

The Powerful Word of the Lord

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[0 : 00] So we're going to turn to our Bible reading. And we're continuing our time in 1 Kings with Phil Copeland, another one of our ministers.

And he's been leading us through this book and bringing its message to bear on us and our church. And this morning, we're going to be reading together 1 Kings chapter 13, the whole thing.

1 Kings chapter 13. So do turn that up and follow along as we read. And behold, a man of God came out of Judah by the word of the Lord to Bethel.

Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make offerings. And the man cried against the altar by the word of the Lord and said, O altar, altar.

Thus says the Lord. Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name. And he shall sacrifice on you the priests of the high places who make offerings on you.

[1 : 17] And human bones shall be burned on you. And he gave a sign the same day saying, this is the sign that the Lord has spoken.

Behold, the altar shall be torn down and the ashes that are on it shall be poured out. And when the king heard the saying of the man of God, which he cried against the altar at Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his hand from the altar saying, seize him.

And his hand, which he stretched out against him, dried up so that he could not drop back to himself. The altar also was torn down and the ashes poured out from the altar according to the sign that the man of God had given by the word of the Lord.

And the king said to the man of God, entreat now the favor of the Lord your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored to me. And the man of God entreated the Lord and the king's hand was restored to him and became as it was before.

And the king said to the man of God, come home with me and refresh yourself and I'll give you a reward. And the man of God said to the king, if you give me half your house, I will not go in with you and I will not eat bread or drink water in this place.

[2 : 43] For so it was commanded me by the word of the Lord saying, you shall neither eat bread nor drink water nor return by the way that you came.

So he went another way and did not return by the way that he came to Bethel. Now, an old prophet lived in Bethel and his sons came and told him all that the man of God had done that day in Bethel.

They also told their father the words that he had spoken to the king. And their father said to them, which way did he go? And his sons showed him the way that the man of God who came from Judah had gone.

And he said to his sons, saddle the donkey for me. So they saddled the donkey for him and he mounted it. And he went after the man of God and found him sitting under an oak.

And he said to him, are you the man of God who came from Judah? And he said, I am. Then he said to him, come home with me and eat bread. And he said, I may not return with you or go in with you.

[3 : 53] Neither will I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place. For it was said to me by the word of the Lord, you shall neither eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by the way that you came.

And he said to him, I also am a prophet as you are. And an angel spoke to me by the word of the Lord saying, bring him back with you into your house that he may eat bread and drink water.

But he lied to him. So he went back with him and ate bread in his house and drank water. And as he sat at the table, the word of the Lord came to the prophet who had brought him back.

And he cried to the man of God who came from Judah. Thus says the Lord, because you have disobeyed the word of the Lord and have not kept the command that the Lord your God commanded you, but have come back and have eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which he said to you, eat no bread and drink no water.

Your body shall not come to the tomb of your fathers. And after he had eaten bread and drunk, he saddled the donkey for the prophet whom he had brought back. And as he went away, a lion met him on the road and killed him.

[5 : 10] And his body was thrown in the road and the donkey stood beside it. The lion also stood beside the body. And behold, men passed by and saw the body thrown in the road and the lion standing by the body.

And they came and told it in the city where the old prophet lived. And when the prophets had brought him back from the way, he heard of it. He said, it is a man of God who disobeyed the word of the Lord.

Therefore, the Lord has given him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word that the Lord spoke to him. And he said to his sons, saddle the donkey for me.

And they saddled it. And he went and found his body thrown in the road and the donkey and the lion standing beside the body. The lion had not eaten the body or torn the donkey.

And the prophet took up the body of the man of God and laid it on the donkey and brought it back to the city to mourn, to bury him. And he laid the body in his own grave.

[6 : 15] And they mourned over him, saying, alas, my brother. And after he had buried him, he said to his sons, when I die, bury me in the grave which the man of God has buried.

