

Today we will return to the Old Testament for another emphasis on the *Trustworthiness of God's Words*, this time in the book of Kings.

“No other book of the Bible goes so out of its way to cite God’s words as the driving force and explanation behind the events of human history as the record of 1 and 2 Kings.” [189]¹

Recurring phrases:

“the word of the Lord” in Kings: 51 times (Chronicles: 13 times)²

“thus says the Lord” in Kings: 33 times (Chronicles: 12 times)

These references highlight God’s word, often in prophecy, and many times include the fulfillment of these prophecies. Some fulfillments are immediate, “others take years, decades, or even centuries to materialize.” [190]

The theological point: “*all God’s words are totally trustworthy.*” [190]

The Man of God and The Word of the Lord (1 Kings 13)

Context of God’s word fulfilled prior to this passage:

- Eli’s descendant Abiathar removed from the priesthood as God had said (1 Ki 2.27)
- Solomon established on David’s throne, as God had said (1 Ki 8.20, 24)
- Kingdom divided because of Solomon’s sin, as God had said (1 Ki 12.15)
- Jeroboam, God’s appointee for the Northern Kingdom, turned away from God and led his people into deviant worship that earned God’s condemnation (1 Ki 12.25-33)

The man from God (unnamed) — story commences with 1 Ki 13.1

- Jeroboam offering incense at the golden calf of Bethel (1)

¹ Layton Talbert, *The Trustworthiness of God's Words: Why the Reliability of Every Word from God Matters* (Geanies House, UK: Christian Focus, 2022), 189 (All other quotations will be noted merely by a page number [in brackets]).

² Chronicles is 14% longer and covers essentially the same material.

- Man of God approaches (1), crying out against Jeroboam's sins (2-3)

1 Ki 13.2-3 He cried against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, "O altar, altar, thus says the LORD, 'Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.'" ³ Then he gave a sign the same day, saying, "This is the sign which the LORD has spoken, 'Behold, the altar shall be split apart and the ashes which are on it shall be poured out.'"

- Jeroboam reacts, cries to his guards, but is paralyzed, and the altar immediately breaks in two (4-5)
- Jeroboam begs the prophet to entreat God for his healing, his hand is restored (6)
- Jeroboam invites the prophet to his home for "refreshment and reward" (7) but the man of God refuses (8-9)

1 Ki 13.8-9 But the man of God said to the king, "If you were to give me half your house I would not go with you, nor would I eat bread or drink water in this place." ⁹ "For so it was commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'You shall eat no bread, nor drink water, nor return by the way which you came.'"

Things to note:

- The prophesy about Josiah, who would defile Jeroboam's altar
- The prophesy about the immediate breach of the altar

The old prophet interferes (11)

- Claims a word of the Lord told him to invite the unnamed man of God to his home (18) [Note repetition of the unnamed prophet's restrictions, vv. 15-17)

1 Ki 13.18 He said to him, "I also am a prophet like you, 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.'" *But he lied to him.*

- After deceiving the man of God, the old prophet indeed receives a word from the Lord (20-22)

1 Ki 13.20-22 ¶ Now it came about, as they were sitting down at the table, that the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back;²¹ and he cried to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Because you have disobeyed the command of the LORD, and have not observed the commandment which the LORD your God commanded you,²² but have returned and eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which He said to you, “Eat no bread and drink no water”; your body shall not come to the grave of your fathers.’”

- When the man of God set out again on his journey, a lion attacked him and killed him but didn’t maul or consume his body (24)
- The old prophet gathered the body, buried it in his own grave, and told his sons to bury him beside the man of God when his own time came (31)

1 Ki 13.32 “For the thing shall surely come to pass which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria.”

The results:

- Jeroboam continued in his evil idolatry (after repairing the altar of Bethel)
- The kings of Israel continued in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat
- And 32 chapters of Kings and 300 years later, Josiah came to reign on the throne of David and indeed defiled and destroyed Jeroboam’s altar

2 Ki 23.15-16 ¶ Furthermore, the altar that *was* at Bethel *and* the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, even that altar and the high place he broke down. Then he demolished its stones, ground them to dust, and burned the Asherah.¹⁶ Now when Josiah turned, he saw the graves that *were* there on the mountain, and he sent and took the bones from the graves 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 things.

Conclusion for today's lesson:

- “Every conversation and action in the story hinges on *the word of the Lord.*” [193]
- The focus of the narrative: not the personalities, not the sin of Jeroboam, but the word of the Lord

“Every time God’s words are confirmed by an immediate and visible fulfillment, it conditions us to accept all other words of the Lord as equally reliable, even when they seem incredible, unlikely, or delayed. ... The fulfillments we can see guarantee the certainty of those we can’t.” [193]