

1 KINGS 13:11-32 | PROPHET DECEIVES, LION KILLS

VERSE 11 –

The **old prophet** in Bethel has become a mystery, like the man of God in verses 1-10 who remains unnamed. We are left with many questions, but few answers. Was he a true prophet? If so, why was he in Bethel? Why did God choose the man of God from Judea instead of him? And why do his sons have knowledge of all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel? Were they at the dedication service? The lack of information is frustrating, and leaves us with many unresolved questions.

VERSE 12 –

At this point in the narrative, we are not told why the prophet wants to know what way the man of God went. But we can see that he appears to have not known what God was up to with this man. Is he jealous? Is he curious? Is he vengeful? Is he helpful? Once again, many questions and few answers.

VERSE 13 –

A point of useless trivia: This chapter is #2 in the King James Bible for the use of the word **ass**, Numbers 22 being #1. There appears to be a repetition of the words *saddle the ass* in verses 11-24, perhaps to build a sense of urgency and determination.

VERSES 15-17 –

We are once again faced with more than just the facts of the story. We must ask ourselves, why does the old prophet want the man of God to come home with him and eat bread? The man from Judah gives the same response as he had given to Jeroboam earlier, that by instruction from the Lord he cannot eat bread in Bethel.

VERSE 18 –

Verse 18 is the first clue that this “prophet” may not be genuine. It’s suspicious that an angel of the Lord is sent to deliver a message instead of the Lord Himself (compare v. 1). The text becomes even more blunt by telling us that the “prophet” lied to the man of God. While there are instances of lying prophets in the Bible, they are always exposed as false. It seems likely that the “old prophet” in 1 Kings 13 is a false prophet, given the evidence in verse 18 and the comparison with 2 Chronicles 11:16-17, which indicates that the true prophets left Israel when Jeroboam introduced his false doctrine.

VERSE 19 –

The man of God’s decision to go to the old prophet’s house for a meal proves to be fatal, and serves as a cautionary tale to use discernment when evaluating those who claim to speak on behalf of God. However, in reality, the man of God did not need discernment in this situation; he simply needed to obey the word of the Lord that had come to him (v. 1). No matter how persuasive a person may seem, if their message contradicts God’s word (which we have in the 66 books of the Bible), we should reject it without hesitation. To do otherwise is to reject God’s word for the sake of feelings or circumstances.

VERSES 20-22 –

In verses 20-22, we see that the message delivered to the old prophet is not brought by an angel of the Lord, but rather by **the word of the Lord** that came directly to the prophet. Unfortunately, the word is not a good one. It reveals that the man of God has **disobeyed** the Lord's instructions and as a result, will suffer a vicious death, as indicated by the use of the word **carcase** (which is simply the archaic spelling of "carcass").

VERSES 23-24 –

The man of God meets a tragic end, being killed by a lion on his way home as punishment for disobeying the word of the Lord. It is noteworthy that the lion does not attack the donkey or further harm the man's body. The only other incident of death by lion in the Bible is found in 2 Kings 17:25-26.

VERSES 25-26 –

Passersby quickly spread the news of the man of God's death, and the false prophet immediately recognizes what has happened.

It is unclear why the man of God suffered a bad end while the bad guys, including the false prophet, Jeroboam, and the nation, continue on. While the text does not explicitly state why this happened, it is possible that God was demonstrating a consistent theme seen throughout Scripture: when the Jews are outside of a relationship with God, He leaves them alone until they return, or a final reckoning comes. This can be seen, for example, in the book of Esther, where God is not explicitly seen. This theme can also be seen in the story of the Prodigal Son.

VERSES 27-32 –

For yet another turn of events, the false prophet seemingly repents of the part he played in the death of the man from Judah. He honors the man for speaking **against the altar in Bethel**, something he himself seemingly had not done.

1 KINGS 13:33-34 | NO FURTHER REPENTANCE

VERSE 33 –

The narrative now shifts back to Jeroboam, but unfortunately, he has not learned from the recent events in chapter 13. He continues to ignore the laws regarding the priesthood and persists in promoting his own religious practices.

Jeroboam chooses priests from **whosoever** wants to serve, which goes against the laws of Moses. Interestingly, however, in the New Testament, the office of bishop (1 Tim. 3:1) is open to any man who *desires* it and meets Pauline qualifications. The contrast between Jeroboam's actions in verse 33 and the requirements for a bishop in 1 Timothy 3 reminds us to continue to *think dispensationally*.

VERSE 34 –

It is specifically **this thing** which **became sin unto the house of Jeroboam** and brought about its future destruction. This makes one assume that Jeroboam still had a chance to repent and return, even with all he had done. Sadly, he did not, and his fate was sealed.