Lay my boons beside his boons. For the saying that he called out by the word of the Lord against the altar in Bethel and against all the houses of the high places that are in the cities of Samaria shall surely come to pass.

After this thing, Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but made priests for the high places again from among all the people.

Any who would, he ordained to be priests of the high places. And this thing became sin to the house of Jeroboam so as to cut it off and to destroy it from the face of the earth.

Well, amen. This is God's word. And surely his word is our guide for everything. Well, good morning.

[7 : 29] I'm pleased to have your Bibles open to 1 Kings 13. This section of the book of Kings could really well be entitled, Dismal Kings in the Divided Kingdom.

Remember the golden days when the kingdom was united under Solomon are long gone. And we are now at a point where the kingdom is split in two, divided, and it's ruled by dismal kings, making disastrous decisions.

And remember that the kingdom is this way, not by chance, but because of God's sovereignty, because of what we read back in chapter 11. Solomon, in his senior years, at the end of his life, turned away from the Lord in his heart to follow the false gods of his many pagan women.

And in response, the word of the Lord came to him and said that there would be just and dire consequences for his unbelief. The worst of these consequences coming after his death upon his household, the line of David.

And in chapter 12, the Lord sovereignly brings about everything that he has promised. Solomon dies. His son Jeroboam comes to take his place. And he makes some seriously stupid decisions that sees the kingdom torn in two.

[9 : 06] Remember, in the south down here, you've got Judah, the nation of Judah. And that's ruled over by Jeroboam. But in the north was these ten dissident tribes under the title, the kingdom of Israel, or all Israel, led by Jeroboam.

And what a king he was. What a man he is. As we saw last Sunday morning, his reign gets off to an even worse start than Rehoboam. And he showed himself to be a true unbeliever in his heart.

A man who hates God and hates his promises. And that's what he did. He rejected the promises that God gave him of security. Because that would mean having to walk by the obedience of faith and trust in the Lord.

And Jeroboam, Rehoboam, sorry, I'm getting mixed up. Jeroboam refuses to do that. He will not do that. And as a result, he tries desperately to secure his own kingdom with his own craftiness.

And he does that by creating his own northern-based religion up north. He does this, remember, to stop people traveling down south to Judah to worship in the temple, the place where God had actually put his name to be worshipped.

[10 : 24] Jeroboam worries that when his people do that, what they'll do is they'll go back, and in their hearts they'll reject him and turn to Judah. They will turn to Rehoboam and surrender themselves to him instead.

And so that's why he sets up this new northern religion. And it looked and sounded like the real deal in many ways. He tried to back it up with scripture.

Actually, it was scripture that he twisted. But it was scripture sounding. It also looked very similar to what was in the south. It had temples. It had altars.

It had priests. It looked the real deal. But really, it was deadly deceptive. It was deeply sinful. And Jeroboam was actually leading his people into grotesque, grotesque lawlessness and idolatry.

But do you know what? It worked. Remember? It worked. The people of Israel in the north, they were absolutely captivated by everything Jeroboam has made.

[11 : 27] His two golden bull calves, the temples in the high places, the new priesthood, the new festival. They embraced it all. They embraced it all and rejected God's true religion, which was established in the south.

And at the end of chapter 12, at the end of the chapter there, in verse 33, the scene is Jeroboam and all Israel rejoicing.

And they're walking up towards the high place, the temple in Bethel to offer sacrifices and worship. And as they do that, as they enter in all their pomp and all their pride, you're asking this question as the reader in your mind.

What does the Lord make of all of this? How will the Lord respond to all of this? And we don't have to wait for a very long time to find out because chapter 13 tells us immediately.

Let me just say two things by way of introduction before we get into the passage, which we will work through. Firstly, I want you to please notice the structure. Now, I'm not trying to be funny here.

[12 : 35] Please, seriously, I'm not trying to be funny here. I know I say this a lot, but it's because this is in the Bible a lot. Notice the passage is structured like a sandwich. There's two bits of bread, and in the middle, there's a center section.

