

Title: Temptation under an Oak
Text: 1 Kings 13: 1-34
Date: March 21, 2013
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Our text is 1 Kings 13: 1-34. The man of God in our text was a prophet, entrusted by his heavenly Master with carrying forth the word of God. He represents every God-sent preacher, as well as every believer who is indeed a witness for Christ Jesus our Master.

I. THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE PROPHET IN DELIVERING THE MESSAGE--1 Kings 13: 1: And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.

The man of God wasted no time. He went right to the place where Jeroboam worshipped. When he arrived, Jeroboam was engaged in the very idolatry the man of God was sent to preach against.

He Cried Against the Altar

Verse two says, he “cried against the altar.” The stone of the altar was probably softer than the hard-heart in Jeroboam? By addressing the altar, he discredits Jeroboam’s false gods and shames Jeroboam.

Application: Those sent to preach in Christ’s name have a divine commission to preach AGAINST all false religion and corruption of this world.

Any doctrine which gives man room to glory is false. All sinned in Adam, all were conceived in sin, all come forth dead in trespasses and in sins, all sin because sin is what we are. Not one sinner saved by the grace of God has any room to boast for we contribute nothing to our salvation at any point in our salvation. The gospel gives no sinner room to glory in his presence.

Salvation is of the Lord. Election is of God the Father. Redemption is of the GodMan, Christ the Son of God. Regeneration is of the God the Holy Spirit. We are kept by the power of God. Whatever good works the believer does were before ordained by God that we should walk in them—they are but our reasonable service.

The wrath of God is surely against all free-will, works religion which gives a sinner room to boast. It is idolatry the same as Jeroboam’s idolatry.

Jeremiah 9: 23: Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: 24: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

He Cried In the Word of the LORD

Secondly, notice his faithfulness in that he cried, verse two says, “IN the word of the LORD.” It does not say he cried “the word of the LORD,” but that he cried “IN the word of the LORD.”

God’s true messengers along with every true believer not only bear witness of the word of God, but we live—IN the Word of God. For believers, the gospel of Christ and him crucified is not merely a system of doctrine but Christ’s words are the words of eternal life. He is our Life, our Righteousness, our Redeemer

and our redemption who justified us by his own blood, reconciled us to God when we were yet enemies in our minds by wicked works. Christ is the very heartbeat IN our inner man and the very Power and Strength IN whom we live.

Romans 8: 9: But ye are not in the flesh, but IN the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

Colossians 3: 3: For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4: When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

He Preached Christ and him Crucified

Thirdly, we see his faithfulness in the message itself. In type, the message delivered was the gospel of the conquering Son of David, Christ Jesus the Lord, in verse two, “O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men’s bones shall be burnt upon thee. 3: And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This *is* the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that *are* upon it shall be poured out.”

Josiah is a type of Christ. His name is a compound of—“foundation” and “JAH-Jehovah.”—Jehovah Jesus is our Foundation. Josiah was a Son of David like our Savior is the Offspring of David. Like Josiah was prophesied to come years before and named by name, so was Christ our Savior, even a sign was given like it was here.

Isaiah 7: 14: Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

The man of God declared that Josiah would burn the bones of the false priests upon that very altar. This prophecy was not fulfilled for 360 years; yet, when the time fixed by the counsel of God arrived, not one thing failed to be accomplished of all the prophet declared should come to pass. Josiah not only did exactly as God said he would, Josiah also gave himself to destroy all idolatry out of the land, then after that he set his hand to rebuild the house of the LORD.

Likewise, at the time set from eternity, Christ our Redeemer came forth and fulfilled all that was written in the law and the prophets concerning him. After fulfilling the law for his people, purging all the sins of all the elect of God on the cross, and bruising Satan’s head—Christ arose the victorious Head of his church. He is now breaking down idolatry in the hearts of his redeemed through the gospel, giving life through the Holy Spirit, calling each one to faith in Christ. Our Masterbuilder is building up the house of God with his living stones gathered from the four corners of the earth. Brethren, you are...

