

# 1 Kings 13

## Charles Feinberg

Feinberg:

The same way about you. We thank the Lord for the wonderful way in which he's giving increased health and strength to our dean. Dr. O'Neill and then as he says some folk are even getting a bit of an idea that some things are transpiring west of the Mississippi. My heart was quite moved and saddened over the sudden [inaudible] of the FEGC. I've been [inaudible] board member for a number of years. Perhaps Dean O'Neill will remember our first session our first chapel service in the old chapel in Myers Hall had as its speaker. Dear brother Philip Armstrong great man of God. He's gone on to his abundant reward. Let's remember the families. It's a great work for his gospel crusade. Not quite the rapture but it's going without sighing and without crying and without pain. This morning I'm going to deal with such a serious subject that I'm not even going to start with a bit of humor.

I'm directing your attention to first kings 13 first kings 13 very very serious passage though only 34 verses I conceive that the theme in the chapter is the priority or the absolute priority of obedience not only for a man of God but especially for a man of God who has the message of God. If you think this narrative is an easy narrative you have a little more studying to do. It contains an account. That has been found so difficult to understand that it has been twisted and turned and grossly misinterpreted in many quarters. It's even been denied historical value.

Listen to one writer in a liberal commentary. "It is not history but a didactic story. It carries with it a warning to every religious denomination today. (That's really bringing it up to date) not to cast aspersions on the leaders of its rival schools of thought. It's a warning also to each individual to put first the voice of conscience as being the most sure means whereby the individual can apprehend God's will as to his place and purpose in the divine economy."

You may be sure my dear friends this morning that that is not what the chapter is teaching. One of the great commentators of another generation a learned Methodist brother Adam Clarke said this is one of the most remarkable and most singular prophecies in the Old Testament. First Kings 13 I must admit it has puzzled me for a long time especially when I didn't have the light of the New Testament. I couldn't quite understand its facets its different features. It has however when we understand it in the light of the New Testament it has some of the most timely admonitions for the minister of God that can be found in all the Bible and that's quite a big order. You remember the passage first kings 13. It was in the time of Jeroboam son of Nebat because of the folly of Solomon's son Rehoboam the son of Solomon the Solomonic kingdom was destroyed. It was disrupted.

It was divided in nine about 930 B.C. the one who got five sixth of the nation ten tribes was Jeroboam the son of Nebat enterprising industrious conniving and all and ungodly how many times over a dozen times in the scripture we read that it was Jeroboam the son of Nebat that sinned and caused Israel to sin. What an epitaph on that lands too. This is Jeroboam the son of Nebat. We find him here in chapter 13 verse one with a man coming a man of God from Judah. He is coming from the south to Bethel going north by the word of the Lord while Jeroboam was standing by the altar to burn incense and he cried against the altar by the word of the Lord and said oh altar altar thus says the Lord behold a son shall be born to the House of

David Josiah by name three centuries later and I knew he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you and human bones shall be burned on you goes on to give the sign.

Notice in verse 32 when Jeroboam decided to have this service he instituted a feast in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month there is no such feast in Israel. According to Leviticus twenty three it was the 15th day of the seventh month but it was it was the feast of booze the tabernacles [inaudible Hebrew] Jeroboam had altered it from the seventh to the eighth month and now God sends a prophet from Judah and he is obedient the first ten verses speak of the obedience of this prophet from Judah he probably appeared on the first of this newly instituted festival to show God's absolute disavowal and disapproval of the whole worship. And notice he wasn't doing it on his own. Verse one by the word of the Lord verse two by the word of the Lord verse five by the word of the Lord.

He had strict explicit clear direction from God and the king is publicly rebuked in this wicked worship that he himself has inaugurated. And the word was a word of judgment was threefold. Future judgment on that idolatrous worship, verse two. Verse three even a present sign. This is the sign verse 3. The order shall be split apart. It was exactly the ashes which are on it shall be poured out. Exactly what happened and then immediate visitation on Jeroboam personally when he heard this word he said seize him, verse four. Arrest that man. Not that easy. He's rebuked and then in verse two. Do you notice who is addressed or what is addressed? Not Jeroboam not O Jeroboam King of Israel but O Altar Altar did he not say that? Altar altar! He bypasses this man of God does he bypasses ignores the ruler and self-appointed priest to address the altar itself. And when he says that it will be scattered and broken happened actually and

indicates that human bones shall be burned on you a grievous desecration according to law of Moses numbers 19:16 and three hundred years later in the time of King Josiah, 2 Kings 23:16.

