isaiah, in Isaiah chapters 44 and 45, where he made certain predictions about what king Cyrus would do, and named Cyrus by name. 150 years before Cyrus was born.

Prophets don't do that very often. This prophet had that kind of inside information, and he was also supernaturally protected, and he gave a sign. When Jeroboam sought to reach out and capture him, Jeroboam's arm was withered, and also a sign was given where the altar here was broken open, in response to the prediction of the prophet.

So, this prophet really was unusually mighty, and yet he's anonymous. We don't have his name given. And perhaps the reason for that is because he died in a way that was not honorable.

His last act, apparently, was an act of disobedience. Probably not rebellion against God, but just not obeying what God told him to do, and as a result, he was killed. So, we have this strange story about this really powerful prophet, whose name is withheld, and who is definitely very close to God, and able to be an agent of supernatural signs and wonders for God, and yet his disobedience gets him killed.

Another strange aspect of the story is the means by which he is led into compromise, because it is another prophet who actually tempts him, and seduces him to do the wrong thing, and gets him into trouble. And the motives of that prophet are never told to us. And so, we're left to try to read some things between the lines, and perhaps not able to do so entirely.

But this chapter is one of the peculiar stories. Interesting, instructive, I'm sure, but peculiar in many of its features. So, Jeroboam was there offering incense in Bethel, and this prophet from Judah, by the word of the Lord, came to him.

Then he cried out against the altar, by the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar, thus says Yahweh, Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David, and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places, who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be burned on you. Now, the burning of the priests, or the sacrificing of the priests, is not talking about a literal human sacrifice. But actually, Josiah, about 300 years later, in 2 Kings chapter 23, as part of his reforms, exhumed the bones of these false priests.

The priests of this altar were dead and buried long before Josiah came along. But he pulled their bones out of their graves, and desecrated the altar by burning their bones on

the altar. So, the priests of the altar were, in fact, offered up, but it was long after they had died.

But anyway, that he would be able to predict this accurately, so far in advance, is astonishing. And he says, and he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the Lord has spoken. Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out.

Now, this was going to happen, actually, right there on the spot. And this is an example of how God often would verify His word. The prophets would show themselves to be supernaturally empowered, often by predicting things that were hundreds of years off, accurately.

This, of course, would be of no benefit to His original hearers, because they would not live to see the fulfillment, or to be impacted by it. It means that the prophetic words would have an impact on later generations, as well as their own. Yet, so that those of their own generation, who would not live to see that fulfillment, might know that it was a true word from God, God would give a short-term, or immediate fulfillment, in many cases.

So, we find the prophets giving both long-term predictions and short-term predictions. The short-term predictions are there so that their own generation can know that they've really heard a prophet. And that the long-term predictions will also come true, though the original listeners would not be there to witness it.

And so, the sign in this case, was that this altar was going to split open, and the ashes would spill out on the ground. So, it came to pass when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, who cried out against the altar in Bethel, that he stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, Arrest him! Then his hand, which he stretched out toward him, withered, so that he could not pull it back to himself. Apparently, his arm was paralyzed.

And the altar also was split apart, 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. Then the king answered and said to the man of God, Please entreat the favor of the Lord your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me. Now, notice this king, Jeroboam, referred to Yahweh as, when speaking to the prophet, Yahweh your God.

He doesn't say Yahweh our God. He says your God. And yet, when he had built the golden calves, he had said to Israel, This is Yahweh.

In other words, he had claimed to be a worshipper of Yahweh, but in this situation it became clear that he and Yahweh were not on the same team. That Yahweh was angry at him. That Yahweh had pronounced judgment upon his altar.

And now he does not dare refer to Yahweh as his own God, because he's obviously on the outs with Yahweh. Ironically, however, he does not repent. He does let the prophet go.

He does repent of his order to arrest the prophet, and the prophet leaves unmolested. But, Jeroboam doesn't take it to heart and discontinue his idolatry, which is strange. So, he asked the man of God to intercede for him.

So, the man of God entreated the Lord, and the king's hand was restored to him and became as it was before. So here, the king is trying to have the man arrested, and God supernaturally defends the prophet, and the prophet goes ahead and prays for the king to be restored, even though his last act, and for all the prophet knew, his next act might be to have him arrested. But, he just took his chances, and he interceded for the king, and his arm was restored.

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. Now, why God gave him these particular instructions, we don't know. There were two things.

