THE MAN OF GOD, THE OLD PROPHET AND THE WORD OF THE LORD:

AN EXEGESIS OF 1 KINGS 13

Abstract

by

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1 Kings 13 is a strange story with many plot reversals. This prophetic narrative has long confused readers and challenged interpreters. Questions abound about many aspects of the narrative, especially those related to its unity and theme. This dissertation addresses these problems through studying this text in three stages: first, in its pre-deuteronomistic form, second, in its setting within the Deuteronomistic History, and, finally, in its larger canonical context. The work of Uriel Simon is consulted in the pre-deuteronomistic stage. Robert L. Cohn’s article and Gary N. Knoppers’ monograph come into play in the deuteronomistic stage. In the canonical stage, Karl Barth’s theological exegesis is explained and defended. After this progressive study, it is concluded that 1 Kings 13 is a united story with a single, expansive theme: the prevailing and enduring power of the Word of the LORD. Isaiah 40:8: “The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.”
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CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION

In his 2006 commentary on 1 and 2 Kings, Peter J. Leithart makes a pointed claim regarding 1 Kings 13, “The story of the man of God and the old prophet is one of the strangest narrative passages in the Old Testament and deserves a monograph to itself.”¹ Why would he make such a claim? What is so odd about this text? What are the problems in this story? Why is it so difficult or so important to invite such attention?

Before listing some of the oddities in this story, let’s take a brief look at it. While King Jeroboam of the northern kingdom of Israel is standing at the altar ready to present an offering, a man of God from Judah blows onto the scene, and prophesies against the altar at Bethel: “O altar, altar! Thus said the LORD: A son shall be born to the House of David, Josiah by name; and he shall slaughter upon you the priests of the shrines who bring offerings upon you. And human bones shall be burned upon you.” Irritated by this interruption, Jeroboam stretches out his arm against the man of God, but Jeroboam’s arm becomes rigid. Surprisingly, the man of God heals him at Jeroboam’s pitiful plea. Reversing his approach, Jeroboam invites the man from Judah to his home to dine with him, but the man of God refuses, stating bluntly, “I was commanded by the word of the

¹ Peter J. Leithart, 1 & 2 Kings (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2006), 98.
LORD: You shall eat no bread and drink no water, nor shall you go back by the road you came.” So the man of God returns as mysteriously as he appeared, only by another road.

But the story does not end there. When an old northern prophet hears of the man of God’s prophecy, he takes action and deceitfully persuades the man of God, by claiming to have received a command from God through an angel, to return with him and dine at his house. The old prophet’s lie and the man of God’s action are in direct violation of the previous authentic order from the LORD. While the man of God and the old prophet are sitting together at the table, a true word of the LORD comes to the false prophet: “Thus says the LORD: Because you have flouted the word of the LORD and have not observed what the LORD your God commanded you, but have gone back and eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which He said to you, ‘Do not eat bread or drink water [there],’ your corpse shall not come to the grave of your fathers.” Oddly enough, the man of God finishes his meal. After the meal the man of God set out and a lion comes upon him in the road and kills him, but does not eat him or his donkey. When the old prophet finds the corpse lying on the road, with the donkey and the lion standing beside it, he brings the corpse of the man of God back to town and, after lamenting over it, he lays the corpse in his own burial place. After burying him, he says to his sons, “When I die, bury me in the grave where the man of God lies buried; lay my bones beside his. For what he announced by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the cult places in the towns of Samaria, shall surely come true.”

Three hundred years later, in 2 Kings 23:16-18, the prophecy of the man of God is fulfilled: “Josiah turned and saw the graves that were there on the hill; and he had the
bones taken out of the graves and burned on the altar. Thus he defiled it, in fulfillment of the word of the LORD foretold by the man of God who foretold these happenings. He asked, ‘What is the marker I see there?’ And the men of the town replied, “That is the grave of the man of God who came from Judah and foretold these things that you have done to the altar of Bethel.’ ‘Let him be,’ he said, ‘Let no one disturb his bones.’ So they left his bones undisturbed together with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria.”

There are many odd happenings and reversals in this story. Here are a few: (1) a man of God heals a wound that, as it appears, his God had just inflicted on Jeroboam, (2) Jeroboam invites the man of God to his house, although Jeroboam had just threatened him, (3) the man of God violates a message where he once was committed resolutely to it, (4) the lying prophet speaks a genuine word from the LORD, (5) a lion kills the man of God but does not eat him or his donkey, (6) the old prophet lays the man of God in his own grave and then is buried with him, and (7) three hundred years later the man of God’s prophecy is fulfilled and his bones save the bones of the old prophet.

With its many twists and turns and its strange events, this is indeed a puzzling text. With its strange ways, it continues to confuse and perplex interpreters. On a cursory reading, it is confusing, but those who invest the effort into a close reading manage to uncover even more perplexities, as a review of 1 Kings 13’s history of interpretation would reveal.²

² For surveys of 1 Kings 13’s history of interpretation, see; Simon J. Devries, 1 Kings (Word Biblical Commentaries 12, eds. David A. Hubbard, Glenn W. Barker, and John D. Watts; Waco, TX:
In what follows in this introduction, I will discuss 1 Kings 13’s problems, the significant reasons for addressing these problems, the process and methodology I will use for addressing these problems, the thesis of my work, the limits to this study and the benefits of such an exegesis of 1 Kings 13.

Problems

Although I will have more to say about the various interpretations, suffice it to say here that the biggest problems with this prophetic narrative can be placed under two categories: (1) its unity, and (2) its theme.

Unity

Various options have been offered related to its unity:

- It is a unified, single story.
- It is the combination of two stories: vv. 1-10 and vv. 11-32.
- It is an almost hopeless collection of various strands and accretions.

Theme

Numerous themes have been proposed. Some of these are:

- The problematic nature of prophecy in the last days of Judah

- The importance of singular obedience by the man of God

- The power of the Word of God to overcome anything or anyone who opposes it

- The prophet’s authority to challenge those who would attempt to usurp Yahweh’s supremacy

- The relationship of Judah and Israel

- The admonition that prophets who receive divine messages must obey those oracles, even in the face of contradictory messages

- The discernment between true and false prophecy

- The struggle against a popular belief in angels

- The urgency of obedience in general

- The reciprocal relationship of election and rejection

- The absolute negation of the Bethel altar as a legitimate place for divine worship

- A collection of themes from the Deuteronomistic History

A well-defined problem or a clear collection of problems is usually offered as a justification for the subject matter of a dissertation. The issue here might be that the problems are so great, why even try? Why offer another attempt at a coherent explanation of the story’s unity (or lack thereof) and theme? Isn’t it hopeless?

**Significance**

1 Kings 13 is too significant to ignore. The potential payoffs are too great not to put in the effort to make sense out of this text. These problems must be solved for several reasons:
First, 1 Kings 13 possesses a strategic location in the Deuteronomistic History, just after the division of the nation into the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom. It provides a framework for the rest of the Deuteronomistic History running from the division of the kingdom to the fall of Judah.

Second, it has an important theological subject: the Word of God. As others have pointed out, it addresses the effectiveness and durability of the Word of the LORD as expressed in such texts as Isaiah 40:8, “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever” and Isaiah 55:10-11:

For as the rain and snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.³

Third, standing at the beginning of the divided kingdom, it speaks to the ongoing relationship between Judah and Israel. The ultimate unification of Judah and Israel, even after 722 B.C.E. and 587 B.C.E., is a significant theological construct that has not been adequately explored. 1 Kings 13 stands at the beginning of this division, but also speaks about the future unification of the nation.

Fourth, in general, if the Christian interpreter, who is in possession of a two testament canon, has a prior commitment to the divine inspiration of Scripture and a belief that the Old Testament is a witness to Jesus Christ, then, for him or her, 1 Kings 13 becomes an important text for theological reflection as it stands at the headwaters of the

³ Both of these biblical quotes come from the *New Revised Standard Version.*
divided kingdom, frames the final stages of the Deuteronomistic History and deals with the important subject of the Word of God. Considering the possibility that the story’s complexity might translate into profundity, it could have something very significant to say regarding the nature and mission of Jesus, if it is considered in its larger canonical context.

For these reasons, 1 Kings 13 is worthy of another look. The potential payoffs seem worth the effort.

Process

I will approach the primary problems of 1 Kings 13’s unity and theological theme in three logical and progressive steps.

First, I will establish the prophetic narrative’s pre-deuteronomistic form, unity and theme by removing it from its Kings context. For help with this project, I will look to the work of Uriel Simon.

Second, I will place the prophetic narrative back within its place in the Deuteronomistic History demonstrating the way it functions within its most immediate literary setting and in its larger context within Kings. To accomplish this task, I will rely primarily on the work of Robert L. Cohn and Gary N. Knoppers.

Third, I will look at how it functions within the larger canon and what it might have to say about the mission and nature of Jesus Christ. For assistance with this large undertaking, I will turn to Karl Barth.
Methodology

My basic methodology is to analyze the text critically, and, then, produce a coherent narrative that best explains all the data. In this process I will employ the historical critical disciplines such as source and redaction criticism, along with literary, canonical and theological approaches. By using the interplay of these fundamental methodologies and moving forward through the logical progression from pre-deuteronomistic to deuteronomistic to canonical contexts, I hope to produce a narrative of the text’s development that makes sense and takes seriously the history of the text while uncovering the richness of its theological substance. Through careful, critical analysis, I expect to find a logical narrative which accounts for the complexity of the text and moves toward solving the issues related to the text’s unity and theme.

Thesis

To separate 1 Kings 13 into its pre-deuteronomistic setting, examine it in its deuteronomistic context, and, then, read it in its larger canonical narrative is the most exegetically effective and theologically rewarding way forward to address its problems and understand its themes. For maximum exegetical and theological benefits, each of these steps or stages must be understood in its own right, and in relation to the others.

Limits

As with any study, there are limits to this examination of 1 Kings 13. First, I will not address the various Deuteronomistic History theories related to the redactional
development of Kings. Although my findings have implications for these theories, I will not comment directly on my work’s relevance for those theories or those theories’ relevance for my work. Second, I will not critique Barth’s larger theology, nor will I evaluate the full implications of his exegesis of 1 Kings 13 or his overall exegetical methodology for such issues as the relationship of the church to the synagogue, or the problem of universalism.


Benefits

I hope that the reader will find benefit from the analysis of the text in each of the three separate stages in the process. For example, I trust that the side-by-side comparison of the deuteronomistic text and the pre-deuteronomistic text in chapter one will prove beneficial. But even more than that, I believe that this study will contribute to the interpretation of 1 Kings 13 by taking seriously each of the three stages of the story’s development: pre-deuteronomistic, deuteronomistic, and canonical. To me, it seems that a study which includes each stage in the developmental process is necessary in order to appreciate the full riches and relevance of this story. I would argue that such a study enhances exegetical precision and theological reflection.
CHAPTER 2:

1 KINGS 13 AS A SOURCE SEPARATE FROM ITS FUNCTION IN THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY

In this chapter, depending primarily on Uriel Simon’s work in chapter five, “A Prophetic Sign Overcomes Those Who Would Defy It,” of his book Reading Prophetic Narratives, I will argue that the story of 1 Kings 13 and its ending in 2 Kings 23:16-18 once existed as literary unit prior to its inclusion in the larger Deuteronomistic History. I will develop this argument by (1) excising the narrative from its present context in Kings, removing deuteronomistic redactions from the story and establishing the text as it might have existed before its recontextualization into the larger narrative of Kings, (2) demonstrating the unity and structure of the story, (3) explaining the story’s thematic and theological message, and (4) discussing the genesis of the narrative within the histories of Judah and Israel.

The Pre-Deuteronomistic Text of the Prophetic Story

In order to prepare for the discussion regarding the establishment of the source text of 1 Kings 13, it might be helpful to begin by looking at the TANAKH translation of

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the Jewish Publication Society of 1 Kings 13 and 2 Kings 23:16-18, first in the left hand column, the complete deuteronomistic text and, second in the right hand column, the pre-deuteronomistic text separated from its redactional additions, along with some additions which represent the original text. Put simply, the left hand column is the English translation of the deuteronomistic text and the right hand column is the pre-deuteronomistic text.\footnote{For a comparison in Hebrew see Appendix A.}

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<th>Deuteronomistic Text</th>
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<td><strong>1 Kings 13</strong></td>
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<td>1 As he ascended the altar to present an offering, a man of God arrived at Bethel from Judah at the command of the LORD. While Jeroboam was standing on the altar to present the offering, the man of God, at the command of the LORD, cried out against the altar: 2“O altar, altar! Thus said the LORD: A son shall be born to the House of David, Josiah by name; and he shall slaughter upon you the priests of the shrines who bring offerings. And human bones shall be burned upon you.” 3He gave a portent on that day, saying, “Here is the portent that the LORD has decreed: This altar shall break apart, and the ashes on it shall be spilled.” 4When the king heard what the man of God had proclaimed against the altar of Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his arm above the altar and cried, “Seize him!” But the arm that he stretched out against him became rigid, and he could not draw it back. 5The altar broke apart and its ashes were spilled—the very portent that the man of God had announced.</td>
<td>1 As he ascended the altar to present an offering, a man of God arrived at Bethel from Judah at the command of the LORD. While Jeroboam was standing on the altar to present the offering, the man of God, at the command of the LORD, cried out against the altar: 2“O altar, altar! Thus said the LORD: A son shall be born to the House of David, Josiah by name; and he shall burn human bones upon you.” 4When the king heard what the man of God had proclaimed against the altar of Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his arm above the altar and cried, “Seize him!” But the arm that he stretched out against him became rigid, and he could not draw it back.</td>
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at the LORD’s command.  

Then the king spoke up and said to the man of God, “Please entreat the LORD your God and pray for me that I may be able to draw back my arm.” The man of God entreated the LORD and the king was able to draw his arm back; it became as it was before.

The king said to the man of God, “Come with me to my house and have some refreshment; and I shall give you a gift.” But the man of God replied to the king, “Even if you give me half your wealth, I will not go in with you, nor will I eat bread in this place; for so I was commanded by the word of the LORD: You shall eat no bread and drink no water, nor shall you go back by the road by which you came.” So he left by another road and did not go back by the road on which he had come to Bethel.

There was an old prophet living in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the things that the man of God had done that day in Bethel [and] the words that he had spoken to the king. When they told it to their father, their father said to them, “Which road did he leave by?” His sons had seen the road taken by the man of God who had come from Judah. “Saddle the ass for me,” he said to his sons. They saddled the ass for him, and he mounted it and rode after the man of God. He came upon him sitting under a terebinth and said to him, “Are you the man of God who came from Judah?” “Yes, I am,” he answered. “Come home with me,” he said, “and have something to eat.” He replied, “I may not go back with you and enter your home; and I may not eat bread or drink water in this place; the order I received by the word of the LORD was: You shall not eat bread or drink water there; nor shall you return by the road on which you came.” “I am a prophet, too,”
said the other, “and an angel said to me by command of the LORD: Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.” He was lying to him. 19 So he went back with him, and he ate bread and drank water in his house.

20 While they were sitting at the table, the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back. 21 He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah: “Thus said the LORD: Because you have flouted the word of the LORD and have not observed what the LORD your God commanded you, 22 but have gone back and eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which He said to you, ‘Do not eat bread or drink water [there],’ your corpse shall not come to the grave of your fathers.” 23 After he had eaten bread and had drunk, he saddled the ass for him and he returned—for the prophet whom he had brought back. 24 He set out, and a lion came upon him on the road and killed him. His corpse lay on the road, with the ass standing beside it, and the lion also standing beside the corpse. 25 Some men who passed by saw the corpse lying on the road and the lion standing beside the corpse; they went and told it in the town where the old prophet lived. 26 And when the prophet who had brought him back from the road heard it, he said, “That is the man of God who flouted the LORD’s command; the LORD gave him over to the lion, which mauled him and killed him in accordance with the word that the LORD had spoken to him.” 27 He said to his sons, “Saddle the ass for me,” and they did so.

28 He set out and found the corpse lying on the road, with the ass and the lion standing beside the corpse; the lion had not eaten the corpse nor had it mauled the ass. 29 The prophet lifted up the corpse of the man of God, laid it on the ass, and brought it back;
it was brought to the town of the old prophet for lamentation and burial.  

30 He laid the corpse in his own burial place; and they lamented over it, “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 lies buried; lay my bones beside his.  

32 For what he announced by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the cult places in the towns of Samaria, shall surely come true.”

33 Even after this incident, Jeroboam did not turn back from his evil way, but kept on appointing priests for the shrines from the ranks of the people. He ordained as priests of the shrines any who so desired.

34 Thereby the House of Jeroboam incurred guilt—to their utter annihilation from the face of the earth.

2 Kings 23:16-18

16 So Josiah turned and saw the graves that were there on the hill; and he had the bones taken out of the graves and burned on the altar. Thus he defiled it, in fulfillment of the word of the LORD foretold by the man of God who foretold these happenings.

17 He asked, “What is the marker I see there?” And the men of the town replied, “That is the grave of the man of God who came from Judah and foretold these things that you have done to the altar of Bethel.”  

18“Let him be,” he said, “let no one disturb his bones.” So they left his bones undisturbed together with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria.

2 Kings 23:16-18

16 So Josiah turned and saw the graves that were there on the hill; and he had the bones taken out of the graves and burned on the altar. Thus he defiled it, in fulfillment of the word of the LORD foretold by the man of God when Jeroboam stood on the altar. He turned and saw the grave of the man of God who foretold these happenings.  

17 He asked, “What is the marker I see there?” And the men of the town replied, “That is the grave of the man of God who came from Judah and foretold these things that you have done to the altar of Bethel.”  

18“Let him be,” he said, “let no one disturb his bones.” So they left his bones undisturbed together with the bones of the prophet.

8 Unless indicated otherwise, the translations used are the TANAKH Translation by the Jewish Publication Society, 1999, for the Old Testament and the New Revised Standard Version by the National Council of Churches, 1989, for the New Testament.
Comparing these texts side-by-side reveals a number of deletions and a few additions to the pre-deuteronomistic text of 1 Kings 13 and 2 Kings 23:16-18. In the next few pages, we will look at what is missing and why it has been removed. Also, we will discuss the additions.  

1 Kings 12:25-33 is Not a Part of the Original Prophetic Narrative.

First, the background and setting of the story recorded in 1 Kings 12:25-33 are not present:

25 Jeroboam fortified Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and resided there; he moved out from there and fortified Penuel.
26 Jeroboam said to himself, “Now the kingdom may well return to the House of David. 27 If these people still go up to offer sacrifices at the House of the LORD in Jerusalem, the heart of these people will turn back to their master, King Rehoboam of Judah; they will kill me and go back to King Rehoboam of Judah.” 28 So the king took counsel and made two golden calves. He said to the people, “You have been going up to Jerusalem long enough. This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!” 29 He set up one in Bethel and placed the other in Dan. 30 That proved to be a cause of guilt, for the people went to worship [the calf at Bethel and] the one at Dan. 31 He also made cult places and appointed priests from the ranks of the people who were not of Levite descent.

32 He stationed at Bethel the priests of the shrines that he had appointed to sacrifice to the calves that he had made. And Jeroboam established a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month; in imitation of the festival in Judah, he established one at Bethel and he ascended the altar [there]. 33 On the fifteenth day of

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the eighth month—the month in which he had contrived of his own mind to establish a festival for the Israelites—Jeroboam ascended the altar that he had made in Bethel.

