

## 1<sup>st</sup> Kings Ch 14

Ch 13 drew to our attention that interesting account of the anonymous man of God who pronounced judgment upon the ways of Jeroboam politically, how that in the course of his reign as king of Israel he had led the nation into idolatry and God was going to deal with that, and bring destruction to that. You recall that Jeroboam was worried that people from the northern kingdom of Israel would be persuaded to defect to the southern kingdom of Judah as they journeyed from time to time to the temple to worship and offer sacrifices. So he decided to build his own altars and set up his own relics, one in Bethel and one in Dan, and he said, “Hey, it’s way to inconvenient for you to travel to Jerusalem to worship, these relics (the golden calves) can represent God to you, and you can worship right here, we’ll have *our own* feasts, and ordain *our own* priests.” and So he did according to the desire of his own heart rather than walking in accordance to the Word of God and in so doing he led the entire nation into idolatry. And so out of nowhere comes this man of God up from Judah, and we don’t even get to know his name, he’s just a man of God. Listen, God can use your life in radical ways and you don’t have to be in the “who’s who” of significant people, God prefers to use the “who’s he?” of insignificant people.

So this man of God pronounces judgment; he cries out to the altar and says the bones of the priests who’ve offered sacrifices on you will be burned on you, and a man by the name of Josiah going to bring destruction upon you. And he prophesied by name of the man who would come on the scene some 300yrs later, and to ratify the reality of it he gave a sign the *same* day that the altar would split apart and ashes would pour out of it. Well, Jeroboam was standing there and being incensed at what this guy was saying he stretched out his hand and said, “Arrest that man!” Right then his hand withered and Jeroboam lost his ability to use it, and the altar split apart and ashes poured out of it. A pretty dramatic scene!

But wasn’t it interesting that as soon as Jeroboam was in dire need he didn’t go to the altar, or look to his idols, he called upon the man who stood before him as the Lord’s representative. He didn’t cry out before his relics, he knew that his only hope was in the Lord, so he asked the man of God to pray for him, and his hand was restored, yet he didn’t repent. It amazes me the things that people can endure and yet never repent, how they can see so evidently that God is seeking to deal with their lives and see the error of their ways, yet they press on in their pride to their own destruction. But we commend the man of God for *praying* for him even though *he* was going to *persecute* him. Jesus would later articulate that same principle when He said in Matt 5, “*I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven;*” Matt 5:44-45 This man of God prayed for him, Jeroboam was restored, but he didn’t repent, what he did was offer to refresh and reward the man of God by taking him back to his place for a glass of ice tea.

But the man of God said, “I wouldn’t care if you gave me ½ your kingdom, I’m not sharing in, or condoning your hypocritical idolatry by being in fellowship with you,” and he left. And there’s a real caution in the degree that we interact with backslidden believers, it’s not that we’re not to pray for them, or be available to them, but we’re not to take part in their sin by yoking up and fellowshiping with them. Paul said, “*I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner -- not even to eat with such a person.*” 1 Cor 5:11 Why? Because to fellowship with them is to be in approval of them, and the things going on in their lives, and it causes other people to associate you along with them and what’s happening in their lives. It sterilizes your witness, now it’s totally different regarding the nonbeliever, how else are they to come to know the Lord?

Go have dinner with them, hang out at the mall or whatever, but Jeroboam was an Israelite. One of God’s covenant people, and he’s blowing it, so the man of God refuses to identify with him in it.

Well, as you know from there the story went tragic for the man of God who bought the lie of another believer, and in so doing he disobeyed God’s Word directly. And because he’d pronounced judgment publicly because of Jeroboam’s disobedience to God’s Word, he was judged publicly in *his* disobedience to God’s Word. Remember to whom much is given, much is required, and I’m not going to deny the fact that it was a heavy thing, but what did Peter say? “*For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now ‘If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?’*” Peter 4:17-18

But even seeing all this, how God dealt with even *His own*, that didn’t prompt Jeroboam to repent, rather he repeated his ways. And so now in ch 14 we see the judgment of his house *personally*, God gave him a chance to repent when He judged his ways *politically*, so now God judges his house *personally*.

