

Beware of Prophet Lying 1 Kings 13

In 1 Kings 13, we find the story about a man of God who delivers a prophecy against King Jeroboam at the altar at Bethel. Later, listening to a prophet, he disobeys God.

This study will learn about **obedience, discernment, the danger of deception**, even from those who claim to speak for God, **and the reliability of God's Word**.

This message underscores the importance of taking God's commands seriously, being vigilant against spiritual deception, and maintaining humility in our walk with God. Hopefully this message will help you grow in faith, discernment, and devotion to God.

Background

1. Promises Made to David

The promises to David are part of the Davidic Covenant, found primarily in 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17.

A. The Covenant Promise: An Eternal Kingdom

- 2 Samuel 7:12-16 (NKJV):
 - *"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever."*

Key Points:

1. Unconditional Promise:
 - God promised David that his royal line would endure forever, culminating in the Messiah, who would reign eternally (fulfilled in Jesus Christ; see Luke 1:32-33).
 - Even if David's descendants sinned, God would discipline them but not revoke His promise of an enduring dynasty.
2. Condition for Blessings:
 - While the covenant itself was unconditional, the blessings on individual kings depended on their obedience to God. Disobedience would bring discipline and hardship to the nation (e.g., the exile).

Supporting Scripture:

- **Psalm 89:30-34 (NKJV):** *"If his sons forsake My law and do not walk in My judgments... I will punish their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless My lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him, nor allow My faithfulness to fail."*

2. Promises Made to Solomon

The promises to Solomon reiterated aspects of the Davidic Covenant but were more conditional in nature, emphasizing personal obedience for the continuation of blessings.

A. God's Charge to Solomon

- 1 Kings 2:2-4 (NKJV) (David's instructions to Solomon):
 - ***"I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. And keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; that the Lord may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,' He said, 'you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'"***
- 1 Kings 9:4-5 (NKJV) (God's charge to Solomon):
 - ***"Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.'"***

B. Conditions of Obedience

1. Personal Obedience:

- Solomon was called to follow God wholeheartedly, walking in integrity and keeping God's laws.
- His faithfulness would ensure prosperity for Israel and the continuation of the royal line.

2. Consequences of Disobedience:

- **1 Kings 9:6-7 (NKJV):**
 - ***"But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight."***
- Disobedience would lead to judgment, including the division of the kingdom and the loss of blessings.

Fulfillment in Solomon's Life:

- Solomon initially followed God faithfully, and his reign was marked by peace, prosperity, and the building of the temple (1 Kings 6-8).
- However, later in life, Solomon turned away from God by worshiping idols, influenced by his foreign wives (1 Kings 11:1-13). As a result:
 - God declared that the kingdom would be divided after Solomon's death.
 - Ten tribes were given to Jeroboam, leaving only Judah for Solomon's son, Rehoboam (1 Kings 11:11-13).

1. Background of Jeroboam's Calling

- Jeroboam was one of King Solomon's officials, described as a capable and industrious young man.

- **1 Kings 11:28 (NKJV):** *"The man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valor; and Solomon, seeing that the young man was industrious, made him the officer over all the labor force of the house of Joseph."*
- His rise to prominence made him a key figure in Solomon's administration.

2. The Prophecy of Ahijah

The prophet Ahijah delivered God's message to Jeroboam, foretelling his rise to kingship over the ten tribes of Israel.

Key Passage: 1 Kings 11:29-31 (NKJV)

- *"Now it happened at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met him on the way; and he had clothed himself with a new garment, and the two were alone in the field. Then Ahijah took hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it into twelve pieces. And he said to Jeroboam, 'Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you."'"*

Key Details in the Prophecy:

1. The Division of the Kingdom:

- God declared that He would tear the kingdom away from Solomon due to his idolatry and unfaithfulness (1 Kings 11:33).
- Jeroboam would receive ten tribes, while Solomon's son (Rehoboam) would retain one tribe (Judah, along with parts of Benjamin) for the sake of David and Jerusalem.