I highlight that because that helps us really to interpret and understand the passage well. The bits of bread are found in 1 to 6. Verse 1 to 6, that's the first bit of bread.

And the final bit of bread is verse 33 to 34. These two sections are all about the word of the Lord and King Jeroboam. The word of the Lord and King Jeroboam.

And in the center of the passage, center of the sandwich, from verse 7 to 32, we've got what I call the true, true tale of two prophets.

The true tale of two prophets. Now, the central section of the true tale of two prophets, it has baffled many a reader over the years. Many wonder why this is here in the passage.

[13 : 34] Why put this in here? Well, I take it that this is a real-life event that actually happened, but also it is an active parable. It is a historical event recorded for all of God's people to learn from, and it's been specifically put here to teach us something about Jeroboam and the word of God.

Yes? Which is why it's sandwiched in between these two bits about Jeroboam and the word of God. Remember, the author hasn't carefully splurged this down in some sort of a random order.

However, this is carefully and meticulously written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. So just remember that when we come to it.

This is a passage that's related together. It's not random. The second observation about this whole chapter, the second introductory comment, is that there are three motifs, three things that pop up again and again and again.

They run through the chapter. Let me just list them. The first is the motif of the word of God, or the command of the Lord, or the mouth of the Lord.

[14 : 47] That is the main motif. It's all over this passage. It dominates it. The second is the motif of the way. The way. It pops up in verse 9, twice in verse 12, verse 17, verse 26, verse 33.

In this chapter, friends, the way that you choose to go is serious business. The way you choose to go is actually a matter of life and death.

The third is the motif of turning. Of turning. And this idea pops up again and again. It pops up as turning or returning or drawing back or being restored or being brought back.

It pops up in verse 4, twice in verse 6, verse 9, verse 10, verse 15, verse 17, verse 18, verse 19, verse 20, verse 23, verse 26, and verse 33.

I think it's a major theme of the chapter, yes? So look out for these three motifs as we go through. Well, here's the first scene. I'm going to look at this under three scenes, really the sections of our sandwich.

[15 : 57] Verses 1 to 6, the first scene. The king's religious, sorry, the king's rebellious religion is condemned. The king's rebellious religion is condemned.

So as I've said at the end of chapter 12, Jeroboam and all Israel, they've gathered up in Bethel, in the high place up there at the temple, to make offerings on the altar to their new calf god.

one of the new calf gods that Jeroboam made. And you can just picture the scene. The king is about to make his offering with all of his religious pomp.

The service is all set up. It's going to run smoothly. But there is a rude interruption. For like that, the word of God smashes into the scene and confronts the king.

Please look at verse 1. And behold, a man of God came out of Judah by the word of the Lord to Bethel. Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make offerings.

[17 : 00] And the man cried against the altar by the word of the Lord. So the voice who interrupted the king was that of the man of God from Judah. And he has been sent by the word of the Lord to then proclaim the word of the Lord.

And his message, notice, this is aimed at Jeroboam's altar. And I take it, friends, that that is shorthand for Jeroboam's entire religion. It's not just the altar that's being aimed at here, but it's all of Jeroboam's religion.

It is condemned. In verse 2, he says, altar, altar, thus says the Lord, your days are numbered. One day there will be soon born a king in the house of David, a new son.

He will go by the name of Josiah. And this future king of Judah, he will defile you, O altar. This new Davidic king, he will sacrifice your pagan priests upon you.

He will take all the priesthood and kill them on this altar. And also human bones will be dug up and burned on you too. And verse 3, in order to give you assurance that this will come about, altar of Jeroboam, I'm going to give you a sign now here today in the presence.

[18 : 18] In the present. And that is, that the altar will be torn down and ashes will pour out of it. Now just notice that word torn in verse 3.

