

Are You Listening to the voice of God?

Bible Study | The Church of God International | October 6, 2018



All Christians agree that the Holy Bible is
the inspired word of God



Exodus 31:18

When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the covenant law, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.



2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness



If the Bible is the word of God in print, why are there so many different interpretations? Why are there as many interpretations of the Bible as there are many church denominations?



There is just one Bible but with
innumerable interpretations



God's words will always be true.
The problem lies with its interpretation.



The Bible is interpreted by all sorts of people — people from different background, orientation, philosophy, culture, tradition and belief. Some may have a personal agenda, rebellious, licentious, arrogant, unbelief or simply ignorance. Therein lies the problem of interpretation.



Mark 7

13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.



2 Peter 3

16 He (Paul) writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.



The scripture is not for anyone's personal interpretation. The problem is many church leaders and preachers put in their personal bias interpretations into the Bible. This is what the scripture says in 2 Peter as a reprimand



2 Peter 1:20-21

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.



We know that we ought to listen to God's voice.
But, how do we divide the Word of God from the
word of man?



How does a Christian decipher from all
the theological noises to find the true
Words of God?



The Word of God leads to truth and life. The word of man leads to lies and eventually death. Many people confused with all the noises end up listening to man.



How then do we learn to listen to God's voice?
Today, we will teach you how to listen to God rather
than man.



1 Kings chapter 13 is a unique story of a prophet who was deceived by another prophet. But, why was it even recorded in the scripture. What lesson and insight can be learned from it?



History is dotted with people who listened to bad advice. Not because they were fools, but because they listened to what their ears wanted to hear.



2 Timothy 4:3

3 For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.



Solomon's Error



Solomon was initially blessed because of his obedience.



However, his 700 wives and 300 concubines were extremely difficult to please. Solomon built temples and high places of worship for his foreign wives. He polluted the nation of Israel with idolatry. Instead of converting his wives and concubines, Solomon gave himself to worship their gods. Thus, Solomon did evil in the sight of God.



1 Kings 11

1 King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites.

2 They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love.

3 He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray.



1 Kings 11

4 As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

5 He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites.

6 So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not follow the Lord completely, as David his father had done.



Because of Solomon's disobedience, God split the kingdom and gave the northern ten tribes (Israel) to Jeroboam. The remaining two tribes then became the nation of Judah and remained under leadership of Rehoboam, son of Solomon. The error of Solomon was listening to his wives than to God.



1 Kings 11

11 So the Lord said to Solomon, “Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates.



1 Kings 11

12 Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son.

13 Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.”



Rehoboam's error



1 Kings 12

1 Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone there to make him king.

3 So they sent for Jeroboam, and he and the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him:

4 “Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you.”



1 Kings 12

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

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, “These people have said to you, ‘Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke lighter.’ Now tell them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist.’”



1 Kings 12

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.’ ”

12 Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam, as the king had said, “Come back to me in three days.”

13 The king answered the people harshly. Rejecting the advice given him by the elders,



1 Kings 12

14 he followed the advice of the young men and said, “My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.”

15 So the king did not listen to the people, for this turn of events was from the LORD, to fulfill the word the LORD had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat through Ahijah the Shilonite.



Rehoboam lost the 10 tribes because he listened to very bad advice from his young friends.

The lesson we learned from Solomon and his son Rehoboam is that they both listened to wrong advice and did not listen to God.



God made Jeroboam king of the 10 tribes of Israel.
God promised Jeroboam a lasting dynasty if he keeps
His commands.



1 Kings 11

29 About that time Jeroboam was going out of Jerusalem, and Ahijah the prophet of Shiloh met him on the way, wearing a new cloak. The two of them were alone out in the country,

30 and Ahijah took hold of the new cloak he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces.

31 Then he said to Jeroboam, “Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon’s hand and give you ten tribes.’”



1 Kings 11

34 “ ‘But I will not take the whole kingdom out of Solomon’s hand; I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of David my servant, whom I chose and who obeyed my commands and decrees.

35 I will take the kingdom from his son’s hands and give you ten tribes.

36 I will give one tribe to his son so that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I chose to put my Name.



1 Kings 11

37 However, as for you, I will take you, and you will rule over all that your heart desires; you will be king over Israel.

38 If you do whatever I command you and walk in obedience to me and do what is right in my eyes by obeying my decrees and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you.



