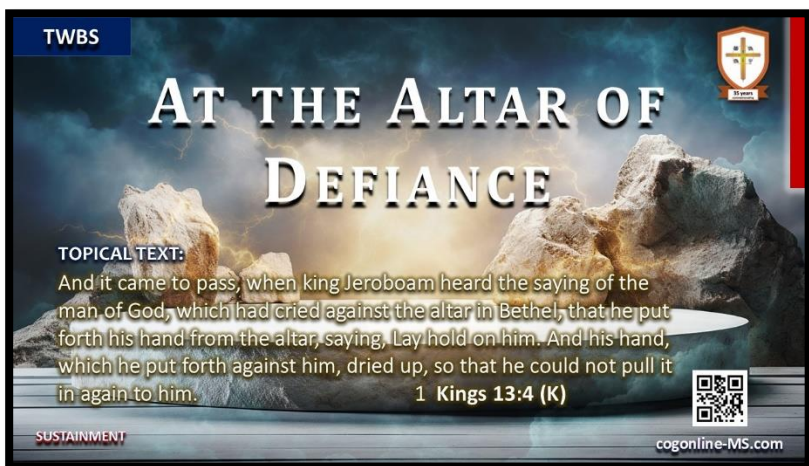




TWBS

AT THE ALTAR OF DEFIANCE

TOPICAL TEXT:
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.
1 Kings 13:4 (K)

SUSTAINMENT

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STUDY TEXT:

1 Kings 13:1-6, 33-34 (K)

¹ 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.

² And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, 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.

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.

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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.

⁶ 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. And the man of God besought the Lord, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before.

^{1 Kings 13:33} After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places.

³⁴ And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth.

APPLICATION POINT:

King Jeroboam's wicked scheme to maintain political control over the people of the Northern Kingdom reflects the common evil elements that have been associated with every system of false religion that has been introduced into the sphere of fallen humanity across the centuries.

AT THE ALTAR OF DEFIANCE

FOCUS TEXT: 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.

1 Kings 13:4 (K)

We cannot justly deny the fact that the mercies of God are repeatedly granted to us according to **Psalms 13:10** that states: **“He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.”**

And moreover, He had repeatedly demonstrated to us as has been described in earlier **verse 8**: **“The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.”**

Yet despite these grace responses we (humanity) have frequently shown our complete indifference toward His initial prompting to us, compelling us to repent and turn from following the destructive path of wickedness.

And thus, we observe in the present inspired account another mirror example of our hardened indifference toward the stern rebuke and corrective measures of Heaven that are intended to spare us the greater punitive response of divine wrath that will inevitably be unleashed to address the persistent conditions of our unrepentant and defiant heart, and our associated actions willful rebellion against the Word of God.

The Word of God, from the Man of God

On the inaugural day of the implementation of Jeroboam's idolatrous, false religious system the Lord promptly dispatched His

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commission ambassador “from Judah” to openly reprove the open actions of ungodly defiance that he was about to commence.

Verse 1a so reported: **“And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the Lord unto Bethel.”**

And this action served not only to rebuke Jeroboam for his deliberated defiance against the known way of God; but, also to afford him the opportunity to avoid the full brunt of the measure wrath of God that his wicked actions merited.

As we observed from the very beginning, King Jeroboam’s actions were not the result of His ignorance of revealed truth; but rather, spawn from a heart of evil unbelief in God and His ability to fulfill His promises.

Hence, his willful and premediated plans mirrored the graphic depiction of **Romans 2:5** that described: **“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”;**

And also reflected the character of **verse 2:8a** that detailed: **“But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness.”**

Thus, here we too are compelled to ponder the true character of our heart posture toward Heaven, and the associated conduct and behavior of our daily lives which manifestly testify to it.

Heaven’s Prompt Intervention & Public Rebuke

King Jeroboam’s wicked scheme to maintain political control over the people of the Northern Kingdom reflects the common evil elements that have been associated with every system of false religion that has been introduced into the sphere of fallen humanity across the centuries.

Namely they are: 1) devilish in origine; 2) created purposely to rival the true order divine worship; 3) blasphemously defiant toward God; and 4) intrinsically and inevitably destruction to all that become ensnared in it attractive web.

Notably, in **verse 2** it is plainly indicated that the main feature of that represented King Jeroboam's idolatrous system became the central target of divine wrath.

This was the key element that was proudly endorsed in **verse 12:33** that detailed: **"So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense."**

Thus, likewise, the Lord's direct rebuke countered by publicly declared: **"And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, 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."**

That is, at some future point (300 years later) this system of wickedness, as well as those associated with it would eventually be destroyed by a specially appointed servant of Heaven.

An Immediate Public & Punitive Heavenly Response

As King Jeroboam sought to intervene and hinder the authority of the true "man of God," the Lord directly deposed his evil efforts as cited in **verse 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."**

Then, subsequently, having addressed the actions of the brash opposer the Lord promptly fulfilled His prophetic Word as described in **verse 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."**

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Thus, shown to be completely powerless to thwart the greater power of God, Jeroboam acquiesced (backed down); however, even though he sought the blessing of immediate healing; his heart remained completely defiant and hardened to continue along the wicked path that he had chosen to follow.