

General Church Education



The Prophecy of Josiah

1 Kings 13:1-34

Lesson 8

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 6: The Lord Is Our Prophet

For ages 11-12 years

The Prophecy of Josiah

1 Kings 13:1-34

Teacher Background

The children of Israel disobeyed the Lord by setting up altars in Dan and Bethel and worshipping idols. This had serious consequences. Israel adopted false worship and Jeroboam's descendants could not remain on the throne. One prophet was killed by a lion, and another prophet felt the guilt and sorrow of causing his death. These dramatic events illustrate the spiritual consequences of disobeying the Lord. The loss of the kingdom pictures being cut off from the Lord's blessings. Being killed by a lion illustrates the harm a life of falsity can cause. The guilt and sorrow the old prophet felt reflects the feelings we might have when we hurt others.

We may think that disobedience harms no one but ourselves. Jeroboam's family and, more importantly, all of Israel suffered the consequences of his choice. It is useful to help adolescents see the harm that one person's unwise choices can have on others.

Focus Points

- Jeroboam, king of Israel, received a prophecy concerning Josiah; the altar split into two.
- A prophet tricked a man of God, after which he was killed by a lion.
- King Jeroboam continued in his evil ways despite these events.

Reading from the Writings

“‘Bethel’ and ‘Dan’ signify the ultimates (most external) in the church, and the ultimates in the man of the church are called natural-sensual things, or natural-worldly and corporeal, so these are signified by ‘Bethel,’ and ‘Dan,’ the ultimates of good by ‘Bethel,’ and the ultimates of truth by ‘Dan’; therefore these two altars signify worship in ultimates or in things most external, such as is the worship of those who separate charity from their faith, and acknowledge faith alone to be the means of salvation. ‘The altar should be rent and the ashes poured out’ signifies that there was no worship whatever. Faith separated from charity was then signified by ‘Samaria’, because the Jewish kingdom signified the celestial church, that is, the church that is in the good of love, and the Israelitish kingdom signified the spiritual church which is in the truths from that good. This was signified by the Jewish and Israelitish kingdom while they were under one king, or while they were united; but when they were separated, the Israelitish kingdom signified truth separated from good, or what is the same, faith separated from charity.” *Apocalypse Explained* 391.29, 30

Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers the following activity choices:

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“O altar, altar! Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men’s bones shall be burned on you.’” (1 Kings 13:2)

Projects and Activities (for answers, see back of lesson)

The Prophecy of Josiah Multiple choice

Read questions and circle and answers that are correct.

Obedying the Lord

Many stories in the Word are about people not obeying the Lord and the consequences they suffered because of their choices. There are several examples of this in the lesson. Fill in a chart that shows what a person did, which commandment a person broke, and the resulting consequence.

Additional Project and Activity Choices for Parents and Teachers

Play: The Prophecy of Josiah

Act out the story of the prophecy of King Josiah. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/play-the-prophecy-of-josiah-1-kings-13.pdf>

Altars

Altars in the Word stand for worship due to the burnt offerings and sacrifices that were offered on them. The altar in the temple stood for genuine worship, but the altars built by Jeroboam stood for false worship because they were used to worship idols. Today, we put the Word on the altar and use candles and cloths for worship. Design an altar that you would like to have in your home or church.

A Chart of the Kings of Israel and Judah

As you learn about the kings of Israel and Judah, complete a chart. As you fill in the spaces, think about whether the king is good or evil. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-a-chart-of-the-kings-of-israel-and-judah-1-kings-2-kings.pdf>

The Prophecy of Josiah

1 Kings 13:1-34

Vocabulary

covenant—a two-way agreement between a person and the Lord

corpse—dead body

consecrate—set aside for a religious purpose

Jeroboam Is King of Israel

Jeroboam became the king of Israel as the Lord had prophesied. He had the opportunity to help Israel turn back to the Lord, and it seemed as if he might do that. He had gone to Rehoboam and asked that the heavy burdens of labor and taxes be taken from the people. Although he was told that Israel would be taken from Rehoboam and given to him, Jeroboam did not immediately act as if he was eager to be king. However, once he became king, he protected his power.

Jeroboam set up places of worship in Shechem and Bethel. He feared that the people of Israel would want to return to Jerusalem and to Rehoboam, the king of Judah. He built altars for people to worship the Lord God Jehovah by sacrificing animals and burning incense. In doing so, he broke the law of the Lord, which was designed so that people would not turn from Him.

