

**JUNE 14**

**1 Kings 12:20-13:34**

1 Kings 12:20-33

Vs. 20-24 Although it says that only Judah followed *the house of David*, Benjamin is listed as contributing to the army of Judah. God kept this a relatively bloodless civil war.

V. 24 Rehoboam listened to the man of God, and in humility, he did something wise.

Vs. 26-33 God had made a promise to Jeroboam and it had been fulfilled to this point. There should have been no doubt on Jeroboam's part that God would fulfill everything. And remember too, that Jeroboam was being given one half of one of the most glorious and prosperous kingdoms on earth. This is an utterly amazing gift and honor.

Look at what is influencing Jeroboam. Faith is spiritual, fixed on, and resting in God. The flesh is not only of no avail; it can destroy us, others and nations. As disciples these are some of the same things that influence us. I don't know about you, but this all seems so unbelievable. He is blessed by God and then commits amazing sin to hold on to the gift and the blessing.

Notice what Jeroboam imitated. He made golden calves in the north and south, and allowed worship anywhere. And, he made anyone a priest. Talk about being an equal opportunity employer. And in v. 32 he replaced the Day of Atonement with a feast of his own. What a smart guy.

One question here: Why do you think the nation was so easy to push into idol worship? Doesn't it seem like the entire country would have rebelled at leaving the worship of Yahweh like this? So, who got the nation ready for this? That's right, the wisest man in the world, by his own ungodly example, led Israel into idolatry. Isn't it stunning to think that the man who built the temple, as a king, introduced such grave idolatry into the nation for so many years before these events, that Israel would never recover. This would eventually lead the nation into exile and lead to the destruction of the temple.

As disciples, we are never perfect. In following in humility, our imperfections are overwhelmed by God's grace and forgiveness. We need to beware of having a secret life, as David did for a time, and as Solomon must have had privately with his wives, before it became public. Living with such a contradiction between belief and practice caused irreparable damage. It appears that neither David nor Solomon read the Word daily as they were commanded to do in Deuteronomy.

## 1 Kings 13

Vs. 1-10 So, what common element ties the events of chapters 12 & 13 together besides the fact that the names of both guys end in *boam*? It seems to me that both were faced with a *man of God*. This begins something very important in the history of Israel and in prophetic history: the role of the prophet. God begins sending His messengers before the kings and people, but the prophets are ignored or killed.

V. 2 This will not happen for another 290 years. Josiah will be (in my opinion) the godliest king the nation ever had. He will be a brilliant light before the storm hits Israel.

Vs. 4-10 So, in spite of all of these signs, Jeroboam didn't change. What does that say to you? I thought "seeing is believing." We will observe this "seeing is not believing phenomenon" more and more. Signs will most often result in showing the deep, controlling sin in people, thus giving God basis for judgment. The signs will not move the majority of the people to repentance and obedience.

V. 5 This translation by the ESV is unfortunate. As the prophet was speaking, the altar was not "torn down," but it burst apart and spewed the ashes that were on it, defiling everyone in the area.

Vs. 11-34 Your guess is as good as anyone's regarding the meaning of this story of the man of God and the prophet of Bethel. Go nuts making observations and applications. Everything about this event is strange for a purpose.

As I read this this morning it hit me that it may be that the Lord was introducing the concept of "parable" into the teaching of Israel. The idea of parables and hidden truth is introduced in Psalm 78 and it is linked to Israel's disobedience. Parables, as Jesus used them, were truth in story form that would become understood by those who sought, but whose truth would remain veiled to those who really didn't care. Parables reveal the faith or unbelief of the hearer. The use of parables is also related to the call of Isaiah in Isaiah 6:8-10. The way that God will now be revealing truth to Israel will make it so those who don't want to see won't. And those who hear, but don't want to hear, will not understand.

So, thinking of this entire story as a kind of parable, that is, truth with deeper meaning under the surface if you try to understand it. What does it say to you as a disciple living in this present darkness? The Spirit had a lot to say to me.

Vs. 30-32 These verses actually give the message and meaning of the story. The thing God had prophesied would surely happen. Judgment was determined and all the circumstances of this event showed that every word would be fulfilled. Remember that this guy would be buried next to the man of God. We'll revisit both of their bones, and this event, when we read about Josiah 290 years from now (if you know what I mean).