So did the conditions appear? What is the principle upon which God is moving? The law of retaliation. Lex taliones, the law of retaliation. They have desecrated God's altar and worship. There's going to be also. And then he indicates the eventual complete overthrow of every part of this godless idolatrous worship. If we may call it that Jeroboam revealed how much he appreciated the warning the prophet gave him. He said put that man out of commission but as he did it. His arm dried up. Why. Because he was actually raising it against God. This man wasn't speaking his own message. He was speaking God's message and Jeroboam was defying God's word. So here is exact unmistakable fulfillment of the prediction of the prophet there in verse five, altar split apart. Ashes poured out. Not much that an altar can accomplish or can be used for.

In that case and I have found in over fifty years of ministry that some of the greatest hypocrites in churches or out of it are those who say when they're in trouble. Please pray for me preacher. Have you met him yet? You will. And that's what he says here he says. Dear little Jeroboam, what does he indicate please entreat the Lord your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored to me suddenly Jeroboam got religious. It was his fright his helplessness that wasn't lost on these people. The very one that had voiced judgment is the one who is being entreated now to pray for him. Then he says come on home. Let's have a great time. He tried to win the prophet by friendship well eastern hospitality courtesy for a benefaction such as he had just received the restoration of that hand that dried up eastern hospitality would have dictated no less. But it could have been gratitude with an ulterior motive.

Doubtless was and it could have been construed among the people as condoning the sin of the nation or even mitigating or lessening the sentence of their doom on their idolatry which the prophet had just pronounced. And so God's servant said no I can't go with you Sorry I can't take this dinner engagement I can't even tell you when I will in the future. My God in heaven has told me that I am not to stop here. I am not to abide here I'm not to eat. I'm not to drink with anyone here. All were apostates in God's sight. He wasn't permitted to have any fellowship with the apostates and as though they were all spiritual lepers he's to have nothing to do with them and because they're under the condemnation of Lord. The Prophet isn't even allowed to drink water or eat among them. That acceptance of that invitation of Jeroboam would have been misunderstood and His obedience the obedience of the prophets certainly showed that he concurred in God's view of the apostasy of the nation at that hour.

He wasn't going to join with them either in worshipping or in feasting. He's just condemned them in the most severe terms and God said you are to go by way that you didn't come. You're not to return to the same way in other words he was to avoid all fellowship with the ungodly and he was to avoid being traced and followed. There was some trouble later by somebody who did find out where he was and did follow him and brought him back. They were all for practical purposes excommunicated by the Lord. Those of you who are acquainted with your church history remember the account of St. John's hurried leaving of the bath because of the presence there of the heretic Cerinthus. Now that may be an occasion for contemptuous smiles today but it doesn't mean that we're any wiser just means that we may be more conceited and less biblical. But up through verse ten notice. So he went another way and did not return by the way which he came to Bethel.

Implicit obedience thus far but told to the teacher explained to her class the words concerning God's angels. The Scripture says they are ministers of his who do his pleasure so the teacher asked how angels carry out God's will. Well many answers came. One said they do it directly another says they do it with all their hearts. A third said they do it well and after a pause a quiet little girl said they do it without asking any questions. The most important question to children to a certain age is the one three letter word, why. It fits in so well with whine. So it's why why why here is a good definition of implicit obedience. Do it without asking any questions. That was the course the wise course of this Judean prophet. But I wish the rest of the story would read equally as heartwarming. The next nine verses are very very sad. And here's where the difficulty comes in hard to understand the deceit of this old prophet.

We read in verse 11 an old prophet was living in Bethel. I don't know how many others there were. Why didn't he rebuke Jeroboam, why hadn't God used him to rebuke the sin of this King? Had he compromised with a low spiritual state of the nation? Not a very high spiritual plane upon which he was living. According to the rest of the story when Satan couldn't avail with Jeroboam's invitation. Think of it he succeeded with that of the old prophet. Someone has well said the devil never takes the first no as a final answer. He certainly doesn't. Nor even the sixth. No. he is everlastingly at it. amazing his stick-to-itiveness Now the conduct of this old prophet of Bethel has been considered so strange that Flavius Josephus the Jewish historian the Targum, the Aramaic portion on 1 Kings most of the rabbis and even early Catholic Protestant commentators have viewed this prophet old prophet as a false prophet.

