

Kings and Prophets 13-04-26b

We pick up our study now in 1st Kings chapter 13 verse 1 says 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. There are several wrong things as we saw at the verse 12. The altar is in the wrong town.

The man officiating at the altar is from the wrong tribe. The occasion is the wrong occasion. So, wrong person, wrong place, wrong time.

All in one verse. It's just you couldn't be wronger if you took wrong pills and hit yourself in the head with a wrong stick. He's just wrong, wrong, wrong.

So, the man of God went from Judah. Now this is kind of interesting because that's the other kingdom, right? This is like sending a guy from Virginia up to see Abraham Lincoln and saying, hey, this whole Civil War thing is not cool. So, he cried out against the altar.

Now this is one of the things that makes me smile about the Bible and about the way God communicates. You know the book of Jonah is Jonah going to Nineveh and talking to the Ninevites and saying get 40 days and Nineveh will be destroyed. It has nothing really to do with the Ninevites.

Jonah is a prophet to Israel. It doesn't say the Ninevites got saved. It doesn't say that they set up an altar and began to worship the God of Israel or they all came down and became the 14th tribe.

They're a stage prop. The message is to Israel. Jonah stands and talks to Nineveh and then gets upset about Nineveh and you get the broom, the worm and the whole thing, the gourd.

But the whole message is to Israel. Remember in Ezekiel and those woe songs that were sung to the various nations, Moab and Haman and Edom and all these other guys. God's not talking to those nations.

It's not like the people over there saying, oh, letter from God. Let's open it and read it and follow its contents. God stands and presents himself as speaking to somebody else when he's really talking to his own people.

Well, you have no more classic example of that anywhere in the Bible than right here because this guy traipses all the way from down in Judah up to Bethel. It's a pretty good hike. It's a traverse.

And when he gets there, he says, hello, altar, I've got a message for you. He cried out against the altar by the word of the Lord and said, oh, altar, oh, altar. Now, this, if you haven't figured it out already, is a huge rebuke to everybody that's standing there.

Jeroboam, first and foremost, if you're the king and a guy comes with a message, an important

nationally significant message, this would be like the ambassador of England coming over to the United States, going to the White House, walking into the Oval Office and speaking to the now missing bust of Winston Churchill and saying, oh, Churchill, Churchill, I've got a message to you about the future of the United States, and talking to the statue when the president's sitting right there at the desk. I mean, this is hugely insulting. Hello, altar.

I expect you're listening better than this clown standing next to you. This is the idea. So the guy goes up and, I mean, it's just the biggest slap in the face.

Jeroboam has puffed himself up. He is now prophet, priest, and king. He's standing at the altar as the anti-king, the anti-priest, the anti-God, in full view of all of the people, officiating at this altar of his own construction.

And so the genuine man of God comes up and says, well, hello there, altar. Let me talk to these rocks, because they've got more of an ability to hear, understand, and respond than anybody standing next to them. Oh, altar, altar, thus says the Lord, behold, a child Josiah by name shall be born to the house of David, and on you, pile of rocks, he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be burned on you.

And he gave a sign the same day, saying, this is the sign which the Lord has spoken. Now he's turning around and addressing the people. He's not saying, guess what, altar, you are going to split.

He says, the altar. So you can tell that he is now finished with his little mock address to the altar, and he's addressing the people. He says, this shall be a sign.

Remember in Isaiah 7.14, this shall be a sign unto you. Behold, a virgin will conceive. And when you go in your New King James Bible to Isaiah 7, and they've got child capitalized and all of this stuff, and it just throws you into the biblical future, it should not.

This will be a sign to you people standing around in the throne room right now. A virgin right now is going to conceive and bear a son. And before he knows his right hand from his left, before he finishes eating his curds and whey, or whatever it is, this confederation is going to dissolve and fall apart.

It was a time bound. This will be a prophecy. This will be a sign given to you by prophecy right now.

And it's a right now sign. A present sign of a future certainty. This is the sign which the Lord has spoken.

Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out. So it came to pass, when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, who cried out against the altar in Bethel, actually cried out to the altar, and just snubbed him, and embarrassed him, and repudiated and condemned everything that he was doing. Oddly enough, he got angry, and he

stretched out his hand from the altar.