These verses, which provide the primary setting for the man of God’s encounter with the king, are excluded for several reasons. First, 1 Kings 12:25-33 is written in the characteristic deuteronomistic ideology and style of the redactor of Kings, which is exhibited in such texts as 1 Kings 11:1-13; 14:19-24; 16:29-33; 21:25-29; 2 Kings 8:16-27; 13:1-13.10 The deuteronomistic characteristics in these texts in Kings include:

- Total devotion to the LORD alone
- The election of Jerusalem only
- The election of David and his line only
- Worship at the Temple in Jerusalem exclusively
- The evil of the shrines, pillars, and sacred posts on every high hill and under every leafy tree
- The sins of Jeroboam
- The wretchedness of Samaria

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In deuteronomistic ideology, the LORD chose David and his house, the city of Jerusalem and the Temple in Jerusalem. In contrast, God has not ultimately chosen Jeroboam, the city of Samaria or its sacred places. In 1 Kings 12:25-33, Jeroboam fears a return of the kingdom to the house of David, so he devises a plan to prevent the people from returning to offer sacrifices at the House of the LORD in Jerusalem so that their hearts will not turn back to the line of David. He set up two golden calves, one in Dan, the northernmost border city and one at Bethel, the southernmost center of his kingdom. He also made cult places, set up non-Levitical priests of the shrines and established a festival to rival that of the southern kingdom. None of this was of the LORD’s choosing, but was contrived in his own mind. Thus, 1 Kings 12:25 exhibits deuteronomistic ideology and style. Although it is true that some of these dynamics are in play in the story of the man of God and the old prophet in 1 Kings 13, for example Jeroboam’s illegitimate cult versus Josiah’s destruction of that cult, and the southern man of God versus the northern prophet, they move to the background of the story and are not presented in typical deuteronomistic style. As will be shown below, the Word of the LORD is foregrounded in the pre-deuteronomistic story so that these other kingly and prophetic characters and geographic and cultic settings become simply the milieu in which the Word of the LORD accomplishes what it sets out to do. Some of the deuteronomistic aspects of the story are foregrounded only when they are recontextualized within the narrative agenda of the Kings redactor.

Further, the style and vocabulary of 1 Kings 12:25-33 are paralleled in the summary statements of 1 Kings 13:33-34. Jerome T. Walsh identifies a chiastic inclusion
surrounding 13:1-32 which demonstrates the rhetoric parallelism present between 12:30-31 and 13:33-34:

A. “This thing became sin” (12:30)

B. houses on high places (12:31a)

C. “he made priests from among all the people” (12:31a)

C’. “he made from among all the people priests” (13:33b)

B’. priests for high places (13:33c)

A’. “This thing became sin” (13:34)\textsuperscript{11}

To this point, a form of \ascal{עשׂה} is used at least nine times to refer to Jeroboam’s sin of establishing a false cult in 12:25-33 and it is employed again in the summary in 13:33. Conversely, \ascal{עשׂה} is used only once in 13:1-32; in this single instance in the main body of the story, it does not refer to Jeroboam’s sin, but to the things the man of God did in Bethel (13:11).\textsuperscript{12}

In addition to issues of vocabulary and style, the fact that the man of God addresses the altar but totally ignores the golden calves, which figured prominently in 12:25-33, argues that this text was not a part of the story prior to its inclusion into Kings.\textsuperscript{13}


\textsuperscript{12} Simon, \textit{Reading Prophetic Narratives}, 133.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
This analysis is not without its challenges: (1) Chapter 13 begins with the interjection והנה, which indicates that what follows in the narrative is dependent on what preceded it. Thus, if it is accepted that the main body of 1 Kings 13 must have existed as one or more independent stories, then it follows that the encounter between the man of God and the king must have originally functioned as a part of a larger literary context, which included, at minimum, an introduction to this story. Mordechai Cogan asserts that “the opening word wehinneh cannot be the beginning of the tale and is dependent on some preceding statement that is no longer retrievable.” It appears, therefore, that the deuteronomistic editor of Kings must have substituted 12:25-33 for the original literary setting of chapter 13. (2) There is an obvious duplication between 12:33 and 13:1:

The literal translation of the two key phrases here is in verse 33 “he ascended on the altar” and in verse one “he was standing on the altar.” Why did the person interpolating the story not avoid the duplication of “he went up to the altar” and “Jeroboam was standing on the altar?” Verse 33 functions as a transition, inserted by the redactor,

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14 Cogan, I Kings, 367.

15 Thus, the NRSV translation, “... and he went up to the altar to offer incense. While he was standing by the altar to offer incense ...” is preferred over the JPS rendering, “Jeroboam ascended the altar that he had made in Bethel. As he ascended the altar to present an offering ...” The NRSV preserves better the distinction between ascending the altar in 12:33 and standing on the altar in 13:1.
between the broad descriptions of Jeroboam’s longstanding, institutional sins in 12:25-32 to an account of a particular sin in a specific place on a certain day in chapter 13. This description in verse 33 prepares for the interjection (וְהִנֵּה) in 13:1 and creates a heightened sense of anticipation of future developments. Peter Leithart catches the tension and disjunction of the transition from 12:33-13:1: “The courtly liturgical scene is disrupted by a flash across the screen, a man of God coming from Judah, a man of the Spirit who blows where he lists.” He translates the sense of the first part of 13:1: “Look, see, a man of God coming from Judah by the word of the Lord.”

Walsh, finding a chiastic structure between 12:32 and 33, identifies four narrative effects of this part of the deuteronomistic introduction to the prophetic story of chapter 13:

1. The introduction unifies the description of Jeroboam’s cultic innovations in 12:26-31 with the scene of confrontation that follows in 13:1-10.

2. The introduction brings all of Jeroboam’s cultic deviations together in preparation for the scene of confrontation. The new festival forms the outer frame of the introduction; an altar at Bethel, which we have not heard about before, forms the inner frame; and the calves, priests, and high places he made occupy the center of the picture. The wealth of detail enhances our image of the situation.

16 Simon notes that this repetition fits with the redactor’s verbose style and his use of repetition for emphasis. Also, he conjectures that the phrase “to present an offering” might have been taken from 13:1b. Simon, Reading Prophetic Narratives, 132-133. The dramatic tension is even greater if one understands, as Cogan does, that the editor considered the events of chapter 13 to have occurred on the day of the inaugural sacrifice. Cogan contrasts his view with that of Noth who reads the text as if it said, “On one such occasion, when the king ascended the altar . . .” Cogan, I Kings, 367.

17 Leithart, 1 & 2 Kings, 97.
3. The introduction awakens some echoes with the Solomon story. The narrator’s attention to dates recalls a similar concern in the account of Solomon’s Temple (6:1; 6:37-38; 8:2). This hints at the parallel between the stories of Solomon and Jeroboam.

4. The introduction suggests the nature of the celebration described in 13:1-10. The festival is, presumably, an annual affair, since it is “like the festival that was in Judah.” But this particular celebration is unusual: Jeroboam himself is officiating rather than the priests he placed in Bethel to offer sacrifice. The implied parallel with the Solomon story invites us to understand this ceremony as Jeroboam’s dedication of the new calf sanctuary in Bethel.\textsuperscript{18}

Thus, the most significant effect of this repetitive introduction is to place, in dramatic fashion, the specific confrontation of the man of God with Jeroboam in the context of the more general sins of Jeroboam and in the even broader deuteronomistic narrative. Much more will be made of this in the next chapter.

In summary, 12:25-33 does not appear to be original to the story because of its characteristic deuteronomistic ideology and style, the shared use of a form \textit{עשה ליהוה} with the same meaning in its parallel text 1 Kings 13:33-34, which also contains deuteronomistic characteristics, and the absence of any attention given to the golden calf in 1 Kings 13’s main body.

\textit{In 1 Kings 13:2 the Phrase “and he shall slaughter upon you the priests of the shrines who bring offerings upon you” is Not a Part of the Original Prophetic Narrative.}

As we continue in our establishment of the source text, 13:2c also does not appear to have been a part of the original source: “and he shall slaughter upon you the priests of

\textsuperscript{18} Walsh, \textit{I Kings}, 175-176.
the shrines who bring offerings upon you.” In the fulfillment of this prophecy, which we will demonstrate is recorded in 2 Kings 23:16-18, there is no mention of priests slaughtered on the altar.\(^{19}\) Without any knowledge of the man of God’s prophecy 300 years earlier, “Josiah turned and saw the graves that were there on the hill; and he had the bones taken out of the grave and burned on the altar. Thus he defiled it, in fulfillment of the word of the LORD foretold by the man of God who foretold these happenings (2 Kings 23:16).” In this fulfillment passage, there is specific mention of Josiah defiling the altar by burning dead men’s bones on it, as prophesied at Bethel by the man of God, but there is no mention of the slaughter on the altar of the shrine priests who make offerings on it. In the sequence of the narrative of 2 Kings 23, the mention of the slaughter of the shrine priests occurs after the townspeople inform Josiah that in burning men’s bones on the altar he has fulfilled the man of God’s prophecy and after Josiah spares the bones of the man of God and, indirectly, the bones of the old prophet: “He asked, ‘What is the marker I see there?’ And the men of the town replied, ‘That is the grave of the man of God who came from Judah and foretold these things that you have done to the altar of Bethel.’ ‘Let him be, he said, ‘let no one disturb his bones.’ So they left his bones undisturbed together with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria (2 Kings 23:17-18).” The fulfillment passage, 2 Kings 23:16-18, is fixated on the bones, not on the sacrifice of the shrine priests on the altar.

\(^{19}\) Much more will be said later to demonstrate convincingly that 23:16-18 is indeed the end of the original story.
At this point in the narrative of 2 Kings 23, but not within the text of 23:16-18 that fulfills the original source’s prophecy in 1 Kings 13, the sole reference to any slaughter of living priests of the high places occurs: “Josiah abolished all the cult places in the towns of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had built, vexing [the LORD]. He dealt with them just as he had done to Bethel: He slew on the altars all the priests of the shrines who were there, and he burned human bones on them. Then he returned to Jerusalem (2 Kings 23:19-20).” As we will demonstrate later, this passage is clearly not a part of the original ending of 1 Kings 13. It appears that the deuteronomistic redactor has inserted this incident into the prophecy of the man of God in 1 Kings 13:2. In so doing, he has tightly woven our source into the deuteronomistic narrative and message of Kings and the deuteronomistic narrative and message of Kings into our source.20

Without the phrase “and he shall slaughter upon you the priests of the shrines who bring offerings upon,” the man of God’s prophecy reads, according to a literal rendering of the Masoretic text:

יִקְרָא יְהוָה אָמַר לֵעָלָיו כֹּהוּד אָדָם וְעַצְמֹות גוּדָו יִשְׂרְפוּ לְבֵית־דָּוִד נֹולָד הִנֵּה־בֵן יְוָהוּ

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה בִּדְבַר עָלֶיךָ יִשְׂרֵפוּ אָדָם וְעַצְמֹות שְׁמֹו יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ לְבֵית־דָּוִד

And he cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD: “O altar, altar! Thus said the LORD: A son shall be born to the House of David, Josiah by name; and human bones shall be burned on you.”

20 Gray sees it differently: “In the account of Josiah’s desecration of Bethel the slaughter of priests on the altar is introduced as an afterthought (II Kings 23:20) under the influence of the present passage.” He understands that 2 Kings 23:20 was influenced by 1 Kings 13:2, not vice versa. Gray, I & II Kings, 326.
This construction is awkward at best. Josiah is named directly but bones will be burned passively on the altar. Without the middle of verse two, the prophecy of the slaughter of the shrine priests on the altar, the verse does not work. Josiah is mentioned but then he does not directly do anything. The active verb יִשְׂרְפוּ is invariably translated as passive in the modern English versions (JPS, NIV, NRSV), but it is actually an active verb.21 Thus, verse two of our source could be translated: “O altar, altar! Thus said the LORD: A son shall be born to the House of David, Josiah by name, and they will burn human bones on you,” but this does not make much more sense of the verse than the passive translation makes of it. The answer to this dilemma might be found in the apparatus of the MT. The textual variant suggests that the third person singular reading (ףיִשְׂרֹ), the one found in the Septuagint, the Syriac and the Vulgate, is probably the better reading. Each time this verb occurs with Josiah’s act of burning, the verbal form is an active third person masculine singular:

- Josiah turned and saw the graves that were there on the hill; and he had the bones taken out of the graves and burned (וַףיִשְׂרֹ) on the altar. Thus, he defiled it, in fulfillment of the word of the LORD foretold by the man of God who foretold these happenings.” (2 Kings 23:16)

- He slew on the altars all the priests of the shrines who were there, and he burned (וַףיִשְׂרַול) human bones on them. Then he returned to Jerusalem. (2 Kings 23:20)

21 It is acknowledged that the third plural masculine is used frequently with a passive meaning. *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar* (ed., E. Kautzsch; 2d English edition; Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1910), 144 f, g, 460.
• He burned (שָׂףרַ) the bones of priests on their altars and purged Judah and Jerusalem. (2 Chronicles 34:5)²²

Cogan recommends that the impersonal plural in 1 Kings 13:2 should be read as a singular.²³ The result is that the verse flows perfectly: “O altar, altar! Thus said the LORD: A son shall be born to the House of David, Josiah by name, and he shall burn human bones on you.”

Some take issue with Josiah being mentioned by name claiming that this is obviously the work of the deuteronomist or a later gloss. Grey asserts that “The naming of the reforming King Josiah is either a vaticinium post eventum, or, more probably, a later gloss.”²⁴ Fritz agrees with Würtwein: “Würtwein assumes correctly that the threat of the man of God was originally directed against the king himself; it was only the Deuteronomistic Historian who changed this older word of Yahweh in favor of a threat

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²² Interesting differences exist between the account in Kings and the one in Chronicles. In Kings, Josiah sacrifices the priests of the shrines on the altars and burns human bones on them throughout Samaria, as he had done in Bethel. Then, he returns to Jerusalem. In Chronicles, the text does not say that Josiah sacrificed the priests of the shrines on the altar and burned human bones on them. Rather, he simply burns the bones of priests. This he does in Judah and Jerusalem and then he pushes his reform northward into Israel. Afterwards, he returns to Jerusalem.

²³ Cogan, I Kings, 367. In spite of recommending the singular reading with G, S, and V for the plural, Gray maintains that it would still be admissible as indicating the indefinite subject. Of course, this indefinite reading is not necessary if the name Josiah is not considered a later, deuteronomistic addition.

²⁴ Here Gray explains that the later events of Josiah’s reformation shaped the earlier tradition of the man of God’s prophecy: “The sequel with its literal fulfillment in the Josianic reformation (II K. 23:16-18) suggests that the original tradition was reshaped in the light of later events, though it is possible that there was an original prophetic denunciation of the cult and altar of Bethel in the colourful language of v.2, omitting the name of Josiah, which suggested the deliberate destruction of Bethel in the particular detail described in II K. 23:16-18.” Gray, I & II Kings, 326. James A Montgomery, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Books of Kings, The International Critical Commentary (ed. Henry Snyder Gehman; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1951), 260-261.
that will be fulfilled under Josiah.”\(^25\) While it is true that Josiah and the house of David were, to say the least, of particular interest to the deuteronomistic redactor of Kings, Josiah is not the hero of the story; initially, he is not even aware that he is in compliance with the prophecy made by the man of God from Judah, a point that Simon makes forcefully:

> If 2 Kings 23:16-18 is part of the original version of our narrative, the story must have been committed to writing only after Josiah’s occupation of Bethel. When we read these verses as the conclusion of our narrative, however, we reach the somewhat astonishing conclusion that the narrator was less concerned with telling us that Josiah acted in conformity with an ancient prophecy than in showing that the word of the Lord to Jeroboam was fulfilled in its entirety. The perspective here is not that of the royal court (that is, political), nor of the priestly temple (that is, ritualistic), but distinctly that of prophecy (that is, theological). Josiah is not described as guided by the word of the Lord but as its unconscious executor.\(^26\)

The real hero is the Word of the LORD. In 1 Kings 13:1-32a and 23:16-18, Josiah is not mentioned to show that he is the great reformer of Israelite religion; rather, he is the instrument that God uses to fulfill the Word of the LORD as spoken through the man of God. Since our interest concerns the text as it existed before being recontextualized in the book of Kings, it is not difficult to imagine that shortly after Josiah’s actions this story was circulated with Josiah’s name as a part of the man of God’s original prophecy. Having Josiah’s name as a part of the prophecy strengthens the

\(^25\) Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings*, 150.

\(^26\) Simon, *Reading Prophetic Narratives*, 145.
point of the passage, which is the power of the Word of the LORD to overcome any and all who oppose it, even if it takes 300 years.

1 Kings 13:3 and 5 are Not a part of the Original Prophetic Narrative.

As we continue working through 1 Kings 13 establishing the source text that existed prior to its recontextualization into the narrative of Kings, we notice that verses three and five interrupt the sequence of verses four and six.27

A portent is given in verse three and then fulfilled in verse five. Between the portent and the fulfillment, Jeroboam’s outstretched hand withers. Following the

27 Long, 1 Kings, 145.
portent’s fulfillment, Jeroboam asks the man of God to entreat the LORD for his healing and, subsequently, the king is healed when the man of God prays to the LORD. The narrative would flow better if it simply read:

“O Altar, altar! Thus said the LORD: a son shall be born to the House of David, Josiah by name; and he shall burn human bones on you.” When the king heard what the man of God had proclaimed against the altar in Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his arm above the altar and cried, “Seize him!” But the arm that he stretched out against him became rigid, and he could not draw it back. Then the king spoke up and said to the man of God, “Please entreat the LORD your God and pray for me that I may be able to draw back my arm.” The man of God entreated the LORD and the king was able to draw his arm back; it became as it was before.

It is obvious that the sequencing of this part of the story functions better without verses three and five, but there are other reasons for excluding these verses from the form of the story that existed before it was included into the narrative of Kings. First, the story gives the impression that Jeroboam is still standing on the altar (or at least on the steps or ramp attached to it) when he stretches his hand out over it. The scene makes little sense if the altar breaks apart and the ashes are spilled but there is no mention of Jeroboam either stepping away before the altar falls or being affected in some way. Second, the destruction of the altar makes little sense if its desecration is yet to come.

28 Simon, Reading Prophetic Narratives, n. 17, 301.

29 Walsh explains the difficulties with verses three and five thusly,

In other words, this parenthetical sign is not part of the scene; we hear it but Jeroboam does not. The sign begins with the same vivid construction we saw in verses 1 and 2. In our mind’s eye we see the altar split open and its sacred ashes pour onto the ground . . . We are not told when this will occur, or whether it will be associated with Josiah’s purge. We infer that it will not happen earlier, since in that case the altar would already be desecrated and unusable, and Josiah’s
Third, the perfect at the beginning of verse three (ןוְנָתַ) does not fit with the imperfects in the verses before and after it. The perfect here makes sense only if it is understood as a past tense and the past tense is possible only if the form is an Aramaism inserted by a later hand. Gray asserts that “the use of לְ with the perfect natan is late and suggests midrashic elaboration of the original word of God in v. 2. Cogan states that “The unusual syntax, with the verb in perfect tense, indicates that the verse along with its complement in v. 5 are not original to the story.” Fourth, the introductory words, such as “on that day,” are awkward and unnecessary, but they make perfect sense if added by a later interpolator. Although the exclusion or inclusion of verses three and five from the original source text is not crucial to my argument, removing these verses addresses the actions would be pointless . . . The NRSV translation of verse 5 is misleading, since it includes the verse in the series of events that occurred at the king’s ceremony. It is rather the narrator’s affirmation to us that the man of God’s prophecy in verse 3 was fulfilled by the time of the narrator. Translate (including the parentheses): ‘(And the altar has been torn down and the ashes on it spilled out, according to the sign that the man of God gave by the word of Yahweh.)’ In addition to prolonging the suspense, this parenthesis has other effects on a reader. It confirms the reliability of God’s word and draws an immediate connection from the scene of the story to the reader’s own world.

Walsh’s point of view will be useful when we explain how artfully the deuteronomistic redactor weaved this text within the narrative of Kings. Walsh, 1 Kings, 178.

30 Ibid.

31 Gray, I & II Kings, 326.

32 Cogan, 1Kings, 367.

33 Simon, Reading Prophetic Narratives, n. 17, 301. More will be said in the next chapter as to why a later hand would add verses three and five to the narrative along with how it functions rhetorically and thematically in the deuteronomistic narrative.
sequencing problem in the narrative of the withering and healing of Jeroboam’s arm and the issue with the odd use of the perfect וְנָתַן, a later form showing Aramaic influence.

Before discussing the redactional additions at the end of 1 Kings 13, there is a small text critical issue in verse 23 in which the LXX reading is preferred. It has some relevance to the point of view I have taken in this chapter because the LXX reading retains the clear distinction between “man of God” from Judah and “the prophet.” Consistently, the old prophet is referred to as “the prophet.” The one who came by the word of the LORD from Judah is always labeled “the man of God.” But verse 23 could be read in a manner that identifies the “man of God” as a prophet. Verse 23 of the MT reads:

After he had eaten bread and had drunk, he saddled the ass for him—for the prophet whom he had brought back.