One was that he was not supposed to eat, he was supposed to fast, until he would return to Judah. This might simply be because, as a man of God, he was called on occasion to fast, and since he was on a divine mission, fasting was appropriate for him. Sometimes things are accomplished through prayer and fasting that might not be accomplished otherwise, and it may be only that.

It may also be that, because many times, the prophets were, as it were, bribed by people's hospitality and gifts and food and things like that offered to them, to say what people wanted them to say. That God just said, Don't take anything from anyone. You go up there, say what you're going to say, and don't allow anyone to tempt you, or draw you in, or befriend you so as to maybe make you be tempted to alter your prophecy.

It was Amos, I believe, who said that the prophets of Israel would prophesy peace to anyone who would put bread in their mouth. And there was apparently that phenomenon, that a prophet would be paid or fed or otherwise given perks to induce him to say things that were not from the Lord. Balaam is an excellent example of that.

He was paid to prophesy certain things, even though they weren't the right things. And so maybe God had just told this prophet, Don't even subject yourself to that temptation. Don't accept any gifts.

Don't accept any hospitality. Don't eat anything. Just go and come back.

Whatever the reason is, he was quite clear on the instructions. And the other instruction was to go back home by a different route than he had come. Again, it's not known why this would be unless it was to retain his anonymity, which of course is retained in the story.

We don't even know who he was. We don't even know where he was from except Judah. And it may be that if people saw him coming from one direction and saw him leave the same direction, they might be able to deduce where he was from.

But if he came one direction, left another direction another way, it would remain a mystery where his home was. It's easier to conceal it. It's hard to say.

But these instructions were given to him clearly and he was intending to keep them. He could not even be bribed. He said even if Jeroboam would offer him half his house, which would be a lot of wealth, he was not to be induced by money or bribes.

Unfortunately, he was capable of being deceived by another prophet. 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.

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. Then he said to his sons, saddle the donkey for me. So they saddled the donkey for him and he rode on it.

And he 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. Then he said to him, come home with me and eat bread.

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. For I've been told by the word of the Lord, you shall not eat bread nor drink water there nor return by going the way that you came.

Then the older prophet 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. But he lied to him.

So he went back with him and ate bread in his house and drank water. Now this of course was a mistake, but one can certainly sympathize with this prophet. He's determined to do what God said.

He's turned down invitations because God told him to do a certain thing and he intended to do it. And the only reason he was persuaded to do otherwise is that he became

persuaded that God had issued new orders. So even in going to eat with this man, as far as he was concerned, he's going in obedience to God.

Hardly seems like the kind of man who should have come under divine judgment for his action. The worst sin he committed was that he ate food, not a sin in itself. And his reason for doing it is because someone said an angel of God said he should.

Now, obviously there are things that a prophet knows that we don't know and therefore that he should know that we might not know. We don't know how God spoke to him in the first place, but he was obviously a man who heard correctly from God, not only correctly, but in detail. He could know about Josiah coming and know his name.

However God spoke to this man of God, either in a vision or a dream or by some other means that was unmistakably God, he knew he had the word of the Lord. He had no reason to doubt it. Now comes another man claiming to be a prophet who apparently is a prophet because we will find that after a meal, this man prophesies, the old man prophesies it quite correctly.

He apparently is an old retired prophet of Yahweh. We'll have more to say about that in a moment. But the man of God takes this man's word for it that God has changed his mind and sent an angel to say so.

And we're told the old prophet was lying to him. Now why he lied to him and what was up with that, obviously we'll have to consider. But the point is the man was lying.

There had been no angel of God. And even if there had been, remember what Paul said in Galatians 1, 8 and 9? He said, If we or an angel from God should preach to you any other gospel than that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. If God has spoken plainly about something and directly about something, then to follow contrary instructions, even that seem to come from an angel, is a mistake.

Because angels are not always angels. Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light, we're told in 2 Corinthians 11. And therefore, you can't really say, well, this was definitely an angel.

Now, of course, there was no angel in this case at all. The man was lying. He's making up the whole story.

But on the assumption that the man had been telling the truth, which is what the man of God did assume, he should have known that any angel that comes and tells him to do something that God specifically and clearly told him not to do, is not really bringing instructions from God after all. He's only claiming to be. And we see that statement of Paul in 2 Corinthians 11, verse 14.

And no wonder for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. And we think

of perhaps people like Muhammad or Joseph Smith, who received religious information from alleged angels. Muhammad said that the angel Gabriel came and gave him the Quran.