He was about to sprinkle some more incense on and make some holy smoke, and it's a very graphic picture. His hand is already outstretched, and he swivels. He does kind of a left face, and his arm just swivels around.

His arm is already outstretched, and he swings it to point at the man of God. That's why it says he removed his hand from the altar, saying, Arrest him. Then his hand, which he stretched out toward him, the prophet, withered so that he could not pull it back to himself.

The picture that comes to my mind, and I'm sorry I can't help it, but if you've ever seen Indiana Jones, the first one, you remember those guys' faces that just shrivel up? Well, that's what I see his arm doing. He reaches around, he says, Arrest him, and his arm just turns to a mummy arm with no wrappings, just dries on the stick. It becomes jerky, and he can't do anything with it.

His arm has become a dead, desiccated appendage. He's walking around like this, like a guy on a cast with a little prop on it with a shoulder injury. He's like this.

Of course, if he didn't look foolish enough before, you can't have a king walking around with his arm just sticking out every which way. The altar, at the same time, if people are not gaping at the king's arm, the altar suddenly cracks in half, and the ashes, and of course there's live fire in there. He was burning incense on it at the time.

You know what happens when you spill a fire? Have you ever knocked over a barbecue? There's smoke, and sparks, and ashes, and coals, and unburnt stuff going everywhere. Jeroboam is standing right next to the thing, so he's kind of hot-footing out of the way of all of this burning stuff pouring out of the altar. It's a big altar.

This is a huge public celebration. There's perhaps thousands of people there, and he's up on this high place. Everybody can see him.

The thing splits open. All this smoke, fire, ash, coals come out. So he's dancing around with his hand sticking up in the air, trying not to get his feet burnt, and looking like a complete fool, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the Lord.

Notice, he's a man of God, and it's the word of the Lord. It doesn't say he's a man of the Lord, and it was the word of God. Why is that? He's a man of God consistently all the way through, and it's the word of the Lord consistently all the way through.

When you have a variation in terms, just like Kingdom of God, Kingdom of Heaven, it can be talking about the same thing, but there is an emphasis. Is God the Lord, and is the Lord God? Blessed is that nation whose God is the Lord. Remember that? In the Psalms? I've got a little cross-stitch of that that somebody gave me.

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. So why the differentiation? Man of God is a stock

title for a prophet. The prophet is the man of God.

The man of God is the prophet. You see this throughout the stories of Elijah and Elisha. You'll see people referring to them as the man of God, and they are, in fact, the prophets.

So this guy is a prophet, man of God, and of course God is El or Elohim, and then the Lord, of course, is the personal name. People would worship God, build altars to God, God would visit, God visits Abraham, God walks between the pieces, but His name, His personal name, His covenant name with Israel is I Am. God is the God of the universe.

He's the God of the angels. He's the God of the planet. He's the God of the nations.

He is the creator God, and a man of God invokes God's bigness and God's universality and God's ultimate sovereignty and omnipotence. The word of the Lord, why is it the word of the Lord? The word of the Lord in the Old Testament always comes to Israel because the Lord is a euphemism. When you find Lord in small caps like this, that's the tetragrammaton.

Sometimes you see Lord and it's L-O-R-D and it's not small caps. The way you know that the tetragrammaton is in the Hebrew text is when you see those small caps. So this is the word of Yahweh.

That's the covenant name. You know, one of the promises in Revelation to the overcomers is that there's a name, a special name. There's a name that God calls you and you alone.

It's your family name. It's the name between you and God. It signifies relationship.

So this is not a word for the nations. It's not a word for anybody but God's covenant people. It is a reminder that these people, even though they've split off and done all of these heinous things, they are still under covenant obligation to God.

Despite their depravity, despite their backsliddeness, despite their apostasy and their disobedience and their virtual rebellion here, remember Jeroboam, God has spoken to Jeroboam more than once. Why? He's a believer. He knows God's up there.

He's just violently rebellious like King Saul. King Saul is going to be resurrected and have a lot of stories to tell with great chagrin all through eternity. Yep.

Let me tell you about the dark side of disobedience. Here's my son Jonathan though. Jonathan never left me.

He wasn't a chip off the old block, thank God. But very interesting that this is the word of the Lord. Then, in verse 6, the king answered and said to the man of God, please entreat the favor of the Lord your God.

