

Old Prophets and Young Counselors

Bible Characters

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Bible Text: 1 Kings 12:8-19; 1 Kings 13:8-19
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Our Scripture lesson today is taken from 1 Kings 12 through 1 Kings 13, and I will be going back and forth in these two chapters and won't follow exactly what we've got in the bulletin. So if you'll turn with me to page 545, we will start at verse 5. This is King Rehoboam. King Rehoboam is the son of Solomon, and he is the first king of a divided kingdom. "Rehoboam answered" [baby cooing] and I love hearing that noise. That is a wonderful noise. God loves to hear little children. So we're all giving applause, yes, for you. And they asked the king for relief because Solomon had put a heavy load on them and in verse 5:

5 Rehoboam answered, 'Go away for three days and then come back to me.' So the people went away. 6 Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. 'How would you advise me to answer these people?' he asked. 7 They replied, 'If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants.' (1 Kings 12:5-7)

What wisdom! Wow! But verse 8:

8 But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him. 9 He asked them, 'What is your advice? How should we answer these people who say to me, 'Lighten the yoke your father put on us?'' 10 The young men who had grown up with him replied, 'Tell these people who have said to you, 'Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke

lighter’—tell them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist. (1 Kings 12:8-10)

Wow! My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist.

11 My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.” (1 Kings 12:11)

Wow! Now turn over across the page to page 547, and this is the story of the man of God who came from Judah up to Israel to rebuke King Jeroboam for his new church.

He decided to split from the church that was the established church of the people of God.

Where was that? That was in Jerusalem, the Jerusalem temple, **I’m speaking anachronistically**. He decided to split from that.

He had divine authority to split politically (1 Kings 11:29-36), but he did not have divine authority to split from the church that God established, again, **I’m speaking anachronistically**.

And so God sends this anonymous prophet. He’s never mentioned by name. I find that intriguing. And so what happens is that he speaks to King Jeroboam, and he speaks a curse on his new church with his new ways of worship and all of these things, and we can pick it up there in verse 1, page 547, 1 Kings 13:1.

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. (1 Kings 13:1)

The word of the Lord. [“Thanks be to God.”]

Lord, bless this reading and the proclamation of your word from these two chapters of Scripture for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Now one of the things you see here is this, this man of God who has come from Judah to give a message to King Jeroboam, who not content with

having a political separation that God himself had ordained (1 Kings 11:29-36), decides in his fear of people:

Jeroboam thought to himself, “The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David. 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.”

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, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”

One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. (1 Kings 12:26-29)

He decides to create a new church that would appeal to people and would keep them from going back to God’s established church in Jerusalem and again, **I’m speaking anachronistically.**

The temple of God in Jerusalem was the established place of worship. No ifs, no ands, no buts. It was where God himself met with his people in the Holy of Holies within that sanctuary.

When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the LORD. And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled his temple. (1 Kings 8:10-11)

And so what happens is that Jeroboam—his rationale, makes good sense—thinks if people continue to worship where they’re ordered to worship by the Lord, they will eventually turn on me.

Notice how it’s rooted in fear, and notice how it’s rooted in human reason, and notice how it’s rooted in a desire to appeal to people’s flesh. Anyone who wanted to be a priest could be a priest.

Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites. 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. 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. (1 Kings 12:31-33)

Now it's interesting when Jeroboam I does this, lots of people left. The children of Aaron, the descendants of Aaron, the high priestly family, they left. Many Levites left and came to Judea, or to Judah, where they strengthened the hand of King Rehoboam.

The priests and Levites from all their districts throughout Israel sided with him. The Levites even abandoned their pasturelands and property, and came to Judah and Jerusalem because Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them as priests of the LORD.

Those from every tribe of Israel who set their hearts on seeking the LORD, the God of Israel, followed the Levites to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices to the LORD, the God of their fathers. They strengthened the kingdom of Judah and supported Rehoboam son of Solomon three years, walking in the ways of David and Solomon during this time. (2 Chronicles 11:13, 16-17)

And so what happens is this man of God comes and he speaks and look at what he says in verse 2, 1 Kings 13:2:

2 He cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD: 'O 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 now make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you.'"

Now that's quite a predictive prophecy, and let me say this, as a connoisseur of commentaries, so many commentaries are worthless because they're rooted in the idea that the supernatural is impossible.

This is clearly a supernatural event because this is absolutely, literally fulfilled much later when King Josiah, who reigned from 640 to 609 BC,

when King Josiah, almost 200 years later (**actually over 300 years later**), fulfilled this very prophecy.