Vs1-3

We’re seeing a pattern developing here. When things seem to be going good, Jeroboam carries on about his idolatrous business. But when a true time of crisis arises, he knows that his religious practice is worthless and so he seeks to consult or call upon a man whom he knows to be right with God to consider his position and assist him in his hour of need. It’s amazing how many people only cry out to God in time of need, other than that it’s business as usual, and if God shows them mercy, they don’t fall on their faces in repentance, they just repeat their practice. And that’s what we see in Jeroboam, he knows that Ahijah the prophet is right on, he’s the one who told him that he would be king. But he also knows that he’s blown life, and is still blowing life, so he tells his wife to put on a disguise so that he doesn’t recognize her, but he’ll be able to tell you what’s to become of our son. You know it’s that whole, “he knows me so I can’t go, but if you put on a disguise he won’t recognize you, and so take him a gift and perhaps he’ll give us good news.”

And really Jeroboam is seeking to use him more as a fortune teller than anything else, he's not asking for prayer, asking what he needs to do to demonstrate repentance or anything like that. It could be that he's resolved to the fact that the illness of his son is the result of God's judgment and so he's simply wanting to know his fate, I don't know. But what I do know is that we see the way that the rationale of a man is tweaked when he's in sin. Jeroboam trusts that Ahijah will be able to see through the veil that clouds the future, but that he won't see through the disguise that clouds the identity of his wife. You know it's fairly common that people will come to me from time to time and things in their lives are falling apart, and they want to know what's going on with it yet they seek to disguise their true identity. They try to keep the fact covered that they're in compromise and have been leading a double life. And I'm not saying every turbulent time in life is the result of sin, we know it's not, but surely we could avoid much heartache and heartbreak if we'd simply do what God has told us to do in His Word rather than do whatever we devise in our own hearts and then try to figure out why our lives and everything in it is going down the drain. That's what Jeroboam is doing, he knows he's been disobedient, but he seeks to cover it up and get a word of encouragement. What did Jesus say? He said beware of the sin of hypocrisy, "*For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known.*" Luke 12:2 She thinks she can slide on in to Ahijah's place, get a word from the Lord, and he'll never know the difference.

#### Vs4-6

It seems a bit ironic that here they went through all this trouble to hide her identity from Ahijah and come to find out he was blind anyway. And perhaps even in that the Lord is sending us the message that it's not the man of God we need to concern ourselves with so much as it is the God of the man. Man on his own is blind to a lot of things, not real sharp when it comes to discernment and easily deceived, I can be blind to a # of things in your life and you think you're real smooth, getting away with this and that and still serving or doing your thing unbeknownst to me. But the problem with that is that ultimately I'm not the One with whom you have to do, you're accountable before God for your actions/the frame of your heart and He sees it all. The bible says, "*O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.*" Ps 139:1-4 and Again, "*...there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*" Heb 4:13 How many times we think we're so sly, getting away with our sin, masking ourselves real clever like. But in reality the fact is that man for the most part is blind anyway, but God sees it all, and He's the One we need to concern ourselves with. So even though Ahijah was blind, God still gave him insight to the situation, his eyes may've been a bit glazed, but his ears were wide open and God spoke to his heart. How important it is that we have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to us. We might not always see things just the way that we should, but if we're open to the Lord, and have hearts that are teachable, He'll speak to us, set things straight, make things clear, that we might be tuned into His will, and walking in His way for our lives.

God turns Ahijah on to the whole situation, gives him what we would call a word of knowledge, divine insight into a situation that otherwise he would know nothing about. And it seems only right that the man whom God used to give Jeroboam the word of his *reign* would be the one to bring the word of his *ruin*.

But I want to camp out here for just a moment more on this idea of pretending to be another person and the vanity therein. God knows who you are, yet it's amazing how many people come to the house of the Lord pretending to be something else. And the question in vs 6 is worthy of drawing attention to, "Why do you pretend to be another person?" As if the Lord doesn't know everything that's going on in our hearts, or in our lives, yet so often people find themselves in a similar position to Jeroboam's wife, trying to deceive God as to their true identity. They'll come to church and sing the songs, raise their hands, toss in \$5 or \$15 when the offering bag comes around, you know, "some bread, a few cakes and a jar of honey" to sweeten things up a bit. But they're in a disguise, seeking to appear to be something that they really aren't, but God sees through the disguise. He knows when we're honoring Him with our lips, drawing near to Him with our mouths but our hearts are far from Him, and He's not impressed.