Joseph Smith said that an angel Moroni came and gave him the Book of Mormon. Now, the contents of these books were contrary to what God had said through his prophets and even through Christ. And through the apostles.

God's word had been given clearly. The gospel had already been delivered. Here comes an angel with an alternative message.

And there are many, many people who are following that alternative message, whether it's the Quran, which claims to have an angel as its source, or the Book of Mormon, which claims to have an angel as its source. Both of them contradict what the Bible says. Both of them contradict what Jesus said.

And a person who succumbs to them is making a wrong choice of who to believe. You should believe the word of the Lord rather than the alleged words of angels, or the words of alleged angels. You know, the Mormons, when you talk with them, will discuss for a certain length of time the merits and demerits of their views scripturally.

And once they find out that they're getting nowhere with you, they'll always resort to one final expedient. They'll stand to testify. And they'll be prepared to leave.

They'll say, well, we have to go now, but before we leave, we'd like to give a testimony. And they'll say, we asked God whether Joseph Smith is a prophet in the Book of Mormon, it's the word of God, and we received a witness that this is so. And I bear testimony, they say, that Joseph Smith is a prophet, and that the Book of Mormon is the word of God.

And they then ask you if you'll do the same thing. Will you pray and ask God about that? No, I won't. I already have the word of God.

The word of God is given in the Bible. Jesus spoke it. The apostles spoke it.

The prophets spoke it. I don't need Joseph Smith to come and change the information. I don't need him to come and change the message.

Even if he claims it came from an angel, why should I believe that? I have the words of God already from an authoritative spokesperson, Christ, and his apostles. So, it's a mistake to even consider even what appears to be an angelic message that contradicts what the word of God said. That's what this prophet made, that mistake.

And this will be true in other cases where many times people will go to seances and they'll think they've contacted some relative and the relative will tell them things about the nature of the universe and of eternity and of the hereafter which contradict what the



Bible says. And people sometimes believe them because they're hearing from a spirit from the other side, they think. But when you have the word of God, why do you need the testimony of a spirit from the other side? And how can you hope even to be able to discern whether that spirit is genuine or not? If it's obviously speaking not according to this word, it's because there's no light in it.

That's what Isaiah said in Isaiah 8.20 If they speak not according to this word, it's because there's no light in them. This prophet should have known that it's possible that he'd gone some days traveling without food and knew it'd be a few more days before he'd be home again and before he'd eat and his hunger pains may have been bothering him. He may have been just very open to new instructions, you know, about eating.

And when a man says, well, I'm a prophet, an angel appeared to me, he said, you should eat, that may very well have appealed very much to the flesh of this individual. And he was just too willing to accept an unverified word from God which went contrary to the word that he knew God had given him before. And so, although he appears to be a true man of God, obviously, and seems to have sincere desire to obey God, he makes a miscalculation which apparently was unjustified, unwarranted.

He could have known better. His guard was down and he allowed himself to be deceived when he should have been more vigorously holding on to what God had said. Now, verse 20, it happened as they sat down at the table, as they still sat at the table, I should say, that the word of the Lord came to the prophet who had brought him back.

And he cried out to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, Thus says Yahweh, because you have disobeyed the word of Yahweh and have not kept the commandment which Yahweh your God commanded you, but you came back, ate bread, and drank water in a place which Yahweh said to you, eat no bread and drink no water, your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers. So, in other words, you'll die in a situation where you'll not be able to be buried, at least not such as you would have planned in your family tomb. And the prophet apparently took that with aplomb and with composure and just saddled his donkey and left.

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. So, when he was gone, a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his corpse was thrown on the road, apparently by the lion, and the donkey stood by it, and the lion also stood by the corpse.

Now, this was also supernatural. Now, there are lions, or I should say there were lions in Israel in biblical times, although wild lions were rare by this late time. In the period of the judges and even in the period of David, lions existed in Israel, but as, you know, as the years and centuries wore on, they were largely hunted down and killed off and sometime later they were extinct.

There are no lions in Israel now. But, although lions were less common in Israel in those days, there obviously were some still around. And this one found him and killed him, but didn't eat him.

What's more, the donkey didn't even run away. Now, a donkey would be spooked big time by a lion killing the man that is his mount, or that's upon him, I should say. Yet, the donkey just stood there by the corpse.

The lion just stood there by the corpse. It didn't attack the donkey. It didn't eat the man.