Not the Lord our God, not the Lord my God, the Lord your God. It's the word of the Lord, but you can see the distance that Jeroboam recognizes between himself and God. What Israelite

wouldn't say the Lord our God, except someone who had willfully walked the other way.

This is the kind of language that Pharaoh used to Moses. Entreat the Lord your God. This is what a stranger and a foreigner might use.

It just speaks of the distance that Jeroboam has put between himself and God. Entreat the favor of the Lord your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored to me. Now, obviously when you suffer a personal trauma like this, you get real selfish and real subjective.

But a great king, a great man would have stopped to think about the prophecy against the altar before he stretched out his hand to have the man arrested, sees him. Jeroboam knows that God is in heaven. He has had demonstrations.

God told him he would get the kingdom. God said, I am giving you the kingdom. And it just is an illustration of how contrary human nature can be.

When we willfully disregard, when we willfully forget, when we choose to ignore the word of God, we just become so blind and so abysmally stupid. And so now all he can think about is, well this isn't any good, look at my arm. Please get the Lord your God to fix this arm.

And amazingly, God does. And why would God do this? Why wouldn't God say, no, you're stuck with it. You just walk around with that thing and they can bury you in an L-shaped coffin for all I care.

Why does God heal him? When's the last time somebody had something real bad happen to their arm and then immediately after it was healed? Moses, stretch forth your hand. And it was leprous, it was diseased, it was living death. Put it in your bosom, pull it out and it's whole.

Diseased arm, restored arm, the presence and the power of God with you personally. That sign was to authenticate Moses and to give him confidence and authority in front of the people. So the king said to the man of God, come home with me.

After the man of God entreats the Lord, the king's hand was restored to him and became as before. Now this man of God has given two potent demonstrations that he is in fact a genuine, card-carrying, gold-plated man of God. He is absolutely conveying the word of the Lord.

He said the altar would split and it did. When somebody tried to harm him, that person was harmed instead. When he prays for healing, the man is healed.

That's really three demonstrations of his validity as a representative of the one true God. So Jeroboam says, come home with me. Now why would he say this? Is it just gratitude? Watch closely.

What is the motivation for inviting the man? He's a scary guy. You say the wrong thing, your arm turns to jerky. So why would Jeroboam want to embrace this guy and then fold him into his bosom and take him to his house? Get him there and he's a good luck charm.

This could rapidly turn into a Herod with John the Baptist kind of a situation. Keep this guy where I can keep an eye on him. Consult him.

He can be my oracle. He's obviously got some kind of potency here. Use him as a talisman, a charm, whatever.

Remember, Jeroboam is a political animal. If he can be seen with his arm around this guy departing to the king's house, well, look, God approves of me after all. He'll forget about the first part and just say, look, God restored my wounded arm.

We don't worry about how it got wounded. God is on my side. Look, he's approving my whole program here.

This is going to be a propaganda tool, is my guess. Jeroboam's thinking, you know, I've got to make nice with this guy because people have seen that he's legit and there's some question about my legitimacy, especially now since my altar fell apart and my arm withered. So come home with me and refresh yourself and I will give you a reward.

I will give you a reward. He doesn't say let me give you something to take back to the God of Israel. He doesn't have a Naaman type response of repentance and a desire to honor God.

He says, hey man, you're a lucky charm. Let me buy you off. Make sure you stay happy.

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 or drink water in this place, for it was so commanded me by the word of the Lord, the same word of the Lord that broke down that altar and predicted the coming of Josiah. You shall not eat bread nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came, nor return by the same. Why do people not return by the same way they came? They taught us this at Fort Bragg before I went overseas and started mingling with terrorists.

People can harm you if you do something predictable, right? Why did the wise men not return by the same way they came? Was God incapable of protecting them? No, but if you can take prudent action, God doesn't have to intervene miraculously to preserve you. He doesn't have to paralyze people all along your route. He says, look, you go by a different way, and if you're obedient, I don't have to do miracles for you.

And it's not the time for a signed miracle on his return trip. What is he going to be traveling through on the return trip? Pagan land, the northern tribes. It's only a perverse and crooked generation that's going to seek a sign.