Ephesians 2: 19:...of the household of God; 20: And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21: In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; 22: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

So we see the man of God stood courageously before this powerful king Jeroboam and preached faithfully against all the idolatrous works of men’s hands, declaring Christ and him crucified.

II. SECONDLY, WE SEE THE MAN OF GOD’S FAITHFULNESS AT THE VIOLENT REACTION OF THE KING—1 Kings 13: 4 And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in

again to him. 5: The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

The Outstretched Hand

The king's outstretched hand shows us natural man's opposition to the gospel of Jesus Christ. When the unregenerate man hears the gospel that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes," that there is "none other name under heaven whereby we must be saved," he hears God speak against his idols, against his false refuge, against him. (Rom 10: 1-4; Acts 4: 12) The response of the hard-heart of rebellion is violence as seen in verse four, "he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him." Instead of removing his hand from his idol to lay hold of Christ by faith he reached forth to destroy the messenger—and would do the same to God if he could reach him. The fool says in his heart, "No, God!"

The Prayer of the Rebellious

We see the necessity of the new birth. The king's hand withered, the altar rent, the ashes were poured out, "according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD." Surely this will bring about repentance in the king! Nope! Verse six gives this sad request of Jeroboam, "And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Intreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again."

Application: Until God gives a new heart, not only will a man not repent, but a man doesn't even know what to pray for as he ought. The king only wanted his hand healed, not his heart. But God made his hand to wither to show the believer, "No weapon formed against thee shall prosper." (Isaiah 54: 17)

Faithfulness in the Face of Violence

Still, the man of God stood firm and faithful against this violent reaction, verse six, "And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before." Faithfulness is shown here in not rendering evil for evil; but being of a forgiving spirit. How often Satan attempts to overcome us in this way! Though the king had stretched out HIS hand against him, the man of God lifted up HIS hand to heaven for him. And God healed him.

In healing the withered hand of his enemy, at the intercession of the man of God, we see a picture of the mercy of God who for the sake of Christ, forgives the sin of his people, though enemies in our minds, at the ever-prevailing intercession of Christ Jesus.

Application: Our Savior instructs us to "Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you." (Lk 6: 28)

1 Peter 2: 19: For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 20: For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. 21: For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed....

III. THIRDLY, WE SEE HIS FAITHFULNESS IN RESISTING THE TEMPTING OF THE KING—
I Kings 13: 7: And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward.

Faithfulness against Craftiness

Satan has many weapons in his arsenal. The king failed in the use of violence; now he attempts to overcome the man of God by craftiness. How often this is the case! A man whose heart is raging against Christ, first speaks ill or does some harm rejecting our gospel in some way. Then he seeks to draw you to his side. Why?

Application: This is very important. If the man who rejects our gospel can get God's preacher or deacons to appear as his friend then the truth we stand for is discredited before the people while him and his false gospel has gained credibility in the eyes of the people.

The man of God remained faithful—how so? **1 Kings 13: 8: And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: 9: For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. 10: So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel.**

Remember, Christ ate with publicans and sinners, he even went into the house of Pharisee's. But once a man rejected the gospel, he charged us, "Let them alone!"

2 Corinthians 6: 14: Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?...17: Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18: And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

IV. LASTLY, WE SEE THE MAN OF GOD ERR.—I Kings 13: 11: Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father...14: And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am. 15: Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread. 16: And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: 17: For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest. 18 He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him.

The Tempter was an Old Prophet

Notice, the tempter was not a ferocious king, but an old prophet. Let's see what lessons we can learn from the tempter.

First, this man may be a false prophet or he may be true; it is hard to say. All indications point to him being false: he was living in a land of idolatry, he allowed his sons to attend idolatrous worship. But the question mark over this man is the very point. A questionable character is better left alone. Judge righteous judgment.

Secondly, the old prophet used their common offices to persuade the man of God in verse eighteen, “I am a prophet also as thou art.” Beware when men attempt to appeal to any commonalities other than the truth of Christ. Christ is the tie that binds—what think ye of Christ?