In contrast, the LXX has a different ending to the verse 23:

After he had eaten bread and had drunk water, he saddled the ass for him (himself?) and he returned.

The LXX reading is not clear as to who saddled the ass for whom. Did the man of God saddle the ass for himself and then return or did the prophet saddle the ass for the
man of God and then the man of God return? It appears that a scribe, possibly with a marginal gloss, attempted to remove this ambiguity. Thus, the MT replaces בַּווַיָּשֹׁ with הֱשִׁיבֹו אֲשֶׁר לַנָּבִיא, so that the meaning of the verse is that the old prophet saddled the ass for the prophet he had brought back. While this does clarify who saddled the ass for whom, it muddles the clear verbal distinction, which is maintained throughout this prophetic narrative, between the prophet and the man of God. On the basis of this verbal consistency, it seems reasonable to conclude that the LXX reading is preferred, since it maintains the clear terminological distinction between the prophet and the man of God.

As a result, the meaning of the verse is most likely that the old prophet saddled the ass for the man of God and then the man of God returned.  

In 1 Kings 13:32 the Phrase “and against all the cult places in the towns of Samaria” is Not a Part of the Original Prophetic Narrative.

The editor of Kings adds nothing to the narrative after verse 5 until verse 32:

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34 Uriel Simon, “Denial and Persistence,” 93, n. 32. Also, see Simon’s discussion in Reading Prophetic Narratives,” 143.

35 Walter Gross argues persuasively that 13:20-22 are a part of the pre-deuteronomistic narrative and are not the work of the deuteronomistic redactor. He substantiates this view with several proofs:

(1) The oracular formula in verse 20b does not prove the dtr origins of verses 20-22. Admittedly, dtr authors frequently use this formula, but the oracular formula is pre-dtr, particularly in contexts which deal with prophets. (2) With respect to miṣwā’s singular number and with respect to its signification (neither the deuteronomistic law nor the Decalogue, but a specific prohibition against eating and drinking, limited to the man of God at Bethel), the usage of miṣwā in 1 Kgs 13:21 lies outside the field of typical dtr usage. (3) Although it may be concluded that the sentence 1 Kgs 13:21d resembles frequently encountered dtn-dtr expressions, the relative clause is also met frequently in priestly expressions. Further, the main clause deviates both in signification and number from usual dtr formulations. Were 1 Sam. 13:13 actually deuteronomistic, it would be the only authentic dtr parallel. (4) It is certainly possible, even probable, that the pre-dtr
For what he announced by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the cult places in towns of Samaria, shall surely come true.

The final phrase in the Hebrew text, מֵעֲרֵי אֲשֶׁר הַבָּמֹת כָּל־בָּתֵּי וְעַל, is not a part of the original story. On the lips of the old prophet the phrase “and the cult places in the towns of Samaria” is surely anachronistic since the city of Samaria had not been founded when he uttered these words. The city of Samaria was not established until the time of Omri, whose reign dates from 882 to 871.36 “Then he bought the hill of Samaria from Shemar for two talents of silver; he built [a town] on the hill and named the town which he built Samaria, after Shemar, the owner of the hill.”37 This hill country was not officially annexed and named Samaria until after the Assyrian conquest (post 720 B.C.E.).38 But this anachronistic reference is not the main issue here. Earlier in this chapter, it was argued that the name Josiah was a part of the original prophetic narrative author of I Kings 13, who wanted to treat prophetic obedience in response to YHWH’s word (the theme itself proves it pre-dtrN) used a common expression (as I Kgs 2:43 shows) which fit the context with YHWH as subject.


37 “The concluding reference to Samaria indicates the late date of this story, given that Samaria is not established as the capital of northern Israel until the reign of Omri (1 Kgs 16:24).” Sweeney, I & II Kings, 182.

38 Cogan, I Kings, 373 . “The reference to Samaria as a province obviously dates from at least after 734 . . . More probably the usage reflects the situation after 722 and specifically in Josiah’s reformation when local shrines were suppressed.” Gray, I & II Kings, 332.
even though the man of God gave this word 300 years before Josiah’s birth. If this prophecy concerning Josiah’s name is accepted as a part of the original literary composition of the story, then it is not too farfetched to conclude that the old prophet could have delivered a prophetic word against the cult places in a certain region using a future name for that region. Of course, the difference in the case of Josiah is that the text is emphatic regarding his name: “A son shall be born to the House of David, Josiah by name.” But, given this difference between the prophecy regarding Josiah’s name and the prophetic word “against all the cult places in the towns of Samaria,” the phrase “and all the cult places of the towns of Samaria” should not be ruled out simply because, on the lips of the old prophet, it is anachronistic.

The main reason that this phrase is not a part of the original story is that it demonstrates the qualities of being a part of the editorial work of Kings’ redactor. As has been mentioned above and will be discussed next, verses 33 and 34 are the work of the deuteronomistic redactor. Thus, the phrase “and the cult places of the towns of Samaria” prepares the way for the deuteronomistic editorial comments in verses 33 and 34. The reasoning here fits with the exclusion of the phrase “and he shall slaughter upon you the priests of the shrines who bring offerings upon you” in verse two. In fact, it seems that, in his statement in verse 32, “For what he announced by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the cult places in Samaria, shall surely come true,” the Old Prophet is actually referring back to the man of God’s prophecy in verse two, so that the same hand that added “and he shall slaughter upon you the priests of the shrines who bring offerings upon you” in verse two also inserted “and against all the cult places in the
towns of Samaria” in verse 32. In so doing he prepares the reader for the editorial comments in verses 33 and 34 and connects these comments to what preceded in the prophetic narrative.

1 Kings 13:33 and 34 are Not a Part of the Original Prophetic Narrative.

With reference to the deuteronomistic editorial comments in verses 33 and 34, some mention has been made above. It was stated that in his commentary on 1 Kings Walsh found a chiastic structure between 12:30-31 and 13:33-34. In a different place, Walsh notes the correspondence between these two texts. He points out that many of the words and phrases of 12:30-31 are repeated in 13:33-34, as seen here:

1 Kings 12:30-31

1 Kings 13:33-34

39 Much more will be made of this text and 12:25-33 in the next chapter when we discuss at length 1 Kings 13 in its deuteronomistic setting in Kings.
1 Kings 12:30-31

That proved to be a cause of guilt
For the people went to worship [the calf at Bethel and] the one at Dan.
He also made cult places
    And appointed from the ranks of the people
    Who were not of Levite descent.

1 Kings 13:33-34

Even after this incident, Jeroboam did not turn from his evil ways,
    But he kept on appointing priests from the ranks of the people.
He ordained as priests of the shrines any who so desired.
Thereby the House of Jeroboam incurred guilt –
    To their utter annihilation from the face of the earth.

After demonstrating this correspondence, Walsh makes the following observation:

The effect of this chiastic correspondence is to mark the two pairs of verses as a kind of frame around the two narratives already considered.

In contrast to xii 30-1, which form an integral part of the report of Jeroboam’s cultic innovations, xiii 33-4 do not fit smoothly into their context. They appear to be an editorializing remark inserted between two narratives. Structurally, too, the verses are an irregularity in an otherwise symmetrical organization: they fall between b’ and a’, and have no counterpart in the first half of the Jeroboam story. The effect of this isolation and asymmetry is to call attention to xiii 33-4, and thus to mark them as especially significant.

Both xii 30-1 and xiii 33-4 contain negative evaluations of Jeroboam’s religious innovations; between them lie the prophetic events at Beth-El. In the course of those events Jeroboam has heard the divine condemnation of his new cult, and felt the divine power behind the word in his own withered flesh. That power, violent and ineluctable, has also been publicly demonstrated in the destinies of the Judahite man of God and the Beth-El prophet. That the second evaluation of Jeroboam can be stated in the same terms as the first implies that the intervening events made no lasting impression upon him. Such intransigence can lead only to
Yahweh’s rejection of him and his house, which will be the burden of ch. xiv.

On this contextual level the key to interpretation of xiii 33-4 is not any one of the specifics it cites, but the chiastic repetition of vocabulary that establishes its correspondence with xii 30-1. This correspondence reveals Jeroboam’s contumacy. High places and their non-Levitical priests are all part of the “sins of Jeroboam”; but it is his obduracy in the face of prophetic testimony to Yahweh’s anger that seals his doom.

Along with this chiastic relationship between 13:33-34 and 12:30-31, the phrase, “to the . . . annihilation from the face of the earth (הָאֲדָמָה פְּנֵי מֵעַל וּלְהַשְׁמִיד),” reveals the deuteronomistic nature of 13:33-34 and its connection with the broader deuteronomistic editorial narrative in 12:25-33. The hiphil verb הַשְׁמִיד (to annihilate or wipe out) is used frequently in Deuteronomy to describe YHWH’s punishment of Israel. A very similar phrase to that in 1 Kings 13:34 is found in Deuteronomy 6:14-15 and 7:4-5. This language and these actions recorded in Deuteronomy 7:5, are strikingly similar to the language and actions in Josiah’s reform as recorded in 2 Kings 23, demonstrating the deuteronomistic nature of annihilation as an act of the LORD in response to Israel’s false worship. The LORD wiped out Jeroboam’s kingdom because he engaged in false worship rather than radically confronting it as Josiah would do.

In reference to the deuteronomistic nature of 1 Kings 13:33-34 and its connection with 1 Kings 12:25-33, Deuteronomy 9 is obviously relevant because of the way it

41 Cogan, 1 Kings, 373.
addresses the golden calf rebellion. Four times in Deuteronomy 9, a form of the hiphil verb שָׁמַיד is employed. For the Deuteronomist, the worship of the golden calf is the worst of all sins, the very sin that Jeroboam fully instituted. Weinfeld sees the connection between Israel’s original golden calf rebellion and the sin of Jeroboam:

The sin of golden calf was the dominant one, however, and it actually reflects here the historical sin of the northern Israelites, who were worshiping the golden calves (cf. 1 Kgs 12:28-29 and especially Hos 8:5-6; 10:5; 13:2). The exile of the northern Israelites was indeed seen by the Deuteronomic historiographer as a punishment for this sin (cf. 1 Kgs 14:15-16; 2 Kgs 17:16, etc.). The stubbornness and the wickedness of the northern Israelites is described in the Book of Kings in terms similar to those of Deut 8 and 9; see, for example, 2 Kgs 17:13, “they did not obey, they stiffened their necks like their fathers who did not have faith in YHWH their God . . . they made molten idols for themselves—the two calves.42

It seems like no accident that the repetitive use of שָׁמַיד in Deuteronomy 9 is located in the context of golden calf worship, which in turn is found in a deuteronomistic frame (1 Kings 12:25-33 and 13:33-34) that anticipates the ultimate downfall of Jeroboam’s kingdom due primarily to his sin with the golden calves and false worship.

The golden calf and Jeroboam’s sin, the exile and שָׁמַיד are all related in the mind and theology of the Deuteronomist. It also seems intentional that in the chiastic structure, as discovered by Walsh, the phrase “For the people went to worship [the calf at Bethel and]

42 Ibid., 424.
the one at Dan (12:30b)” is parallel with “To their utter annihilation (וּלְהַשְׁמִיד) from the face of the earth.”

Thus, it appears that 1 Kings 13:33-34 is a deuteronomistic editorial comment which is not a part of the original story. This is substantiated by Walsh’s analysis and conclusion that 1 Kings 13:33-34 is vitally connected with 1 Kings 12:30-31 through a chiastic relationship which ties together the themes of illegitimate shrine priests, the golden calves and the obstinacy of Jeroboam. In addition, the relationship of הַשְׁמִיד to golden calf worship in the mind of the Deuteronomist demonstrates that 1 Kings 13:33-34 is a redactional addition, not a part of the original story.

So far, we have established the body of the original story before it was integrated into the fabric of the Deuteronomist’s historiography. What is left to do is to determine the ending of the story, which, amazingly, is located not in 1 Kings 13 or even 14, but in 2 Kings 23:16-18. What evidence exists to suggest that the end of this prophetic narrative is found near the end of 2 Kings in 23:16-18?

2 Kings 23:16-18 is a Part of the Original Prophetic Narrative.

Following in line with the views offered by Gressman, Montgomery, Jepsen, Rofe, and Eynikel, Simon offers five persuasive arguments for identifying 23:16-18 as the end of the story of 1 Kings 13:

1. It is implausible that it had an open ending that left readers wondering whether the Lord’s sentence against the altar would be fulfilled and whether the old prophet’s prediction about his tomb would come to pass.
2. The second half of 2 Kings 23:18—“so they left his bones undisturbed together with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria”—would be quite appropriate as the conclusion for 1 Kings 13 but has no real meaning in the story of Josiah. In the context of Josiah’s campaign against the cult places of the towns of Samaria, the ancient word of the Lord and the respect shown to the man of God who spoke it are relevant; but what is the incidental fate of the bones of the old prophet doing here?

3. 2 Kings 23:16-18 makes no mention of the golden calves and the cult places, and the verb נְעָשָׂה is used in its normal sense (whereas in verse 15 and 19 it refers to the illegitimate actions.)

4. These verses are stylistically reminiscent of our story: they observe the distinction between the “man of God” (23:16 and 17) and the “prophet” (v. 18); they repeat the rare usage of the verb קָרָא with “the word of the Lord” as its direct object (vv. 16 and 17); and they contain the lengthy repetitions that distinguish 1 Kings 13 from similar scriptural tales.

5. On the other hand, the narrative mode of these three verses, which is scenic-dramatic and relies on dialogue, is quite distinct from the reportorial moralizing of the rest of 2 Kings 23 (which has direct speech only in verses 21 and 27 and no real dialogue).

With regard to number three, Walter Brueggemann points out a profound, self-conscious practice of intertextuality operative between 2 Kings 23:15, 19-20 and 1 Kings 12:25-33 and I would add 1 Kings 13:2b (“and he shall slaughter upon you the priests of the shrines who bring offerings upon you”), 13:32b (“and against all the cult places in the towns of Samaria”) and 13:33-34 (“priests of the shrines”) to 1 Kings 12:25-33. Further,

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43 Simon, Reading Prophetic Narratives, 131-132. Writing of 2 Kings 23:16-20, Gray offers a different interpretation, “This section reflects the interest of the Deuteronomists in the fulfillment of prophecy (cf. 1 K. 13). A different hand is at work here from that of the redactor in v. 15, who has already noted the destruction of the altar of Bethel, and the section may be from the Deuteronomistic redactor.” Gray, I & II Kings, 738.

Sweeny points out the interplay between 2 Kings 23:15 and 1 Kings 12:26-33: “The DtrH portrays the Beth El altar, established by Jeroboam ben Nebat of Israel, as a site for the worship of the golden calf . . . The destruction of this altar ground to dust resembles Moses’ destruction of the golden calf in Exod 32:20.”

Thus, the deuteronomistic redactional activity that frames the story in 1 Kings 13 also surrounds 2 Kings 23:16-18.

There is a fairly significant problem with asserting that 2 Kings 23:16-18 is the conclusion to the prophetic narrative in 1 Kings 13. Compare the proposed final verses to the story in chapter 13 of 1 Kings with the initial verses of the story’s conclusion in 2 Kings 23.

31 After burying him, he said to his sons, “When I die, bury me in the grave where the man of God lies buried; lay my bones beside his. For what he announced by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel shall surely come to pass.

16 So Josiah turned and saw the graves that were there on the hill; and he had the bones taken out of the graves and burned on the altar. Thus he defiled it, in fulfillment of the word of the LORD foretold by the man of God (when Jeroboam stood on the altar.) He turned and saw the grave of the man of God who foretold these happenings.

Obviously there is not a smooth transition between 1 Kings 13:32 and 2 Kings 23:16. For the interpretation proposed here to work, one must posit that the deuteronomistic editor of Kings removed an original, shorter transition between the narrative in 1 Kings 13 and its conclusion in 2 Kings 23:16-18 and replaced it with his own lengthy material. Just as the redactor replaced the story’s original opening with his

45 Sweeney, I & II Kings, 449.
own introduction, here he substituted his own intermediary material for the original transition. This assumption is adopted because it “allows us to account for the discrepancy, in both style and content, between the exposition we have before us and the body of the story as well as for the linguistic (“and behold”) and factual dependence of the story on the missing exposition.” Simon claims that “the redactor treated the Elijah stories in a similar fashion. This is evident from both the truncated form of the opening (17:1) and their dependence on an exposition we no longer possess.”

In 2 Kings 23:16 the Phrases “when Jeroboam stood on the altar” and “He turned and saw the grave of the man of God” are a Part of the Original Prophetic Narrative.

Having discussed the intermediary material that transitioned the prophetic story in 1 Kings 13 to its conclusion in 2 Kings 23:16-18, we now turn to two final issues. First, I have added to the text of verse 16, material which is placed within parentheses:

So Josiah turned and saw the graves that were there on the hill; and he had the bones taken out of the graves and burned on the altar. Thus he defiled it, in fulfillment of the word of the LORD foretold by the man of God (when Jeroboam stood on the altar on the festival day. He turned and saw the grave of the man of God) who foretold these happenings.

The MT does not contain the text within the parentheses:

46 Simon, Reading Prophetic Narratives, 132.

47 Ibid, n. 6, 300.
The LXX has the text, “when Jeroboam stood on the altar on the festival day. He turned and saw the grave of the man of God,” that is absent from verse 16 of the MT (The LXX also has an additional phrase not included in the reading I propose, “on the festival day,” which I will discuss below):

καὶ ἐξένευσεν ἦσιας καὶ έδειν τοὺς τάφους τοὺς ὄντας ἐκεῖ ἐν τῇ πόλει καὶ ἀπέστειλεν καὶ ἔλαβεν τὰ ὀστά ἐκ τῶν τάφων καὶ κατέκαυσεν ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον καὶ ἐμίανεν αὐτὸ κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου ὁ ἐλάλησεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ (ἐν τῷ ἑστάναι ἰεροβοαμ ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον καὶ ἐπιστρέψας ἤρεν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν τάφον τοῦ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ) τοῦ λαλῆσαντος τοὺς λόγους τούτους

It is possible that awkwardness in the MT text, אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים (foretold by the man of God who foretold these things), is due to dittography. In this explanation of the “garbled” text, either אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים or the entire phrase at the end of the verse, which appears again in verse 17, should be excised.48 While this explanation is possible, there is probably a better way to account for the awkwardness in the MT; it is the result of homoeoteleuton. A scribe looked up after the first occurrence in the verse of אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים and, when he directed his attention back toward the text, placed his eyes on its second appearance. He continued his work, skipping the textual material that we find in the LXX. With this explanation, the LXX would represent the original text. While this rationalization cleans up the awkwardness in the text, it is not without its issues. With the LXX reading, the passage contains a clear

48 Cogan and Tadmor, II Kings, 289
repetition, the altar is mentioned three times in this short passage, and it retains another redundancy, three times the man of God is noted to have foretold the actions of Josiah (סְשָׁמַר which is also used twice in 1 Kings 13). Oddly enough, instead of serving as an argument against the LXX variant these redundancies are reasons to adopt this reading. Even without the LXX reading, the text contains a repetitious style. For example, verse 18 is repetitive, “‘Let him be,’ he said, ‘Let no one disturb his bones.’ So they left his bones undisturbed together with the bones of the prophet.” Further, if one adopts the view presented here, then the repetition represented by the LXX reading is an argument for its authenticity. The story of the man of God and the prophet in 1 Kings 13, which the present text under consideration concludes, is marked by a repetitive style. What follows are two examples of such redundancy in 1 Kings 13:

- Eating, drinking and going back by another way.

But the man of God replied to the king, “Even if you give me half your wealth, I will not go in with you, nor will I eat bread or drink water in this place; for so I was commanded by the word of the LORD: You shall eat no bread and drink no water, nor shall you go back by the road by which you came.” (8-9)

He replied, “I may not go back with you and enter your home; and I may not eat bread or drink water in this place; the order I received by the word of the LORD was: You shall not eat bread or drink water there; nor shall you return by the road on which you came.” “I am a prophet, too,” said the other, “and an angel said to me by command of the LORD: Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.” He was lying to him. So he went back with him, and he ate bread and drank water in his house. (16-19)

He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah: “Thus said the LORD: Because you have flouted the word of the LORD
and have not observed what the LORD your God commanded you, but have gone back and eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which He said to you, ‘Do not eat bread or drink water [there],’ your corpse shall not come to the grave of your fathers. After he had eaten bread and drunk . . . (21-23a)

- Saddling the ass and setting out.

