

Should You Listen to a Prophet or a Donkey?
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
July 25, 2009

Who we should listen to?

1 Kings 13

- 1 And behold, a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.
- 2 Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, "O altar, altar! Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be burned on you.'"
 - This specific prophecy, including Josiah's name, was remarkable since it was given almost 300 years before Josiah was born.
- 3 And he gave a sign the same day, saying, "This is the sign which the LORD has spoken: Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out."
 - The altar of Jeroboam.
- 4 So it came to pass when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, who cried out against the altar in Bethel, that he stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, "Arrest him!" Then his hand, which he stretched out toward him, withered, so that he could not pull it back to himself.
 - The hand represented authority, and thus indicates Jeroboam's authority would wither.
- 5 The altar also was split apart, 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 sign came to pass
- 6 Then the king answered and said to the man of God, "Please entreat the favor of the LORD your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me." So the man of God entreated the LORD, and the king's hand was restored to him, and became as before.
 - This prophet is simply referred to as "the man of God"
 - No name is given
- 7 Then the king said to the man of God, "Come home with me and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward."
- 8 But the man of God said to the king, "If you were to give me half your house, I would not go in with you; nor would I eat bread nor drink water in this place."
 - Eating bread and drinking water would symbolize approval.
- 9 "For so it was commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'You shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came.'"
- 10 So he went another way and did not return by the way he came to Bethel.
- 11 Now an old prophet dwelt in Bethel, and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel; they also told their father the words which he had spoken to the king.
- 12 And their father said to them, "Which way did he go?" For his sons had seen which way the man of God went who came from Judah.

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- 13 Then he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." So they saddled the donkey for him; and he rode on it,
- 14 and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak. Then he said to him, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?" And he said, "I am."
- 15 Then he said to him, "Come home with me and eat bread."
- 16 And he said, "I cannot return with you nor go in with you; neither can I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place.
- 17 "For I have been told by the word of the LORD, 'You shall not eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by going the way you came.'"
- 18 He said to him, "I too am a prophet as you are, 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.'" (**He was lying to him.**)
 - Both men were evidently valid prophets.
 - The second lied to the first.
- 19 So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water.
 - The first disobeyed a directive from God
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 - The rest of the story in verses 20-31 tell how the two were treated
 - We will skip over these verses since they are part of another study

Revelation 2-3

- The seven letters to the seven churches
- Each church, like each person, has something to “overcome”
- Did you ever think that one thing you have to overcome is the teaching of your teacher?

2 Timothy 3:

- 1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:
- 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
- 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,
- 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,
- 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!
-
- 13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.
 - In order to deceive a large number of people, one needs to be in some position of authority

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- 14 But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,
- 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
- 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
- 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 4

- 1 I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:
- 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.
 - Paul is exhorting Timothy to stay true to the scriptures in what he preaches
 - A radio minister once said "If all I could preach was from the Bible, I would quit"
 - He should quit
- 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;
- 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.
 - People want to believe in Christmas, Easter and Sunday
 - People want to believe what is in their hearts instead of what is in the Bible
 - Today's preachers are teaching what people want to hear instead of what is in the Bible
- 5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Isaiah 30

- 9 That this is a rebellious people, Lying children, Children who will not hear the law of the LORD;
- 10 Who say to the seers, "Do not see," And to the prophets, "Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits.

Jeremiah 5

- 30 "An astonishing and horrible thing Has been committed in the land:
- 31 The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?

Jeremiah 23:

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- - Skipping over several verses that have to do with the punishment of the false prophets
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- 1 "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!" says the LORD.
- 2 Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel against the shepherds who feed My people: "You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings," says the LORD.
 - Three failures
 - The church has been divided
 - Many have been driven away from any form of teaching about God
 - The churches have not attended to the needs of the poor, the sick and others in need
-
- 9 My heart within me is broken Because of the prophets; All my bones shake. I am like a drunken man, And like a man whom wine has overcome, Because of the LORD, And because of His holy words.
-
- 11 "For both prophet and priest are profane; Yes, in My house I have found their wickedness," says the LORD.
-
- 13 "And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria: They prophesied by Baal And caused My people Israel to err.
- 14 Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: They commit adultery and walk in lies; They also strengthen the hands of evildoers, So that no one turns back from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to Me, And her inhabitants like Gomorrah.
 - A minister in Texarkana was just convicted of sex crimes yesterday
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- 16 Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; They speak a vision of their own heart, Not from the mouth of the LORD.
- 17 They continually say to those who despise Me, "The LORD has said, "You shall have peace"; And to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say, 'No evil shall come upon you.'"
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- 21 "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.