It didn't run off into the jungle and hide. It just stood there by the road. This was apparently all a supernatural way of giving a sign that God was in this.

This was not just bad luck. This was supernatural. 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. So, when the prophet, who had brought him back from the way, heard it, he said, It is the man of God who is 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.

And he spoke to his son saying, Saddle the donkey for me. And they saddled it. 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. And the prophet took up the corpse of the man of God. Apparently, right there in the presence of the lion, he could tell the lion was not aggressive.

And so, he just took up the corpse and laid it on the donkey and brought it back. So, the old prophet came to the city to mourn and to bury him. Then he laid the corpse in his own tomb and they mourned over him saying, Alas, my brother! So, it was after he had buried him that he spoke to his son saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb where the man of God is buried.

Lay my bones beside his bones. 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. After this event, Jeroboam did not turn away from his evil way.

But again, he made priests from every class of people for the high places as not from the Levites. Whoever wished, he consecrated him and he became one of the priests of the high places. And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam so as to exterminate and destroy it from the face of the earth.

Now, getting back to these prophets. Boy, prophets are peculiar folks. I mean, later on we're going to see a prophet says to a man, Strike me! And the man says, No, I'm not going to strike you.

And the prophet says, Because you didn't obey me, a lion is going to meet you and kill you. And it happened. You know, it's like weird stuff.

It's obvious that God, in those days, in dealing with prophets, He took a no-nonsense approach. These people were the ones who represented Him in a time of apostasy. And they had to do it right.

They had to correctly represent Him. Remember Moses, who was a prophet? Just when God said, Speak to the rock and he struck the rock and that became an unforgivable thing. God never allowed him to go into the promised land because despite Moses' good behavior, forever before and after.

That one thing just was the thing that was, Sorry, you didn't sanctify me before the people. When you're called to be a prophet of God, you need to represent God. You need to do what God says.

Because you're calling on people to do what God says. That's the point. If you're God's mouthpiece, what He's telling you to do is to tell people to be obedient to Him.

Well, you of course, first of all, have to be obedient to Him. When God called Moses first to go and confront Pharaoh, to be His prophet to Pharaoh, Moses still had not circumcised his son. There was this area of disobedience in Moses that had to be corrected.

And so God intervened to require this. Because a man who would speak for God until others to obey God must himself be obedient to God. And there is a higher standard he's held to.

Everybody ought to obey God, but those who have a direct revelation from God and who understand better and more directly and have a more dynamic relationship with God are entrusted with God's message to the people and who are supposed to be the ones who are convincingly telling people that God requires them to obey. That person had better show it in his life. He better live an obedient life.

And there's a stricter standard and apparently a stricter judgment if a prophet disobeys. A prophet who's actually hearing the word of God clearly has no excuse for being deceived. And if you're not a perfect prophet you get eliminated.

Because if there's going to be prophets of God they have to be trustworthy. They have to be people that everyone knows. If you talk to the prophet of God you'll hear from God because this man really is obedient.

This man really knows God. This man is reliable. If there isn't that kind of reliability then no one can know when God is speaking and who he's speaking through.

So here's this really high standard God has set. This prophet was a mighty prophet. And then there was this older prophet.

And what motivated him? We're not really told. And one could see it two entirely different ways. One thing is clear that he lied and tempted this man and caused him to sin.

Then he rebuked him and said you're going to die for that. All of that sounds very hostile. And yet when he found that the man had died he felt compassion and kinship with him.

And went and gave him an honorable burial. Mourned him and told his sons, you know this is a real man of God. I want to be buried next to him when I die.

I mean what a strange man this old prophet is. There are two ways of looking at it I suppose. One would be that the reason that he this was like an older prophet who had passed his prime.

Possibly because the spiritual mood of Israel was such that it was not amenable to Yahweh because of the corruption and sin of Jeroboam that the prophets of Yahweh had kind of gone into retirement or had to lay low. There was a later time in that same country when Jezebel was hunting down the prophets to kill them all. All the prophets of Yahweh.

And so in certain environments it's dangerous to be one of God's people. Because the culture has turned so much against God that they either won't listen to you or even will be violently opposed to you. As in the case of Jezebel, want to kill you.

In this case no one was trying to kill the prophets but they were perhaps being ignored. And they really didn't have a position of respect anymore. Their ministries had been sidelined, marginalized.