They're not going to respond to a sign, so God's not going to give them a sign. God has already given the sign here, and that's the only sign they're going to get. And this guy's supposed to return by a different way so that God doesn't have to clutter up the area with more signs and more miracles.

He wants to focus attention on this altar, on its illegitimacy, on the fact that people who worship there are ultimately going to die and have their bones burned there. That's the message. Focus on the message.

Don't distract it. Don't clutter it up. Don't return by the same way.

And if the man had simply done that, this would be the end of the story. But no. An old prophet, verse 11, and the guy was obedient.

He told the king, no way. I'm not going to your house, not drinking your water, not eating your food, and he leaves. He went another way and did not return by the way he came to Bethel.

So everything's good, and that ought to be the end of the chapter. But 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. So a little crux interpretum here because sons in the first instance is singular in your Hebrew text.

And they say, well, is it corrupt? I think if it's not corrupt, then one son came and told him. But this guy spends the rest of the episode talking to his sons, plural, his banim, but this is just a single son. His son came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel.

I would guess the old prophet had several sons. One of them happened to go and watch the Jeroboam thing and happened to catch all of this, came back and told his old man what happened. And also told his 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. So even though he went a different way, the sons had an interest and followed him, a professional interest. You know, they're sons of the prophet.

Now, right before you go any further, does this not raise a question in your mind? There's an old prophet, old prophet, been around a long time, seasoned prophet, experienced prophet, gray headed, curly bearded prophet in Bethel. If you want to send a message to the king in Bethel and you've got a prophet in Bethel, why do you take a guy all the way from Judah and make him make the long trek up there? And he's got hazards along the way. By the way, if he came up the main drag, there's one main road that goes from Judah up to Bethel.

And if you take a different way back, you've got to take the high road and the low road and the bandits and robbers and lions. There's a reason why there's one main drag. That's the safe way.

All the other ways are more dangerous. So if he went up there by the main road, which he probably did, then he's got to take county roads on the way back. So these guys, when he says, God told me not to go by the same way.

Well, this son or sons of the prophet, they trail this guy and say, oh, you know what? He's taken

old hey dad's road over this way. And they know which way he's going. And they come back and they tell their father.

And the old prophet, who was not commissioned by God to deliver this message. Now, how would you feel if you're the old prophet and you're sitting there in grandeur and probably semi-retirement and you've had no word of the Lord in forever. And now a great big splashy word of the Lord and an altar splitting arm withering event happens right there in front of the king and is splashed all over the headlines.

And you say, well, why did this young upstart from Judah get the commission? And I didn't. So this guy's got a sort of a professional and I think a jealous motivation to try to figure out what's going on with this young prophet. I suspect he has fooled himself into thinking that he's still a viable prophet, but he's getting a wake-up call because God did not use him.

It doesn't say he's a wannabe prophet. It doesn't say he's a self-appointed prophet. It says he is an old prophet.

But notice, this is Nevi, prophet, not man of God. He's got the office, but he doesn't have the identity. The Bible is very to the point in the terminology that it uses.

This guy's an old prophet, but he's not an old man of God. The young guy is a man of God and ought to know better than what happens. So the old prophet said to them, which way did he go? Which way did he go? For his sons had seen which way the man of God went.

So he said to his sons, saddle the donkey for me, start the car for me. So they saddled the donkey for him and he rode and went after the man of God and found him sitting under an oak. The guy took a little siesta, didn't keep going, didn't have a sense of urgency.

He's like the hare. I'm well ahead in the race, survived that big test with the king. I'm doing well.

God's proud of me. I think I'll sit down and congratulate myself. So he's sitting under a tree.

He ought to be Hayako out of the area and he's not. Sitting under the tree. So the old prophet finds him and catches up with him.

And he said to him, are you the man of God who came from Judah? And the guy says, I am. I am. So he says to him, of course, he doesn't actually say am.

He just says, honey. He says, yo, that's Spanish for I. Then he said to him, come home with me and eat bread. Now, does this not sound suspiciously like something you just heard and successfully escaped? Come home with me and eat bread.

God specifically said, anybody that says come home with me and eat bread, don't do it. He's the man of God. He got the word of God from God.

Clear commission. He's obeyed it. And so far, he's been richly blessed, right? In the sense that

he hasn't been killed or otherwise harmed.