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. 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.

The king asked, “What is that tombstone I see?”

The men 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.”

“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. Just as he had done at Bethel, Josiah removed and defiled all the shrines at the high places that the kings of Israel had built in the towns of Samaria that had provoked the LORD to anger. Josiah slaughtered all the priests of those high places on the altars and burned human bones on them. Then he went back to Jerusalem. (2 Kings 23:15-20)

And so this is supernatural. If you ever pick up a commentary and they tell you that this didn’t happen, that this is somebody rewriting history and giving this as a parable or whatever, I wouldn’t read much further in that commentary. I want to know, when I pick up a commentary, does this person take Scripture seriously? Does this person take Scripture seriously? So this is predictive prophecy. It’s recorded both here in 1 Kings and it’s recorded in 2 Chronicles.

And notice what he says, verse 3,

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.’ (1 Kings 13:3)

Now, if you have just started a church, just imagine you created a new church and it’s big. Let’s see. I travel through two of the largest cities in the

United States in my work for my presbytery as I travel and visit churches. Houston: I have a Texas Tag so I can get on 99 and skirt that place because I don't want to end up in Houston downtown, even though I have to go there sometimes.

And San Antonio—San Antonio—that beltway is more dangerous than the one in Houston. But anyhow, imagine that you've decided to start a new church in Houston, Texas, and it's a big city and it has a lot of draw, and you think about what do I need to do in order to pack this place out? Think about it.

Now suddenly just imagine, there it is on one of the 12 services on a weekend and filling your church, some weird guy comes in, and he curses your church, and that's the effect of what's happening here. He curses your church. He said, "Listen, this is an abomination to God. God is going to destroy this place." Now what's your reaction? What does the pastor do? Verse there in verse 4:

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 notice,] But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back. (1 Kings 13:4)

Wow! Well, that stopped the parade, didn't it? Wow! And he struggled because he's lost control of his own hand and arm.

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.' (1 Kings 13:5-6)

Now notice, what does the man of God do? He prays for the king. He asks God to heal the king's hand and arm, and what does God do? God heals the man's hand and arm. And then the king said in verse 7,

7 The king said to the man of God, 'Come home with me and have something to eat, and I will give you a gift.' (1 Kings 13:7)

Think about it for a moment but notice what the man of God says.

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. (1 Kings 13:8-10)

So far, so good. And we might have known that man’s name. He’s a very important man in many ways. But what happens? There’s this old prophet, and I think that this old prophet illustrates the negative side of being old. We’re going to look at the positive side of being old in a minute—the negative side of being old. Verse 11:

11 Now there was a certain old prophet [he’s anonymous too] 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. (1 Kings 13:11-14)

Now I want to think about this for a moment. If God has told you don’t eat or drink, don’t go back the way you came, go another route, and get back to Judah, now you’re hungry and you’re thirsty because it’s probably been at least a day, what would you have done? You may have been tired. I think I’d have taken that donkey and said keep on going. Keep on going. But he’s tired, and he takes a break. There’s nothing wrong with this. Is there any sinful thing this man has done at this point? No. But now notice what happens. Verse 15:

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.’ (1 Kings 13:15-17)

Now look at verse 18. Do preachers ever lie? What about old preachers? Do preachers ever lie? When people get on TV and preach, do they ever lie? Look at what he says. The old prophet, verse 18 says:

18 ‘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. (1 Kings 13:18-19)

I want to make a couple of quick points here before we go back and look at the positive side of old age. I want you to think about it.

Here’s a man who once knew working under the Lord, and now he’s no longer doing that. He’s on the shelf, and he’s an old man, and it’s very plain. What is one of the great temptations of old age?

It’s to forget your position that you’re now in and long for the better days, and this leads this old man to lie to the man of God from Judah, and he tells him, “An angel came to me and told me this.”

Now I want to say this: You remember St. Paul’s words about the gospel in Galatians? He said, “Though we **or an angel from heaven** preach to you another gospel than the gospel you’ve heard, let him be accursed. Let him be condemned to that outer darkness. Let him be accursed. Though we or an angel from heaven, let him be accursed.” (Galatians 1:8-9)

And I want to say this in a very practical way. If you know your Bible, and if in response to Scripture, you know something that you are supposed to do, or know something you’re not supposed to do, don’t ask God for clarification because it’s a way of getting an excuse to do what’s wrong. If you got a word from God, got a word from God, you don’t need clarification. You don’t need clarification.

Clarifications always get you in trouble.

You remember Balaam and Balaam's donkey who actually talked to him.