And this old prophet may have even felt like his days of prophesying were pretty much in the past. He's sort of a retired prophet but a true man of God. He was able in fact to prophesy correctly about the fate of this younger prophet.

And some people think that when he heard about the prophet of Bethel, that is the Judean prophet who prophesied against the altar in Bethel, that he was kind of jealous. And he kind of thought well, now this guy's moved into the position I used to be in when I was a younger man. He's got the glory going on with him.

He's having all the fun. And there being a jealousy toward the younger prophet wanting to corrupt him. But if that is what motivated him, then it's hard to explain why he

showed such respect for him.

We'd have to say that he had a change of heart. Initially he was jealous, but then after the man died he kind of realized that was kind of wrong of me. I shouldn't have done that.

But we don't find the old prophet repenting as if he had done something wrong. We see him respecting the prophet but not repenting for the role he himself had played in bringing that prophet down. I mean this old man had been the tempter who had led this prophet astray had tested him and seen him fail and actually this prophet who was a man of God would have gotten home safely if not for the intervention of this old man.

You'd think that the man if he had been malicious and had done it wrongly and then later had respect for the prophet would have been very remorseful about his own role and very repentant would be afflicting himself for why did I do that? That was carnal of me and now look what I've done. I've killed a man of God as it were by tempting him and luring him to do the wrong thing. I don't think that's it.

I think it's probably that this old prophet was a true man of God motivated by love for God all along and that he was a lonely prophet in an apostate nation. There had been times perhaps earlier in his life when there was more fellowship with true prophets of Yahweh sons of the prophets. There were sons of the prophets in Bethel at other times.

In Samuel's time there were sons of the prophets there. In Elijah's time I believe there were sons of the prophets in Bethel as I recall. This was a place where there had been and maybe still was but maybe less so prophetic fellowships.

It may be that at this time most of the other prophets had left the ministry because of the unpopularity of Yahweh in Israel or that they had gone somewhere else to minister but this guy may have been lonely wanting real fellowship with a real man of God. And when he heard that this man was a true prophet it was very clear from what happened at the altar in Bethel this true man of God. He wanted to fellowship with a like minded brother but wanted to test him first to make sure that he was truly uncorruptible.

That he was truly a sincere and true man of God. He knew that he was a true prophet but was he also a godly man who would be obedient to God and uncompromising. You know when you are yourself seeking to be uncompromising and true to God but you're in a town a church even where there seems to be a lot of compromising it's hard to know who you can really fellowship with heart to heart as a kindred spirit.

You know you meet somebody and say well this certainly sounds like a good Christian friend to me. We could have good fellowship but you wonder are they going to be a compromiser like everyone else seems to be. And this man may have had that question in his mind.

Here's somebody I could really enjoy fellowship with. Somebody who's really on the same page I've been on. Hearing from God, prophesying, following the Lord but is he like so many others who cave in under temptation who compromise.

And therefore he may have wanted to test him. And this was not without God's approval. God allows people to be tested.

This man was a false prophet in a sense but he was a true prophet in another sense. He lied about the angel and the message. That was a false prophecy.

But he operated as a false prophet to test the loyalty of the younger man of God. It's very much like what Moses warned about in Deuteronomy 13 when he said if there arises a prophet or dreamer of dreams and he gives you a sign or wonder and he says depart from Yahweh, don't believe him. He said the Lord your God is testing you to see whether you love the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul.

So that here was a younger prophet that was being tested to see if he loved the Lord with all his heart and all his soul. And the older prophet became the prophet or the dreamer of dreams that seeks to lead him astray. Now we are told very often to not stumble people, not to lead people astray, not to lead people in temptation.

And not to destroy a weaker brother and so forth. And that is a New Testament instruction. And that is our obligation.

But these prophets were special category of people. And they were held to a higher standard. And God apparently used this older prophet to put this younger prophet's obedience to the test.

And he failed the test. And the older prophet may have been extremely disappointed to see it. When he said, oh the angel said you should come home and eat with me.

He may have hoped that the angel said, sorry I've got words from God. I'm not going to do that. Then the older prophet would have said, wow, okay I've met a kindred spirit.

I can trust you. But instead the younger prophet came home and ate. And probably to the great disappointment of the older prophet.

And then he had to deliver the hard word from God to him. But grieved over it. It's really kind of an amazing story.

And the lessons that we would have from it would be, for one thing, if God has spoken clearly about something, don't be taking alternative messages that claim to be from angels or from other authoritative sources. God's word is clear. He doesn't change his mind.