2. God's Covenant with Jeroboam:

- **1 Kings 11:37-38 (NKJV):** *"So I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israel. Then it shall be, if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you."*
- God promised Jeroboam a lasting dynasty if he remained faithful to His commandments, similar to the promise made to David.

3. Jeroboam's Reaction and Solomon's Response

- After receiving this prophecy, Jeroboam rebelled against Solomon.
- **1 Kings 11:40 (NKJV):** *"Solomon therefore sought to kill Jeroboam. But Jeroboam arose and fled to Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon."*
- Jeroboam's rise to kingship was delayed until Solomon's death, after which the kingdom was divided (1 Kings 12).

4. Fulfillment of the Prophecy

The prophecy was fulfilled when the northern tribes rebelled against Solomon's son, Rehoboam, and made Jeroboam king over Israel (1 Kings 12:20). This division marked the establishment of the northern kingdom of Israel (under Jeroboam) and the southern kingdom of Judah (under Rehoboam).

Significance of Jeroboam's Calling

- Jeroboam's rise to power was a direct result of God's judgment on Solomon for his idolatry and unfaithfulness.
- Despite God's promise of blessings for obedience, Jeroboam ultimately failed to walk in God's ways and led Israel into idolatry, becoming a negative example of unfaithfulness.

This story highlights themes of God's sovereignty, the consequences of sin, and the importance of faithfulness to God's commands.

Jeroboam Builds An Altar To Worship God

- *1 Ki 12:27–33 (ESV) — 27 If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the Lord at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.” 28 So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, “You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” 29 And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. 30 Then this thing became a sin, for the people went as far as Dan to be before one. 31 He also made temples on high places and appointed priests from among all the people, who were not of the Levites. 32 And Jeroboam appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like the feast that was in Judah, and he offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made. 33 He went up to the altar that he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, in the month that he had devised from his own heart. And he instituted a feast for the people of Israel and went up to the altar to make offerings.*

The Authenticity Of The Altar At Bethel

- Altar at Bethel
 - Reference: Genesis 35:1, 7
 - Who Built It: Jacob
 - Occasion: Following God's command to return to Bethel, where God had first appeared to him in a vision.
 - Significance: This altar was built to renew Jacob's commitment to God. It marked God's reaffirmation of His promises and Jacob's new name, Israel.
 - **Judges 20:18, 26-28:** During the time of the Judges, the Israelites went to Bethel to seek God's guidance and direction in their battle against the tribe of Benjamin. The Ark of the Covenant was there, and they sought God's will through prayer and sacrifice. Bethel served as a place where the Israelites could encounter God, showing that it retained spiritual importance for them.
 - Theological Significance: Bethel continued to be viewed as a holy place where God could be consulted, in keeping with Jacob's initial encounter with God there.
 - **1 Samuel 7:16:** The prophet Samuel traveled to Bethel as part of his circuit to judge Israel. This indicates that Bethel was one of the central locations for worship and administering justice. Samuel's visits likely involved worship and sacrifices, reminding the Israelites of their need for holiness and dedication to God.
 - **1 Kings 12:28-29:** After the division of Israel into the northern and southern

kingdoms, King Jeroboam of Israel set up golden calves for worship in Bethel and Dan to prevent his people from going to Jerusalem to worship at the temple. This was a tragic turn for Bethel, as it shifted from being a place of encounter with the true God to a center of idolatrous worship.

- Theological Significance: Bethel's transition into a center of idolatry demonstrates how even sacred places can be corrupted when people stray from God's commands. The prophets later condemned Bethel's idolatry, warning of judgment.
- **Amos 3:14; 5:5-6:** The prophet Amos denounced the idolatry at Bethel, warning the northern kingdom that God would destroy the altars there. He called the people to seek God sincerely rather than relying on corrupted places of worship. He famously said, "Seek the Lord and live, or He will sweep through the house of Joseph like a fire."
- **Hosea 10:15:** Hosea also condemned the false worship at Bethel, calling it "Beth-Aven," which means "house of wickedness," instead of "house of God." He warned that Israel's idolatry would bring judgment upon them.