Jeroboam Is Given a Prophecy Concerning Josiah

One day, as Jeroboam burned incense at the altar in Bethel, he was frightened by the appearance of a prophet from Judah. He directed his words to the altar, a symbol of Jeroboam's disregard for the Lord.

Jeroboam's Hand Withered and the Altar Split in Two



We can remember that the Lord promised that if Jeroboam followed the Lord, his descendants would remain on the throne of Israel for a long time. But Jeroboam did not keep his part of the covenant for even a short time, so his descendants would not keep the throne.

The prophet promised a sign that his words were true. The altar would split in half and the ashes would be poured out. This angered Jeroboam. So he put out his hand and called for the arrest of the prophet, but as he did so, his hand withered! The altar split and the ashes poured out!

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Hands represent a person's power. The Lord was telling Jeroboam that his power as the king of Israel would be weakened. Although the Lord restored his hand, Jeroboam would never again be as strong as he might have been if he had listened to and obeyed the Lord.

The Man of God Is Tricked

When his hand was restored, Jeroboam invited the man of God to come home with him for something to eat and for a reward. The prophet refused to do so because the Lord had told him not to eat or drink anything during his mission. He was to go home another way. He would not disobey the Lord even for a reward. So he set out on his journey.

An older prophet from Bethel heard this amazing story and wanted to meet and speak with the person the Lord had entrusted with such an important message. He rode out on a donkey and met the prophet. He invited the prophet to go home and eat with him. Once again, the prophet from Judah refused. But the old prophet from Bethel convinced the man of God that it would be all right to do so. He said:

“I too am a prophet as you are, 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.’” (1 Kings 13:18)

Why did these words have more weight than anything else the old prophet might have said?

What if someone said that your parents had told them that they had changed their minds about a rule they had given you? If that person was someone you trusted, might you believe them? One prophet would have reason to trust another prophet if that prophet said the Lord had spoken to him. And so the man of God from Judah believed the old prophet and went home with him, thinking he was obeying the Lord.



The Prophet Tricks the Man of God

What might be wrong with this decision?

The Lord was specific about what the man of God from Judah should do:

“You shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came.” (1 Kings 13:9)

There were false prophets at that time, so the man of God should have known that the prophet from Bethel may have been lying. However, he did not question why the Lord might have changed His mind, and he did not ask the Lord directly if the old prophet was telling the truth.

The Man of God Is Punished

While the prophets ate, the word of the Lord was heard. Even though the prophet from Judah believed that the Lord wanted him to eat with the older man of God, he had not followed the Lord's command. His disobedience would cost him his life. Also, his body would not be returned to his country.

As prophesied, a lion killed him as he went home. His corpse was thrown onto the road. Then the lion stood by his body and did not eat it or harm the donkey, which also stood over his corpse.

Passers by told others what they had seen.

The old prophet heard about it, and, although the Word does not say he regretted his lie, his actions suggest that he might have. He retrieved the body, buried it in his own tomb, and mourned the death of the prophet. He told his sons that when he died, he was to be buried in the same place.

“Lay my bones beside his bones” (1 Kings 13:31).

Jeroboam Continues in His Evil Ways

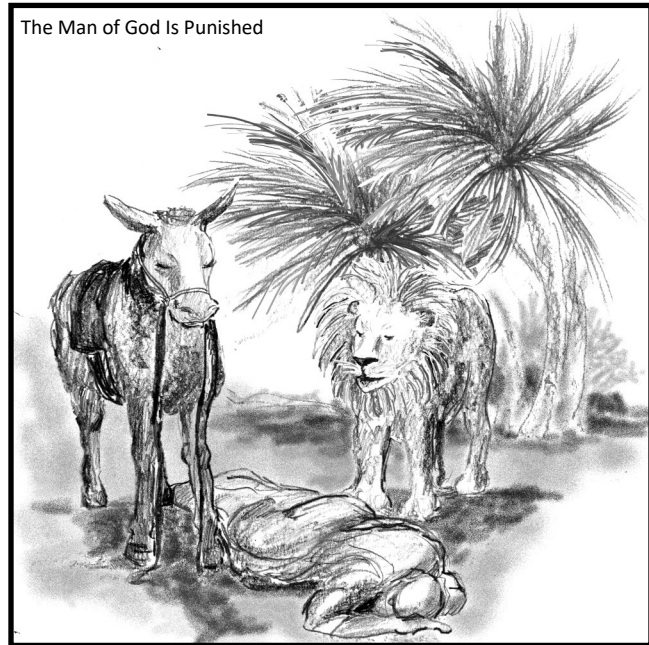
You might think that Jeroboam would worry about the consequences of not following the Lord after his hand was withered. But the Word tells us that Jeroboam continued to consecrate anyone who wished to become a priest.

