

God's Calling Requirements
Part 15

"1 By the word of the LORD a man of God came from Judah to Bethel, as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make an offering. 2 By the word of the LORD he cried out against the altar: "Altar, altar! This is what the LORD says: 'A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you.' " 3 That same day the man of God gave a sign: "This is the sign the LORD has declared: The altar will be split apart and the ashes on it will be poured out." 4 When King Jeroboam heard what the man of God cried out against the altar at Bethel, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, "Seize him!" But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back. 5 Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the LORD. 6 Then the king said to the man of God, "Intercede with the LORD your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored." So the man of God interceded with the LORD, and the king's hand was restored and became as it was before. 7 The king said to the man of God, "Come home with me for a meal, and I will give you a gift." 8 But the man of God answered the king, "Even if you were to give me half your possessions, I would not go with you, nor would I eat bread or drink water here. 9 For I was commanded by the word of the LORD: 'You must not eat bread or drink water or return by the way you came.' " 10 So he took another road and did not return by the way he had come to Bethel. 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. 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.' " 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. 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." 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." 33 Even after this, Jeroboam did not change his evil ways, but once more appointed priests for the high places from all sorts of people. Anyone who wanted to become a priest he consecrated for the high places. 34 This was the sin of the house of Jeroboam that led to its downfall and to its destruction from the face of the earth." (1Kings 13:1-34)

God sent His man to deliver his message and to rebuke the wicked King Jeroboam who set up his idols in Bethel and Dan and worked it out to prohibit the Israelites to go to Jerusalem to worship God in the Temple of God as you can read: *"25 Then Jeroboam fortified Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. From there he went out and built up Peniel. 26 Jeroboam thought to himself, "The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David. 27 If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam." 28 After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt." 29 One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. 30 And this thing became a sin; the people came to worship the one at Bethel and went as far as Dan to worship the other. 31 Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites. 32 He instituted a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival held in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. This he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves he had made. And at Bethel he also installed priests at the high places he had made. 33 On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, a month of his own choosing, he offered sacrifices on the altar he had built at Bethel. So he instituted the festival for the Israelites and went up to the altar to make offerings." (1Kings 12:25-33)*

The man of God that the Lord sent to face and rebuke Jeroboam for his sin did well and he pronounced God's judgment to the king in a furious way and publicly in front of all the people. He proclaimed the judgment of God against Jeroboam who was standing there in front of the altar to do something against God's will. From the passage that we chose to read you can get the following conclusions and lessons to learn:-

1- Do not be afraid to proclaim the whole will of God; all will come true: "2 By the word of the LORD he cried out against the altar: "Altar, altar! This is what the LORD says: 'A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you.'" He reminded him that his sin by instituting another religious festival will be judged by God using the house of David through one of their Kings. The man of God gave him the name of the King, Josiah, who was truly born after 358 years. The man of God also mentioned to him that on this altar the priests of the high places will be slaughtered and offered on the altar, and human bones taken out from the graves will be burned on that altar. The man of God proclaimed all that publicly to all the people and faced them who came to offer their gifts to this false altar. That prophecy was fulfilled by King Josiah who did all this proclaimed judgment of God, "15 Even the altar at Bethel, the high place made by Jeroboam son of Nebat, who had caused Israel to sin—even that altar and high place he demolished. He burned the high place and ground it to powder, and burned the Asherah pole also. 16 Then Josiah looked around, and when he saw the tombs that were there on the hillside, he had the bones removed from them and burned on the altar to defile it, in accordance with the word of the LORD proclaimed by the man of God who foretold these things. 19 Just as he had done at Bethel, Josiah removed all the shrines at the high places that the kings of Israel had built

in the towns of Samaria and that had aroused the LORD's anger. 20 Josiah slaughtered all the priests of those high places on the altars and burned human bones on them. Then he went back to Jerusalem." (2Kings 23:15-16, 19-20) It is a kindness from God to send warning to sinners. So be diligent and be the instrument that God will use to send His kindness.

2- God will support you with signs and wonders as you are proclaiming and doing His will: *"3 That same day the man of God gave a sign: "This is the sign the LORD has declared: The altar will be split apart and the ashes on it will be poured out."* The people offered their sacrifices on an altar that on the same day got split, *"5 Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the LORD."* God supported His man who stood firm and proclaim the judgment message of God against His people who went away from Him.