Thirdly, the old prophet flat out lied in verse eighteen, saying, “an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him.” Remember, BEFORE THE FALL SATAN USED A SERPENT, AFTER SIN ENTERED IN, NOW SATAN USES MEN.

2 Corinthians 11: 13: For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 14: And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15: Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Fourthly, here was the main reason that the man of God should not have given ear to this man, the man of God knew clearly the will of God in this matter. Read verse seventeen, “For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.”

Application: If we sit down to meat with freewill, works religionists—especially in worship, joining ourselves with them—we will return by the same way we came, like a dog returning to his vomit—and go backward at a much quicker rate, than we came forward in the race set before us. (2 Peter 2: 20-22) Run the race looking to Christ alone. Turn not back again. (Hebrews 12: 1-2)

The Man of God Sitting Under the Oak

Now, let’s look at the man of God. He was sitting under an oak, instead of travelling on home. Let’s see what lessons we can learn from the error the man of God made.

First, remember, often the real trial comes after we think the trial is over. He may have been tired. But most likely, after his successful resistance of the king, he had become self-complacent and full of self-confidence. Beware of false security after we have proven faithful in one trial. It is only by the grace of God that sinful creatures like us prove faithful. We have absolutely no reason to ever think we have some sufficiency in ourselves. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” (1 Cor 10: 12)

Secondly, remember, it is dangerous to hang around the scene of temptation. If the Lord opens the door to go in and preach in a place of will-worship, once you have preached, go home. If the man of God had continued on, instead of stopping, he would not have been overtaken by the old prophet.

Thirdly, generally speaking, in our life as believers, we must not eat and drink by the way; redeem the time, but do not waste time. God has given us a commission to set forth the gospel. We must not become entangled with the affairs of this life or we will surely forget the reason we are here in the first place.

2 Timothy 2: 4: No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

Matthew 6:24: No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

The Chastening Hand of our Heavenly Father

The chastening hand of our heavenly Father now comes upon the man of God. God our Father shall chasten his servants. God often uses the very one who tempted us to also rebuke us as we see in verse nineteen, “So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water. 20: And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back: 21 And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee, 22 But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which *the LORD* did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.”

Mercy in Chastening

Also, we see mercy in his chastening. Before we read this, I remind you, this is only temporal judgment, like Moses who the Lord chastened. (Deuteronomy 3: 25-27; 34: 4-6; Numbers 20: 12) Christ has born the just judgment for the iniquities of his people on the cross. Nothing can separate those for whom Christ died and has brought to faith in Christ from Christ. (Romans 8: 34-39)

Therefore, understand, that when believers “are judged we are chastened of the LORD, that we should not be condemned with the world.” (1 Cor 11: 32) We see mercy in the fact that the LORD did not allow the dead body of his servant to be torn in verse twenty-four, “And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase.” Then again in verse twenty-eight, “And he went and found his carcase cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcase: the lion had not eaten the carcase, nor torn the ass.”

The Lord allowed the lion to go so far but stopped him. Then the Lord used the ravenous lion, contrary to his instincts, to stand over the body of his prophet as a kind guardian. God showed mercy in that the man of God had a proper burial. The old prophet performed the ceremony, and pretended to mourn, saying, “Alas, my brother!” like those who weep for those they treated so badly in their lifetime.

One last lesson: We cannot judge of a man’s eternal state from the way in which he may be taken out of this world. The man of God sinned, within a few hours a lion slays him. But the lying prophet that seduced him lives on, and goes to his grave in peace and wicked Jeroboam continues his idolatrous worship, and treads upon the grave of his reprovor. But there is a judgment to come, when what appears to be inequality, will be made clear with impartial justice.

Brethren, follow the Lord. Our unfaithfulness is all of us; our faithfulness is to the praise of God’s grace. Set your affection on things above where Christ sits, and follow him.

Amen!