Beware of Prophet Lying

1 Kings 13

1 Ki 13:1–9 (NKJV) — 1 And 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.

2 Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the Lord, and said, "O altar, altar! Thus says the Lord: '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.' "

3 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."

4 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. 5 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.

6 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." So the man of God entreated the Lord, and the king's hand was restored to him, and became as before.

7 Then the king said to the man of God, "Come home with me and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward." 8 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.

9 For so it was commanded me by the word of the Lord, saying, ‘You shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came.’ ” 10 So he went another way and did not return by the way he came to Bethel.

1. God’s Word Must Be Our Ultimate Authority

- Lesson:
 - The man of God received a direct command from the Lord: not to eat or drink in Bethel or return the way he came.
 - God’s instructions were clear and specific, and the man of God initially obeyed.
- What We Should Do:
 - When we receive God’s Word through Scripture or prayer, it should remain our guide, regardless of external influences.
 - Scripture is the ultimate standard for truth. *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105)*

11 Now an old prophet dwelt in Bethel, and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel; they also told their father the words which he had spoken to the king. 12 And their father said to them, “Which way did he go?” For his sons had seen which way the man of God went who came from Judah. 13 Then he said to his sons, “Saddle the donkey for me.” So they saddled the donkey for him; and he rode on it, 14 and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak. Then he said to him, “Are you the man of God who came from Judah?” And he said, “I am.” 15 Then he said to him, “Come home with me and eat bread.” 16 And he said, “I cannot return with you nor go in with you; neither can I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place. 17 For I have been told by the word of the Lord, ‘You shall not eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by going the way you came.’ ”

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

2. Deception Can Come from Religious Sources

- Lesson:
 - The old prophet claimed divine authority to deceive the man of God.
 - This highlights that deception can come from those who appear credible or godly.
 - Not everyone who claims to speak for God is truthful or inspired by Him.
- What We Should Do:
 - Believers must test all teachings and messages against Scripture. *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1)*
 - *1 Co 14:32 (NKJV) — 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.*
 - Be cautious of those who manipulate God’s name for personal gain or influence.

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

3. Spiritual Discernment is Critical

- ***Lesson:***
 - *The man of God failed to discern the lie because he placed trust in the old prophet's claim rather than in God's direct instruction.*
 - *Discernment involves prayer, careful examination of the Word, and reliance on the Holy Spirit for guidance.*
- ***What We Should Do:***
 - *Cultivate discernment by knowing Scripture intimately and staying close to God in prayer.*
 - *When you encounter conflicting messages, ask: "Does this align with God's Word and character?"*

20 Now it happened, as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came to the prophet who had brought him back; 21 and he cried out to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, "Thus says the Lord: 'Because you have disobeyed the word of the Lord, and have not kept the commandment which the Lord your God commanded you, 22 but you came back, ate bread, and drank water in the place of which the Lord said to you, "Eat no bread and drink no water," your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.' "

4. The Consequences of Believing a Lie

- ***Lesson:***
 - *The man of God suffered severe consequences for disobeying God's command, even though he was deceived.*
 - *God holds His people accountable for knowing and obeying His Word, regardless of external influences.*
- ***What We Should Do:***
 - *Believing lies can lead to spiritual harm, broken relationships, or lost opportunities. Be vigilant and stay anchored in God's truth.*
 - ***"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." (Hosea 4:6)***
 - ***Ge 3:13 (NKJV) — 13 And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."***

23 So it was, after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, that he saddled the donkey for him, the prophet whom he had brought back. 24 When he was gone, a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his corpse was thrown on the road, and the donkey stood by it. The lion also stood by the corpse. 25 And there, men passed by and saw the corpse thrown on the road, and the lion standing by the corpse. Then they went and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

26 Now when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard it, he said, "It is the man of God who was disobedient to the word of the Lord. Therefore the Lord has delivered him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke to him." 27 And he spoke to his sons, saying, "Saddle the donkey for me." So they saddled it. 28 Then he went and found his corpse thrown on the road, and the donkey and the lion standing by the corpse. The lion had not eaten the corpse nor torn the donkey. 29 And the prophet took up the corpse of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back. So the old prophet came to the city to mourn, and to bury him. 30 Then he laid the corpse in his own tomb; and they mourned over him, saying, "Alas, my brother!"