Do you ever think that what would your dog say if they could speak out loud? Dogs think, let me tell you. Cats think. Cats are more thoughtful than dogs, I think, but cats are also smart, and they're not going to give in too easily. But animals think and what happens is that the angel of the Lord opened the mouth of Balaam's donkey. When Balaam's beating the donkey and she said, "Why are you doing this to me?" God opened the mouth of that beast (Numbers 22:28-30).

What was Balaam's problem? Balaam's problem is that he had a word from God. When he had messengers coming, asking him to come and curse Israel, the Lord told him plainly and simply and clearly and unambiguously without equivocation, "Don't go." So he tells them, "I can't go." (Numbers 22:12)

But then what happens? A second team arrives. A new pulpit committee with far better terms of call arrives and says, "Come with us." So then he goes, and he prays and God said, "Okay, go with them, but you'll only speak what I tell you to speak" (Numbers 22:15-20).

And of course he went because he wanted to go because he liked money (Jude 1:11), and so here the donkey sees the angel of the Lord blocking the way (Numbers 22:21-33).

And so again, you want another word from God when you've already got a clear word? You don't need another word from God. and beware of an opinion that ever counters God's word, and that's the problem, and this man of God from Judah hears a lie, and notice it appeals to his flesh.

I imagine by this time he's really hungry and I imagine by this time he's really thirsty, and so the old prophet appeals to his flesh and lies. Now here's the amazing thing with the old prophet. "While," verse 20,

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. 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 fathers.” (1 Kings 13:20-21)

Wow! So the old prophet, who once knew the anointing and wanted to just meet with a celebrity preacher and fellowship with him, lies to him, and then he has the anointing one more time. But notice that anointing.

That anointing gives him a word and that word is, “You’re not going to be buried in the land of your fathers” (1 Kings 13:21).

And you know the rest of the story. Along the way, a lion meets him, the lion pulls him off the donkey, the lion tears him but doesn’t kill him, doesn’t eat up the body, and the lion leaves the donkey alone (1 Kings 13:24-26). This is a very weird lion, isn’t it? Is that a natural way for a lion to act? Not at all.

This was a sign from God proving that God does not want to be messed with and defied. And it’s extreme, but have you ever thought that God’s ways often in our lives are quite extreme because God wants obedience rather than sacrifice, to hearken rather than the fat of lambs because rebellion, said Samuel the prophet, is as the sin of witchcraft (1 Samuel 15:22-23).

So we want to rest in the word of God.

So the one negative thing I want to say, and I think I can say this as an old man, because I renewed my driver’s license this week, and I don’t have to renew it again until I’m 83. Does that qualify me as an old man? What is the big danger for old men? It’s dreaming of the past. It’s focusing on the past. It’s thinking, “Lord, my life is over. My life is over.” And that’s the danger of old men, and it is in that nostalgic remembrance and worry about having no purpose left in life, that old men sometimes do what this man did, and he lied to the man of God from Judah.

Turn with me, if you will, back to the page to 1 Kings chapter 12. 1 Kings chapter 12. And that’s what we see here. What do we see here about the young men?

Difference in old men: Old men are good men. Old men are wise men but old men, when they get hung up on themselves and begin to bathe in the

waters of narcissism, can end up being very destructive people. And I try to remind myself of that, thinking about my age.

Now if we go back to 1 Kings chapter 12, I want us to notice what happens with these people. Notice twice we're told in the text, in verse 8, for example:

But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted with (notice) the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him. (1 Kings 12:8)

And notice how that's repeated in verse 10, "The young men who had grown up with him replied" (1 Kings 12:10).

I want you to notice some things here. What is the problem with young men? Young men have strength. I remember having once been very physically fit. I remember, I used to demonstrate when I taught in our—we had a parochial school, our church did—it still exists in Alexandria. And I would teach one class a couple of days a week, and it was kind of a catch-all.

I taught US history at one point, I taught World History at a point, and then I taught a course called Worldviews, and what I used to do—and it was always very impressive. When I took martial arts in college, I learned how to fall, and so what I would do is I would fall over backwards to get a reaction, and then sometimes I would have the heaviest person in the class stand on my back and do a push-up. That really impressed kids. I can't do that now. I can't even do a push-up with nobody on my back anymore. I was cleaning the floor yesterday and on my knees and I almost had to ask Sandy's help to get up.

The point is, young men have strength, they have vigor, and they also have something that we have to watch out for. Notice these young men were sheltered people.