If he has said it clearly then obey what he said clearly and don't be entertaining notions

that seem to have some kind of other information. Leading you in another direction. Even if it claims to be from God or from a prophet or something else.

Once God has spoken, we have a word we can stand on and we're not supposed to change from that. Another lesson would be, of course that if you're a prophet God may deal severely with you if you disobey more severely than he might just an ordinary person. Another thing we see in the story is that in spite of all these events and all these signs that were given to him, Jeroboam didn't repent.

And Jeroboam just continued with his evil way and continued making the same mistakes and committing the same offenses against God. So we come to chapter 14. At that time, Abijah the son of Jeroboam became sick.

Now it's interesting both Jeroboam and Rehoboam had sons named Abijah. Rehoboam was the king of Judah simultaneously with Jeroboam being the king of Israel in the north. Both of them had sons both named Abijah which I think must mean my father is Yahweh.

Abai from Abba, my father and Jah from Yahweh. So my father is Yahweh. Now both Rehoboam and Jeroboam gave that name to their sons.

I don't know I mean it sounds like a reverent title but both of these kings were irreverent. I wonder when you give your son a name that says my father is Yahweh, if the father is saying I'm Yahweh, I'm his father. My son will always speak of me as if I'm Yahweh.

I would think there would be a more reverent way to understand those names if the fathers who gave them were more reverent men and servers of Yahweh. But these men both Rehoboam and Jeroboam turned out to be wicked kings. And so it's curious that they would give such names.

Now Rehoboam's son by that name is usually called Abijam in the books of Kings. But in Chronicles he's called Abijah. Abijah and Abijam are different forms of the same name.

And perhaps in order to distinguish between the one and the other the writer of Kings refers to Rehoboam's son as Abijam. But Jeroboam's son is here called Abijah. And he was a child at this time.

And he became sick. And Jeroboam said to his wife, please arise and disguise yourself that they may not recognize you as the wife of Jeroboam. And go to Shiloh.

Indeed Ahijah, the prophet is there who told me that I would be king over this people. That was back when Solomon was still living. And Jeroboam was a foreman over the work teams on the construction projects that Solomon was involved in.

At that time this man Ahijah had come to Jeroboam and torn his cloak into 12 pieces and given Jeroboam 10 pieces. And they represented the 10 tribes as God's going to give you

10 of the tribes. So he remembered this prophet who had prophesied correctly and he thought I need to know what's going to happen to my son.

Suddenly he wants a real prophet around. You know, when he's when things are going well he's happy to have the false priests and the false prophets and the false religion. But, you know, when he's really got trials and his son is sick, then he wants to turn to God.

I remember someone saying a young man, a friend of mine in Santa Cruz back in the 70's he was talking, he was preaching actually in the open air and he was talking about new age religion and all the other options other than Christ. And he says, you know, these other religions you may be able to find, apart from Christ, you might be able to find a religion that you can live with. But, you won't find one you can die with.

You know, I mean, you can be satisfied with other religions during your lifetime when everything is going well. You can live with a religion that doesn't impinge on your behavior too much as long as you're going to be living. But when you're dying, suddenly you want the real thing.

The religion you can live with isn't always the religion that you're willing to die with. And here it wasn't so much Jeroboam was dying, but his son was dying. And now he wanted a real word from the real prophet.

He knew who the real God was. He'd been ignoring him on purpose for his own reasons and for his own political advantage, but when his son was sick, then he wanted to turn to the real God, as is so often the case with people in their lives. They ignore God until they need him, and then they expect him to just jump and come to their aid as if he is their servant.

And he says, go and talk to Ahijah. He says to his wife, disguise yourself so he doesn't know you're my wife. Also take with you ten loaves, some cakes, and a jar of honey and go to him.

He will tell you what will become of the child. People always brought some kind of gift to the prophet. Probably the prophets were living by faith.

We don't know how they got their income otherwise. They apparently did live by faith, and therefore people who used their services or to whom they ministered would reciprocate by giving them things they needed to live. Which is, of course, why there was that difficulty with prophets becoming mercenaries, too.

And that's true in any ministry. The Bible says in the New Testament, in 1 Corinthians 9, those that preach the gospel should live of the gospel. But it becomes a danger that the persons who are living of the gospel will become mercenary about it.



