

Exegetical Notes – 1 Kings 13:11-32

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1 Kings 13:11-32

Verses 11-19

¹¹ Now there was a certain old prophet living in Bethel, whose sons came and told him all that the man of God had done there that day. They also told their father what he had said to the king. ¹² Their father asked them, "Which way did he go?" And his sons showed him which road the man of God from Judah had taken. ¹³ So he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." And when they had saddled the donkey for him, he mounted it ¹⁴ and rode after the man of God. He found him sitting under an oak tree and asked, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?"

"I am," he replied.

¹⁵ So the prophet said to him, "Come home with me and eat."

¹⁶ The man of God said, "I cannot turn back and go with you, nor can I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. ¹⁷ I have been told by the word of the Lord: 'You must not eat bread or drink water there or return by the way you came.'"

¹⁸ The old prophet answered, "I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the Lord: 'Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.'" (But he was lying to him.) ¹⁹ So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house.

- For background, read 1 Kings 13:1-10.
- There was an old man who lived in Bethel, the city where Jeroboam the king of Israel, had placed one of the golden calves. Whether he was a prophet of YHWH or a false prophet is not known. His sons came home one day and told him about the man of God who had come to Bethel from Judah and all the events told in 1 Kings 13:1-10. When the old prophet heard about this, he went in search of the man of God. When he found the man of God, the old prophet invited the man of God to come back to his house in Bethel and eat with him.
- The man of God told the old prophet that he could not honor his request because YHWH had told him not to eat or drink while he was in Israel.

- But the old prophet told the man of God that a messenger from YHWH, an angel, had spoken to him, too, and had told him that he was to bring the man of God back to his house and feed him. None of this had happened. So, the old prophet shows himself to be a false prophet. He told lies!
- But the man of God trusted the old prophet. He believed that YHWH had spoken to the old prophet. So, he went home with the old prophet not knowing that he had been deceived.

Verses 20-22

²⁰ While they were sitting at the table, the word of the Lord came to the old prophet who had brought him back. ²¹ He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, "This is what the Lord says: 'You have defied the word of the Lord and have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. ²² You came back and ate bread and drank water in the place where he told you not to eat or drink. Therefore your body will not be buried in the tomb of your ancestors.'"

- The old prophet had true prophetic gifts. He did hear from YHWH. However, he used these gifts to promote himself rather than YHWH.
- As they ate together, the old prophet accused the man of God of being a false prophet because he had disobeyed the specific instructions YHWH had given him. He accused the man of God of "defying the word of YHWH."
- This accusation was true. The man of God had not followed the instructions YHWH had given him.
- The old prophet told the man of God that because he had not followed God's instructions, he would not be buried in the family tomb when he died.

Verses 23-25

²³ When the man of God had finished eating and drinking, the prophet who had brought him back saddled his donkey for him. ²⁴ As he went on his way, a lion met him on the road and killed him, and his body was left lying on the road, with both the donkey and the lion standing beside it. ²⁵ Some people who passed by saw the body lying there, with the lion standing beside the body, and they went and reported it in the city where the old prophet lived.

- After the meal, the man of God resumed his journey back to Judah. He was attacked by a lion on the way and died. People passing by saw the man of God lying by the road dead and reported what they saw back in Bethel.

Verse 26

²⁶ When the prophet who had brought him back from his journey heard of it, he said, "It is the man of God who defied the word of the Lord. The Lord has given him over to the lion, which has mauled him and killed him, as the word of the Lord had warned him."

- The old prophet told the people that the dead man was the man of God from Judah. He told the people of Bethel that he had correctly prophesied that the man of God would die like this and that he had warned the man of God of his fate.

Verses 27-32

²⁷ The prophet said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me," and they did so.

²⁸ Then he went out and found the body lying on the road, with the donkey and the lion standing beside it. The lion had neither eaten the body nor mauled the donkey. ²⁹ So the prophet picked up the body of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back to his own city to mourn for him and bury him.

³⁰ Then he laid the body in his own tomb, and they mourned over him and said, "Alas, my brother!"

³¹ After burying him, he said to his sons, "When I die, bury me in the grave where the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. ³² For the message he declared by the word of the Lord against the altar in Bethel and against all the shrines on the high places in the towns of Samaria will certainly come true."

- The old prophet then went and brought the body of the man of God, which had not been eaten by the lion, back to his home. He mourned for the man of God and buried him in his own tomb.
- The old man recognized that the man of God was part of the company of prophets and honored the man of God because of this.
- The old man gave instructions that when he died he was to be buried next to the man of God. He declared that the words the man of God spoke against the altar in Bethel were truly from God and would come true.

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