3- Do not be afraid, God is with you against your enemy: *"4 When King Jeroboam heard what the man of God cried out against the altar at Bethel, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, "Seize him!" But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back."* God further supported His man when he inflicted judgment on Jeroboam when he tried to harm his prophet. God would protect His messenger who is doing His work according to His promise, *"15 Do not touch my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm." (Psalm 105:15)* When Jeroboam offered to the altar that he built, the Lord did not punish him but he sent him warning. But when he tried to harm his prophet, the Lord inflicted judgment on him. Those who try to harm those who do God's work will be punished by God. So do not be afraid, God is with you against your enemy.

4- Be merciful and pray for the sinners who asks you prayers: *"6 Then the king said to the man of God, "Intercede with the LORD your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored." So the man of God interceded with the LORD, and the king's hand was restored and became as it was before."* The man of God was merciful to Jeroboam when he asked for prayer. The point that we want to expound here, Jeroboam did not repent when God sent him judgment. So when the man of God prayed for his hand to be restored, he put the possibility that Jeroboam might be repenting of his sin when he will receive mercy from God. Jeroboam when he was inflicted he did not pray or asked healing from the altar that he built, so the man of God might put the possibility that Jeroboam might be repenting and that was another reason for him to pray. Your aim should be fruit in the life of the people that you are ministering.

5- Discern if people repented or not: *"7 The king said to the man of God, "Come home with me for a meal, and I will give you a gift."* Jeroboam did not repent from his sin. If he repented he would announce publicly his wrong doing, and if he wants to give a gift he should give it to God and send it to Jerusalem to the temple of God. Be discerning, people may give you food, invite you to eat, give you food but they are not repenting. You should be discerning and withdraw yourself and do not continue to condone their own wrong ways of life and their worship to their idols.

6- Stand firm and be firm with the people whom God sent you to minister: *"8 But the man of God answered the king, "Even if you were to give me half your possessions, I would not go with you, nor would I eat bread or drink water here. 9 For I was commanded by the word of the LORD: "You must not eat bread or drink water or return by the way you came."* The man of God was commissioned to do two more things in Bethel:

A- **Not to eat or drink anything there:** God intended to tell the people of Bethel, that He abhors their sin and the fellowship with them till they repent. The man of God said to Jeroboam, *"I would not go with you,"* and he refused to take anything from him, *"Even if*

you were to give me half your possessions. " With such kind of action and attitude, the message was more severe and affirmed.

B- **Not to return by the way he came:** The explanation of that is to show to the people of Bethel that the man of God was not coming to them but he met them as he was passing by. The purpose of that is not to show them importance so they will not take pride of themselves. *"10 So he took another road and did not return by the way he had come to Bethel."* In this way it showed that he was just passing by and was not intentionally coming for them.

7- Be obedient to the instruction that God is giving you: You may not understand why God is asking you certain instruction to do, but as you obey Him then the wisdom of God will be manifested in your ministry and you will be able to deal wisely with the people that he is sending you to minister.

8- Be aware of wicked false prophets who try to trap you: *"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."* That old prophet was wicked and false one. He did not go after the man of God to help him, look after him or his body needs, or to get the wisdom of God from Him. But he went after him to trap him. He most likely was trained by one of the schools of Samuel the prophet, but he left the ways of righteous and the true worship of God. If he is a true prophet he would not allow his children to attend the festival of Jeroboam. Further he lied to the man of God, *"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.)* False prophets are liars and telling lies for them is their normal language. They are devil servants and their ministry is to trap the people of God. That false prophet lied to the man of God in three things; proclaimed himself as a prophet, told a fabricated story as if a true, and he used the name of God in vain stated that God commissioned him to do so.

9- Be aware of the tempter: *"19 So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house."* Food and drink is a weakness and devil may enter into your life and destroy you through that. Devil tempted Eve and succeeded to make her eat from the forbidden tree. The tempter also tempted Jesus when he was hungry, but, *"Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:4)* The false prophets are those who knew the word of God but they don't live it, and their aim is to force and entice others to do and to be like them as you can read here, *"But you made the Nazirites drink wine and commanded the prophets not to prophesy."* (Amos 2:12) They push the committed people and try to break their commitment to God; that is so evil and wicked practice for the wicked false prophets. And they love to mislead people from the way of righteousness, and to make others to sin like; truly they are Satan servants. This what God's word tell us, *"9 Concerning the prophets: My heart is broken within me; all my bones tremble. I am like a drunken man, like a strong man overcome by wine, because of the LORD and his holy words. 10 The land is full of adulterers; because of the curse the land lies parched and the pastures in the*

wilderness are withered. The prophets follow an evil course and use their power unjustly. 11 “Both prophet and priest are godless; even in my temple I find their wickedness,” declares the LORD. 12 “Therefore their path will become slippery; they will be banished to darkness and there they will fall. I will bring disaster on them in the year they are punished,” declares the LORD. 13 Among the prophets of Samaria I saw this repulsive thing: They prophesied by Baal and led my people Israel astray.” (Jeremiah 23:9-13)