We don't know for certain in the light of verses 20 to 24 the honor he paid the dead prophet validation of the prediction concerning the Bethel altar verses twenty nine to thirty two. We have it in second kings as we mentioned. That would appear to indicate that he was a true

prophet but out of fellowship he certainly was out of fellowship. The old prophet was a prophet. Scripture says so but what was his motive. He wanted a prophet of God doubtless to sanction his own compromising unfaithfulness by aligning himself with him. Come on let's eat together. Ostensibly he honored the word of God and the man who proclaimed it but he was unknowingly a tool of the devil. The prophet the prophet from Judah ultimately disannulled he disannulled the force of his own message.

The old prophet had been insensitive to the evil around him and he wanted company. Misery they tell us loves company. Well here it is. And verse 15 we read here. Then he said to him come home with me and eat bread. He was out of fellowship with the Lord as the account clearly shows. He had heard from this prophet that he wasn't allowed to do that. He should have suspected the old prophet. God did not want that Judean prophet to follow him to eat there would have removed one element of his message of warning the ban and neutralized his mission. In this aspect of it he set an example of disobedience himself and thinks of it it's amazing what can happen. He said to him. I also am a prophet like you and an angel spoke to me by the word of the Lord a prophet lying like that.

Not the first and not the last. He is an example of a man who bears the name of God and can perpetrate a falsehood in the name of God. He is an example of insight without holiness light without love. Prophetic gifts don't imply piety. If you don't believe that read the first 16 chapters of 1st Corinthians only 16 chapters and you'll find that a church can be filled with every kind of a gift enriched in all wisdom and all knowledge and all utterance. Sometimes too much utterance but they were enriched in all those things but they were carnal can't speak to you spiritual. And notice in verse 19 the very opposite. He went back with him and ate bread in his house and drank water the very opposite of the position the stand he had taken in verse 9.

He knew the will of God. He knew what had been forbidden. He knew God wouldn't contradict himself or changed his command through another man. Even Balaam, profiteering, merchandising Balaam said God is not a man they should lie or that he should take his word back shall we say and do it. His desire for food and fellowship and rest must have prevailed. Advice friends even from men known for God and this can be nonsense deceitful. You'll all verify this. There was a certain dear excellent but eccentric preacher Reverend John Ryland. I don't know whether he was of the family of John Ryland where the library is in the aisles but he once advised a young preacher. I know you're all going to throw this advice out the window that's where it belongs he said first of all don't buy too many books for that'll hurt your pocket. Secondly don't sit up late at night to study.

That'll hurt your constitution. You all look very healthy this morning. And thirdly don't go courting for that will hurt your mind. Foolishness. Look at verses twenty. To thirty four. We wouldn't have as many married men here in their right minds if they didn't go courting. So that is also nonsense. Look at the death of the Judean prophet in the time that remains. Now look at verse twenty now it came about as they were sitting down at the table. This is very very difficult. That the word of the Lord came to the prophet who had brought him back. The Liar gets the message and he cried to the man of God who came from Judah saying thus says the Lord because you have disobeyed the command of the Lord have not observed the commandment which the Lord your God commanded you but returned and eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which I sit.

He said to you eat no bread and drink no water your body shall not come to the grave of your fathers. And I'm certainly sorry that I deceived you. No that's not in the Bible. He wasn't sorry the most dreadful feature in the count. The sentence comes from the very mouth that had

uttered the falsehood that deceived the gullible credulous prophet. What a visitation from God. And verse 21 we see that God did not reverse his word even if the prophet was not obedient. And what does the prophet mean. The old prophet when he says your body shall not come to the grave of your fathers. You are going to meet with a violent death. Now the Judean prophet cannot be exonerated because a clear prohibition from God is never repealed by revelation from an angel. Remember second Samuel Seven, David said I I'm living in a beautiful home.

It's not right that the ark of God should dwell among curtains in such a transitory place and nothing very beautiful no beautiful appointments and arrangement. I'd like to build a house for God. Well what do you think Nathan said? What would any preacher say if a man says the Lord blessed me in a five million dollar five billion dollar deal? And I want to give 20 percent for the Lord's work here. Well after that preacher would come out of the hospital two weeks later after severe coronary. He'd say the Lord bless you. More power to your right arm. Nathan said go do all that's in your heart. Well that night when he got to looking over his sermon notes Nathan was told by the Lord. You didn't tell him the right thing. You go back and tell David that he's going to be the last person in the world that's going to build the temple.