“Saddle the ass for me,” he said to his sons. They saddled the ass for him, and he mounted it and rode after the man of God who came from Judah. (13-14a)

After he had eaten bread and had drunk, he saddled the ass for him—for the prophet whom he had brought back. He set out, and a lion came upon him on the road and killed him. His corpse lay on the road, with the ass standing beside the corpse . . . (23-25b)

He said to his sons, “Saddle the ass for me, and they did so. He set out and found the corpse lying on the road, with the ass and the lion standing beside the corpse; the lion had not eaten the corpse nor had it mauled the ass. The prophet lifted up the corpse of the man of God, laid it on the ass, and brought it back . . . (27-29b)

The use of the word *altar* three times in the LXX reading of 2 Kings 23:16-18, along with the repletion of קָרָא, which the LXX retains less awkwardly, call the attention to the main theme of the story, which is the precise fulfillment of the word of the Lord no matter what opposes it. For the story to call attention to the fact that Jeroboam was standing on the altar demonstrates that, although the prophecy took 300 hundred years to be fulfilled, the word of the LORD certainly accomplished its intended end. The emphasis is on neither Jeroboam nor the festival day, as we will see below, but on the duration of the 300 year time span and identification of the precise prophecy.

Thus, the LXX reading is preferred for two reasons: (1) it cleans up the redundant statement “in fulfillment of the word of the LORD foretold by the man of God who
foretold these things” (הָאֵלֶּה אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים קָרָא אֲשֶׁר הָאֱלֹהִים אִישׁ קָרָא אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה כִּדְבַר).

(2) A scribal homoeoteleuton best explains the origin of the textual awkwardness. Also, the redundancy that the LXX’s variant creates and retains argues for this reading since such repetition is characteristic of the main body of the prophetic narrative in 1 Kings 13.

Although the LXX’s reading is preferred, it causes a serious problem for the thesis in this chapter, even though Simon affirms the entire LXX variant: “The assumption that the Masoretic text reflects a deletion due to homoeoteleuton (“the man of God”) is plausible in and of itself, and is further supported by the fluency of the version preserved in the Greek translation.”

The short phrase, “on the festival day” is mentioned nowhere in the original part of the story, but is found in the deuteronomistic redactor’s introductory work:

He stationed at Bethel the priests of the shrines that he had appointed to sacrifice to the calves that he had made. And Jeroboam established a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month; in imitation of the festival in Judah, he established one at Bethel, and he ascended the altar [there]. On the fifteenth day of the eighth month—the month in which he contrived of his own mind to establish a festival for the Israelites—Jeroboam ascended the altar that he had made in Bethel. (1 Kings 12:32-33)

These verses record the redactor’s great distaste for Jeroboam’s creation of this cult and this festival out of the contrivance of his own heart. The condemnation of this specific festival is not a part of the original story’s agenda. I propose that the deuteronomistic editor added the phrase “on the festival day” (חָגבֶּ) to the conclusion of

49 Simon, Reading Prophetic Narratives, n.35, 305-306.
the prophetic story when he incorporated it into the larger Kings narrative. This proposal requires several points of explanation and substantiation.

First, for the redactor of Kings the establishment of the festival in the northern kingdom was especially heinous since the celebration of the authentic festival, which Jeroboam’s festival imitated, brackets the narrative of Solomon’s dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem in 1 Kings 8:

1Then Solomon convoked the elders of Israel—all the heads of the tribes and the ancestral chieftains of the Israelites—before King Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD from the City of David, that is Zion. 2All the men of Israel gathered before King Solomon at the Feast, in the month of Ehanim—that is, the seventh month.

65So Solomon and all Israel with him—a great assemblage, [coming] from Lebo-hamath to the Wadi of Egypt—observed the Feast at that time before the LORD our God, seven days and again seven days, fourteen days in all. 66On the eighth he let the people go. They bade the king goodbye and went to their homes, joyful and glad of heart over all the goodness that the LORD had shown to His servant David and His people Israel.

Jeroboam’s establishment of his festival was a direct affront to Jerusalem, the Temple and David. For the deuteronomistic redactor to add the tiny phrase “on the festival day” in 2 Kings 23:16 spoke volumes regarding Jeroboam’s direct and willful intention to undermine what the LORD had established in Judah. Further, the deuteronomist associates the establishment of an illegitimate festival with the creation of an alternative cult in Aaron’s golden calf incident:

50 Simon deals with this problem by positing an introduction to this prophetic story which locates the event on this festival day. His conjectured exposition at the beginning of the story functioned to explain the situation in Bethel on the festival day. See his chart, Reading Prophetic Narratives, 138-139.
And all the people took off the gold rings that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. This he took from them and cast in a mold, and made it into a molten calf. And they exclaimed, “This is your god, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt!” When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron announced: “Tomorrow shall be a festival of the LORD!” Early next day, the people offered up burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; they sat down to eat and drink, and then rose to dance. (Exodus 32:3-6)

Associating Jeroboam’s festival with Aaron’s base act of creating a festival around the golden calf cult and contrasting his illicit festival to Solomon’s legitimate festival at the dedication of the temple are important to the deuteronomist’s agenda, whereas, making these connections was not significant to the prophetic narrative’s purpose.

Second, the entire phrase “when Jeroboam stood on the altar on the festival day” is not of deuteronomistic origin. One might legitimately ask, “Why remove only the words “on the festival day,” but not the entire phrase? In 1 Kings 12:32-33 Jeroboam “ascends” the altar, but in the body of the story Jeroboam is standing on the altar. Ascending the altar is deuteronomistic. Conversely, standing on the altar is original. Since the phrase in the conclusion of the story states that Jeroboam was standing on the altar, it is likely that the phrase is a part of the original prophetic narrative.

Third, just as the redactor incorporates an action, “and he shall slaughter upon you the priests of the shrines who bring offerings upon you,” from Josiah’s reforming activities (2 Kings 23) which come right after the prophetic narrative’s conclusion (2 Kings 23:16-18) into the main body of the prophetic narrative (1 Kings 13:2b), he inserts a phrase, “on the festival day,” from Jeroboam’s institution of illegitimate worship (1
Kings 12:32-33) which comes right before the prophetic narrative’s main body into the story’s conclusion (2 Kings 23:16c). With reference to this story’s inclusion within Kings, this move seems to be a part of the editor’s redactional strategy.

Fourth, earlier we said that 1 Kings 13:3 and 5 were not a part of the original prophetic story. Rather, they were a deuteronomistic addition. In support of this position, we stated that, “the introductory words, such as ‘on that day,’ are awkward and unnecessary, but they make perfect sense if added by a later interpolator.” They especially make sense if one takes into account the redactor’s agenda to locate the prophetic narrative on the very day that Jeroboam established this illicit festival. The addition of “on that day” in the body of the story parallels the inclusion of “on the festival day” in the conclusion to the story.51

Finally, the effect of adding “on the festival day” turns the emphasis away from the prophecy itself and its precise fulfillment over a 300 year time span and places the focus on the exact day when Jeroboam inaugurated the illegitimate festival.

Thus, most likely the original version of verse 16 reads:

51 One might argue that this line of reasoning does not take into account the use of הַיֹּם in the sons’ report to their father, the old prophet, of what the man of God did in Bethel on “that day” (1 Kings 13:11). This point is acknowledged, but there is an important difference in verse 3. הַהוּא (“that very”) is added for emphasis which does not occur in 1 Kings 13:11 and “day” appears with the בּ preposition as does “festival” in the Septuagint’s rendering of 2 Kings 23:16. The Deuteronomist is pointing out that the altar broke apart on the very day that Jeroboam inaugurated the festival, whereas the story teller of the prophetic narrative was placing the sons’ report to their father on the same day that the man of God gave a prophetic word against the altar, entreated God for Jeroboam’s healing and stated that he could not eat or drink in Bethel and must return by another way. It was that day in which the sons’ report set their father in motion. For the prophetic story teller, the fact that it was the day of the inauguration of the festival was not the issue; for the Deuteronomist the fact that is was on the very day of the festival’s inauguration was the issue. In the chapter to follow, I will argue that the Deuteronomist made explicit what was, according to his reading, implicit within the text.
So Josiah turned and saw the graves that were there on the hill; and he had the bones taken out of the graves and burned on the altar. Thus he defiled it, in fulfillment of the word of the LORD foretold by the man of God when Jeroboam stood on the altar. He turned and saw the grave of the man of God who foretold these happenings.  

A word needs to be added here regarding the use of the word translated in English “turned” twice in this single verse. Josiah turned and saw the graves on the hill and then he turned and saw the grave of the Man of God. As stated above redundancy is a vital part the prophetic narrator’s style and strategy, but something seems different here. This repetition is awkward and purposeless. It is interesting to note that Septuagint employs two different words for turn here. The Greek verb ἐξένευσεν is used in the first instance of Josiah turning and seeing the graves, while a different verb, ἐπιστρέψας, is employed in the second instance of Josiah turning and placing his eyes on the grave of the man of God. This is intriguing since the MT uses יָפֵן in the first instance, while also suggesting יָפֵן in the MT apparatus’ Hebrew rendering of the Septuagint. The LXX employs two different verbs to describe Josiah’s turning actions, but the MT, like the English translations, suggests using the same verb in both cases. I would suggest that the LXX here represents the original text of this phrase. In this case, the first instance of turning in 23:16 in the Hebrew text is correct. The original reading is יָפֵן. But in the second instance of turning, the MT apparatus is incorrect; it should read אָשְׁב. I suggest that the LXX represents the Greek translation of the original Hebrew אָשְׁב for the following reason. A form of the verb אָשָׁב is used 14 times in the body of the prophetic narrative in 1 Kings 13; each time it is used, the LXX translates it with a form of the same verb, ἐπιστρέφω (ἀνέστρεφω in one case):

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From this analysis of the Septuagint’s translation of forms of the verb אָשָׁב in 1 Kings 13:1-32a, it makes sense to conclude that the LXX’s switch from one verb meaning turn to another verb for turn in 2 Kings 23:16 represents a change in the Hebrew text, especially given the LXX’s consistent translation of אָשָׁב with a form of the Greek verb ἐπιστρέφω. If our belief is correct that 2 Kings 23:16-18 is the conclusion to 1 Kings 13:1-32a, then the fact that the LXX employs two different words for turn (ἐξένευσεν in the first instance and ἐπιστρέψας in the second) in 2 Kings 23:16 most likely indicates that the LXX is translating the verb אָשָׁב rather אָשְׁב as is found in the MT apparatus. If the MT apparatus is inaccurate in this way, then there are a number of implications: (1) it supports the idea that 2 Kings 23:16-
In 2 Kings 23:18 the Phrase “who came from Samaria” is Not a Part of the Original Prophetic Narrative.

As we complete our work of identifying the text of the original prophetic narrative, we must excise the last phrase of the conclusion found in 2 Kings 23:16-18. Cogan and Tadmor point out that this phrase is anachronistic:

The old prophet, whose bones were buried alongside those of the man of God from Judah, came from Bethel, not Samaria (1 Kgs 13:11). Moreover, Samaria had not yet been built in the days of Jeroboam I. Its mention here is anachronistic and betrays the usage of the seventh century when Samaria was a regional territory, juxtaposed to Judah.

Further, the old prophet lived in Bethel; he did not come from Samaria (בָּא מִשֹּׁמְרֹון) to Bethel, as Gray explains, “Neither in I Kings 13 nor elsewhere is there any reference to a prophet coming from Samaria to Bethel, and, in fact the city of Samaria was not founded in the time of Jeroboam I.” Gray surmises that בָּא is written loosely here under the influence of the clause concerning the prophet of Judah (מִיהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר־בָּא). He is certainly right. While the old prophet lived in Bethel (1 Kings 13:1), the man of

18 is the conclusion to 1 Kings 13:1-32a because of the prophetic narrative’s repetitious use of various forms of שׁוּב, (2) as we will see in the next section of this chapter, it argues for the unity of the entire story and (3) it lends credence to the legitimacy of the larger LXX reading in 2 Kings 23:16.

53 Cogan and Tadmor, II Kings, 290. See also Sweeney, 449. Reading אֵת as an object marker rather than the preposition “with,” Montgomery seems to equate mistakenly the prophet with the man of God: “The final clause is an absurd bit of carelessness, as the prophet came from Judah.” They do acknowledge that the Lucianic Greek “has a long insertion, introducing the elder prophet of the original midrash; but even he did not come from Samaria.” Montgomery, Kings, 535.
God is identified throughout this prophetic story as the one who came to Bethel from Judah:

- I Kings 13:1
  נָשָׁר אֲשֶׁר-בָּא מִיְּهوּדָה arrived at Bethel from Judah

- 1 Kings 13:10
  נָשָׁר אֲשֶׁר-בָּא מִיְּهوּדָה on which he had come to Bethel

- 1 Kings 13:12
  נָשָׁר אֲשֶׁר-בָּא מִיְּهوּדָה who had come from Judah

- 1 Kings 13:14
  נָשָׁר אֲשֶׁר-בָּא מִיְּهوּדָה who came from Judah

- 1 Kings 13:21
  נָשָׁר אֲשֶׁר-בָּא מִיְּهوּדָה who had come from Judah

- 2 Kings 23:17
  נָשָׁר אֲשֶׁר-בָּא מִיְּهوּדָה who came from Judah

It seems that the storyteller of this prophetic narrative wanted to emphasize that the man of God came from Judah to Bethel. Why? Most likely, this has to do with the emphasis in the story on the fact that the man of God was not to return by the way he had traveled (1 Kings 13:9, 17). Ultimately, because the man of God disobeyed the LORD’s command, his corpse would not come (לֹא-תָבֹוא) to the grave of his fathers. Because of
the man of God’s disobedience, he never returned to his homeland in fulfillment of the old prophet’s word from the LORD.

The Deuteronomist read out of the man of God’s entry into Bethel from Judah a contrast between Judah and Samaria in the persons of the man of God and the old prophet. He made what he read as an implicit contrast explicit by adding the phrase “who came from Samaria (משרמון)" to the description of the old prophet. This phrase obviously paralleled the description of the man of God “who came from Judah” (מיהודה). This was not a clumsy move on the part of the deuteronomistic editor, but a strategic move and an unabashed statement with regard to his point of view.

The Unity and Structure of the Pre-Deuteronomistic Prophetic Story

Although I will argue for the unity of this prophetic narrative, its unity is admittedly not readily apparent to everyone. Burke O. Long articulates the complexity of this issue well:

The history of this supposedly pre-Dtr tradition is much in dispute. Scholars see tensions within vv. 1-7, and between these verses and the rest of the chapter. For example, vv. 3, 5 appear to interrupt the sequence of vv. 4 and 6, and subsequent events in vv. 11-32 completely ignore the themes of vv. 1-7, the Bethelite altar and the king’s confrontation with the man of God. Moreover, v. 2 may be heavily influenced by 2 Kgs 23:15-18 and the Dtr editor. Beyond these considerations is the unresolved question of a possible relationship in the history of the tradition to Amos 7:10-17.

Since the evidence is equivocal, critics differ widely on what to make of these problems and internal tensions. Würthwein has most recently suggested even more inconsistencies in the tradition. On the opposite side, Simon defends the artistic unity in the text.
The plain fact is that both the unity and antiquity of ch. 13 in various reconstructed forms have over the years been affirmed and denied (see summary of research in Gross, 100-6; Lemke, 303-4). It is fair to say that evidence is ambiguous, and judgments have been arbitrary.54

Even though Long gives this pessimistic analysis of the narrative’s unity, he offers a glimmer of hope in his next sentence: “Certainly from the standpoint of style, vv. 1-32 stand closely linked together.”55 Then, he suggests a way forward: “The difficulty lies in understanding the sometimes confusing movements and developments in the narrative.”56

In the next few pages, depending on Simon and others, I will argue for the prophetic story’s unity and suggest a way to make sense out of the “sometimes confusing movements and developments in the narrative.” I will present many positive arguments for unity, but arguing negatively, the simple fact is that after dividing the story into two independent sources, what is left is a general threat against an anonymous king of Israel

54 Long, I Kings, 145. Volk Fritz, following Würthwein, understands that the narrative comes in two parts: (1) the word against Jeroboam and the two miracles concerning the king (1-10) and (2) the strange circumstances of the death of the man of God (11-31). Fritz, I & 2 Kings, 154-155. At one time, Gray also denied the unity of the narrative, but he later affirmed the text’s unity:

The incident in vv. 7-10, where the man of God rejects the king’s invitation, or inducement, to hospitality, is joined, so far as content is concerned, with the sequel in vv. 11-32, where the prophet of Bethel, with fatal consequences, persuades the man of God to share a meal with him, an important factor both in vv. 7-10 and 11-32 being a prohibition of this through the word of God. For this reason, and through stylistic considerations, we now admit with Fichtner, Noth and M. A. Klopfenstein that vv. 7-32 and probably also the original matter in 12:33-13:6 is a unity.

Gray, I & II Kings, 320-321.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.
and an almost meaningless “grave tradition” of a few lines that told of two prophets, one from Judah and one from Israel, buried together.57

*Verbal Analysis Supports the Unity of the Prophetic Narrative.*

While he does not overtly acknowledge 1 Kings 13:1-13a and 2 Kings 23:16-18 as an independent prophetic story or discuss the redactional moves used by the Deuteronomist to position the story as he did, Choon-Leong Seow claims that the unity of the chapter is not in doubt, supporting his assertion with a verbal analysis.58 First, he notes that the phrase “the word of the LORD” (יְהוָה בִּדְבַר, יְהוָה פִּי, יְהוָה כִּדְבַר) is repeated throughout the narrative:

1. A man from Judah arrived at Bethel from Judah by the word of the LORD (1 Kings 13:1).
2. By the word of the LORD, the man of God cried out against the altar (1 Kings 13:1).
3. The man of God was commanded by the word of the LORD not to eat or drink in this place and not to return by the way he came (1 Kings 13:9).
4. Again, the man of God states that an order was given to him by the word of the LORD not to eat or drink there and not to return by the way he came (1 Kings 13:17).
5. The old prophet claimed that an angel spoke to him by the word of the LORD (1 Kings 13:18).
6. The word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought the man of God back (1 Kings 13:20).

57 Cogan, *1 Kings*, 373-374.
7. The prophet accused the man of God of disobeying the word of the LORD (1 Kings 13:22).

8. The prophet identified the corpse as that of the man of God who disobeyed the word of the LORD (1 Kings 13:26).

9. The prophet asserted that the lion killed the man of God according to the word of the LORD (1 Kings 13:26).

10. The prophet acknowledged that what the man of God announced by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel would surely come true (1 Kings 13:32).

11. Josiah defiled the altar according to the word of the LORD announced by the man of God (2 Kings 23:16).\(^59\)

Second, various forms of the Hebrew root סָוֹב appear throughout the story. As demonstrated above, excluding the appearances of סָוֹב in the deuteronomistic redaction and including the LXX’s variant in 2 Kings 23:16, there are about 15 appearances of סָוֹב, which figure prominently throughout the narrative.

Third, the word translated road or way (ךְדֶּרֶךְ) appears repeatedly.

1. The LORD commanded the man of God not to return by the road which he came (1 Kings 13:9).

2. The man of God returned by another road (1 Kings 13:10).

3. The man of God did not return by the road which he came to Bethel (1 Kings 13:10).

4. The man of God explained that he was ordered not to return by the road he came (1 Kings 13:17).

\(^59\) Often the words and phrases in this section also appear within the deuteronomistic redaction, for example יְהוָה בִּדְבַר in verse 5, מִדַּרְכֹּו in verse 33 and סָוֹב in verse 33. I suggest this is a move by the redactor as he read meaning out of the narrative and as he included this story as a part of his larger agenda.
5. The lion came upon the man of God on the road and killed him (1 Kings 13:24).