Even though he was in the hands of the king, God miraculously preserved him from the power of Jeroboam. And he has escaped unscathed and unharmed. And he's on his way home to Judah.

He said, I cannot return with you nor go in with you. Neither can I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. For God hath said, ye shall not eat it nor touch it, lest ye die.

Does that sound vaguely familiar? Eve quotes back the command of God right before she fails also, doesn't she? She knew the word of the Lord. God has said, stay away from the fruit or you'll die. 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.

Does this guy understand? Did he pay attention in Bible class and fully grasp the message of the word of the Lord? Yes, he did. He absolutely understands it. And he has successfully applied this word in one case.

Here is another slightly different permutation of the same test. However, like Eve in the garden, there's deceit involved. The old prophet says to him, I too am a prophet as you are.

He doesn't say, I too am a man of God. He says, I too am a prophet. 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. Well, of course he was because the old prophet, if he was any good, if God was, and listen, the young prophet from Judah, if he took any time to think, if he took time to meditate before he made this decision, if he took time to concentrate, if he took time to dig back and apply, what would he say? If this guy was getting a word from the Lord, why am I coming up all the way from Judah when you've got a perfectly functional prophet here? If there's a functional prophet in Bethel, why am I here? I am here because there is not a functional prophet in Bethel. This guy's not getting the word of the Lord or I would not be here.

He doesn't use what he knows. He doesn't deduce. Does he say, let me consult with the Lord? Can this guy get the word of the Lord direct? He has been getting direct revelation from God that has been proven and demonstrated true.

His source for the word of God has been demonstrated in his own life and his own experience today to be valid. If that word is valid and God blesses it and God confirms it, it's kind of like the old rule of hermeneutics. If the plain sense makes common sense, seek no other sense.

Don't listen to anything else. If that works, stick with it. He allows himself, is he tired? Of course he's tired.

That's why he parked under the tree. He hasn't had anything to eat or anything to drink. He's

on one of these 40 days in the for all of those days.

God says, don't eat and don't drink. It's like a marathon. You got to run and you get no squirt bottles along the way.

No Gatorade. I will be your strength. God says, because he's Bethel is not on the border.

If you look at a map, it's up a ways, no bread, no drink all the way in deliver the prophecy, get scared to death in the presence of the prophet, the prophet in the presence of the man of God in the presence of Jeroboam. It's, it's, you know, he, I'm sure it taxed his courage, but he does it. And then he's got to go all the way back.

No bread, no water. Well, he's real hungry and he's real thirsty. This is when Satan chose to attack the Lord.

Remember desires of the flesh fatigue is our enemy. It makes us susceptible makes us deceivable. So he went back with him, verse 19 and ate bread in his house and drank water.

Ah, that water is good and cold. And I feel so much better. Sure.

Nice to be in the company of a fellow prophet. What is the whole idea in the Northern kingdom? We've got pseudo everything. And it's based on fraternity.

Remember the, the, the, uh, the slogan of the French revolution, you know, fraternity and all the rest of it. We're, we're all in this together. Red green, uh, we're hail fellow well met and fellowship with, with a, uh, an alleged ostensible fellow prophet, fellow man of God fools him into abandoning the word of God.

He prioritizes refreshment and fellowship over obedience. He lets his guard down because the guy says, well, I'm, I'm a guy like you. We're in the same profession.

We, we've got some stuff in common. I'll take it. Yes.

God told me it's okay. Different source untested, unverified, unknown provenance, but it sounds good to me. So I'll buy it.

Just like this serpent in the garden, different source, unknown provenance, but it sounds good to me. So I'll buy it. And the fruit was good to look upon desirable.

And she stretched out her hand and took an eight. This guy stretched out his hand and takes and eats. When he just saw Jeroboam stretch out a hand that got withered.

He stretches out his hand at the table, takes and eats. Now it happened. And here's the surprise surprise coming.

Stand by. You will need your pencil or your pen as they sat at the table that the word of the Lord came to the prophet who had brought him back is not correct. Came to the prophet that had

been brought back.

The word of the Lord comes to the prophet from Judah, not the old prophet. The word of the Lord comes to the guy. This phraseology is identical to the end of verse 23.

The Hebrew is exactly the same. Look at the end of verse 23. Your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your father.