## **Acts 9:26-43**

Vs. 26-30 One of the challenges in understanding how Paul's testimony in Galatians fits here is that he says it was three years after his conversion that he went to Jerusalem. So then, it is presumed that he left Damascus, went to the Arabia, returned to Damascus and then went to Jerusalem. The challenge is that in v. 26, they are still terribly afraid of Paul. If this is all accurate, then Paul must have been a very terrible guy who had left wreckage and scars and bad memories all over the place. I think that was his reputation.

V. 27 Paul was trying to find the apostles, but it was like a wacky cartoon. He would come into a room and they would sneak away on tiptoes behind him. As everyone else was avoiding Paul, Barnabas actively sought out and laid hold of Paul and took him to the apostles. Now, in Galatians 1:17, Paul says he only saw the apostles Peter and James (the brother of Jesus); but it should be noted, that the group of apostles was growing. Barnabas would be called an apostle as well as others. Apparently Paul meant that he didn't see the Twelve.

V. 29 That old Paul magic was working again. How do you know Paul was involved in effective ministry? People were trying to kill him.

V. 30 Caesarea was the main seaport. Philip lived there now and so did Cornelius. Peter would be there soon. Although Caesarea was northwest of Jerusalem, all directions from Jerusalem are "down." Paul was from Tarsus, in what would be modern-day Turkey. Today, Paul would have been a Turk by birth. According to Paul, in Galatians, it would be 14 years until he would return to Jerusalem.

V. 31 Notice that when Paul left, they had peace. ☺ Can you imagine the change in Paul's identity? Jerusalem and those three feasts each year had been his world. Now Jerusalem was not only the scene of his crimes, but also the place where his newly found Savior had bought his forgiveness. This city had been his life, and now Paul would not see Jerusalem again for 14 years.

Even for us as disciples, radical change is to be expected as we follow Christ on this planet. Times, places and people come and go; but for us, Jesus, His love, and His mission become and remain our focus, leading us into new seasons of growth, friendships, service, and joy.

Vs. 32-43 This account of Peter's travels is a very important setup to the next major important event in the early church and God's plan of redemption.

V. 32 Peter was visiting believers who had been forced to flee Jerusalem. Of course, some of those who came to Christ in Jerusalem may have lived in some of these towns and cities. The network of faith was spreading throughout Judea and Samaria.

V. 36 Joppa would have been one of those cities where Philip preached as he walked from Azotus to Caesarea.

V. 42 It is interesting that Peter was staying with a tanner. Jews regarded them as unclean because they were always dealing with dead animals.

There is a reason why God used Peter like this. Obviously, He wanted people healed, but God's plans also had to do with a purpose He had for Peter, an apostle and a true-blue Jew, to knock down one huge wall. God is giving Peter a great deal of esteem among the Jewish Christians. This respect will come in handy in chapter 11.

As Christians, we are often overly personality oriented. We read the books and try to figure out the talent, faith and abilities that made a person great. It is still God who chooses the person and does that work. There are many more talented, faithful, capable people running around and serving Christ without renown, than those who serve with public recognition. God decides who to give a public name and ministry. Others may be more skilled, more fruitful and more faithful, but God just doesn't lift them up. It isn't for a lack of devotion or faith on their part. It just isn't the Lord's plan for them. Faithfulness in loving and following Christ in the harvest is the goal, not renown or respect. God gives visible ministry to people publicly if and when it is necessary for Him and His plan. Peter will pay a price for this and then he will disappear from the record of Acts.

## **Psalm 132**

No one is sure when this psalm was written; but since we just witnessed Solomon dedicating the temple, it seems that this could have been the song that was sung on that occasion.

Vs. 1-5 This was the reason for the passion of both David and Solomon to build the temple. Therefore, especially because of David's passion and sufferings, God should remember to honor Zion.

Vs. 6-10 As the people respect David's desire, God is asked to honor the temple with His presence.

Vs. 11-12 This sounds like Solomon reminding the Lord what He said to him.

Vs. 13-18 These verses take on a prophetic note, referring to the final king in David's line. See how many references you find that make sense to you.

Notice that the idea of *crown* could be related to the promise that Solomon's sons, grandchildren and descendants would sit on the throne after him (vs. 11-12) and then in v. 17 referring to Jesus. Now, look at how Proverbs 17:6 begins.

**Proverbs 17:6**

My "grand-crowns" are all living in Germany. As for the next part, the Lord says this, so it is true, but I wonder if this is what most people think or experience in our world today.