7. The prophet is identified as the one who brought the man of God back from the road (1 Kings 13:26).

Within this list, there is an irony which demonstrates the literary and artistic unity of the story; the man of God is not to return by the same road and ultimately, because of his disobedience, he lies dead on the road. In a similarly ironic way, the man of God is commanded not to eat, which he does, and subsequently the lion does not eat his corpse, apparently in obedience to God. These two instances argue for the unity of 1-10 and 11-32.

In addition to Seow’s arguments for unity from verbal consistency, there are other instances. There is the repetition of the phrase man of God “from Judah,” which was pointed out above. It is used from start to finish in the story (1 Kings 13:1, 12, 14, 21; 2 Kings 23:17).

Further, there is the repeated emphasis on the terms “house” or “homeward” (בַּית), used in a special way within the story to contrast the man of God’s refusal to go to Jeroboam’s house and his acceptance of the prophet’s invitation to enter his house.  

1. Jeroboam invited the man of God to come to his house (1 Kings 13:7).

60 Simon, “Denial and Persistence,” 89. It seems to me that the one other use of house, “the house of David” (בֵּית־דָּוִד), within the compass of the prophetic narrative is a play on “the house of El” (בֵּית־אֵל). In his editorial activity, the deuteronomistic redactor paralleled “the house of Jeroboam” (בֵּית יָרָבוֹם) with “the house of the David,” which was already in the text as he found it. This is the same type of move as when he paralleled the man of God who came from Judah with the prophet who came from Samaria in 2 Kings 23:17-18.
2. The man of God refused to go to with Jeroboam even if he would give the man of God half his house (1 Kings 13:8).

3. The prophet invited the man of God to go homeward with him (1 Kings 13:15).

4. The prophet delivered a fictitious word to the man of God in which the LORD instructed the prophet to bring the man of God to his house (1 Kings 13:18).

5. The man of God returned with him and ate bread in his house (1 Kings 13:19).

In and of themselves, these arguments from verbal analysis provide convincing evidence for the unity of the passage, but by far the most persuasive argument for its unity is the literary analysis offered by Uriel Simon in a chapter entitled, “A Prophetic Sign Overcomes Those Who Would Defy It: The King of Israel, The Prophet from Bethel, and the Man of God from Judah” from his book Reading Prophet Narratives. He presents his argument for unity in two forms: (1) literary structure and (2) the use of sign and portent. What follows is a summary of the data presented in Simon’s chapter, beginning with a look at the literary structure of the 1 Kings 1:32a and 2 Kings 23:16-18 and then following with an exposition of his thoughts on sign and portent.

*Literary Structure Supports the Unity of the Prophetic Narrative.*

According to Simon, there are six scenes in the narrative, the first five scenes all occur on one day and the final scene occurs some three hundred years later. The changes of scenes are identified by (1) a complete or partial change of characters, (2) introductory
sentences that recount the hero’s arrival on the scene, (3) concluding sentences and (4) a change of place. Simon organizes this pattern into six scenes:

Scene 1 (13:1-10): The confrontation between the man of God and King Jeroboam
Characters: The man of God, Jeroboam, and the assembled worshippers
Place: The altar in Bethel
Opening sentences: “now behold, a man of God came to Bethel from Judah at the command of the Lord.”
Concluding sentence: “So he left by another road and did not go back by the road on which he had come to Bethel.”

Scene 2 (13:11-13): Astonishing new spurs the prophet to go out
Characters: The man of God, Jeroboam, and the assembled worshippers
Place: The home of the old prophet in Bethel
Opening sentence: “There was an old prophet living in Bethel; and his sons came and told him . . .”
Concluding sentence: “‘Saddle the ass for me,’ he said to his sons. They saddled the ass form him, and he mounted it.”

Scene 3 (13:14-24): The confrontation between the man of God and the prophet
Characters: The old prophet and the man of God; at the end of the scene, the old prophet solus
Place: On the road, at the home of the old prophet, and again on the road
Opening sentences: “He went after the man of God. He found him sitting under a terebinth.”
Concluding sentence: “He saddled the ass for him . . . He went, and a lion found him on the road and killed him.”

Scene 4 (13:25-27): Astonishing news spurs the prophet to go out
Characters: Passerby alone, later joined by the old prophet and his sons
Place: On the road, and particularly in Bethel
Opening sentence: “Some men who passed saw the corpse lying on the road . . . They went and told it in the town.”
Concluding sentence: “He said to his sons, ‘Saddle the ass for me,’ and they did so.”

Scene 5 (13:28-32a): The old prophet and the corpse of the man of God
Characters: The old prophet solus, later joined by his sons
Place: On the road, and particularly at the family burial site

61 Simon, *Reading Prophetic Narratives*, 133-134.
Opening sentence: “Lay (hannihu) my bones beside his. For what he announced by the word of the LORD . . . shall surely come true.”

Scene 6 (2 Kings 23:16-18): King Josiah and the sepulcher of the man of God
Characters: Josiah, his ministers, and the people of Bethel
Place: The cemetery district of Bethel
Opening sentence: (The original opening sentence, that told of Josiah’s coming to Bethel, has been replaced by the redactor’s survey of the purification of the cultic site there.)
Concluding sentence: “‘Let him be (hannihu lo),’ he said, ‘let no one disturb his bones.’ So his bones rescued the bones of the prophet . . .”

Simon schematizes these scenes into a chart in order to highlight the story’s symmetry:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2.1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE PRE-DEUTERONOMISTIC STORY’S SYMMETRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opening/Link Scene</th>
<th>Part I</th>
<th>Part II</th>
<th>Part III</th>
<th>Part IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening Scene</td>
<td>I,1 [Jeroboam’s sins as the background for the journey to Bethel by the man of God.]</td>
<td>II,1 (13:11-13) Astonishing news spurs the old prophet to go out</td>
<td>III,1 (13:25-27) For a second time, astonishing news spurs the old prophet to go out</td>
<td>IV,1 [Josiah’s righteousness as the background for his journey to Bethel]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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62 Ibid., 134-135.

63 Simon states that “Two of the opening scenes have been dropped from out text, as we have seen, but a conjectural reconstruction of their contents can be based on what has replaced them in the Book of Kings and on their function in the story, as required by their location in it sequential structure.” Ibid., 136-137.
Simon comments on how the symmetry in this chart argues for its unity:

The first conclusion to be drawn from a study of the table is that the allegations about the story’s lack of unity and consequent attempts to analyze its component strata stem from a failure to understand the story. Its thematic unity is clearly reflected in its formal cohesive architecture. Formally, the story consists of four parts, which share a uniform basic structure; as for content, there is a clear link between the first two parts on the one hand, and between the third and fourth parts on the other. In the first half of the story (parts I and II), the king of Israel and the prophet of Bethel work to frustrate the word of the Lord and harm its bearer; in the second half (parts III and IV), the prophet and the king of Judah work to honor the man of God and fulfill the word of the Lord.  

**Sign and Portent Support the Unity of the Prophetic Narrative**

As will be demonstrated in the next few paragraphs, this structure is supported and held together by the progression of portent and sign. Simon differentiates between a portent and a sign, defining a portent as a miracle that buttresses the prophet’s credibility and confirms the truth of his utterance and a sign as a symbolic act that intensifies the word of the LORD and renders it tangible through an actual deed or powerful symbol. The portent derives its power from its miraculous nature; its link to the content of the prophecy need not be one of meaning and may actually be merely formal. The power of a sign, on the other hand, lies in its content; hence it always has a meaning, transmitted in the language of symbols.

With the above definition, the paralysis of Jeroboam’s arm and the restoration of its mobility are classic portents; the Lord protects his emissary and responds to his

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64 Ibid., 136.
entreaties. They are miracles that bolster the credibility of the stranger from across the border. The disintegration of the altar and the spilling of the ashes are also a portent, which clearly demonstrates the truth of the word of the Lord as spoken by the man of God. Since Simon considers these verses additions to the original story, he does not take this latter portent into consideration.

The signs are found in the man of God’s refusal to eat with Jeroboam and God’s command to return by a different route. Simon interprets the command to return by a different way as a symbol of undoing the command. Just as the ban on eating and drinking stresses the intensity of the LORD’s abhorrence of Bethel, the ban on returning by the same route gives tangible expression to the final and irrevocable nature of the decree.

This narrative, then, displays its unity when the violation of the sign by the man of God leads to another portent. After the man of God is duped by the prophet, returns with him and dines at his house, the old prophet, who set out to undermine the original sign, now speaks a prophetic word: the man of God will experience an unseemly death and be buried in a foreign grave. The man of God is killed by a lion, but the lion does not eat the man of God or the donkey, revealing that this incident is the work of God, a divine portent. The sign broken, this new portent is given.

Following this portent, the old prophet creates another sign. After the old prophet buries the man of God in the prophet’s own family tomb, fulfilling the prophecy he uttered of the man of God’s burial in a foreign tomb, the prophet makes a request to his sons that upon his own death they bury him in the same tomb with the man of God. In
other words, he buried the stranger in his own sepulcher because of his complete faith that his prophecy—the the tombs of Bethel will be desecrated so as to defile the altar—will be fulfilled; only by doing so can he guarantee that his tomb will not be violated in the future. Perhaps motivated by less than altruistic reasons, the local prophet unequivocally declares the authenticity of the word of the LORD and its perfect fulfillment, and creates a prophetic sign that gives powerful expression to his faith. The man who went forth to infringe the sign of the threefold prohibition ultimately creates a sign of his own—the common sepulcher. In the end, the sign proves true when Josiah discovers the tomb of the two men in 2 Kings 23 and does not disturb their bones.

Simon now fills out his chart to reflect the way the sign and portent theme supports the overall structural unity of the narrative:\textsuperscript{65}

\begin{table}
\centering
\caption{The Pre-Deuteronomistic Story’s Symmetry: Sign and Portent}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Part I} & \textbf{Part II} & \textbf{Part III} & \textbf{Part IV} \\
\hline
I,1 [Jeroboam’s sins as the background for the journey to Bethel by the man of God] & II,1 (13:11-13) Astonishing news spurs the old prophet to go out & III,1 (13:25-27) \textit{For a second time,} astonishing news spurs the old prophet to go out & IV,1 [Josiah’s righteousness as the background for his journey to Bethel] \\
\hline
\textit{[Conjectured exposition: The breaking of the ties with the temple in Jerusalem. The man of God is sent from Judah.]} & The old prophet’s sons tell him about the \underline{portent} and \underline{sign}. The prophet finds out which way the man of God went. & Passersby recount the \underline{awesome} death (short recapitulation). The prophet identifies the slain man from a distance and proclaims that his death is a fulfillment of the \textit{word} & \textit{[Conjectured exposition: The} \underline{restoration of the status of Jerusalem. Josiah comes to Bethel.]} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 138-139
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part I</th>
<th>Part II</th>
<th>Part III</th>
<th>Part IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The situation in Bethel on the festival.</td>
<td>The saddling of the ass.</td>
<td>of the Lord. The saddling of the ass.</td>
<td>The situation in Bethel on the day of the action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The man of God appears when Jeroboam is presenting an offering on the altar. <em>The word of the Lord:</em> the altar defiled. The king commands the arrest of the man of God! <em>Portents</em> (The altar collapses): The man of God is protected and the king’s arm is healed. The king lures the man of God with promises of food and a gift. Refusal: The <em>sign</em> of the threefold prohibition is upheld.</td>
<td>The prophet finds the man of God.</td>
<td>The prophet finds the corpse of the man of God.</td>
<td>Josiah discovers the tombs of Bethel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The man of God leaves by another route.</td>
<td>The prophet lures the man of God by inviting him home.</td>
<td><em>Portent:</em> the corpse is not touched by the lion (recapitulation).</td>
<td>The <em>word of the Lord</em> is fulfilled: The altar is defiled. Josiah notices the tomb marker and asks what it means. The Bethelites explain: This is the tomb of the man of God who foretold what you have done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The sign</em> is breached: return, eating, drinking. <em>The word of the Lord:</em> A disgraceful death will overtake the one who breached the sign. The man of God departs. Fulfillment: the <em>word of the Lord</em> and a new <em>portent:</em> Death on the way; the corpse is not touched by the lion.</td>
<td>The sign is upheld: return, eulogy, burial.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The king orders that the bones of the man of God be preserved and respected. Fulfillment of the prophet’s <em>sign:</em> His bones are spared.</td>
<td>The prophet confirms the <em>word of the Lord</em> about the altar.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This table illustrates the use of portent and sign and, thereby, demonstrates the unity of the passage: (1) *Portents* are given: the man of God is protected and Jeroboam’s arm is healed. (2) The *sign* of the threefold prohibition is upheld. (3) The old prophet’s sons tell him about the *portent* and *sign*. (4) Refusal: The *sign* of the threefold prohibition (recapitulation). (5) The *sign* is breached: return, eating, drinking. (6) Fulfillment: the *word of the Lord* and a *new portent*: Death on the way; the corpse is not touched by the lion. (7) *Portent*: the corpse is not touched by the lion (recapitulation). (8) A *new sign*: The command of common burial. (9) Fulfillment of the prophet’s *sign*: His bones are spared.

In summary, although this story is not devoid of bewildering complexity and surprising twists and turns, there are strong arguments, both verbal and literary, for its unity. Words and phrases such as word of the LORD (בִּדְבַר יְהוָה, יְהוָה פִּי, יְהוָה כִּדְבַר), return (שׁוּב), road (ךְדֶרֶ), man of God “from Judah,” and house (בַּית) demonstrate the unity of the story. The structural symmetry of the story along with its use of portent and sign argue for its unity as well.

**The Pre-Deuteronomistic Narrative’s Unified Theme and Theology**

In this section, I will analyze and critique two attempts to find a unified theme within the pre-deuteronomistic narrative, those of Walter Gross and Thomas Dozeman. After discussing the views of Gross and Dozeman, I will present Simon’s argument for
the story’s unified theme which is “the supremacy of the Lord’s word over those who speak it and its triumph over those who oppose it.”

**Obedience/Disobedience Is Not the Unifying Theme of the Prophetic Narrative**

Applying role analysis to the pre-deuteronomistic narrative of 1 Kings 13, Walter Gross concludes that the unified theme of the story is obedience/disobedience. He begins his argument by establishing the content and parameters of the pre-deuteronomistic text, which is as follows:

(The king made a festival for the Israelites and he ascended the altar to present an offering.) A man of God arrived from Judah at the command of the LORD and he, at the command of the LORD, cried out against the altar: “O altar, altar! Here is the portent that the LORD has decreed: This altar shall break apart and the ashes on it will be spilled.” When the king heard what the man of God had proclaimed against the altar, he stretched out his arm above the altar and cried, “Seize him!” But the arm that he stretched out against him became rigid, and he could not draw it back. The altar broke apart and its ashes were spilled—the very portent that the man of God had announced at the LORD’s command. Then the King spoke up and said to the man of God, “Please entreat the LORD your God and pray for me that I may be able to draw back my arm.” The man of God entreated the LORD and the king was able to draw his arm back; it became as it was before.”

Except for small additions, 7-30 is considered a part of the pre-deuteronomistic story with 31-32, the account of the prophet’s request to be buried in same grave as the man of God, being excluded from the narrative, so that the story ends:

66 Ibid., 131.

He set out and found the corpse lying on the road, with the ass and the lion standing beside the corpse; the lion had not eaten the corpse nor had it mauled the ass. The prophet lifted up the corpse of the man of God, laid it on the ass, and brought it back; it was brought to the town of the old prophet for lamentation and burial. He laid the corpse in his own burial place; and they lamented over it, “Alas, my brother!”

Gross offers several reasons for limiting the content and parameters of the pre-deuteronomistic text in this way. First, recognizing that הִנֵּה + a participle/suffix conjunction/nominal sentence never opens an independent unit, Gross conjectures that 12:33bc (The king made a festival for the Israelites and he ascended the altar to present an offering.) may belong to the narrative, but not in its present form. The original beginning is no longer present. Because of this uncertainty regarding the beginning of the narrative, it impossible to decide if 13:1b (and he was standing on the altar to present the offering) is to be separated from 12:33c as a doublet.

Second, the king in the narrative is probably originally unnamed just as the man of God and the prophet are not so identified.

Third, only 13:3cd (“This altar shall break apart and the ashes on it will be spilled.”), which has no parallel in 2 Kings 23, represents the actual oracle of the man of God against the altar. It appears that since 2 Kings 23:15-18, 20 are grouped together as an addition to the pre-deuteronomistic narrative, then anything present in this later text was probably absent from the original story.
Fourth, although 3a ("He gave a portent on that day, saying.") appears to be secondarily connected to verse 2, which is later, verse 3b ("Here is the portent that the LORD has decreed.") could belong to the original text as could 2ab (and he cried out against the altar: "O altar, altar!"). Thus, the far reaching prediction that "A son shall be born to the House of David, Josiah by name; and he shall slaughter upon you the priests of the shrines who bring offerings upon you. And human bones shall be burned upon you." is removed from the pre-deuteronomistic narrative.

Fifth, Gross asserts that there are no grounds for removing verse five from the narrative. The use of יְהוָה בִּדְבַר argues for its place in the narrative. Consequently, the fulfillment of the man of God’s prophetic word is completed in verse five.

Sixth, if verse five belongs to the narrative then, verse 32 must be excluded, despite the fact the presence of יְהוָה בִּדְבַר, because it looks for a fulfillment beyond the parameters of 1 Kings 13: "For what he announced by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the cult places in the towns of Samaria, shall surely come true." Also, verse 32 is excised because it alludes to verse 2c-g, which, according to this logic, cannot be a part of the original pre-deuteronomistic story because it refers specifically to 23:15-18, 20.

Seventh, based on the exclusion of verse 32, verse 31 is probably to be rejected as well: "After burying him, he said to his sons, "When I die, bury me in the grave where the man of God lies buried; lay my bones beside his."
In summary, Gross explains his method for establishing the content and parameter of the text:

This unit has been isolated by application of a purely negative principle: elements of the text are considered to belong together if there is no compelling reason to separate them. Only form criticism and considerations of content will demonstrate whether and in what manner the unit identified by this negative principle is also a literary unit in a positive sense, thus confirming indirectly the literary criticism.68

Through form critical analysis, Gross produces an amazingly coherent understanding of the text’s structure, represented in the following chart:

**Part 1: Man of God and King: 12:33b (?), c(?); 13:1a,b(?), 2ab, 3bcd, 4-10**

. . . 12:33b(?), c(?): preceding, lost section (=A) ?

A1: 13:1, 2ab, 3bcd Oracle of the man of God against the altar  *Man of God, altar, (YHWH)*

A2: 13:4a-6h First reaction of king Man of God heals  *Man of God, king, (YHWH)*

A3: 13:7a-10b Second reaction of king  *Man of God, king, (YHWH)*

**Part 2: Man of God and Nabi: 13:11-30**

A4: 13:11a-19c Nabi induces man of God to disobedience  *nabi, man of God, (YHWH)*

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68 Ibid., 106
A5: 13:20a-24f  Man of God is punished  Man of God, nabi, YHWH, (lion)


A7: 13:29-30c  Nabi buries man of God  Nabi, man of God

The larger structure reflects the expression side of the text but does not agree with the thematic structure. From the point of view of content, the main division should not come after A3, but after A2. A1 and A2 concern the oracle of YHWH against the altar and the king’s reaction. A3 to A7, by contrast, concern the obedience and disobedience of the man of God along with its consequences. Gross notes insightfully that “By using the catch phrase b-dbr YHWH and transposing the main division to after A3 = verse 10b, the author skillfully linked both themes together.”

The oracle against the altar only gets the action rolling and the burial of the man of God only completes the action as a direct result of the punishment for his disobedience. “Whatever may have been the significance of the oracle against the altar and the burial in earlier stages of the tradition, both have been subordinated to the main theme obedience/disobedience in a way that can be demonstrated literarily.” The emphasis on disobedience/obedience is made clear through the thrice repeated sequence: prohibition, obedience/disobedience. These warnings take a dominant position within the narrative.