Remember when there at the beginning stages of the early church there was such zeal towards the things of God that people were going out and selling everything they had and they were laying the money down at the apostle's feet so that they could distribute the resources wherever the need might lie. They were all just sharing what they had, and a man by the name of Ananias along with his wife Sapphira sold a possession and they decided to keep a portion of it for themselves and give the rest to the church. Now *that* was fine, it was theirs they could do what they wanted to with it. But the problem is that they conspired together to send out the news report that they had in reality given it all, they were disguising the reality, pretending to be something other than they were.

Look at Acts ch 5 Vs 1-10

Now I suspect that we should be thankful that God isn't moving in such a way as to purge His church in a similar manner today. Some of the songs we sing, or things we say would find us dead on the floor. Because we want to hold out on God, and put up this front like we've surrendered completely to Him. "Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to Thee, ...take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold." and We all fall over dead, we may be singing with some form of sentiment, but is there real commitment? God knows who we are.

So when the wife of Jeroboam came to Ahijah, Ahijah says, "Hey, come on in wife of Jeroboam, what's with the disguise anyway?" and In essence he says, "You think that you've come to me to inquire of your son, but in reality God has sent me to you, and I have news for you, bad news."

Vs7-16

She was hoping for a message of *deliverance*, instead she got a devastating message of *destruction*. “Go tell Jeroboam that the Lord has said, ‘I exalted you from among the people and made you king over the nation of Israel, I tore it out of the house of David and gave it to you. And I warned you to walk after My ways and keep My commands yet you have not walked in integrity of heart as My servant David, who was careful to keep My commandments and do what was right in My eyes.’” and In vs 9 He says, “You’ve done more evil than all who were before you.” Saul did some real uncool things, his heart departed from the Lord, but he didn’t lead the nation into idolatry and away from the Lord. David blew it from time to time, but he never stopped loving on the Lord and seeking to be pleasing to the Lord, he was quick to repent when confronted with sin and never tried to justify his position. Solomon married all kinds of pagan wives, even allowed them to worship their own gods, but God says, “None of that compares to what you’re guilty of.” and It doesn’t matter if Jeroboam meant for the golden calves to be idols, or simply aids in worship, God makes it real clear. He says, “You made for yourselves other gods, molded images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast *Me* behind your back.” This phrase, “have cast Me behind your back” speaks of utter rejection, just throwing something away with no regard. The Pulpit Commentary says, “[The order of the Hebrew stamps the “me” as emphatic, “and ME hast thou cast, etc.] Behind thy back [This strong expression only occurs here and in Ezek 23:35. It forcibly expresses Jeroboam’s, contemptuous disregard of God’s revealed will. In Ps 1:17, Neh 9:26, we have somewhat similar phrases]” We read in Ezek 23:35 where the Lord said, “*Because you have forgotten Me and cast Me behind your back, Therefore you shall bear the penalty Of your lewdness and your harlotry.*” and That’s the basic flavor of what’s being said here. God is telling Jeroboam that Jeroboam has utterly scorned Him, and disgracefully neglected Him. And it’s such a forcible term that it’s used to describe what God does with our sin when we’re forgiven. We read in Isa, “*Indeed it was for my own peace That I had great bitterness; But You have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption, For You have cast all my sins behind Your back.*” Isa 38:17 So that when the phrase is used in connection God’s treatment of our forgiven sin, it’s a wonderful thing. But when it speaks of a person’s treatment of God, it becomes a tragedy.

And he uses to phrases in vs 10 to allude to Jeroboam’s house and they’re both bodily waste. and I’ll try to be as tactful as possible but the phrase, “Every male in Israel, bond and free” is more literally, “I’ll cut off from Jeroboam him that urinates against the wall.” and The reason I point that out isn’t because guys generally urinate on walls, as a matter of fact I read somewhere that culturally speaking at this time Hebrew men didn’t generally even go standing up. They sat down or squatted and stayed covered by their robes. But the boys wouldn’t have been so refined, so what this seems to allude to is that God is saying, not only men, but boys to (especially in the context of Jeroboam’s son). He’s saying it doesn’t matter, young or old, you’re cut off, both the root and the branches.