And that they will tailor their message to keep happy those who pay their paychecks. So, this prophet, of course, is just receiving a gift as any prophet probably would for his survival. And he's not going to say what the...this is a real prophet.

He's not a mercenary. He's not going to say what the king wants to hear, even if they bring him ten loaves and cakes and a jar of honey. And Jeroboam's wife did so.

She arose and went to Shiloh and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were glazed by reason of his age. Now the Lord had said to Ahijah, Here is the wife of Jeroboam coming to ask something about her son, for he is sick.

Thus and thus you shall say to her, for it will be when she comes in that she will pretend to be another woman. So even though the prophet is blind and the woman is disguised, he surprises her by knowing who she is. And so it was when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps as she came through the door, he said, Come in, wife of Jeroboam.

Why do you pretend to be another person? For I have been sent to you with bad news. Go tell Jeroboam, thus says the Lord God of Israel, because I exalted you from among the people and made you ruler over my people Israel and tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you. And yet you have not been as my servant David who kept my commandments and who followed me with all his heart to do only what was right in my eyes.

But you have done more evil than all who were before you. That would have to mean Solomon and Saul probably as well as David. There weren't many before Jeroboam.

For you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke me to anger and have cast me behind your back. Therefore, behold, I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam and will cut off from Jeroboam every male in Israel bond and free and I will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam as one takes away refuse until it's all gone. The dog shall eat whoever belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city and the birds of the air shall eat whatever dies in the field for the Lord has spoken it.

Now when it says the dogs will eat those who die in the city and the birds of the air, those who die in the field it means they won't get a burial. They'll be left out and exposed to be destroyed by or to be consumed by wild animals or domestic animals depending on where they die but they won't be buried out of that indignity and so they'll have an undignified death all the descendants of Jeroboam would. Arise therefore go to your own house when your feet enter the city the child shall die.

If I was the mother I probably wouldn't go home you know but she couldn't stay away forever and I mean God had declared this was going to happen and all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him for he is the only one of Jeroboam who shall come to the grave because in him there is found something good toward the Lord God of Israel in the house

of Jeroboam. Now this is an interesting point the child dies under the judgment of God but it's not a judgment on the child it's a judgment on the father. The child God actually sees something good in the child.

Therefore the child dies on good terms with God but he dies nonetheless and some people think that doesn't seem fair. Why did David and Bathsheba's first son have to die? It wasn't him that sinned it was them that sinned. Why did God have to take that baby? That doesn't seem fair.

Well if the baby dies on good terms with God that's not so bad for the baby. It's always good to die on good terms with God. Better than to live on bad terms with God and we have to assume that God said since God said I have found some good thing toward the Lord in this child we don't know how old the child was.

Whether it's just childish innocence he's referring to because the child is maybe a baby or a toddler or whether it's actually a young child who's got some motions toward the Lord in his heart and God is taking him away from the evil that he would grow up in. We don't know but it's very clear that the death of the child is not God's judgment on the child and the child would of course experience justice in the presence of God afterward but Jeroboam is one who's judged by the loss of the child and he's the only member of Jeroboam's family that will actually get a decent burial and be remembered with any kind of favor. Moreover the Lord will raise up for himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam.

This is the day. What? Even now. Now it's almost like the prophet is seeing the vision as he's speaking.

It's like it's like heaven right in front of me right now. It's kind of interesting what was going on inside the head of the prophet. He couldn't see with his eyes but he was seeing something apparently in a vision and he's proxying this will happen then it's almost like it's so vivid to his eyes.

It's like oh wow it's like it's happening right now in front of me. Even now it's happening. What? What is this? For the Lord will strike Israel as a reed is shaken in the water.

He will uproot Israel from the good land which he gave to their fathers and will scatter them beyond the river. That is of course into Assyria beyond the Euphrates. Because they have made their wooden images provoking the Lord to anger and he will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam who sinned and who made Israel to sin.

Now he's talking about something that would happen hundreds of years later that God would send Israel out of the land. They'd lose the land. They'd be taken off by the Assyrians and never come back.

He's already predicting that during the reign of the first king. They had a total of 19

kings. But already in the reign of the first king the prophet is telling them the ultimate fate of Israel.

They're going to be driven out of their land. And it's because of the sin of Jeroboam. Now it's not just because of the sin of Jeroboam.

Because if later kings had repented that would be a different story. But we read again and again and again. When we read about the sins of the later kings of Israel.