That would have been very familiar to Jeroboam because it was what the prophet Ahijah spoke to Jeroboam back in chapter 11. Do you remember? when the Lord had promised Jeroboam the majority of the kingdom will be torn, same word, away from Solomon and given to you.

That word of judgment is now directed at Jeroboam and his altar. And in verse 4, Jeroboam, how does he respond?

Oh, he's livid. He is furious. He's furious. He's furious with the man of God for preaching the truth to him. Furious with him for preaching the word of the Lord.

In fact, Jeroboam hates the man of God so much for preaching this word of judgment against him and his religion. He wants to silence him by force. And so the king does this.

[19 : 20] He points. I'm not pointing at anyone here. I'll point over there. Just so no one thinks I'm pointing at them. I'll point at the camera. No, I won't point at the camera. I'll point up there. He points. He points at the man of God and he says, seize him.

He wants his troops to come and get him. And immediately, the outstretched arm of the king starts to shrivel up and dry up and it's paralyzed. He cannot move it.

It's as good as dead. It's as though the Lord is whispering in the king's ear, keep this up if you like, Jeroboam, but just think, how many limbs do you want to keep?

Remember who is boss here. And verse 5, as this thing happened with the king's arm, at the exact same time, right in front of the king, his altar is torn down.

Crack! And all the ashes come pouring out. It's exactly as the word of the Lord said it would. And do you notice, just notice this in verse 6.

[20 : 23] In response to all of this, notice how quickly the king abandons his new gods. He utterly abandons his bull calves in this moment and in his desperation he asks for restoration.

Please look at verse 6. And the king said to the man of God, O, entreat now the favor of the Lord your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored to me. And the man of God entreated the Lord and the king's hand was restored to him and became as it was before.

Friends, let's just be clear on this. What the Lord is doing here, do you know what he's doing? Throughout this whole scene he is showing Jeroboam great, great patience and mercy.

Do you know that? You might think, oh that just sounds like mayhem to me but actually no. It is great, great mercy. In doing what he does to the altar and to the king's arm, the Lord is declaring the truth in order to try and save them, to try and turn them from their own deluded lies and their spiritual blindness and the deadly man-made religion that they've allowed themselves to be ensnared by.

The Lord is declaring to Jeroboam and to all Israel that he alone is the true and living God and that carrying on in their current religious set up it is totally stupid.

[21 : 49] It's madness because what they're trusting in cannot save them or deliver them. And the Lord is also showing the king and his people that what was promised in verse 2 it really will come to pass if they refuse to turn from their evil ways and come back to the Lord for restoration.

If they turn from their idols I take it this has also been declared in this little scene. If they turn from their idols if Jeroboam turns right now and leads all of the people in a massive destruction team to go and destroy all of Jeroboam's cult that he has produced and made and if they look to the Lord alone as God and saviour then I take it they would be restored just as quickly as the king's arm was restored there.

But of course as I say the opposite is also true. If they carry on in their hearts to harden themselves to the word of the Lord if they refuse to respond to his revelation then verse 2 will come upon them.

They will be brought low the house of David will be lifted up and King Josiah will bring reformation to Bethel destroying all that they have put their trust in and all that they have made.

In other words friends in these verses the Lord is being disturbing unmerciful to his wayward people. And don't we find that the Lord operates in exactly the same way today in our lives as the people of God when we gather together like this week by week when we come to sit under his word to listen to it to take it seriously don't we find that so often his word does disturb us his word does cut us to the heart convict us mercifully exposing the evil in our lives the things in our lives that should not be so that we might turn from them by the power of his Holy Spirit within us.