They did not know about the lives of ordinary people. They were brought up in the palace. They were brought up with Rehoboam in Solomon's palace. And again, we see that in two places, verse 8 and verse 10. So they're ignorant. They're ignorant. They have no idea of what common people struggle with—no idea what common people struggle with. I'm very grateful for my children having had opportunities to learn that.

I remember my oldest boy, we were able to get him a job at the Dean Lee Research Agricultural Center at LSUA in agriculture, and so he worked in the summers out in the fields with the laborers. He learned a lot about people that way.

My brother was able to work building Myrtle Beach Air Force Base before he went off to the Air Force Academy, and so he learned something about what ordinary people think about. It's important to understand what ordinary people think about, and it's very easy for young people who are sheltered to imagine that everybody else thinks about things the way they think about it.

And you see they've got another error here, and the other error is that you can impose on people authority from on high, and they will submit. That's the way of a fool. They will submit. Think about it. Oppose that authority from on high. That's why they tell King Rehoboam, "You need to say this, 'my little finger is thicker than my father's waist'" (1 Kings 12:10).

And if you read Ecclesiastes, I think probably Solomon, by the time he died, had a big pot belly (Ecclesiastes 2:10). So this is a very significant thing and what is he saying? He's saying, "You didn't like it under Daddy, I'm going to tell you, you're going to really hate what I'm about to do to you."

What does that cause? And this has a very practical lesson in our own day.

If you're like me, you're troubled about things in our nation, you're troubled about reports from the Department of Justice, and you're troubled about watching somebody who's actually older than I am—though not older than I'm going to be when I renew my license—with a response (<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/09/opinion/biden-age-report-special-counsel.html>). Those things trouble you. And they trouble you on the other side of the spectrum with a man who also makes very incredible remarks.

Well, what do we have to say to those things? The response to two very difficult situations politically is not political. What is the response of the church?

The church's response is prayer. We should pray for President Biden. We should pray for former President Trump. We should pray for these men because these men are in big trouble. These men are in great difficulty. The

response of the church is never to take up arms against the government (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-23). We're not Old Testament Israel.

We are the church of the living God, and the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of fortresses (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). How do you pull down fortresses, like the current fortress that is being erected throughout Europe and North America and much of the world?

How do you pull down these fortresses such as a non-treaty that is going to be binding on our own country out of the World Health Organization to take over without ever going to the U. S. Senate?

(<https://www.cramer.senate.gov/news/press-releases/sen-cramer-colleagues-introduce-resolution-to-help-prevent-president-biden-from-ceding-us-sovereignty-to-world-health-organization>)

How do you deal with stuff like that? Is our job to go out and get guns against the government? Nowhere do you see that in the New Testament church.

Our job is to hit our knees, it's to hit the deck in pleading and interceding with God, "Lord, deliver us from wicked men and wicked schemes and an attempt to destroy our national sovereignty, an attempt to shut the church down!"

The worst thing that happened in 2020 wasn't mandated distancing and mandated wearing of masks, that was nothing. The worst thing was getting churches to shut down. Do you know the impact of shutting down Christian churches during 2020? We have not recovered from that yet. That's the worst thing of the whole thing. The worst thing, shutting down churches. You get people out of the habit, you get people in the habit of watching it on TV, and you know, it's neat to watch church on TV, isn't it? You can get up, you can be in your pajamas, you can sit there and drink coffee, and eat breakfast while you're going to church. I mean, that's appealing, isn't it?

Wouldn't you like to come to church on Sunday morning, wear your pajamas, and drinking your first cup of coffee? No, not really. And the point I'm saying is, we're up against incredible forces against the Christian church and against Christianity *per se*, wanting to outlaw that which is good and wanting to mandate that which is evil.

And if you don't realize that, I don't know who you read or who you watch on television, but if you have even the discernment of Balaam's donkey, you ought to realize we're in deep difficulty.

So what is the solution? The solution of the young men is, "Well, we're going to hit them and hit them hard."

Have you ever noticed how young men are the ones that are appealed to, to go to war? I remember a very poignant scene in one of the most accurate films ever produced, *Nicholas and Alexandra*, although there were moments in that film that tried to encapsulate a series of events in one poignant moment.

The reason *Nicholas and Alexandra* is such a true to life film is because the author, Robert K. Massie's son had hemophilia, and he became interested because Queen Victoria of England passed on a gene to her male heirs, not to everyone, and that gene was hemophilia, and Robert Massie's son had hemophilia, which now is treatable. Back then it wasn't.