So it was after he'd eaten bread. And after he had drunk that he saddled the donkey for him, the prophet whom he had brought back. The old Bethel guy saddles the donkey for the prophet he had brought back.

That Hebrew is identical, identical to the Hebrew in our verse. The word of the Lord came to the prophet who he had brought back. Same phrase, exactly.

And he cried out to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, Thus says the Lord. Notice, he, God, that's capital H, God, evidently cried out to the man 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. But you came back, ate bread and drank water in the place which the Lord said to you, eat no bread and drink no water.

Your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers. 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. 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. And there men passed by and saw the corpse thrown on the road and the lion standing by the corpse.

They went and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt. What is the city where the old prophet dwells? Bethel. Now when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard it, same phrase again, 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. Notice, the word of the Lord which he, God, spoke to him. The old prophet heard God speaking to this other prophet.

That's how I take it. So he spoke to his son saying, Saddle the donkey for me. Start the car.

Once again. Now this is another donkey. Apparently it's a two donkey family because the first donkey was underneath the prophet from Judah, right? So saddle another donkey.

So he's going to go down and 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 the corpse of the man of God, laid it on the donkey and brought

it back.

He's riding one donkey and the corpse is on another. Old prophet on one donkey, young dead prophet on another donkey. Two donkeys making the trip.

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

This guy was in direct contact with God and I'm not. So the solution to this is bury my bones with his bones so that in the resurrection maybe God will sort of think of us both in the same context. He doesn't fall on his face and say, Lord, let me return and become a man of God as of old.

After I'm dead, I want to be thought of in the same place and under the grace. I want to be associated with this genuine man of God. Look at how his words came true.

Everything God says to him, God speaks directly to him. The word of the Lord comes to him and it always comes to pass and the guy is very impressed and he's just as sort of jealous of him at the end as he was at the beginning. It does not create a change in the old prophet just as the word of the Lord in the wither hand episode of withering and healing does not change the heart of Jeroboam.

This generation seeks a sign. No sign will be given it but the sign of Jonah. Why? Signs, however powerful, however immediate, however personal, do not change the heart.

A sign will confirm to a seeking heart that it has found the source of truth. It will not change a heart. Pharisees stood in the synagogue and saw Jesus heal a withered hand.

They didn't change their minds. They saw and heard about Lazarus being raised from the dead, saw Lazarus walking around. That didn't change their hearts.

They decided that they needed to kill Jesus and Lazarus. A wicked and perverse generation seeks a sign. This old prophet sees what he could have been and should have been and is not and all he can think about is well boys when I die be sure and bury me in the same cave.

I'm going to put him in there and I'll be in there and the association maybe will rub off. Why would he care where he's buried? It's his legacy. It's the memory.

People are going to come and visit and say wow there's a man of God in here and maybe they'll think it's him or something but it doesn't change his life. He's hoping it'll change something after he's dead but he makes no change of mind, change of heart, change of attitude. He doesn't go to God at all and that's why God never speaks to this guy.

In my opinion, the right way to read the Hebrew is all the way through. God speaks to the man

of God. The old prophet is on the sidelines watching.

Now there's a sequel to this story that we're going to look at next time. There is a revisiting of this in 2 Kings that we're going to look at and there's another harking back later on in scripture as well. So we're going to quit for tonight with this observation.

There are constant attempts to divert us and distract us from the pure, unadulterated Word of God and obedience thereunto. You and I know the Word of God. We know it.

We know it up, down, backward and forward. It has been delivered to us in a powerful form. It has been verified.

It has been authenticated. It has been confirmed in our lives, in our hearts over time. We know that it is true.

Don't be diverted. Don't allow it to be diluted. Don't allow it to be modified.

Don't allow it to be set aside. What do they say? Deprecated. I was trying to think of that several weeks ago and it came up in a software conversation today.

I was talking to a developer and I said, what is this stuff in here? Do we use this? He said, no. That was an early attempt to implement that feature, but it's been deprecated. It's been sidelined.

It is no longer in effect. It is a useless appendage. It needs to be gone.

We don't want that to happen to the Word of God. It doesn't matter the circumstance. You may be thirsty.

You may be tired. You may be hungry. You may have people telling you, look, there's an easy solution to this.

Just do this here. Just come in with me. It's okay.