[23 : 53] That's what you should expect to find as you come to church regularly on a Sunday yes come and be disturbed mercifully disturbed again and again and again listen to Ralph Davis on this point he says this the Lord hasn't changed and today he does not hesitate to come barging after his people right into the middle of their idolatries he'll throw down roadblocks in your path and sometimes send reasonable obnoxious servants to you as well but it's good news that he'll do most anything to pry you loose from your golden calves his mercy makes waves before his judgment arrives isn't that a wonderful phrase the Lord's mercy makes waves of warning before his judgment arrives well having been confronted by the word of the Lord we're left wondering will Jeroboam be wise will he take the Lord's warning seriously will he tremble before the Lord's word and repent well at first glance in verse 6 that we looked at just a moment ago it might seem like he does for as I said for a split second when he's hit with a painful reality he forgets about all of his man-made golden calf business and he turns to the man of God to intercede for him but friends just look at what he actually says in verse 6 look at this detail in verse 6 notice not the Lord my God not the Lord our God but the Lord your God he really gives away what's going on in his heart in other words verse 6 is not genuine heart repentance this is the voice of a man who simply wants to be spared from the current embarrassment and difficulty that the Lord has brought on his life he is still deep down not interested in submitting to the Lord as his God it's the Lord your God and what Jeroboam says in verse 7 seems to confirm this let's look at verse 7 and the king said to the man of God come with me and refresh yourself and I will give you a reward

I think Jeroboam is back to his sneaky and deviant ways here I take it that Jeroboam what he's doing is trying to sort things out here through his own cunning he's heard the warning of judgment he's seen the signs doesn't want to repent but he thinks do you know what I just think I can sort this out perhaps I can flatter this prophet and then we can talk you know leave all this talk of judgment in the past and so he invites the man of God back to his house to try and win favor with him and to try and bribe him I take it that's what he's saying there in verse 7 as a reward and just listen to how John Woodhouse puts it John Woodhouse is a fantastic Bible teacher from Australia he says this what was King Jeroboam proposing to the man of God answer mutual tolerance mutual tolerance if the man of God from Judah would honor the house of Jeroboam with his presence then Jeroboam would honor the man of God from Judah with a gift and then Jerusalem would respect and accept

Bethel and vice versa in other words he thought light could fellowship with darkness obedience with disobedience truth with lies there was no sign of actual repentance from Jeroboam he simply wanted the compromise of agreeing to differ let's agree to differ he wanted man-made religion and the word of the Lord to live happily together in the nation friends do you not see and hear this sort of rubbish today being spouted in the professing church in the west that those who hold to the word of the Lord those who are properly evangelical and love the Lord and his word they can happily coexist in churches alongside those who profess to be Christians and yet they've got no time for the word of the Lord if you've been following all of the ghastly business and praying for true evangelicals in the church of

England over the past month and if you've been listening out to the news reports you will have heard this sort of drivel being spouted by many who have voted in that church to bless gay or so-called gay marriage people who say you know it's fine that those who hold to such a view that gay marriage should be blessed they can happily coexist in the church with those who have just more more traditional views it's a broad church that is the same mutual tolerance that wicked Jeroboam sought here and it is absolute lies it is absolute drivel light cannot fellowship with darkness so Jeroboam having been confronted by the word of the lord still refuses to repent and he carries on trying to secure his throne through his own deviant schemes will anything get through to his heart will anything pierce through his pride well perhaps when he hears about what happens next to the man of god from judah perhaps this will move him to repent and that brings us to our second point this morning verse 7 to 32 we see a tale of two prophets and this is the middle bit in our sandwich so in verse 7