Yet, in spite of the promise Jeroboam sinned against God because he listened to ill advice of his advisers.



1 Kings 12

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.”



1 Kings 12

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.



Then, God sent a prophet to Jeroboam with a specific instruction.



1 Kings 13

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

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.’”



1 Kings 13

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

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.



1 Kings 13

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.”



1 Kings 13

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

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.



1 Kings 13

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

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

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.



1 Kings 13

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.’”



1 Kings 13

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.



1 Kings 13

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.



1 Kings 13

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.”



1 Kings 13

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.



1 Kings 13

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!”



1 Kings 13

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.”



1 Kings 13

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.



Lesson to Learn



There is great value in determining truth from falsehood and differentiating what God said from what man said. But how?



For a Christian, the basis of truth is the Bible – sola scriptura – solely the scripture. Any teaching that is contrary to the scripture is false, even if it is a long held church tradition.



Mark 7:6-8

6 He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

““These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.

7 They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.’

8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”



Man made church traditions and doctrines are not the basis of truth. The commandments that come from God are the basis of truth.



Different Doctrine



People will approach you with different doctrines. So it is important to distinguish truth from falsehood; what God said from what man said.



A simple way of discerning what God said from what man said is to:

1. Look for the phrase “The Lord said” when reading the Old Testament
2. Look for the phrase “Jesus said” (red letter text) when reading the New Testament



What “God said” and what “Jesus said” are the voices of God and they are the words that you need to listen to. Any message that goes against God’s spoken words are falsehoods and lies that you should stay away from.



Here are the warnings of the Apostles.



Galatians 1

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—

7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.



Galatians 1

8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse!

9 As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!



1 John 1:10

If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.



Jude 1:3

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people.



Jesus said: “My word is truth.” Jesus’ word is clearly recorded in the Bible.



If you find any discrepancy between what God said and the preaching of a minister, always trust the word of God written in the Bible. That is your safe place.



Examples



1. Exodus 20

If anyone tells you that God has abolished and changed the ten commandments of God which He personally wrote with His finger and the law is no longer enforced today; you owe it to yourself to find out who said it.



Your minister might say that the 10 commandments are abolished and no longer to be kept by New Testament Christians.



This is what God said:

Proverbs 4:4 Then he taught me, and he said to me,
“Take hold of my words with all your heart; keep my
commands, and you will live.

John 14:15 “If you love me, keep my commands.

1 John 5:3 In fact, this is love for God: to keep his
commands. And his commands are not burdensome,



Who should you believe the minister who says the
commandments of God are abolished or the very
Words of God?



2. Exodus 20:8

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

Many churches and ministers preach that Sabbath is not to be kept by Christians. The question you ought to ask is who said - God said or man said?



Nowhere in the New Testament could one find that the 4th commandment had been abolished. If God has not plainly stated that he has changed a law why should we believe it was changed? Who would you believe the Bible that is the written word of God or the minister who claims to be a man of God?



3. Leviticus 11

1 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron,

2 “Say to the Israelites: ‘Of all the animals that live on land, these are the ones you may eat:

3 You may eat any animal that has a divided hoof and that chews the cud.

4 “There are some that only chew the cud or only have a divided hoof, but you must not eat them. The camel, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is ceremonially unclean for you.



3. Leviticus 11

- 5 The hyrax, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean for you.
- 6 The rabbit, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean for you.
- 7 And the pig, though it has a divided hoof, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you.
- 8 You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you.



If people tell you that the dietary law is obsolete, ask them who said it - God or man.



When people tell you doctrines and teachings that are different from those written in the Bible, bear in mind what happened to the man of God in 1 Kings 13.



Deceive the Elect



Jesus prophesied a time when there will be so much religious deception in the world. Jesus even said that it would even deceive the elect. When people tell you Jesus is here. Do not believe them.



How can anyone escape from such deception? The simple answer is in the word of God. Read the Bible.



Summation



We should listen to God and not to man. It is our personal and individual responsibility to search and examine the scriptures.



As Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:21

“prove all things and hold on to what is right and true.”



Consider those of Berea who check the preaching of Paul against the scriptures.



Acts 17

11 Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

12 As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.



If someone deceives you into disobedience, the consequences are solely yours. Stay alert for your enemy is a prowling lion seeking whomever he may devour. Stay alert, faithful and true to God. Only to Him do you listen and obey.



END