God says it's okay. Don't buy it. Stick with what you have learned from experience, from trustworthy sources, and don't let it get skewed.

Don't let it get diluted. Don't let it get corrupted. Don't let it get modified.

Don't let it be superseded. Don't let it fall away out of mind. There are two kinds of people in this world, people who are impressionable and susceptible to the Word of God and those who aren't.

It doesn't matter what you do to their arm. It doesn't matter what you do to their altar. They're not going to change their mind.

It doesn't matter what you do in their presence. They're going to still be the old prophet trying

to buy a little fame, trying to get a little glory by association in death. This young prophet does everything right and then fails.

It kind of reminds you of Simon Peter. He gets so many things right, but at crunch points, he fails. We want to learn from these examples.

We want to stick. We want to persist. We want to prevail.

We want to endure until the end for deliverance. You have need of patience so that after you've suffered a while, you inherit. You have need of endurance to inherit.

You will have persecution ten days. Be faithful unto death. I will give you the crown of life.

He that overcomes, I will grant. Be an overcomer. Stick.

Stay. Prevail. Hold on.

Don't fade in the stretch. Don't get weary. And what is it that overcomes Eve? What is it that overcomes this guy? What is it that overcomes Peter? It is the flesh.

I'm hungry. I'm tired. I'm scared of harm.

I feel a great sense of lack. That's what hunger and thirst is. I feel a lack.

God has said I can make it, but I don't think I can. I'm on the last leg of my run, and I just don't think I can get to the finish line. And anybody that runs knows when you hit that wall, you just start concentrating on, well, just a couple of more steps.

I'm not going to think about the whole rest of the way. I'll just go to that post. Well, I know I can make it at least to that crack in the sidewalk.

See that tree shadow? That's my goal. And you break what's left into little small chunks and say, well, I'm not going to quit at least until I get to there. Then I'll revisit my decision.

Well, okay, I've made it this far. I can get a little further. And you can talk yourself to the whole end of the race, even when you've got nothing left in the tank, if you break it into smaller pieces.

Don't let the magnitude of the thing overwhelm us. This guy fades in the stretch. He's hungry.

He's thirsty. He's tired. He stops on the journey and sits under a tree.

To stop is to fail. Keep putting one foot in front of another. Keep being obedient and trust the word of God and don't accept any substitutes.

It's like Porsche. There is no substitute for the word of God. Well, there's a great lesson here for us, not only of obedience and faithfulness and endurance, but also of the sign value and the

sign power of God's plan and purpose.

God has a purpose in all of this. And what he allows is as significant as what he prevents. You notice God proclaims against the altar and splits the altar to show it's invalid, but he doesn't wipe out the people.

He doesn't pull an Elijah and slay everybody that's there. He communicates the truth. He demonstrates the truth.

And then he leaves the decision up to the king and to the people. And that's what God so often does. And we think about that in our own case.

And in the case of the people around us, we have to recognize that God grants people freedom to choose. We can communicate the truth and love, and then we stand back and let people make their own decisions. That's what God does in many, many cases.

When he judges and eliminates people, it's typically as a sign and as a retribution in rare cases for specific offenses. But in most cases, God lets people live out their lives to drop in the wilderness over 40 years. He doesn't wipe them all out in one go and say, all right, Caleb and Joshua, let's march you into the land now.

We can save 39 and a half years here. No, he lets people live and live out the consequences of their decisions. He doesn't wipe out people in the north.

He doesn't even wipe out Jeroboam. He is going to wipe out the man to whom much was given. Who dies in this whole story? The old prophet is a reprobate.

The king is a heinous reprobate. But there's only one guy who dies in the story, and he's the guy that has direct contact with God. The man of God from Judah, the best guy, the best character.

This is the last guy a movie would kill off. He'd be the hero, right? He's the one guy that dies. And these two signposts, be thinking between now and next week.

Donkey and lion, lion and donkey, lion and donkey, donkey and lion. And we'll compare notes next week, but we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for how powerfully it convicts us, exhorts us, encourages us to live the life to which we have been called, to be faithful to the word that you have delivered to us so eloquently and so beautifully in the pages of your word, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. We pray that these things will be meaningful, that they will be constantly on our minds and in our hearts in the days ahead. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.