69 Ibid., 107
After a careful, involved and impressive role analysis, Gross concludes:

The structure indicates that A3-6 have the didactic intent of expressing the unconditional claim of God’s command/prohibition. They present the unconditional obligation of obedience to YHWH in a structure which only considers the external course of events, not the subjective reflections or intentions of the actors. The distribution of the roles of sender, receiver, opponent (helper and intermediary) are more important than the actors who assume the roles. The story fixes its gaze so steadily on what YHWH objectively requires that the man of God’s response to YHWH’s word is judged within the categories “right” and “wrong,” not “guilty” and “innocent” (mitigating circumstances are not even considered). The fact that the author of this story used this structure and these categories does not mean that he or the group he addressed had only these categories available with which to describe their life and their relationship to YHWH (contrast Gressmann’s ignorant and backward “prophetic party”). The path from the text does not travel so directly to reality. The author chose this structure and these categories and used them effectively to realize his didactic purpose, the inculcation of the obligation of obedience to YHWH’s word.\(^{70}\)

While Gross’ analysis of the pre-deuteronomistic narrative is illuminating, it contains at least two significant flaws: First, it fails to deal adequately with the impressive arguments presented above that 2 Kings 23:16-18 is the conclusion to the pre-deuteronomistic story, especially the evidence that demonstrates 2 Kings 23:16-18’s distinction from the narrative surrounding it in 2 Kings 23. If there are good reasons for positing that 2 Kings 23:16-18 is the end to the pre-deuteronomistic 1 Kings 13:1-32a, then affinities between the two texts further substantiate their relationship which, in turn, establishes that 13:2c-g and 13:31-32 can be legitimately considered as a part of the original prophetic story. With this perspective, the story in 1 Kings 13 is left open-ended.

\(^{70}\) Ibid., 124-125.
expecting a fulfillment and resolution in contrast to Gross’ rejection of 2c-g and his acceptance of 3bcd and 5 which are fulfilled within the original encounter of the man of God with the king. Second, it strips the story of powerful prophetic elements and theological implications which would attract the Deuteronomist to the story in the first place and would move the redactor to give this passage such a weighty presence within Kings. Of course, obedience/disobedience is important for the Deuteronomist, but he has other crucial theological concerns, such as the preeminence of Jerusalem and the southern kingdom, the priority of place of the Davidic line and the power of the word of the LORD, which would attract him to this pre-deuteronomistic prophetic narrative. Thus, it seems that the disobedience/obedience idea fails to capture the central, unifying theme of the pre-deuteronomistic story.

True and False Prophecy Is Not the Unifying Theme of the Prophetic Narrative.

For Thomas Dozeman, the unifying theme of the pre-deuteronomistic legend is true and false prophecy.71 He understands the parameters and content of the story as follows:

(The king made a festival for the Israelites and he ascended the altar to present an offering.)

A man of God arrived at Bethel from Judah by the command of the LORD and he, at the command of the LORD cried out against the altar: “O altar, altar! Thus said the LORD: This altar shall break apart, and the ashes on it shall be spilled.” When the king heard what the man of God had proclaimed against the altar in Bethel, he stretched out his arm above the altar and cried, “Seize him!” But the arm that he stretched out against him became rigid, and he could not draw it back. Then the king spoke up and said to the

man of God, Please entreat the LORD your God and pray for me that I may be able to draw back my arm.” The man of God entreated the LORD and the king was able to draw his arm back; it became as it was before.

Verses 7-32a are basically considered authentic to the pre-deuteronomistic story with the narrative culminating in verse 32a. Thus, the story ends,

After burying him, he said to his sons, “When I die, bury me in the grave where the man of God lies buried; lay my bones beside his. For what he announced by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel shall surely come true.”

Dozeman explains his reasoning for limiting the scope and content of the passage in this way. First, although 12:33cd are not the original beginning to the story, the pre-deuteronomistic introduction must have had some resemblance to these verses, minus the reference to Jeroboam. With so many others, he observes that cannot introduce the story.

Second, the presence of the “priests of the high places” and the reappearance of Jeroboam in 13:33 suggest that the legend ends in 13:32. The anachronistic reference to Samaria in 13:32 suggests that 13:32a is the conclusion to what he refers to as the legend.

Third, 2 Kings 23:16-18 does not belong to the original end of the story because the identification of the nabi changes from Bethel to Samaria in 2 Kings 23:18 and because the content of 2 Kings 23:16-18 (20) parallels 1 Kings 13:2c-g which appears to be an addition within the legend. Thus, the boundaries of the pre-deuteronomistic legend are 1 Kings 13:1-32a.
Fourth, there is a word from God in verse 2a uttered by the man of God against the altar. The word is fulfilled in verse five but the story ends in 32a with the nabi’s conclusion that the word which the man of God from Judah spoke against the altar will surely come true, totally ignoring verse five. Further, verse five does not advance the narrative and leaves the king standing on or near an altar that has been obliterated.

Fifth, references which appear here and in 23:16-18 are suspect as additions. For example, the reference to Josiah in 2e and priests of the high places in 2-3 are the work of a later redactor.

Sixth, the verb יִנָּתַן does not agree with the preceding imperfects which probably indicates that it is an addition to the original story. With this in mind, 3a (“He gave a portent on that day, saying”) and possibly 3b (“Here is the portent that the LORD has decreed”), are redactions.

Seventh, 2ab is original to the pre-deuteronomistic account. This is substantiated by the use of יִקְרָא in both 2a by the man of God and 21 by the old prophet. Further, the use of יהוה בִּדְבַר supports its presence in the narrative. The combination of 2ab (At the command of the LORD, he cried out against the altar: “O altar, altar! Thus said the LORD: ”) and 3cd (“This altar shall break apart, and the ashes on it shall be spilled.”) remain as the content of the original word of God uttered by the prophet from Judah.
In Dozeman’s exposition of the text’s unifying theme, “the way of the prophet becomes a central concern for addressing the problem of true and false prophecy,”72 he explains the importance of דֶּרֶך for advancing and holding together the story:

The literary development of the opening scene has been a movement from a word of prophecy (vv.2ab, 3cd) to the authentication of the prophet from Judah (vv. 4, 6-9). At this juncture in the story the report of the prophet from Judah not returning by the same route becomes yet another verification of his authenticity. He fulfills that part of Yahweh’s commandment to him. At the same time another reading is possible. The constant repetition of the “the way” (derek) is a literary device meant to prepare the reader for a motif which becomes central to the remainder of the narrative. Surprisingly, in the following scenes the authenticity of the prophet from Judah’s word against the altar must be verified by determining whether or not his way (derek) is from Yahweh.73

Dozeman tracks the importance of “the way” throughout the story beginning with two questions on the lips of the prophet. First, he asks his sons, “Which is the way he went?” This question has a double meaning: it is a genuine inquiry as to the direction of the man of God’s journey but, more subtly and more importantly to the advancement of the theme, it raises the question as to the legitimacy of the man of God as a prophet, preparing the way for the prophet’s second question which is addressed directly to the man of God: “Are you a man of God?” Thus, begins the testing of his authenticity. Ultimately, “the prophet from Judah falls prey to the central concerns of the narrative and

72 Ibid., 386.
73 Ibid., 387.
returns to eat and drink without even questioning the authenticity of the nabi’s command.”

After the test, the appellative for the nabi changes significantly; he becomes “the prophet who caused him to return (13:20, 23) and he is finally identified as “the prophet who caused him to return from the way” (13:26). The man of God experiences a more radical appellative change; after his disobedience and punishment he is described as “the carcass thrown down in the way” (13:25, 28). “Are you the man of God?” becomes a declaration, “the carcass of the man of God” (13:26). A reversal of appellatives occurs once more; the carcass thrown down in the way is reaffirmed as the carcass of the man of God. “This return of the prophet from Judah establishes his authenticity and results in the confirmation of his original word against the altar.” The man of God’s death confirms the authenticity of his prophecy for surely the LORD would not punish the prophet from Judah for breaking a commandment which he never received. “Thus paradoxically, the fulfillment of the nabi’s prophecy guarantees the authenticity of the prophet from Judah.”

Asserting that a major theme which unites the pre-deuteronomistic story is true and false prophecy, Dozeman identifies three criteria for determining true and false prophecy advanced in the narrative:

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74 Ibid., 389.
75 Ibid., 391.
76 Ibid., 392.
1. The narrative points to the fulfillment as one criterion in the case of the *nabi*’s prophecy in 13:21-22.

2. The testing of the prophet from Judah by the *nabi* and the interdependency of the two prophetic words suggest that prophetic confirmation might have been another way to evaluate the truth of individual prophecies.

3. The emphasis on “the way” with the change in appellatives implies that the actions and character of a prophet must be considered when evaluating his prophecy. His actions must be consistent with his message; he must be in the way of Yahweh.  

Although Dozeman’s careful analysis of the scope and content of the story breaks down at the same point as that of Gross, they both fail to recognize adequately the substantial reasons for holding that 2 Kings 23:16-18 is the conclusion to the pre-deuteronomististic ending, his exposition of the passage is valuable, especially his acknowledgment of the importance of “the way” in the story’s unity and his insight into the changes in the prophet’s and the man of God’s appellations. While his exposition of the passage is insightful, his criteria for determining true and false prophecy do not seem to connect logically with particulars of the text. This shortcoming is pointed out by D. W. Van Winkle:  

While it is true that this narrative promotes the criterion of fulfillment, it also demonstrates its limits. When the man of God is killed by the lion just as the old prophet foretold, we are able to recognize this prophecy to be a legitimate word of Yahweh. Furthermore, fulfillment is important to the Deuteronomistic editor. However, this criterion would have proven to be unhelpful for assisting the man of God to determine the falsehood of the old

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77 Ibid., 392-393.

78 D. W. Van Winkle, “True and False Prophecy,” 31-43. Van Winkle’s work is not given a fuller treatment here because, strictly speaking, he is not engaging in a pre-deuteronomic analysis of the text.
prophet’s assurance that it was proper for him to violate the previous commandment of God.

This story also demonstrates the limits of both prophetic confirmation and evaluations of the character of the prophet. Prophetic confirmation would not have helped the man of God to recognize the falsehood of the old prophet’s assurance that it was all right for him to return and eat. An evaluation of the character of the old prophet might have helped him to recognize the truth of the prophecy that he would not be buried with his fathers. If anything, it would have led him to believe that this was a false message. Indeed, this story demonstrates the limited usefulness of evaluating the character of the prophet since God speaks through the lying prophet.79

Van Winkle is surely right in his evaluation of the shortcomings of Dozeman’s three criteria. Dozeman’s exposition of the narrative and presentation of its thematic unity breaks down at the point where he draws conclusions regarding the narratives implications for the prophetic community. In contrast to Dozeman, Van Winkle introduces a new criterion that seems to combine Gross’ obedience/disobedience theme with true/false prophecy idea. He asserts that “the man of God should have recognized the assurance of the old prophet to be false since it encouraged him to violate the commandment of God.”80 Although, at times, God did change his mind about the future and communicated these changes to the prophets, “there is no instance in the Deuteronomistic History where Yahweh is portrayed as instructing his prophets to encourage disobedience to his commandments. Therefore, the criterion of disobedience to the commandments of Yahweh would have helped the man of God to discern that the

79 Ibid., 39.
80 Ibid., 40.
message of the old prophet was false.” The criticism of Van Winkle is similar to the assessment of Gross’ shortcomings. Although Van Winkle’s theme is present within the text, it is not the idea that unites the passage. In the final analysis, identifying the theme of the text as a single principle for detecting false prophecy reduces the theological richness of the story and over-simplifies the variegated presentation of the entire narrative’s deeper and more expansive theological theme.

“*The supremacy of the Lord’s word over those who speak it and its triumph those who oppose it*” Is the Unifying Theme of the Prophetic Narrative.

It seems to me that Van Winkle and Gross miss the unifying theme of the narrative because, fundamentally, the key to understanding the main point of the story is found in its conclusion in 2 Kings 23:16-18. Whereas each of the three main scenes up to this point have begun with an encounter – the confrontation between the man of God and King Jeroboam, the confrontation of the man of God and the old prophet and the discovery by the old prophet of the corpse of the man of God – this final scene delays the encounter to its middle, where Josiah turns and sees the grave of the man of God and then asks, “What is the marker I see there?” But in 2 Kings 23:16 before Josiah even asks this question, the narrator of the events tells us what Josiah did and how his actions fulfilled a prophetic word, “So Josiah turned and saw the graves that were on the hill; and he had the bones taken out of the graves and burned on the altar. Thus he defiled it, in

\[\text{\textsuperscript{81}}\text{Ibid.}\]
fulfillment of the word of the LORD foretold by the man of God when Jeroboam stood on the altar on the festival day.” Simon points out that . . .

This deviation from the fixed format is an important means to emphasize that Josiah desecrates the altar even before learning about the prophecy that he would do so. Long ago the word of the Lord had overcome both the king and the prophet who had set out to frustrate it. Now it is realized by the king of Judah, who is not even guided by it. The emphasis attests that the main interest of the narrator is not to extol the king of Judah for his fidelity and obedience to the word of the Lord, but rather to tell us how the word of the Lord was realized in the fullness of time.82

The men of the town answer Josiah, “That is the grave of the man of God who came from Judah and foretold these things that you have done to the altar of Bethel.” Josiah had fulfilled the word of the Lord without even knowing he was doing so.83 Josiah is not consciously obedient to the word of the LORD.84 Similarly, although King Jeroboam and the old prophet slightly modify their behavior, they are never said to repent in accordance with the word of the LORD. Rather, the king and, especially, the old prophet succumb to the overpowering force of the word of the LORD. King Josiah even

82 Simon, Reading Prophetic Narratives, 149.
83 Ibid., 150
84 Erick Eynikel argues emphatically for the unity of 1 Kings 13: 11-32 and 2 Kings 23:16-18: “It is absolutely clear then that 1 Kgs 13,11-32 is incomprehensible without 2 Kgs 23,16-18. In other words, 1 Kgs 13,2,(8b,9a),11-32 and 2 Kgs 23,16-18 are from the same hand.” In the final sentence of his article, Eynikel asserts, “Thus we may conclude that the first legend consisted of 1 Kgs 13,1a.3.4.8a.9a\b.10; a redactor added 1 Kgs 13,1b.2.8b.9a°.11-32; 2 Kings 23,16-18.” But this short article left me with too many questions: (1) What was the purpose of the first legend? (2) Why was the narrative expanded? (3) Who is the redactor? (4) What is the theme and function of the redacted narrative? (5) What role does Josiah play in the redacted story? (6) What place does this prophetic narrative play in relation to fulfilled prophecy in Deuteronomistic History? Although this article put forward an intriguing theory, for me it raises more questions than it answers. Erik Eynikel, “Prophecy and Fulfillment in Deuteronomistic History: 1 Kgs13; 2 Kgs 16-18,” Pentateuchal and Deuteronomistic Studies: Papers Read at the XIIIth IOSOT Congress, Leuven 1989. Eds. Chris Brekelmans and Johan Lust (Leuven: University Press, 1990), 227-237.
unknowingly fulfills the sign created by the old prophet when he commands, concerning the bones of the man of God, “Let him be. Let no one disturb his bones.” And, again, the narrator reminds us of a fulfillment, this time a fulfilled sign: “So they left his bones undisturbed together with the bones of the prophet.”

This overpowering word is not a call to repentance, a warning or a rebuke; it is a royal decree or divine verdict which will surely come to pass.85 While there are subthemes of true and false prophecy along with lessons on obedience and disobedience within the narrative, the theme that unites the story is “the supremacy of the Lord’s word over those who speak it and its triumph those who oppose it.”86 More specifically, the lesson of this prophetic narrative is, “that nothing avails against the word of the Lord; any who attack it will find himself compelled to affirm it, and anyone who betrays his mission will be required to reinforce it, even at the cost of his own life.”87

The sovereignty and power of such a word of the Lord is found other texts, such as Isaiah 40:8: “Grass withers, flowers fade—but the word of our God is always fulfilled” and Isaiah 55:10-11: “For as the rain or snow drops from heaven and returns not there, but soaks the earth and makes it bring forth vegetation, yielding seed for sowing and bread for eating, so is the word that issues from My mouth: it does not come back to Me unfulfilled, but performs what I purpose, achieves what I sent it to do.”

85 Ibid., 151-152
86 Ibid., 131.
87 Ibid., 151.
The Genesis of the Narrative within the Histories of Judah and Israel

Simon rightly objects to Jepsen’s contention that the story was written to combat any possible revival of the Samaritan cult in Bethel after the death of Josiah. Jepsen’s theory makes sense except for the problem that he “ignores the fact that neither in the body of the story nor in the editorial framework is there any attack on the syncretism typical of the Samaritan cult.”88 This same criticism of Jepson’s theory could apply to the setting of the narrative as proposed by John Van Seters who writes,

that the story is a vilification of the Bethel temple, which was still in use for some time in the exilic and post-exilic periods, and the Samaritan community. Taking all of the parts of the story together this general attitude seems obvious, especially if no part of the Josiah reform had anything to do with Bethel and the cities of Samaria. The repeated prohibitions against eating and drinking, even with Yahweh worshippers in Bethel, and against traveling to the region, except as Josiah did to destroy its places of worship and slaughter its priests, seem to make the point clearly. It is a fairly crass piece of anti-Samaritan religious propaganda constructed with little narrative skill or sensitivity to religious and moral issues.89

Given all that has been written in this first chapter, Van Seters’ suggestion seems unnecessary. There are good reasons to accept the story as a unified pre-deuteronomistic


89 John Van Seters, “On Reading the Story of the Man of God,” The Labour of Reading: Desire, Alienation and Biblical Interpretation. Eds. Fiona C. Black, Roland Boer, and Erin Runions (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 233. It is interesting that Joseph Blenkinsopp believes that this story deserves a close reading because “it is a fine example of classical Hebrew prose.” Joseph Blenkinsopp, Prophecy in Israel, 158.
narrative and, as will be argued in what follows, there is no substantial reason to regard it as a late addition to the Deuteronomistic History, but as a vital part of the original history.

For Simon, the setting of the narrative’s composition is not important to his interpretation. It is not necessary, nor for Simon is it possible due to the lack of historical information, to know the religious dilemma that gave rise to the narrative’s writing. For this reason, Simon will not go beyond “elucidating the timeless lesson of the story,” although he implies that the story was written “some time after the reign of Josiah.”

I propose that the setting of the narrative’s composition can be placed shortly after Josiah’s reforming work in Bethel. According to 2 Kings 23:17 the men of the town were very aware of the man of God’s prophecy in Bethel along with the prophecy’s connection to the tomb. When Josiah asked them about the meaning of the marker they replied, “This is the grave of the man of God who came from Judah and foretold these things that you have done to the altar of Bethel.” Because of the popularity of this prophetic legend, it is not inconceivable that this story was composed shortly after Josiah’s reform in Bethel. As the argument of this chapter has suggested and the next chapter will attempt to demonstrate, this narrative was composed before the compilation and redaction of the Deuteronomistic History.

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90 Ibid., 154.
91 Ibid.
CHAPTER 3:

1 KINGS 13’S PLACE AND MEANING WITHIN THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY

In the previous chapter, we extracted the prophetic narrative of 1 Kings 13 from its place and function within Kings and the Deuteronomistic History. In this second chapter, we will demonstrate 1 Kings 13’s vital function within the larger deuteronomistic narrative in Kings along with its literary place within its immediate context in Kings. That is, we will examine how the prophetic narrative advanced the broader deuteronomistic agenda within Kings and how the Deuteronomist weaved the story tightly and artistically into its most immediate context.