It says they committed the sin of Jeroboam. They committed the sin of Jeroboam. In other words it was the sin of Jeroboam that caused Israel to go into captivity.

But it was not just Jeroboam committing it. They all committed the sin of Jeroboam. They all repeated the sins of Jeroboam.

And therefore there never was a king in Israel that departed from the sins of Jeroboam. And therefore the nation came under that judgment as predicted. Verse 17 Then Jeroboam's wife arose and departed and came to Tirzah.

Which is apparently at that time the capital. Bethel had been the capital and later Samaria will be the capital. But at this point apparently the king is living in Tirzah.

When she came to the threshold of the house the child died. And they buried him and all Israel mourned for him according to the word of the Lord which he spoke through his servant Ahijah the prophet. Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam how he made war and how he reigned indeed they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

The period that Jeroboam reigned was 22 years. So he rested with his fathers then Nadab his son reigned in his place. Meanwhile in the southern kingdom Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah.

Notice it begins talking about Jeroboam and it goes all the way to the end of his reign and then it introduces the next king but it doesn't go into the next king's reign because the king of Judah has not yet died. Because more than one king of the north had reigns that overlapped the reign of Rehoboam. And therefore for that reason we receive a notice that Jeroboam died and who replaced him but we don't get further information about the northern kingdom until we now go down to the king of Judah we're going to have his whole story.

When he dies we'll read about who replaced him but then the story will go back to Israel to pick up where it left off and that's how the story is told as they follow the histories of two different kingdoms. So Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was 41 years old when he became king and he reigned 17 years in Jerusalem the city which the Lord had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel to put his name there.

His mother's name was Nehama and Ammonitus. Now as I said he's the only son of Solomon whose name is given and he was born apparently a year before Solomon became king because he was 41 at the time he took the throne and his father had reigned 40 years so he must have been born in the last year of King David's reign. So when Solomon came to power he had one wife already and a son Nehama the Ammonitus.

Why he had married an Ammonitus we don't know. The Ammonites were enemies of Israel historically so Solomon had married an Ammonitus and had this one son. Now Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they committed more than all that their fathers had done for they also built for themselves high places sacred pillars and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree.

So they were just as bad as the northern kingdom. And there were also perverted persons in the land and that was apparently male prostitutes homosexual male prostitutes who were serving in the pagan rites of the high places and so that was something that the Canaanites also practiced and so Canaanite practices were being brought in and followed here in Israel. So these perverted persons were in the land.

They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. Now it happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam that Shishak the king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem and he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house. So he took away everything.

He also took away all the gold shields which Solomon had made. So King Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place and committed them to the hands of captains of the guards who guarded the doorway of the king's house. And so it was whenever the king went into the house of the Lord that the guards carried them then brought them back into the guard chamber.

Now what we have here is Shishak is the pharaoh not the same pharaoh whose daughter married Solomon. This Shishak was not related to that pharaoh but he had overthrown Solomon's father-in-law and therefore had no particular connection to Israel by marriage. Solomon's father-in-law the pharaoh had a pact with Israel and would not attack because there was this marriage.

But Shishak had overthrown that pharaoh and now was an enemy of Israel. And so he came up to Judah and he took away a lot of stuff. Including the gold shields that Solomon had put up.

And you know Rehoboam just he made bronze ones to replace them. And this is sort of like it's an emblem of how the glory of Solomon's kingdom had departed. It's like Solomon's kingdom was an age of gold.

It wasn't even an age of silver because silver was counted as nothing in Israel because it was so common. In Solomon's day silver didn't even count for anything. It was too common.

Everything was gold. But now the glory of that reign has departed and it's symbolized by the disappearance of the gold and it's replaced with bronze. Still pretty.

Still shiny. Still kind of gold colored. But of much less value.

And so Rehoboam kind of acted like nothing had happened. He still replaced the gold shields with bronze ones. He still had the ceremony of the shields being carried when it came and went.

And so we see the value of the kingdom degenerating. Although there's sort of it seems like Rehoboam may be in denial about it. And he replaces them as if now nothing has happened.

We still have all our shields. Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam and all that he did are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. So Rehoboam rested with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David.

His mother's name was Nehama, the Ammonitess. Then Abijah, his son also as I said in Chronicles referred to as Abijah. His son reigned in his place.

Now there's more about Rehoboam in Chronicles. But we don't have time to look at that now. In our next session we'll take whatever we need to from that parallel account and then we'll move on into later material.

But we've run out of time here. We need to quit.