5. False Prophets are a Danger in Every Generation

- *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves." (Matthew 7:15, NKJV)*
- Lesson:
 - False prophets are not just an Old Testament phenomenon; Jesus warns us about them in the New Testament.
 - They often appear trustworthy, but their motives are self-serving, and their teachings lead people away from God.
- *What We Should Do:*
 - Evaluate leaders, teachers, and "prophets" by their fruit. Do their lives and teachings align with God's Word and bring glory to Him?
 - *Mt 7:16 (NKJV) — 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?*
 - Seek wisdom from mature believers and spiritual leaders who faithfully teach the Word of God.

31 So it was, after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons, saying, "When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb where the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. 32 For the saying which he cried out by the word of the Lord against the altar in Bethel, and against all the shrines on the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, will surely come to pass."

33 After this event Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but again he made priests from every class of people for the high places; whoever wished, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places. 34 And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam, so as to exterminate and destroy it from the face of the earth.

Fulfillment in 2 Kings 23:15-20 (NKJV)

"Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place and crushed it to powder, and burned the wooden image. As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs that were there on the mountain, and he sent and took the bones out

of the tombs and burned them on the altar, and defiled it according to the word of the Lord which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. Then he said, 'What gravestone is this that I see?' So the men of the city told him, 'It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel.' And he said, 'Let him alone; let no one move his bones.' So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria."

Details of the Prophecy and Fulfillment - 300 years later

2 Pe 3:8–9 (NKJV) — 8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

1. Specificity of the Name "Josiah":
 - In 1 Kings 13:2, the man of God specifically names Josiah as the king who will carry out this prophecy, even though Josiah would not be born for centuries. This level of specificity demonstrates the accuracy and divine inspiration of the prophecy.
2. Destruction of the Altar:
 - In 2 Kings 23:15, King Josiah destroys the altar at Bethel, fulfilling the first part of the prophecy.
3. Burning of Bones on the Altar:
 - In 2 Kings 23:16, Josiah exhumed the bones of priests from nearby tombs and burned them on the altar, defiling it as the man of God had foretold.
4. Recognition of the Prophecy:
 - In 2 Kings 23:17-18, the local people recognize the tomb of the man of God who originally made the prophecy, further confirming its fulfillment.

Significance of the Fulfillment

- God's Sovereignty: The fulfillment of the prophecy after such a long time highlights God's control over history and His ability to bring His word to pass.
- Judgment on Idolatry: The prophecy and its fulfillment serve as a judgment against Jeroboam's idolatrous practices and a reminder of God's holiness and opposition to false worship.
- Faithfulness of God's Word: The exact fulfillment of the prophecy reinforces the reliability of God's promises and warnings.

In conclusion, the prophecy of 1 Kings 13:1-3 was precisely fulfilled in 2 Kings 23:15-20, showing the accuracy of biblical prophecy and God's faithfulness to His word.

Practical Applications for Today

1. ***Know God's Word:***

- *Commit to regular Bible study so that you can recognize false teachings when they arise (2 Timothy 2:15).*
- 2. Pray for Discernment:**
 - *Ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom and clarity in evaluating messages and teachings (James 1:5).*
- 3. Test All Things:**
 - *When someone claims to speak for God, compare their words with Scripture (Acts 17:11).*
- 4. Guard Your Heart:**
 - *Be cautious of spiritual complacency or pride that might make you vulnerable to deception (Proverbs 4:23).*

Conclusion

The story of the man of God in 1 Kings 13 is a powerful reminder to remain steadfast in obedience to God's Word, even when others try to lead us astray. Deception can come from unexpected sources, including those who claim to be prophets or spiritual authorities. By staying grounded in Scripture, praying for discernment, and testing all things, we can guard against lies and walk faithfully in God's truth.

Closing Scripture:

***"Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name."
(Psalm 86:11, NKJV)***