1 Kings 13 in its Immediate Context

In his masterful article, Robert Cohn places the man of God story at the center of the chiastic literary structure of 1 Kings 11-14 as follows:

A  Introductory exposition: Jeroboam and Solomon (11:26-28)

B₁  Prophecy of Ahijah (11:29-40)

B₂  Fulfillment of prophecy (11:41-12:24)

C  Jeroboam’s sin (12:25-33)
D  Man of God interlude (13:1-32)

C’  Jeroboam’s sin (13:33-34)

B₁’ Prophecy of Ahijah (14:1-16)

B₂’ Fulfillment (in part) of prophecy (14:17-18)

A’ Concluding exposition: death of Jeroboam (14:19-20)

92 Cohn explains the purpose of this vital section of Kings:

It is not surprising that Jeroboam, infamous as the arch-apostate to whom every subsequent king of Israel is compared, should be the subject of an extended literary treatment. For he presents a difficult theological problem for the Judahite historian who included his “biography” in Kings. Although Jeroboam had successfully supplanted the reign of the Davidic dynasty over the northern tribes, his kingdom ultimately failed. The author, therefore, must explain both why God allowed Jeroboam to inherit the greatest part of the kingdom promised to the descendants of

92 Robert L. Cohn, “Literary Technique in the Jeroboam Narrative,” *ZAW* 97 (1985), 24. I prefer Cohn’s analysis to that of Walsh who places Jeroboam’s cultic innovations (12:21-25) at the pivotal place in the Jeroboam story. Walsh’s analysis of the Jeroboam narrative is as follows:

A1. Ahijah of Shiloh announces Jeroboam’s kingship (11:26-40)
A2. Closing formula for Solomon’s reign (11:41-43)
B. Political disunity: the rejection of Rehoboam (12:1-20)
C. A Judahite man of God’s approval (12:1-20)
D. Jeroboam’s cultic innovations (12:26-31)
B’. Prophetic disunity: the prophet and the man of God (13:11-32)
A1’. Ahijah of Shiloh announces Jeroboam’s downfall (14:1-18)
A2’. Closing formula for Jeroboam’s reign (14:19-20)

The central, hinge issue in the Jeroboam story is not his cultic innovations. Rather, the pivotal issue is Jeroboam’s intransigence even after his encounter with the word of God spoken by the man of God from Judah, as the text states, “Even after this incident, Jeroboam did not turn back from his evil way, but kept on appointing priests for the shrines from the ranks of the people. He ordained as priests of the shrines any who so desired. Thereby the house of Jeroboam incurred guilt—to their utter annihilation from the face of the earth. (1Kings 13:33-34)” In another article mentioned above, Walsh makes this same point that the story of 1 Kings 13 is framed in such a way that it emphasizes Jeroboam’s contumacy. Walsh, *I Kings*, 202.
David, but also why Jeroboam’s dynasty and his kingdom, having been so favored, came to ruin. The historian accomplishes these two aims by pausing long enough over the career of Jeroboam to depict his transformation from God’s chosen instrument to his despised enemy.\(^93\)

Using Cohn’s proposed chiastic shape along with his suggested purpose for 1 Kings 11-14, we will show in the next few pages how intimately 1 Kings 13 is connected to its immediate context and how vital it is to the advancement of the story of Jeroboam’s rise and fall from power. As stated above, what is most important to remember is that the story of the man of God from Judah stands at the center of the structure serving as the pinnacle of the story which records the ascent and the descent of Jeroboam from his favored position.

\textit{A Introductory exposition: Jeroboam and Solomon (11:26-28)}

Because Solomon married foreign women (11:1) against the LORD’s clear command (11:2), because his wives turned his heart away after other gods so he was not wholeheartedly devoted to the LORD as his father David had been (11:4-6), and because Solomon built a shrine for Chemosh and another for Molech (11:6-7), along with other gods, for all his foreign wives, who offered and sacrificed to their gods (11:8), the LORD was angry with Solomon and announced that he would tear the kingdom away from Solomon and give it to his servant, leaving Solomon with only one tribe. He would retain this one tribe for the sake of David and for the sake of Jerusalem, which the LORD had chosen.

\(^{93}\)Cohn, “Literary Technique,” 25.
As a result of the LORD’s anger and this pronouncement, the LORD raised up an adversary (שָׂטָן) against Solomon, the Edomite Hadad (11:14-22). Then the LORD raised up another adversary (שָׂטָן) against Solomon, Rezon son of Eliada. Jeroboam, a third adversary, comes against Solomon, although the text does not use the term adversary (שָׂטָן) explicitly (11:26-27); instead, the text gives a clue that he would be the one to whom the LORD would give the greater portion of the kingdom when it indicates that Jeroboam was Solomon’s servant, not his adversary;⁹⁴ it would be a servant of Solomon to whom the LORD would give the kingdom. In all probability, the “raised up” and “adversary” pattern, which created literary tension within the text since Hadad and Rezon were Solomon’s adversaries not his servants, is broken to signal that a new phase in history has begun with the entrance of Jeroboam into the story. Whereas the text states definitively that Hadad and Rezon were raised up by the LORD, it asserts simply and abruptly that Jeroboam lifted his hand against Solomon with no mention, at this first point, as to the LORD’s involvement in this matter. We are left hanging as to the LORD’s part in Jeroboam’s rise.

Recognizing that Jeroboam was a capable worker, Solomon appointed him over all the forced labor of the house of Joseph (11:28). It is odd that Solomon elevates the leader who will eventually supplant him. Yet, in this ironic twist, the subtle, providential

⁹⁴ “In 11:11 we learned of Yahweh’s intention to give Solomon’s kingdom to one of his servants. But that threat was left hanging through the stories of two foreigners, Hadad and Rezon, who, enemies though they were, did not fit the description of Solomon’s servant. Now that expectation is finally met: the fulfillment of Yahweh’s threat is at hand.” Walsh, *1 Kings*, 143.
nature of Jeroboam’s rise to power is shown even though God has not yet entered this new phase in the story.\footnote{Many commentators recognize that, although it is not explicitly stated in the text, Jeroboam is the third adversary raised up by God, an adversary from within the kingdom. Brueggemann, \textit{1 & 2 Kings}, 145; Cogan, \textit{1 Kings}, 343; Paul R. House, \textit{1, 2 Kings}, 170; Terrence E. Fretheim, \textit{First and Second Kings} (Westminster Bible Companion, eds. Patrick D. Miller and David L. Bartlett; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 67; Leithart, \textit{1 & 2 Kings}, 86; Long, \textit{1 Kings}, 128, 130; Richard Nelson, \textit{First and Second Kings} (Interpretation, A Bible-Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, eds. James Luther Mays, Patrick D. Miller and Paul J. Achtemeier; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987), 71; Gene Rice, \textit{Nations Under God: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Kings} (International Theological Commentary, eds. Fredrick Carlson Homgren and George A. F. Knight; Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 90.}

\textit{B\textsubscript{1} Prophecy of Ahijah (11:29-40)}

In this section of the Jeroboam story, Ahijah appears suddenly on the scene much like the man of God in 13:1.\footnote{For studies related to the issue of prophecy in the Deuteronomistic History see Hans Barstad, “The Understanding of the Prophets in Deuteronomy,” \textit{SJOT} 8, 2 (1994); John Barton, \textit{Oracles of God: Perceptions and Prophecy in Israel after the Exile} (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1986); Joseph Blenkinsopp, \textit{The History of Prophecy in Israel} (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996); Klaus Koch, “The Language of Prophecy: Thoughts on the Macrosyntax of debar YHWH and Its Semantic Implications in the Deuteronomistic History” in \textit{Problems in Biblical Theology: Essays in Honor of Rolf Knierim} (ed. Henry T. C. Sun and Keith L. Eades; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997); Johannes C. De Moor and Harry F. Van Rooy, eds., \textit{Past, Present and Future: The Deuteronomistic History and the Prophets} (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Rofe, A. \textit{The Prophetical Stories: The Narratives about the Prophets in the Hebrew Bible, Their Literary Types and History} (Jerusalem: The The Magness Press, The Hebrew University, 1988).} Wearing a new robe, he tears it into twelve pieces.\footnote{Note the wordplay between הֹלַם (robe) and שִׁלֹם (Solomon).} This act symbolizes the tearing of the 10 Northern Tribes from Solomon’s hands and giving them to Jeroboam. According to the word of the LORD, for the sake of David and for the sake of Jerusalem, one tribe will be left for Solomon. This tearing of the kingdom from Solomon comes about as a consequence of their worshipping other gods and disobeying the LORD’s commandments and laws. If Jeroboam will obey the LORD’s laws and
commandments, as David had done, he too will have a lasting kingdom. Although the LORD chastised David’s descendants, this is not a permanent situation. “So Jeroboam is launched on his career with God’s conditional blessing, while Jerusalem and the son of David remain his unconditional choices.”

There are two significant ways in which this section is connected to chapter 13. First, the tearing (נִקְרָעֶה) of the altar in 13:3 and 5 recalls the tearing (וַיִּקְרָעֶה) of Ahijah’s robe in this chapter. Ahijah’s symbolic act is a fulfillment of the LORD’s direct statement to Solomon in 11:11-13:

Because you are guilty of this—you have not kept My covenant and the laws which I enjoined upon you—I will tear (אֶקְרַע) and give it to one of your servants. But, for the sake of your father David, I will not do it in your lifetime; I will tear (אֶקְרָעֶנָּה) it away from your son. However, I will not tear (אֶקְרָע) away the whole kingdom; I will give your son one tribe, for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.

This tearing looks even further back to the tearing of the kingship from Saul in 1 Samuel 15:27-28:

As Samuel turned to leave, Saul seized the corner of his robe, and it tore (וַיִּקָּרַע). And Samuel said to him, “The LORD has this day torn (קָרַע) the kingship over Israel away from you and had given it to another who is worthier than you.”

Considering these “tearings” of the kingdom away from Saul and Solomon, the “tearing” of the altar seems loaded with significance, especially since what is torn is not a mere garment but the very altar which came to symbolize the great sin and intransigence.

98 Cohn, *1 Kings*, 27.
of Jeroboam. A better translation of what happened to the altar in 13:3 and 4 than “break apart” might be:

He gave a portent on that day, saying, “Here is the portent that the LORD has decreed: This altar shall be torn (נִקְרָע), and the ashes on it shall be spilled.

The altar was torn (נִקְרָע) and its ashes were spilled—the LORD’s command.

Leithart asserts, “The garment ‘torn’ from Solomon (11:30) is linked to the tearing of Jeroboam’s altar.”99 Again, this demonstrates the pivotal nature of the man of God narrative in 1 Kings 13.

Second, this section is connected to 1 Kings 13 through its heightened emphasis on the word of the Lord and the prophetic ministry. In Samuel, Nathan and Samuel played an important role in their prophetic ministry, but at this point in the

99 Leithart, 1 & 2 Kings, 98. This might demonstrate the literary artistry of the redactor and explain the awkwardness of 13:3 and 5 within its context. The Deuteronomist reflecting back on the event sees a connection between the tearing of kingdom and the tearing down of the altar. The literary artistry and the Deuteronomist’s point of view reflected in 13:3 and 5 are explained beautifully by Walsh:

In verse 3 the narrator breaks frame to direct a parenthetical remark to the reader. Both the Hebrew grammatical form and the unnecessary introductory words show that we are not to read this statement as a continuation of the oracle in verse 2. Although the NRSV allows for this understanding, its phrasing is not completely clear. Translate (including the parenthesis): “(He also gave a sign that day, saying, “This is the sign Yahweh has spoken: ‘Look! The altar is torn down, and the ashes on it shall spill out!’”).” In other words, this parenthetical sign is not part of the scene; we hear it but Jeroboam does not. The sign begins with the same vivid construction we saw in verses 1 and 2. In our mind’s eye we see the altar split open and its sacred ashes pour onto the ground . . . We are not told when this will occur, or whether it will be associated with Josiah’s purge. We infer that it will not happen earlier, since in that case the altar would already be desecrated and unusable, and Josiah’s actions would be pointless.

Walsh, 1 Kings, 178.
Deuteronomistic History the prophetic ministry takes off to a new level of importance shaping the history that follows. Leithart notes this new emphasis on the role of the prophet and the word of the LORD,

In Kgs. 11, we have the first example of the prophet-as-outsider, the first prophet born of Spirit, blowing where he wills. Ahijah, unintroduced except with the ominous description of “Shilonite,” appears from nowhere to speak the word of Yahweh and to redirect the course of Israel’s history. The word of the Lord delivered through Ahijah decisively shapes the history that follows, and from this point on in Kings, the “word of Yahweh” is fulfilled at every turn (1 Kgs. 13; 14:18; 15:29; 16:12, 34; 17:16). By the word of Yahweh dynasties rise and fall; by the word of Yahweh barren widows become fruitful and their stores of food are not exhausted; by the word of Yahweh arrows find chinks in armor; by the word of Yahweh the price of grain tumbles overnight; by the word of Yahweh Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed.

Noting once again the pivotal nature of 1 Kings 13, the prophecy and fulfillment motif that is begun with Ahijah reaches its height early on in the man of God from Judah story. The apex of the Jeroboam narrative becomes a controlling literary strategy for the rest of Kings and a profound theological understanding of the subsequent history of Israel. This story, at the center of the Jeroboam narrative, reaches beyond the exile of the northern kingdom all the way to Josiah’s renewal. Thus, beginning with Ahijah and quickly reaching its height at the center of the Jeroboam story, prophecy and fulfillment are employed by the Deuteronomist as a controlling literary strategy and an overarching theological insight into Israel’s history, as Walsh notes,

The introduction of the theme of prophetism also clears the way for the narrator to use one of his most powerful narrative

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100 Leithart, 1 & 2 Kings, 89.
techniques for forging literary unity: the correlation of prophecy and fulfillment. By bridging large sections of time and text with prophecy at one end and fulfillment at the other, the narrator creates a network of links that connect the sprawling histories of the kings of Israel, and Judah into a coherent whole. In the course of the Jeroboam story, the narrator lays the first abutments of several bridges: the restoration of the Davidic house (11:36, 39); Josiah’s desecration of the altar at Bethel (13:2) and of high places of Samaria (13:31); the downfall of the house of Jeroboam (14:14); and the exile of Israel (14:15). The other ends of these diverse spans will be found throughout 1 – 2 Kings, as early as 1 Kings 15 and as late as 2 Kings 23. The correlation of prophecy and fulfillment is not simply a narrative technique; behind it lies a profound theological understanding of Israel’s history and Yahweh’s role in it. The narrator believes that events are caused by human behavior: for instance, Rehoboam’s diplomatic heaviness precipitated the secession of the northern tribes. But they are also, and more primally, Yahweh’s doing (see 12:15). Prophecy and fulfillment do not merely reveal the interconnectedness of history. The word of Yahweh itself, with or without human cooperation, drives history and brings it into being. Israel’s history—which is that of the narrator and of his intended readers as well—is co-created by Yahweh and Yahweh’s people.\footnote{Walsh, 204-205; Gerhard von Rad writes of a “Theological schema” and a “framework schema” of prophecy and fulfillment in Kings. “There thus exists, the Deuteronomist means, an inter-relationship between the words of Jahweh and history in the sense that Jahweh’s word, once uttered, reaches its goal under all circumstances in history by virtue of the power inherent in it.” See below his excellent list of 11 prophecies and fulfillments in Kings in Studies in Deuteronomy (trans. David Stalker from the revised edition of Deuteronomium-Studien, 1948; London; SCM Press LTD, 1953), 78-81.}

Set between Ahijah’s first prophecy (11:29-40) and fulfillment (11:41-12:24) and his second prophecy (14:1-16) and fulfillment (14:17-18) is the ultimate prophecy and fulfillment which spans from 1 Kings 13 to 2 Kings 23.

In 11:40, which is at the end of this section, Jeroboam does not make a reply to this great word of the LORD concerning his future. Instead, Solomon responds, indirectly, by attempting to kill Jeroboam. Some critics have noted that Solomon’s
pursuit of Jeroboam (11:40) should have followed immediately upon Jeroboam raising his hand against Solomon (11:26-28) or after an intermediate account of the specific adversarial actions of Jeroboam against Solomon. But by placing Ahijah’s prophecy before Solomon’s vengeance against Jeroboam, the redactor “implies that Solomon acts because of the prophecy and compounds his sin by attempting to defy the divine will. It is no wonder that the formulaic report of Solomon’s death follows immediately!”

B2 Fulfillment of prophecy (11:41-12:24)

These verses, 11:41-12:24, create sympathy for Jeroboam and explain his rise and show the reasons for the division of the nation into two separate nations: the northern and southern kingdoms. The reasons for the separation of the nation are famously identified as two related but distinct causes: (1) Rehoboam’s ineptitude and obstinacy and (2) the fulfillment of the Word of God. The narrator structures the passage in such a way that he thoroughly establishes Rehoboam’s foolishness before he lets us know in verse 15 that all this came about in order to fulfill the promise that the Lord made to Jeroboam through


104 Ibid, 28; Brueggemann states, “In this verse (12:15), the narrative nicely ties together the practical policies of chapter 12 and the theological verdict of chapter 11.” Brueggemann, I & 2 Kings, 156; Seow states, “The point the narrator makes, rather, is that Rehoboam’s oppressive and arrogant ways were instrumental in the fulfillment of the will of God, announced through Ahijah’s prophecy (v. 15).” Seow, The First and Second Books of Kings, 98; Long, 1 Kings, 135; Nelson, First and Second Kings, 77.
Ahijah. Thus, the story opens not by directly addressing the prophecy but by taking up Rehoboam’s lack of wisdom.

After the death of Solomon and with Ahijah’s prophecy in the air, the focus of the story turns not to Jeroboam, but to Solomon’s son, Rehoboam. All Israel meets Rehoboam at Shechem to proclaim him king, but they come with conditions. At this time Jeroboam was in exile in Egypt due to his flight from Solomon. Israel sends for him. He and all the assembly of Israel come and present their conditions to Rehoboam:

“Your father made our yoke heavy. Now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke

Chapter 12 is loaded with allusions to the Exodus. Leithart compares the heavy load placed upon the Israelites in Egypt to the heavy load that Solomon placed on the northern tribes. Jeroboam’s request before Rehoboam is also compared to the request that Moses makes before Pharaoh. Leithart writes:

Ultimately, Jeroboam leads the people out of bondage into the wilderness. Spiritually, the northern kingdom remains in the wilderness throughout the history in 1-2 Kings, until removed from the land entirely by Assyria. They worship the golden calves as Israel had at Sinai (Exod. 32:1-5), never entering rest, never entering the land. Not every leader who sounds like Moses is a Moses. Some, like Jeroboam, begin like Moses only to end like Aaron (Provan 1995, 103).

Leithart, 1 & 2 Kings, 91. Fretheim adds, “Moses-like, he was called upon to lead a delegation to Rehoboam to request relief from the crown’s forced labor policies, language reminiscent of Israel’s life in Egypt.” Fretheim, First and Second Kings, 72. Seow also notes the comparison between Pharaoh and Rehoboam. Seow, The First and Second Books of Kings, 102. This exodus allusion truly creates a literary tension at the end of chapter 12 because at this very point Jeroboam is given the opportunity to repent and “enter the land” but instead, at the climax of this Jeroboam narrative (chapter 13), he refuses to turn and snubs the word of God.

Here, I am working with the MT text as is, although the LXX does not record Jeroboam’s return in 12:2-3a. The people’s sending after Jeroboam in 12:2-3a appears to be a problem since the people send for him in 12:20. But this second sending can be explained in this way: First, the people send for him in Egypt to confront Rehoboam at Shechem. Second, they send for him at his home in Israel in order to make him king of Israel. Some of the commentators who discuss this issue are Cogan, 1 Kings, 346-347, 351; Gray, I & II Kings, 300; Jones, I and 2 Kings, 250, 253; Sweeney, I & II Kings, 162; Montgomery, Kings, 248

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which your father laid on us, and we will serve you.” Rehoboam requests for them to go away for three days and then come back.

Rehoboam seeks counsel from the elders who advise him to respond to the people with kind words and to serve them; if he does, the people will in turn serve him. Then Rehoboam asks the advice of the young men who basically counsel him to answer the people harshly and make it rougher on them than his father did. Rehoboam takes the advice of the young men, softens their message a bit and then delivers his response to Israel with Jeroboam present, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father flogged you with whips, but I will flog you with scorpions.” The narrator of the story lets us in on the theological reason that Rehoboam responded in such a foolish way: “For the Lord had brought it about in order to fulfill the promise that the LORD had made through Ahijah the Shilohite to Jeroboam son of Nebat.” The people responded defiantly:

“We have no portion in David,  
No share in Jesse’s son!  
To your tents, O Israel!  
Now look to your own House, O David (דָּוִד בֵּיתְךָ).”

Cohn notes the contrasting and telling way Rehoboam addresses the elders and the young men. When seeking the counsel of the elders, he addresses them as “you.” Conversely, when he inquires of the young men he says “we.” Cohn, “Literary Technique,” 28.