Jeroboam gives his sneaky invitation to the man of god to come back come back and i'll give you a gift let's sort this out let's try and work this out and in verse 8 the man of god is having none of it he says no chance Jeroboam even if you were to give me half of your house i will not go with you and i will not eat and drink in your house why because i was commanded by the word of the lord the word of the lord was clear he commanded me you shall neither eat bread nor drink water nor notice return by the way that you came the man of god has been commanded not to hang around in the northern kingdom once he's finished preaching he's to go right out the door the fire escape of the nation and get out of there and notice the word of the lord commanded him to go back a specific way there is a way that the lord has said he must go on and what is the lord's way well the answer is he's to take a different route back the way down from the one he took coming up to bethel that is the lord's way so in verse 10 the man of god heads off walking by the obedience of the faith he follows the lord's word and is careful not to return by the way that he came to bethel and in verse 11 we are introduced to a different prophet an old prophet a prophet from the north who lives in bethel he's at home and his sons arrive at their house and they tell their old man about all that took place earlier on in the day oh dad you'll never believe what happened we were all at this house in bethel and a man of god came and they fill him in on everything that happened and in verse 12 the old prophet asks his sons which way did this man of judah go and his sons show him the way that he took and in verse 13 they saddle a donkey for their dad at his request and the old prophet sets out and he catches up with the man of god from judah sitting under an oak tree in verse 14 and verse 15 once the old prophet confirms that the man of god is the same one who was involved in all the business at the start of the chapter the old prophet invites the man of god from judah to eat in his house and again verse 16 the man of god is having none of it verse 16 he replies in almost identical way to his earlier reply when the king invited him verse 16 i may not return with you or go in with you neither will i eat bread nor drink water with you in this place for it was said to me by the word of the lord you shall neither eat bread nor drink water there nor return by the way that you came but in verse 18 for whatever reason we are not told why we're just told that it happened this old prophet of the north turns to him and says well do you know what actually i'm just like you i too am a prophet i'm from the lord and actually an angel of the lord brought the word of the lord to me and gave me fresh revelation and the lord says to you now do you know what now it's okay doesn't matter what i've said before now you can come back to my house that is what you're to do and in fact that's what i'm to do i am to turn you back i am to turn you away from judah and i am to turn you to go the way to bethel and you're to come and eat and drink with me never mind what the lord has said i'm telling you something different now and it's from him and the author wants us to be absolutely clear end of verse 18 this old prophet was lying

[33 : 53] this is a lie and he deceives the man of god from judah and he turns the man of god away from going the lord's way back to judah and turns him back to bethel to eat and drink to disregard what the lord had said and they go they go verse 20 as they're sitting in this old prophet's house eating and drinking again the word of the lord breaks into the scene just like it did back at the start of the chapter in verse 2 except this time notice the word of the lord comes through the deceptive prophet the old prophet of the north from bethel and the word of god the lord announces judgment upon the man of god from judah look at the end of verse 22 the word of the lord said to the man of god from judah your body shall not come to the tomb of your fathers in other words the lord promises that the man of god will not enjoy a peaceful death in his hometown by agreeing to lunch with his old prophet by falling for his deception and listening to his lies he had rebelled against the mouth of the lord doesn't matter that he was deceived he is responsible for what has happened and once again everything happens just as the word of the lord promised verse 24 after the meal the man of god sets out on a loaned donkey and suddenly a lion attacks him and kills him and his body falls down and is left right in the middle of the road this carcass is lying there and all of a sudden the lion has lost his appetite for both the carcass in the road and the donkey and what happens is the carcass is in the middle of the road of the dead man from judah and the lion is at this side sitting still and the donkey is at that side sitting totally still in station and in verse 25 some men pass along the road and they see this death scene and the donkey and the lion and they take the news into the city and word gets round and round and round and round until eventually the old prophet hears about it and just listen to his verdict upon the news in verse 26 listen to what he says it is the man of god the dead body in the road it is the man of god who disobeyed the word of the lord therefore the lord has given him to the lion which has torn him notice same word torn him and killed him according to the word that the lord spoke to him and in verse 28 to 30 the old prophet goes fetches the body of the man of god and he buries him away from the man of god's hometown just as the word of the lord said it would he is buried away from the land of his fathers and the old prophet he mourns he seems to be utterly broken by the death of this man that was brought about by his lies and in verse 31 he says to his sons when i die make sure my bones are buried beside this man because he really did speak the truth verse 32 what he said against the altar and the high places the warning of coming judgment on the whole nation it must all be true what the lord has spoken through the man of god here it is unstoppable judgment is coming it will come to pass but friends what are we to make of this scene what is this scene all about well this

