

Subject: *The High Cost of Disobeying God*

Scripture: *1 Kings 13:1-30*

1. The Courage of God's Man (vs. 1-6)

He is called "a man of God" 15 times in this chapter. We don't know his name, but we know he had a good name. ***Proverbs 22:1*** *A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold.* This man was on a mission for God and He was a spokesman for God. God sent him from Judah to Bethel. Now from chapter 12 we learn what is happening at Bethel. The name of that city means "House of God," so you would expect that God would be honored there. Sadly that was not the case. Bethel had become a place of corruption and a place of convenience. Jeroboam, the king, had set up an alternate place of worship that would be more convenient. It was his plan to control the people and keep them loyal. This is a clear picture of what is going on in the world today...religion that is driven by compromise and convenience. The all-important question is not, "Is it right?" but "Does it work?" God's man delivered a powerful message against the false worship and King Jeroboam was there to hear it.

2. The Command of God's Man (vs. 7-10)

God commanded him not to eat or drink or return the same way he had gone from Judah to Bethel. He would not give in to the king's offer because he knew God's will and he was determined to do it.

3. The Compromise of God's Man (vs. 11-19)

This story takes a sad turn when an old prophet followed after this man of God and convinced him to change his plans and disobey God. The story reveals some of the ways we can be misled to step out of God's will:

- Our elders can mislead us (vs. 11)

This was an older prophet that misled God's man. We are not told why. We want to trust our elders and we assume they want to help us and guide us in the right way. There is a real danger for young people in college when they listen to a professor who is older and supposedly wiser, but they are led astray from simple faith in God's Word.

- Our peers can mislead us (vs. 18)

We have to deal with peer pressure all of our lives. As children and teenagers, our peers are our schoolmates. Then we have peers in the workplace. Women have other women as their peers. Men have other men. If you are in a certain vocation, you will be prone to listen to your peers in that same vocation.

- Spiritual leaders can mislead us (vs. 18)

We want to believe that spiritual leaders will tell us the truth. That's why false teachers are so dangerous and the Bible has so many warnings about them. Jesus said they are like "wolves in sheep's clothing." ***Colossians 2:8*** *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

This old prophet gave a message, supposedly from an angel, that was directly opposite from what God had told this man before. Remember that God's Word never changes. If God says, "This is my will," then it's not going to change. If anybody, anytime, anywhere tries to tell you something contrary to the clear teaching of God's Word that person is doing the devil's work. **Galatians 1:8-9**⁸ *But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*⁹ *As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*

- Our own thinking can mislead us

God's man could have thought this isn't that big of a deal. Like so many of us he could have found a way to justify what he did.

4. The Consequences of God's Man (vs. 20-30)

Bad things happen whenever we disobey God. This man of God was killed by a lion and then disgraced because he was not buried with his fathers. The Bible makes it clear that his death was no normal death, but a supernatural judgment of God. The lion and the donkey were submissive to God's will. Against their natural tendencies, the lion did not eat the donkey or the man, and the donkey did not run from the lion. The lesson is clear: If a lion and a donkey obey God, why won't people obey Him?

This man was not killed because the old prophet deceived him. He was killed because he was disobedient to what God told him to do. This wasn't a sin of ignorance, but a sin of presumption. He knew it was wrong.

What is the moral of the story? We can all be deceived, and Satan will try to use someone, somewhere, someway to get us to disobey God. We must be alert to spiritual danger and temptation. We tend to let our guard down when we have accomplished some goal or objective. Remember the man of God—he had done the hard part. He had delivered the message to Jeroboam about the false worship in Bethel, and all he had to do was obey God and go home. Remember—the battle is not over until it's over. What a sad ending to a great beginning. Listen to the old prophet's sad words in verse 30, "Alas, my brother!"

What are the lessons to learn?

- Obeying God is a lifetime commitment, not a one-time event – Part-time obedience is disobedience. A certain young man went to apply for a job and the business owner asked him, "What can you do for me?" The young man said, "I can do what I'm told." Everybody wants to hear Jesus say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." But that's not what He says to part-time servants who obey Him part of the time.
- Obeying God is costly, but disobedience is more costly – It costs a lot to be an obedient follower of Christ, but it will cost you everything if you don't follow Him. Missionary Jim Elliot said: "He is no fool to give up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."