

Setting

Locate the following places on the Bible map:

- Judah (region)
- Bethel (city)

Key Terms & People

Jeroboam: King of the Northern Kingdom (Israel).

Man of God: An unnamed prophet from Judah.

Old Prophet: An unnamed prophet from Bethel.

High Places: The Hebrew word *bāmā* means a shrine where worship would take place—“though often nominally dedicated to God, clearly included many Canaanite features, such as images, standing stones, Asherah poles, sacred prostitution and other fertility rites.”⁶

King Josiah: Future king of Judah. (See 2 Kings 22–23)



Story Moments

Context

11:38. What did the Lord promise Jeroboam?

12:28–33. What did Jeroboam do that violated the Law of God?

Confrontation in Bethel

13:1–3. Where does the man of God come from?

Why might that be significant? _____

What is Jeroboam doing in Bethel when the man of God finds him? _____

What does the man of God prophesy about the altar in Bethel?⁷ _____

13:4–5. How does King Jeroboam respond to this prophecy? _____

What happens because of his response?

- To Jeroboam: _____
- To the altar: _____

13:6. How does the king’s demeanor change? Why? _____

13:7–10. What does Jeroboam offer the man of God and how does the man of God respond? _____

What had God commanded the man of God? _____

The Man of God’s Disobedience

13:11–15. Who tells the old prophet hear about the works of the man of God? _____

⁶ J.T. Whitney, *NBD*, s.v. “High Place,” 474.

⁷ See 2 Kings 23:15–16 for the fulfillment of this prophecy.

What does the old prophet do once he hears about this other prophet? _____

13:16–17. How does the man of God respond to the old prophet’s request initially? _____

13:18–19. How does the old prophet finally persuade him? _____

The Man of God’s Judgement

13:20–25. What does the old prophet prophesy concerning the man of God while they are eating? _____

How is this prophecy carried out? _____

13:26–32. How does the prophet respond when he hears about the man of God’s demise? _____

What does the narrator note about the lion and the donkey? _____

13:33–34. What effect does this event have on King Jeroboam’s new system of worship? _____

What consequences would this false worship bring on Jeroboam and his house? _____

Ask Yourself

What does this chapter teach us about the conflict between political power (King Jeroboam) and God’s power (the man of God). Who has ultimate authority?

The old prophet deceives the man of God by saying that he (also) has a word from the Lord. What can I learn from this deception and the man of God’s failure?

The man of God fails to follow clear instructions from the Lord. How do I respond to the plain instruction of the Bible? Do I question God or obey in faith?⁸

Cross References

1 Kings 11:38

Then it shall be, if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do *what is* right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you.

1 Kings 12:32–33

³²Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made. ³³So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense.

2 Kings 23:15–16

¹⁵Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place and crushed it to powder, and burned the wooden image. ¹⁶As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs that were there on the mountain. And he sent and took the bones out of the tombs and burned them on the altar, and defiled it according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.

⁸ Notice that the man of God faced judgment for disobedience just as Jeroboam would face judgment for his disobedience. The key truths being taught are that 1) God expects obedience and 2) God deals with disobedience no matter the identity of the disobedient person. The fact that the man was a “prophet” of God did not exempt him from strict obedience to the word of the Lord.