10- Be aware about your deed and actions because you are accountable to God: “19 So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house.” One meal had caused the life of that man of God. As you know what God had spoken to you then you should not allow others to tempt you or twist you. The man of God realized that this old prophet is wicked, because if he is a righteous man the Lord would use him to rebuke Jeroboam and no need for him to be sent to that place. He should not trust him because God did not use him to do the ministry that the man of God did. If you are faced with such kind of people who proclaim to be pastors, prophets, workers, etc, don’t believe them till you test see their fruit, “21 test everything; hold on to what is good, 22 reject every kind of evil.” (1Thessalonians 5:21-22)

11- God will discipline you for your disobedience and you will pay the consequences of your sins: “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.’” God proclaimed to His servant the judgment for his sin. Judgment will start in the house of God, to bring speedy repentance in their lives. The man of God heard his sentence and accepted it and did not retaliate or vindicate himself.

12- God used the false prophet to proclaim his judgment on the man of God: That is not strange; God used Balaam to proclaim his message. And the message of God was first given to the false prophet and it was a shocking message, “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.’” Now if God will judge His man for a single disobedience how much more the false prophet will receive of God’s judgment? It is an alarming message not to the man of God but first was the message alarming to the false prophet that is why he was crying in proclaiming it.

13- God fulfilled his judgment: “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.” The lion killed him but he did not eat him. God punished him for his sin, and ordained for him not to be buried in his father tomb. But the man of God is saved, for no eternal judgment was inflicted on him, and the prove of that is this: when king Josiah was excuting God’s judgment he did not disturb his grave or exposed his bones, “17 The king asked, “What is that tombstone I see?” The people of the city said, “It marks the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and pronounced against the altar of Bethel the very things you have done to it.” 18 “Leave it alone,” he said. “Don’t let anyone disturb his bones.” So they spared his bones and those of the prophet who had come from Samaria.” (2Kings 23:17-18)

14- God fulfilled what he said to bring others to repentance: “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. 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 people saw the scene and took heed of what had happened. The lion did not eat the man of God or kill the donkey, and everyone knew that it was God’s doing. Death is heavy and brings deep conviction. In this way the message of God’s judgment were proclaimed in more serious way.

15- The murderer brought to the scene and drove toward repentance: 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 false prophet convicted with the true judgment of God. He carried the man of God and his blood stained his clothed, realized that he was the one who killed him with his lies and realized that God will judge him in more sever way if he would not repent. Therefore he was driven not to chose to spend eternity on fire. He chose the destiny of the man of God that he buried. His repentance was proved when his bones were spared to be exposed when Josiah was executing the judgment of God, “17 The king asked, “What is that tombstone I see?” The people of the city said, “It marks the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and pronounced against the altar of Bethel the very things you have done to it.” 18 “Leave it alone,” he said. “Don’t let anyone disturb his bones.” So they spared his bones and those of the prophet who had come from Samaria.” (2Kings 23:17-18) Continue to do what God is asking you to do and the outcome of your ministry is in the hand of God. You do your part and He will be the One to bring sinners to repentance.

16- Others hardened their hearts: “33 Even after this, Jeroboam did not change his evil ways, but once more appointed priests for the high places from all sorts of people. Anyone who wanted to become a priest he consecrated for the high places. 34 This was the sin of the house of Jeroboam that led to its downfall and to its destruction from the face of the earth.” Jeroboam did not repent, and it seems that his heart was hardened and he continued in his sin. God tried with him His judgment (warning him) and his mercy (healing his hand) and when he did not respond then he hardened his heart by the dead of the man of God. Jeroboam might be speaking maliciously against the man of God and he might be using God’s judgment on him to justify his stand and actions.

My dear and beloved: Continue to serve God and follow his instructions precisely. Be aware and discerning, the devil is around and is a roaring lion, “8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.” (1Peter 5:8-9) As you obey and abide with God’s word and command He will be the one to deliver you from devil peril as Paul said, “16 At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. 17 But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion’s mouth. 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (2Timothy 4:16-18) Do not trust the lies of devil or his servants the false prophets. Trust God, trust His word and what He instructed you, as you agree to pray.

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins and rose from the death to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for your clear word to me. Lord saves me from the lying lips and deceitful tongue. Lord give me sober mind, discernment and help me to say 'No,' to the devil lies. Here am I Lord send me, I trust you that you are beside me and will deliver me from the mouth of lions. This is my prayer in Jesus name, Amen.*

Jesus christ



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