But you're remembering chronicles he did prepare tremendously don't forget those chapters. But he did not do the actual work. And God even gave him the pattern we're told in Chronicles. According to the pattern that was shown him the pattern in the mount the Tabernacle for Moses the pattern for the Solomonic Temple given to David when Nathan's word was reversed it was God himself who did it. And then verses twenty three to 25. That poor prophet did meet with a strange accident God's judgment not an accident. The circumstances were contrary to nature. Notice the five features in these three verses that show it couldn't have been an accident. It was foretold verses 21 and 22. The lion didn't kill the donkey. Thirdly the lion

didn't eat the corpse. Fourth the lion did not harm the passersby in verse 25 and verse 29 the lion stayed in one place until the body was removed as though he was the M.C. master of ceremony.

No you can't get that even in a circus. And notice verse 24. The lion was standing beside the body though a prophet he was slain. Judgment often begins at the house of God. Now notice verse 26 now when the prophet who brought him back but from the way heard it he said it's the man of God who disobeyed. Listen who's giving theological instruction. Who disobeyed the command of the Lord? Therefore the Lord has given him to the lion which has torn him and killed him. According to the word of the Lord which he spoke to him. No bodily harm in this account no bodily harm befell the old prophet. Why not because he had not been the recipient of the original message from God. I would give him credit to believe that he was doubtless conscience stricken for his deed but that could not reverse the awful agony of what took place here.

It seems so out of joint that the faithful prophet should die for one offence and this lying prophet should live on without punishment and godless. Jeroboam should continue in power which he did notice verse 31 came about after you'd bury him that he spoke to his son saying when I die bury me in the grave in which the man of God is buried might lay my bones beside his bones. As I say 2 Kings twenty three shows that foresight was correct. Josiah did spare that Sepulcher the death of the prophet could have dulled the edge of his warning and confirmed Jeroboam all the more in his idolatrous ways. That's what could happen. They tell us that some railroads have a device. If an engineer is not quite alert and runs by a number of signals that are against him they have a device when so many lives are endangered that device automatically calls into play a contrivance that derails that offending train plows it into a ditch out of the way.

And so it will not harm another train. One train from Boston New York found itself in that very predicament. The engineer ran by signal set against him and that invention at once upset the engine. This is factual. Six of the seven cars that followed it. The engineer was badly scalded by escaping steam and his skull was fractured. The fireman was badly bruised but no one else was hurt. My dear friends there are no such machine or mechanical device for human life. But I want to say to you in all love and earnestness that when a man plunges headlong into forbidden areas in the spiritual realm when spiritual disaster threatens him God must automatically ditch such a one. Such was the purpose of God in the death of this Judean prophet. If God is not glorified in the service of his messengers he will be glorified in their punishment.

The Judean prophet. You say what is the message of the chapter still enigmatic still puzzles me. The Judean prophet should have had the change in message from God himself. In the 22nd chapter of Genesis the second verse God said to Abraham you take Isaac and offer him up on one of the mountains there and I will show you told you in Huron, not Huron but mount Mariah. And then in the twenty second verse when God wanted to reverse it. Notice what that verse says. And the angel of the Lord, that's the pre-incarnate Christ said don't you stretch your hand out to that child nor do him any harm. Now I know of course God knew it all the while but he's giving it an experimental demonstration and outworking. Now I know that you obey my voice and heed my command. My friends the New Testament the Holy Spirit's definite commentary on first King's thirteenth turn with me is Galatians one verse eight and nine the absolute priority of obedience Galatians one eight and nine.

But even though we you mean Apostle Paul yes even though we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached you let him be accursed as we've said before. So I say again now. What is he saying now? He's saying if any man is

preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which is received. Let him be accursed. Here it is. If we are morally near to the Lord we'll feel the only right and true position is to follow that which God told us at first. Let's heed. We have the clear word. Let's not keep everlastingly questioning God's leading. Did he say that? Did he actually tell me to do that? Let's find out once and for all and obey. Our father. How often we sing trust and obey. There is no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey. It's more than a song. It's biblical truth.

And what a sad picture we have here. In first kings 13. It's only explicable it's only understood on the basis that thy word means exactly what it says. Thy message is to be preached explicitly and implicitly line for line precept for precept. It may not suit some it may not measure up to their desires to their wishes expectations may we be true. May we be faithful in a day of such perfidy? A day of such a rampant falsehood in the relationship between men Lord may we are found true. We have the message of that blessed one who said I am the way the truth and the life no man comes unto the Father but by me. Thus we pray thee our study of thy truth the assimilation of it into our hearts the importation of it to others far and near bless our schools here bless particularly the seminary. Bless all of its administration the deans faculty bless student. Most recent addition to the student body may will be found faithful thou hast never tell us that we have to be world amazes with our wisdom and all the rest. May we be found faithful? We ask it with Thanksgiving in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ himself amen.

[End]