And he compares taking away Jeroboam’s line to taking away refuse, or dung, just getting rid of it completely because it’s a waste, and good for nothing. As a matter of fact you’re family lineage from this point forward won’t even have a respectful burial, the dogs will eat the bodies of those who die in the city and the birds will eat those who die in the fields.

And he says that in order to ratify the more distant aspects of the prophecy there's going to be an immediate sign, the child will die as soon as she gets back, she'll never see him alive again. However he's the one exception to a descent burial, he'll be honored because there's something good in him towards the Lord. We don't know what that's in reference to but God commends the boy, it's interesting to me that this sickness and even death is from the Lord. It's almost an extension of God's Mercy towards the child rather than letting him befall the fate of the rest of the family. Now what those who purport sickness and things of that nature are a sign of not being right with God do with that I don't know. And that's faulty logic anyway because if you ascribe to that you have to believe that everyone who's healthy *is* right with the Lord, and we *know* that's not true. But in the death of the child God says Jeroboam is cut off even today. And He says that He'll raise up another who will destroy the house of Jeroboam (which we'll see next time). And we see here that the Lord speaks of the Assyrian captivity of Israel in vs 15, Jeroboam has sought to plant Israel in the unstable waters of Idolatry rather than the Solid Soil of God's Word. So God will strike them and uproot them, scattering them, why? Because of the sins of Jeroboam, he becomes the measuring stick for the bad kings from here on out. Jesus said in regards to laying stumbling blocks before people, "*Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!*" Matt 18:7 Jeroboam laid a stumbling block before the nation of Israel, it would've been better had he tied a millstone around his neck and been cast in the sea.

Vs17-20

2<sup>nd</sup> Chron 13:20 tells us that the Lord struck Jeroboam and he died.

Vs21-23

Notice that here it says that *Judah* did evil, not Rehoboam. It's possible that the people began to practice certain forms of idolatry under Solomon's reign and that Rehoboam was simply unable to really suppress the upsurge, sort of reaping what his dad had sown. However we read in 2 Chron 12:1 "*Now it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom and had strengthened himself, that he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel along with him.*" So either way it seems as though he wasn't overly concerned about what the people did. And it was after his forsaking of the law of God that he was invaded by Egypt and lost so much of what his dad had worked for as we're about to read.

Vs24

The perverted persons referred to here were male temple prostitutes taking part in homosexual practices. And we're given some foreshadowing here where it says that the Lord cast out the nations before them that were doing this. God is no respecter of persons, and anytime a nation begins to openly flaunt its sin and shame, they're not far from incurring God's judgment.

God in no way approves of homosexuality no more than He does any other sin, the bible says, “*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*” 1 Cor 6:9-11 God can redeem you from those things, and there are many who can testify to that, but God doesn’t turn a blind eye to sin it doesn’t matter who you are. And if God judged the nation before Israel who occupied the land who engaged in such things, the intimation here is that God will judge Judah to who has committed spiritual adultery going after other gods, rather than being true to the 1 True Living God who redeemed them.

Once God has redeemed *us*, He expects that we be true to *Him*. It’s like a marriage relationship.

Vs 25-28

Remember all those millions of dollars worth of shields that Solomon had made, in a day they were all gone, and all the treasures of the house of the Lord and the king’s house, gone. All those years of hard work destroyed in a day after only 5 yrs of Rehoboam’s reign, but Rehoboam wanted to keep up the façade and so he had bronze shields made in their place. They looked shiny like gold, but in reality they were virtually worthless, what an appropriate picture where Rehoboam is at right now. And of course bronze in the scripture is a symbol of judgment, and this is the beginning of God’s rebuke upon Judah.

Vs29-31

So the deprivation, and degradation of the nation begins, both in Israel and in Judah, and what does it root back to? A lack of obedience from a true heart to the Word of God, and straying from the relationship that God had initiated with them. 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles summarizes Rehoboam’s life like this, “*And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD.*” 2 Chron 12:14 Don’t grow weary in your relationship with the Lord, in preparing your heart to *seek after* the Lord, but rather stay true to Him, and to His Word, and He’ll bless your life.