is a scene that makes us want to ask loads and loads of questions if you're an alert reader if you have a mind that's alert this morning you will have all sorts of little questions popping up in your mind why did the old prophet pursue the man of god why did he lie to the man of god why did the man of god follow the old prophet's lie without even questioning his claim and we could go on and on and on and on and friends I could try and answer such questions and so could the rest of you but let me just say we would be only speculating because the author of kings under the power of the holy spirit chooses not to tell us such details because obviously such things are not important to the point he's trying to teach us what he's given us here are the main things that we are to focus on and I take it what he's revealed in this passage is actually a plain message here it is he wants us to see that the word of the lord is not to be messed with it is powerful and independent and the word of the lord has promised things it will come to pass even if it's spoken by a faithful or unfaithful servant doesn't matter who brings the message do not be deceived all those who reject the word of the lord all those who turn away from the lord and follow deceptive schemes deceptive man-made religions and lies they will not escape god's judgment in the end friends this real life event it is meant to be a shocking parable given to mercifully disturb all of god's people just think about how it should have disturbed israel back then the northern kingdom this should have rocked them to the core because it was yet further evidence that their judgment on their rebellious man-made religion was certain and sure and that they should repent immediately but will they this active parable think about this should also have deeply disturbed judah in the south how so well it would have been a powerful warning to them to make sure that they don't follow the ways of a religion in the north i think that's what the passage is saying to judah back then judah make sure you're not deceived by what was going on in bethel in the north don't be like the man of god from judah take heed don't let your northern rebellious brothers turn you away from the lord to instead walk in their evil ways to walk in the wicked ways of jeroboam and do you know tragically that is precisely what happens to the southern nation of judah they end up turning away from the lord as well and who do they follow they follow the lies of the north yes just like this little prophet in this story this man of god from judah he is deceived by a northern prophet and that happens later on a much bigger scale with both nations listen to second king 17 listen to this judah also did not keep the commandments of the lord their god but walked in the customs that israel the northern kingdom had introduced friends what we get here in this active parable it is a grim foreshadowing of the rest of the history that we'll read about in the book of the kings so this active parable was written to challenge israel and judah but i take

it this active parable was mainly written to actually challenge jeroboam this was another merciful severe but merciful sign for the king of his need to repent to take verse 2 seriously but does this shocking parable get through to his heart again no and that brings us to our very final scene this morning and very very briefly verse 33 to 34 we see the king's hard heart is condemned the king's hard heart is condemned please look at verse 33 after this thing that is after this horrible incident that took place after this active parable with this clear warning after that took place jeroboam did not notice did not turn he did not repent he did not turn away from his man-made religion and his evil way jeroboam has become as stiff necked as the golden bull calf idols that he has made and worshipped that's the thing throughout all the bible you will become like the thing that you worship you will become like the thing that you worship if you worship a dead idol you will become like the dead idol even after the incident with the two prophets there was further evidence that the lord's word was sure and certain and that judgment was coming he refuses to repent in fact all that he does in response to the word of the lord is get back up and running with his wicked idolatrous worship in the high places we know from elsewhere in the bible he went back and he immediately built that altar up again that was torn in two he got it all up and running again he ignored everything the lord had said he appointed his own priests again as we heard back in chapter 12 he carries on doing that again in defiance of the word of the lord priests were only to come from the tribe of levi from the sons of aaron and he just defies that and carries on with his counterfeit priesthood in defiance of god's law and in fact i take it from the text we're supposed to see that his sinfulness has reached new depths and in hardening his heart what he's done is he has confirmed signed sealed and delivered his end look at verse 34 this thing became sin to the house of jeroboam so as to cut it off and destroy it from the face of the earth friends so it will be also for everyone for everyone who rejects the word of the lord today and in every age the lord my friends has set a date when he will judge the whole of history he will judge everyone he will judge the living and the dead and he's proven that he's going to do this by raising a man from the dead the lord jesus christ the son of god he is the appointed judge friends we will meet him one day whether we want to or not we will stand before the living word of god but in his great kindness in his great mercy god has delayed that final day of reckoning so that the nations might hear the gracious and merciful disturbing warning call of the gospel so that all people might heed its warning and repent turn away from sin