So he used the love letters between Nicholas, who was Russian, and Alexandra, who was German, and they wrote to each other in a common tongue they both understood very well, English. And so they wrote in English, and so therefore Robert K. Massie's book is profoundly accurate.

But there's a scene at the outbreak of World War I in that movie that encapsulates the whole issue, and that is that they get word that the first cousin of Tsar Nicholas II has decided to declare war on Russia, and everybody is celebrating.

It's worse than in the opening scenes of *Gone with the Wind* where everybody says, "We're gonna go up there, we're gonna whip those Yankees, we're gonna come back home in about three months, and it's going to be great." And the urge to go to war is appealed to by young men as over against a Robert E. Lee who said, "It is well that war is so terrible, else we should grow too fond of it."

But this poignant scene in the movie *Nicholas and Alexandra* has all of these people celebrating. "We're going to win, and the Kaiser can't match that. We can field a million men. The Kaiser can't match that." Think about

World War I as a war between inbred first cousins. You ever thought of it that way? And so here they are celebrating, “We’re gonna do this!”

And there’s this scene when Mr. Witte, who had been prime minister, counselor, is off by himself, this is not in the book, but he says in his lament, “None of you will be here when this war is over.” And he just recites it.

None of you will be here when this war ends. Everything we fought for will be lost, everything we’ve loved will be broken. The victors will be as cursed as the defeated. The world will grow old, and men will wander about, lost in the ruins, and go mad.

Tradition, restraint, virtue, they all go. I’m not mourning for myself, but for the people who will come after me, they will live without hope. And all they will have will be guilt, revenge, and terror. And the world will be full of fanatics and trivial fools.

I am old, Sire. I have seen so many wars. They all seemed so important at the time, but now I don’t even remember what they were called. Millions of dead men! I don’t know why. Nobody knows. You could so easily stop this war, sir. All you have to do is get up, now, quietly, and go home to your family. You would be the greatest of all the Tsars.

(<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0067483/characters/nm0000059>)

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, the urge for war is a fool’s urge. I’m not saying that wars are not necessary. A war to defend a nation is very necessary and very legitimate, but the lust for war is a demonic lust from the pit of hell, and it appeals to one group of people more than any other, young men who have no experience in life who cannot comprehend what it’s like.

In the interesting book by Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, they have no conception what war is really, really like. Wow! Young men, young men, these young fools, with no life experience, born with a silver spoon in their mouth—reading the account of Solomon’s wealth, born with a gold spoon in their mouths (1 Chronicles 9:20), these young men, “You just need to tell them who’s boss!”

And it's not unlike some nonsense that's certainly on the internet today about a husband needs to just get charge of his wife and make her do right, "You will do this!" You know, that's the advice of a fool.

You know how to get a wife to do right? Well, "There's a way, said the wise old man, a way known by every lover since the whole rigmarole began," — and that's a line from *Camelot* —its to love her. "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her" (Ephesians 5:25).

And that's it, and that's the advice of the old men here, "If you will serve these people, they will serve you forever" (1 Kings 12:7). But the young men with no life experience —they're the people that he listened to, and the result is this revolt that not only separated the two portions of the nation of Israel, a northern and a southern country, but also led to the terrible religious apostasy that took place in the north under King Jeroboam I.

So I want to appeal, if you're watching this on the internet, do you know the Lord? Of all the things that really matter in life, nothing matters more than knowing the Lord Jesus Christ personally because until you know the Lord Jesus Christ personally, you will either be gripped by rage or terror as you observe the phenomena that are coming and that are reported on in the media.

Turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. He will accept you as you are. What do you have to do?

Acknowledge that you are a sinner and you've come short of his glory. I'm a sinner. I've come short of God's glory.

I'm not the man I used to be before I knew the Lord, and I'm not the man I'm going to be when I see him face to face. But when we come to him, he changes us.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Accept the sacrifice that was done on the cross to save those who repent from their sins and cast yourself on God's mercy in Christ and be assured he will receive you.

And beware of the temptations of old age, as in the lying prophet in Israel, and beware of the temptations of youth, which is to be hot-headed, headstrong, and to plunge yourself into things that are ruinous and reckless.

May we pray.

Lord, bless this word as we reflect on our life circumstances, whether we're old or whether we're young. When we're old, Lord, may we not be like the old prophet who, missing the old days, decides to thrust himself into a situation that would have been best to have been left alone, and then being pressed, wanting once again to enjoy what he once did, to lie to somebody. And Lord, we pray if we're young that you would deliver us from being hot-headed, foolhardy, ignorant as we act and react. In Jesus' name, amen.