The Lord's Way

Sometimes the Lord seems full of anger in the Old Testament. In the story of Jeroboam and the prophet from Judah, people did things that seem all right. Jeroboam provided a place for the people to worship the Lord. But he took things into his own hands. He knew the laws the Lord established with the leaders of Israel, as did the prophet from Judah. They received specific instructions from the Lord but chose to follow someone else's way.

It is important to follow the Lord's way—the way He gives us in His Word. Although we sometimes need others to help us understand the Word, we need to be sure that they are giving us instruction from the Word, and the Lord, not just their own ideas.

In the Old Testament the consequences can be dramatic and frightening. This was what the people in Israel understood—they would not have changed without the fear of such actions. In our world today the consequences for people not following the Lord may not be dramatic. However, bad choices lead to unhappiness and discontent. The Lord wanted the Israelites to be happy. He knew this could happen only if they obeyed His Word. He wants the same happiness for us as well—a happiness we can only experience if we follow Him.



Activity Overview

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“O altar, altar! Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men’s bones shall be burned on you.’” (1 Kings 13:2)

Projects and Activities (for answers, see back of lesson)

Choose one or two.

The Prophecy of Josiah Multiple choice

Read questions and circle the answers that are correct

Obedying the Lord

Many stories in the Word are about people not obeying the Lord and the consequences they suffered because of their choices. There are several examples of this in the lesson. Fill in a chart that shows which commandment a person broke, what they did, and the consequence.

The Prophecy of Josiah Multiple Choice

1 Kings 13:1-34

Circle the letter of the answer you think is best.

1. Why did the man of God (prophet) go to Bethel?
 - a. To offer his services to Jeroboam
 - b. To condemn Jeroboam
 - c. To condemn Rehoboam
 - d. To find his donkey
2. What did he prophesy?
 - a. The end of the kingdom of Israel
 - b. The power and glory that would come to Jeroboam in battle against Judah
 - c. The destruction of the temple in Jerusalem
 - d. That Josiah would destroy the worship at Bethel in the future and that the altar would break that day
3. Jeroboam was angry and wanted the man of God arrested. What happened?
 - a. Jeroboam fell down dead at the altar
 - b. Jeroboam's hands withered and the altar split in two
 - c. The soldiers arrested the prophet and took him away
 - d. Jeroboam's hand withered and the altar split in two
4. What good thing happened to Jeroboam? Why?
 - a. His hand was restored because he treated the prophet with respect and asked for the restoration
 - b. He became a good king because of his fear of the Lord
 - c. His hand was healed because he tore down the altar he was building
 - d. His hands were healed because he treated the prophet with respect
5. Jeroboam invited the man of God to his home, but the prophet declined. Why?
 - a. He was too busy
 - b. The Lord told him not to stay in Israel
 - c. He was very angry with Jeroboam
 - d. He did not want to travel that distance
6. As the man of God went home an old prophet from Bethel met him. He invited the man of God to his home. At first he declined, but the old prophet told a lie that changed his mind. What was it?
 - a. He said that the Lord told him that the Judean prophet could stay with him
 - b. He told the Judean prophet that he had something special to tell him
 - c. He said that something bad would happen if the Judean prophet did not go home with him
 - d. He promised the Judean prophet a great feast
7. What happened to the Judean prophet for going to the old prophet's home and disobeying the Lord?
 - a. He could no longer be a prophet
 - b. He was killed by a bear on his way home
 - c. He was killed by a lion on his way home
 - d. He went home and fell sick

Obeying the Lord

Kings 13:1-34

Many stories in the Word are about people not obeying the Lord and the consequences they suffered because of their choices. Sometimes it is direct disobedience of the Ten Commandments, and sometimes it is direct disobedience of other commands the Lord gave an individual or group of people. Keeping the Lord's commandments is an essential part of loving Him.

“He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.” (John 14:21)

There are several examples of this in the lesson. Fill in the chart below for review.

| PERSON | DISOBEDIENT ACT | COMMAND(MENT) | CONSEQUENCE |
|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------|
| Jeroboam – King of Israel | | | |
| Man of God from Judah | | | |
| Old Prophet from Israel | | | |

One of these people died because of his disobedience. He did not have a chance to show his regret for disobeying the Lord. The other two had a chance to change.

Which one continued in his evil ways?

Which one showed regret for his actions?

Answers

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1. b; 2. d; 3. d; 4. a; 5. b; 6. a; 7. c.