

File No. 70

I KINGS 13:1–34

THE MAN OF GOD WHO DISOBEYED THE LORD

(SBS Bk 3 Story No. 4)

Story Notes

Background Information

Jeroboam willfully, established rival worship centres at his Southern and Northern borders so that his people could continue to worship God without having to go to Jerusalem. He established a 'civil religion', a religion used for state purposes. However, the Lord was one Lord with one centre where he made his name to be remembered. Jeroboam returned to the sin Israel committed while Moses received the ten commandments, making golden calves and saying these represented the God who had led them out of Egypt (Exod. 32:4, 8). He ordained his own priests and feasts and sacrifices for which there was no command. This was the continuing sin of the Northern tribes because none of their kings ever abolished this idol worship.

Main Lesson

Jeroboam, king of the northern tribes, perhaps is wishing to be like Solomon (cf. I Kings 8:62–64) offered public worship at his altar, but was confronted by a prophet from Judah, or rather, by the word of the Lord. The Lord had decreed the ruin of this altar, an event that took place under Josiah (II Kings 23:15). Jeroboam opposed God's word, but God's word prevailed. There was even mercy for Jeroboam in the word of the Lord: he lived his life, not with a withered arm but a healed one. He had no reason to doubt the word of God or God's purpose to do him good.

The man of God rejected the king's hospitality, recognising it to be against God's word to him. However, he was led astray by the old prophet's lie and found the truth of the word of the Lord in a lion's teeth. It is better to be a prophet killed by the truth than a king living by a lie. Graciously, God 'killed' us in the killing of his Son, and then raised us up in him, so that we may live truly to him.

See the Martin Bleby song *The Lion on the Road*, in New Creation Hymn Book Vol. 2/53 at the New Creation web site: www.newcreation.org.au

Did the old prophet want the company of the messenger from the South? Did he want to test him to see if he was a true prophet of the Lord? Whatever the case, he discovered, by the word of God in his own mouth, that what God said would happen, not only to this fellow prophet but to false worship established by Jeroboam. Whatever compromises he had made in his life, he wanted to be with this prophet in his death and honoured the man by burying him in his own grave. In contrast, Jeroboam did not honour the servant of God or the word he brought. His dynasty was doomed from the beginning.

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