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- 22 But if they had stood in My counsel, And had caused My people to hear My words, Then they would have turned them from their evil way And from the evil of their doings.
-
- 25 "I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!'
- 26 "How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart,
- 27 "who try to make My people forget My name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbor, as their fathers forgot My name for Baal.
-
- 30 "Therefore behold, I am against the prophets," says the LORD, "who steal My words every one from his neighbor.
- 31 "Behold, I am against the prophets," says the LORD, "who use their tongues and say, 'He says.'
- 32 "Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams," says the LORD, "and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all," says the LORD.
 - Three types of false prophets
 - Those who preach what is not in the scriptures
 - Those who claim that God has spoken to them, when He has not
 - Those who prophesy things not revealed to them by God or His Spirit

So we see that:

1. real prophets can lie
2. false prophets are hard to tell from real prophets
3. many people don't want to hear the truth

So – who do you listen to?

Numbers 22

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- 5 Then he (*Moab*) sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying: "Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me!
 - Balaam is a valid, recognized prophet of God
- 6 "Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the

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- land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."
- 7 So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the diviner's fee in their hand, and they came to Balaam and spoke to him the words of Balak.
 -
 - 12 And God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."
 - God gave Balaam a directive
 - 13 So Balaam rose in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, "Go back to your land, for the LORD has refused to give me permission to go with you."
 - Balaam intended to comply with God's word
 - 14 And the princes of Moab rose and went to Balak, and said, "Balaam refuses to come with us."
 - 15 Then Balak again sent princes, more numerous and more honorable than they.
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 - 18 Then Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more.
 - 19 "Now therefore, please, you also stay here tonight, that I may know what more the LORD will say to me."
 - 20 And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men come to call you, rise and go with them; but only the word which I speak to you-that you shall do."
 - God will allow him to go, but with a tight rein
 - 21 So Balaam rose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab.
 - 22 Then God's anger was aroused because he went, and the Angel of the LORD took His stand in the way as an adversary against him. And he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him.
 - Commentaries say that God was angry because Balaam was so willing to go - his attitude
 - 23 Now the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand, and the donkey turned aside out of the way and went into the field. So Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back onto the road.
 - 1st time
 - 24 Then the Angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on this side and a wall on that side.
 - 25 And when the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she pushed herself against the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; so he struck her again.
 - 2nd time
 - 26 Then the Angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left.

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- 27 And when the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam's anger was aroused, and he struck the donkey with his staff.
 - 3rd time
- 28 Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"
- 29 And Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you!"
- 30 So the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden, ever since I became yours, to this day? Was I ever disposed to do this to you?" And he said, "No."
- 31 Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face.
 - As a true prophet, Balaam should have been the one to see the angel instead of the donkey
- 32 And the Angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to stand against you, because your way is perverse before Me.
- 33 "The donkey saw Me and turned aside from Me these three times. If she had not turned aside from Me, surely I would also have killed you by now, and let her live."
- 34 And Balaam said to the Angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know You stood in the way against me. Now therefore, if it displeases You, I will turn back."
- 35 Then the Angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but only the word that I speak to you, that you shall speak." So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.
 - Balaam obeyed the Angel

Sometimes, we miss a message from God because it comes from an unexpected source

- A person we don't respect or like
- A minister whose beliefs are different
- A donkey?
- Experts?
- Doctors?
- Congressmen?

Be Careful who you listen to! And be careful whose advice you ignore! You will be held responsible for what you believe!

The bottom line – listen to God's Holy Spirit. If you pray that God send it to you, you will know that it is the truth – no matter who delivers the message.