and from idolatry to worship the true god and find in him great restoration and hope and real security forever and ever friends on that final day on the day of judgment all those who've walked in the ways of jeroboam who've continuously shunned the word of god they will be wiped from the face of the earth and they will face destruction that will go on forever so friends first kings 13 pleads with us to heed its merciful warnings to turn to the lord's way and friends all those who do that as i say they will be restored to a loving relationship with the lord as quick as jeroboam's arm was restored it was restored in an instant so it will be for all those who come to the lord through jesus christ his son and friends if you are already a christian then let's ensure that we all keep turning to the lord every day and let's learn from the way that the man of god was deceived in this passage for friends as i said earlier there are many voices today especially within the professing church who speak words that sound christian look christian maybe use evangelical and biblical terms and yet truly deep down they are deeply deceptive and if you follow them and accept them you will be taken away from jesus do you know i wonder if the apostle paul had this passage first kings 13 in mind when he wrote galatians chapter one listen to what he says in galatians one to the new testament church if an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the ones we apostles preach to you let him be accursed as a church in these last days we must not be naive we must not think that being a christian is all about being nice that offer of that prophet the deceptive prophet on the road to the man of god it was very nice come and i'll feed you come to my house oh it's fine i'm a prophet the word of the lord said it's fine come on we must not be deceived we must be discerning and we must guard ourselves with the sure and certain word that the lord has already clearly said the lord will not contradict himself by bringing fresh words that contradict what he said in here as i close let me just say this i always remember in cornhill one of bob file's many great moments in cornhill he would regularly make this one point he would say if anyone comes to you claiming to have a word from the lord today look at them and say oh good for you so have i here it is here the word of the lord or as one writer puts it we are to cling only to the sure and written word of the prophets and the apostles in other words the scriptures first kings 13 teaches us that the given word of god is totally adequate for his servants and that it is not safe to receive anything beyond it or beside it so friends let's keep as a church loving what god has given us here in his word and let's guard one another with it i said it last sunday i'll say it again guarding the church is not rocket science guarding our hearts is not rocket science it is being a people who love and are mastered by the bible it's teaching we don't do that as well we do that as individuals but fundamentally we do it together accountable to one another in this family

of love by prayer and with the help of the lord so let's keep doing what we're doing let's not be deceived well let's bow our heads and we'll pray to the lord now maybe take a moment of quiet for a minute to respond to the word of god in your own heart and then i'll pray for us oh gracious heavenly father we tremble at your holy word father to do such a thing is not a sign of failure but it's actually what your word wants from us we praise you that you are so patient and merciful with us we praise you that your word works in us we praise you that often it disturbs us often that convicts us convicts us of the things in our lives which should not be we praise you for that and praise you for showing us the way to go to turn away from that by the power of your holy spirit to turn to you please help us to do that more and more never to ease off that towards the end of our lives but to do it more and more to the very end until we're called home or

[51 : 38] Jesus returns father we praise you that you are the God who lovingly teaches us your ways and that by the power of the spirit of Christ in us you promise to help us walk by the obedience of faith for on our own we can do nothing so help us to look to you more and more and help us to help each other to love your sure and written word and to not be deceived by the evil one the evil one who so often comes disguised as an angel of light help us to see through his schemes and to stand firm in your word to see the Lord Jesus lifted up and proclaimed as the only way of salvation and we pray this in his name and for his sake amen