This is certainly a Dtr remark. See also 2 Samuel 17:14. Cogan, 1 Kings, 349; DeVries, 1 Kings, 157.
Ironically, one who will be born from the house of David (לְבֵית־דָּוִד) will ultimately destroy Jeroboam’s altar (13:2).¹⁰⁹

Their absolute and defiant revolt against the house of David is illustrated in their pelting to death of Adoram, the head of forced labor. Rehoboam flees to Jerusalem where he rules over just the Israelites who lived in Judah. The narrator emphasizes that only one tribe remained faithful to the house of David.¹¹⁰ While Rehoboam and the house of David were left with only the cities of Judah to rule, all Israel sent messengers to Jeroboam and summoned him to the assembly and made him king over Israel.

Reversal is an important concept in this section, as is the case in 1 Kings 13. We have just seen a reversal in the fact that although Israel is defiant against the house of David, one from the house of David will defile the altars of the northern kingdom. Cohn points out another more significant reversal in chapter 12:

At the outset Rehoboam has the support of the people. Jeroboam has fled to Egypt, so the people go to Shechem to make Rehoboam king (12, 1-2). Yet by the end of the story it is Rehoboam who flees and Jeroboam whom they make king (v. 18-20). This reversal results from Rehoboam’s reversal of the people’s demand: he promises to increase, not to lighten, their yoke.¹¹¹

This reversal is illustrated most clearly at the climax of the story when, as stated above, Rehoboam delivers a harsh slogan stating his intended oppression of the northern

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¹⁰⁹ Given the importance of “reversals” in chapters 12 and 13 this mention of the house of David could be an important literary connection between the two chapters.

¹¹⁰ There might be a bit of sarcasm here in that Benjamin was a part of the southern kingdom but they were not truly loyal to Rehoboam.

¹¹¹ Cohn, “Literary Technique,” 28.
Kingdom but the Israelites respond with a defiant slogan of their own asserting their rejection of the house of David. This motif of reversal is also used effectively in 1 Kings 13, especially in the reversal of roles between the man of God from Judah and the prophet from Israel. Ironically, although it is one from the house of David who will destroy the altar of Jeroboam, it is the man of God from the South who will save the bones of the northern prophet (2 Kings 23:16-18) as they are buried in a single tomb. Deep and meaningful unification will occur, and is foreshadowed here, when the altar is destroyed.

This section which recounts how Ahijah’s prophecy was fulfilled ends with another word from God spoken through the prophet Shemaiah. Rehoboam does not intend on giving up so easily. On his return to Jerusalem, he musters a significant army from the house of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin to fight against the house of Israel in order to restore the kingship to himself. But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God instructing him to speak the following message to King Rehoboam son of Solomon of Judah and to all the house of Judah and Benjamin with the rest of the people: “Thus said the LORD: You shall not set out to make war on your kinsmen the Israelites. Let every man return (שׁוּבוּ) to his home, for this thing has been brought about by Me.” They heeded the word of the LORD and turned back (וַיָּשֻׁבוּ), in accordance with the word of the LORD.\footnote{112 It is tempting to connect this use of שׁוּב literarily and theologically with 1 Kings 13. In chapter one of this dissertation, I pointed out the prevalent use of שׁוּב in 1 Kings 13. The multiple uses of this word are even used there as an argument for the unity of the story. More than this, the Deuteronomist emphasizes the point that even after all the events of 1 Kings 13, especially the fulfilled prophecy and the
Regarding 12:21-24, Walsh makes a powerful point which, I believe, demonstrates a deeper theological and structural unity that plays itself out in the literary connection between these verses and the prophetic narrative of 1 Kings 13. He explains that this oracle uses “family language” to describe Israel’s relationship to Judah. Even though the LORD brought about the split of the two kingdoms by his powerful word, Judah is not to make war because the Israelites are Judah’s kinsman (אֲחֵיכֶם), or better “your brothers.”

For the LORD, “the people are not sundered; they remain one even though Yahweh has divided the kingdoms.” How relevant and eloquent, then, are the words of the old prophet from the North in 13:30 when he and others from the North lament the death of the man of God from the South by referring to him as “my brother:” “He laid the corpse in his own burial place; and they lamented over it, ‘Alas, my brother (אָחִי הֹוי)!”

Walsh had seen and commented on this same idea earlier in 1 Kings 12, in the two narrative remarks in 12:18. First, the narrator says, “So the Israelites returned to

power of the word of the LORD, Jeroboam did not turn back from his evil way: “Even after this incident, Jeroboam did not turn back from his evil way, but kept on appointing priests for the shrines from the ranks of the people . . . Thereby the House of Jeroboam incurred guilt—to their utter annihilation from the face of the earth.” Through the example of Rehoboam, as he responded to the word of the LORD spoken through Shemaiah and on account of the House of David’s election, who averted utter annihilation, the readers of Kings are encouraged to turn back to Yahweh, his place of worship and his king. Utter annihilation of Israel is possible, even after their exile, if they will not return and obey the word of the LORD. Thus, through this use of שׁוּב the pivotal nature of 1 Kings 13 is demonstrated once again and its literary connection to the stories around it are firmly established.

113 NRSV.
114 Walsh, I Kings, 170.
115 Note that Shemaiah is also referred to as the man of God.
their homes” and, second, he comments, “But Rehoboam continued to reign over the Israelites who lived in the towns of Judah.” This second comment, in the context of the first, is no mere passing remark; rather, it betrays the narrator’s perspective on the relationship between Judah and Israel.

It indicates that as far as the narrator is concerned, the division that has occurred is only territorial. Israel and Judah remain one people, because they are the people of Yahweh. Because of Solomon’s malfeasance (compounded, of course, by Rehoboam’s stupidity), Yahweh has divided administration of the people’s territory between two monarchs. But this is only a temporary situation (recall 11:39). The unity of the people under the Davidic house will one day be restored, and the presence of Israelite subjects in Rehoboam’s kingdom is the gauge of that future.\footnote{Walsh, 1 Kings, 165.}

If Walsh is correct, and I believe he is, then the eloquence of the man of God from Judah being buried in the northern land with a northern prophet is stunning. Only when the word of the LORD is fulfilled by a member of the house of David in destroying Jeroboam’s altar will Judah and Israel experience their deep unity in Yahweh. In the narrative of Judah and Israel’s division, their essential unity is affirmed (12:16-17, 24-25) and their future, functional unification is graphically foreshadowed (13:31-32).

Again, 11:41-12:24 demonstrates a vital literary connection between 1 Kings 13 and its immediate context and shows the pivotal nature of 1 Kings 13 to the Jeroboam story.
C Jeroboam’s sin (12:25-33)

After a brief mention of Jeroboam’s fortification of Shechem and Penuel, the narrator begins to set up the context for the narration of the events of chapter 13 and lay the foundation for the “sins of Jeroboam” theme which will continue until the Northern Kingdom’s exile in 2 Kings 17. He does this by (1) revealing Jeroboam’s fearful and twisted inner motivations that explain the condition of his heart that led to his downfall, (2) listing Jeroboam’s cultic innovations which became a cause of guilt for the people and (3) placing Jeroboam on the altar on what is likely the “dedication of the new-calf sanctuary at Bethel.” The following exposition of 12:26-33 will show how these verses set up the circumstances for the man of God’s confrontation of Jeroboam in chapter 13.

In 12:26-33, Jeroboam sets up golden calves in Bethel and Dan, makes cult places (בָּמֹות בֵּית) appoints non-Levitical priests from the ranks of the people and sets up a festival like the one in Judah. Jeroboam’s fall begins when he surmises within his own heart that the kingdom will go back to the house of David if the people of the northern kingdom continue to go up to offer sacrifices at the House of the LORD in Jerusalem.

Of the nine verses in this passage, one is devoted to Jeroboam’s building activities and eight are dedicated to his religious innovations.

Walsh, 1 Kings, 176.

The historicity of these events is called into question as the deuteronomistic narrator’s Judahite bias is clearly on display here. Richard Nelson, asserts, “Even the generations-old institution of local high places is blamed on Jeroboam.” Nelson, First and Second Kings, 80-81. At minimum, it appears that Jeroboam upgraded these high places or increased their role which ultimately became centers of heterodoxy. DeVries, 1 Kings, 163; Fritz, 1 & 2 Kings, 147; Gray, 317; Jones, 1 and 2 Kings, 260; Montgomery, Kings, 255-256; Seow, The First and Second Books of Kings, 104; Sweeney, I & II Kings, 178; Wiseman, I & 2 Kings, 145; see also 1 Kings 3:2-3.
Like Rehoboam (12:6), Jeroboam takes counsel, but he takes counsel within himself. Rather than trusting in Ahijah and Shemaiah’s prophetic words concerning his rise, which were apparently coming true, he takes matters into his own hands and creates an idolatrous and polytheistic cultic situation, for political reasons, by making two

120 Comparing Jeroboam and Rehoboam, Nelson writes,

As the story finishes, Rehoboam the foolish oppressor ends up as the obedient king. In contrast, Jeroboam the liberator of his people, who is searching desperately for religious authentication for his populist revolution, ends up as the paradigm for all royal apostasy.

Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, 82. In this role reversal it is easy to compare the man of God in chapter 13 to Jeroboam and the prophet from Israel to Rehoboam.

121 Ibid., 80.

122 Cohn, “Literary Technique,” 31.

123 Perhaps the narrator foreshadowed Jeroboam’s self-will in 11:26-27 when he points out that Jeroboam raised his hand against King Solomon.

124 The narrator of the account is more than likely making the point that Jeroboam launched an idolatrous and polytheistic cult in the North. Although this may not have been Jeroboam’s original intention, the Deuteronomist presents Jeroboam initiating idolatry and polytheism within Israel, as Nelson explains,

Because the narrator is indulging in an anachronistic evaluation of Jeroboam, insisting on obedience to liturgical principles of a later age, historically-minded interpreters tend to exculpate the king. It is claimed that he was restoring an ancient tradition of Israelite worship, that the calves were pedestals for Yahweh in much the same sense as the ark was Yahweh’s throne, that no polytheism was intended by shrines marking the north and south borders of the kingdom. From a literary point of view, however, none of this matters. For the Book of Kings, Jeroboam’s actions were sins of the lowest order, providing a foil to Josiah, whose virtue was unparalleled. Historically the narrator may be doing Jeroboam a grave injustice; canonically the anachronistic evaluation is fully justified. Later reflections of the prophets (Amos and Hosea) make clear the theological dangers implicit in the liturgical traditions of the kingdom of Israel. The calves were too open to misinterpretation by the local multiplicity of Canaanite Baal worship, implying a Yahweh of Dan and another at Bethel.

Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, 81; While Nelson suggests that “Historically the narrator may be doing Jeroboam a grave injustice,” House is surely right when he claims, “Israel’s monotheistic faith was not an easy sell at any time, so Jeroboam’s action made it harder for Yahwism to survive in any
golden calves and setting them up in Bethel and Dan, on the extreme southern and northern borders of Israel. After making these golden calves, Jeroboam, sounding like a new Aaron leading a new exodus,\(^{125}\) says to the people, “You have been going up to Jerusalem long enough. These are your gods,\(^{126}\) O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt!”\(^{127}\)

Before taking an extended look at the Exodus motif as a background for this text and how this motif connects chapters 12 and 13, let’s observe the significance of Jeroboam’s motivation for creating a new cult. He is disuniting the northern kingdom from the southern kingdom by creating a cult that will cut them off from Judah’s influence. Clearly, he is dividing the nation by setting up an alternative altar in Bethel

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\(^{125}\) Fretheim, _First and Second Kings_, 75.

\(^{126}\) I prefer the MT vocalization here reflected in the NRSV translation (“gods”) rather than that of the NJPS (“god”). See discussions in Cogan, _1 Kings_, 363; DeVries, _1 Kings_, 162-163; Gray, _1 & 2 Kings_, 313, 316; Jones, _1 and 2 Kings_, 258-259; Montgomery, _Kings_, 255; Rice, _1 Kings_, 107; Seow, _The First and Second Books of Kings_, 104.

\(^{127}\) From a historical perspective, Jeroboam’s identification with Aaron might not have been quite so negative as it appears in 1 Kings, as Cogan clarifies,

> In the desert tale, the calf was meant to attract YHWH to a new resting place within the camp, luring the deity back after the long absence of Moses, which broke off the communication between YHWH and Israel. This tradition, though denigrated in the present Pentateuchal rendition, may well have been known in Northern Israelite circles in a positive form and thus have served Jeroboam in promoting a cult independent of the Jerusalem Temple and its cherub figures. In 2 Kgs 17:16, the calves are described as “molten images,” as is the calf in Exod 32:4, 8; cf. also 1 Kgs 14:9.

Cogan, _1 Kings_, 358.
and, thus, shutting out the southern kingdom’s sway. In chapter 13, the man of God from Judah bursts onto the scene in order to confront this rebel king and his divisive cult. Ultimately, this man of God from Judah is buried in the northern kingdom with the prophet from Israel, uniting the two kingdoms in a single grave. As stated above, the influence of the South ultimately saves the North and unites the two kingdoms. The word of the LORD from the South destroys and desecrates the northern altar, but, at the same time, this word from the South saves the North.  

At this point, it is relevant to take an extended look at Exodus 32, as a literary and canonical context for the presentation of the sin of Jeroboam, in order to demonstrate how this bit of contextual detail might prepare for the story of the man of God in 1 Kings 13. In fact, reading Jeroboam’s sin in light of Exodus 32 seems to beg the question,

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128 At the end of this chapter and throughout the next chapter, we will discuss the relevance of this idea for the overarching theme of Kings, a pragmatic theme which, in the time of Josiah or shortly thereafter, attempts to extend the South’s influence into the North and, thereby, save the remnant of the Northern Kingdom and unite North and South once again.

129 Hens-Piazza proposes an explanation as to how that, beyond the present literary and canonical connection of the two stories, the Aaron tradition might have shaped over time the deuteronomistic understanding of Jeroboam as a new Aaron.

Although we have two separate traditions here, over time the telling of the sin of the Aaron tradition gradually qualifies and redefines the account of what Jeroboam was up to. When later editors prepared the final story of Jeroboam’s deeds, the parallel in words and deeds of these two separate stories leads to an indictment against Jeroboam, his cultic centers, and golden calves. The resonances with the Exodus tale redefine this new king’s activities as identical with Aaron’s. Significantly, in the reference to the setting up of the calves in Bethel and Dan, the narrator notes parenthetically that “this thing became a sin” (v. 30). That it “became” a sin suggests that what Jeroboam did initially may not have been sinful, but rather was acceptable. However, over time, either because of cultic distortions, the incorporation of worshiping additional deities, or simply in the telling and retelling, what he did became sinful.

Hens-Piazza, 1-2 Kings, 128-129.
“What awful thing is going to happen to Jeroboam and his cult?” There are several points of connection between the account of Jeroboam’s sin in 1 Kings 12:26-33 and the record of Aaron’s sin in Exodus 32. These connections are as follows.

First, after making a golden calf(ves) both Exodus 32:4 and 1 Kings 12:28 proclaim, “This is your god(s), O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.” This is the most obvious point of connection. “The theme is presented as though Aaron and, in turn, Jeroboam simply manufactured ‘gods’ for their own convenience.”\textsuperscript{130} Thus, the echoes from Exodus 32 present in 1 Kings 12 prepare the way for the radical and deserving confrontation by the man of God in 1 Kings 13.\textsuperscript{131}

Second, Jeroboam makes an altar as Aaron had built an altar (Exodus 32:5). Jeroboam’s altar ultimately becomes the focus of the word of the LORD to Jeroboam.

Third, Jeroboam creates a festival as does Aaron (Exodus 32:5); neither of these festivals were endorsed by Moses.\textsuperscript{132} Aaron’s festival seems to inaugurate his cultic innovations; this is also true of Jeroboam’s festival. In 1 Kings 13, the Deuteronomist places the story of the man of God’s confrontation of Jeroboam on the first day of this

\textsuperscript{130} Brueggemann, \textit{1 & 2 Kings}, 161.

\textsuperscript{131} Grey would argue that Exodus re-echoes themes related to Jeroboam in Kings, Gray asserts, “The plural of the noun, which has significance only with reference to gods of Dan and Bethel, indicates that the Exodus passage, a later expansion of J, has been elaborated to cast aspersion on Jeroboam’s cult.” Grey, \textit{I & II Kings}, 316

\textsuperscript{132} See my discussion in chapter one of the importance of this allusion to Exodus 32 as it relates to his condemnation of Jeroboam.
festival. For the Deuteronomist, the man of God gave a portent on that very day (13:3) and the altar splits apart on that very (festival) day (13:5).\textsuperscript{133}

Fourth, the Levites play a significant role in both chapters, for their large presence in Exodus 32 and for their complete absence in 1 Kings 12. In Exodus 13, the Levites purge Israel of their sin with the golden calf. Brueggemann points out this connection,

1 Kings 12:31 observes that the priests of Jeroboam were “not Levites,” a statement that tilts toward the Aaronide priesthood of Exodus 32 that submitted to the harsh treatment of the Levites in Exodus 32:25-29. Thus from the narrative of Exodus 32, the priests of Jeroboam are taken to be heterodox.\textsuperscript{134}

Walsh raises the question that if Aaron’s sin faced such a violent punishment, “What might this portend for the future of Jeroboam’s nation? Will they too fall into idolatry? And will disaster overtake them?”\textsuperscript{135} But Jeroboam has no Levite priests to confront him. How will the LORD purge the nation of Jeroboam’s illicit cult? The answer to this question is raised implicitly in 1 Kings 12 and answered explicitly in 1 Kings 13.

Fifth, both Aaron and Jeroboam had come out of Egypt to lead the people out of an oppressive situation in which they served as “slaves.” Regarding this particular linkage between Aaron and Jeroboam, Leithart makes an interesting observation that connects 1 Kings 12 and 13,

\textsuperscript{133} See my discussions above which identify 1 Kings 13:3 and 5 as redactional additions to the man of God story.

\textsuperscript{134} Brueggemann, \textit{1 & 2 Kings}, 161.

\textsuperscript{135} Walsh, \textit{1 Kings}, 173.
Rehoboam is the Pharaoh of the previous chapter, and Jeroboam the liberating savior of Israel, but Jeroboam is no Moses. His gold calves instead recall Aaron’s idolatry in Exod. 32, and this association is strengthened by the similarity of Jeroboam’s announcement and Aaron’s: “Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt” (1 Kgs. 12:28; cf. Exod. 32:4). Jeroboam even names his two sons after Aaron’s sons (1 Kgs. 14:1, 20; Lev. 10) (Walsh 1996, 173n1). The Moses figure in 1 Kgs. 13 is the “man of God from Judah” who confronts the “Aaronic” Jeroboam and splits the altar as Moses broke the tablets of the covenant at the foot of Sinai (Exod. 32:19-20).

Ultimately, the placing of the golden calves at Dan and Bethel proved to be a cause of guilt or sin for the people (12:30). Jeroboam’s actions led the people into sin. But there is more. In 12:31-33, Jeroboam also (1) made cult places or houses of high place (בָּמֹותבֵּית), (2) appointed priests from the ranks of the people who were not Levites, and (3) he established a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month in imitation of the one in Judah. As mentioned earlier, these cultic sins were woven into the narrative of the man of God in the next chapter. The Deuteronomist places on the lips of the man of God the warning that one from the line of David will slaughter upon the altar priests of the shrines or high places (כֹּהֲנֵיָבָּמֹות) (13:2) and he gave a portent on that very festival day (13:3).

See Leithart’s note in which he shows how often Moses is referred to as the “man of God” and how his miraculous works are identified as signs as is also true of the “man of God” in 1 Kings 13:3 and 5. Leithart, 1 & 2 Kings, 96-97.

There is an obvious contrast here between Solomon’s construction of the temple and ministering at the altar with that of Jeroboam. The outcome of Solomon’s offering is much different than that of Jeroboam.
Thus, it seems from these five points of connection that casting the sin of Jeroboam against the backdrop of Exodus 32 prepares the way for the man of God’s confrontation of Jeroboam and his altar, especially in the fact that it raises the question, “What will happen to Jeroboam and his cultic innovations? Hasn’t he put himself and his altar in grave danger?” A question which is answered in 1 Kings 13.138

D Man of God interlude (13:1-32)

In the next few paragraphs we will follow more closely Cohn’s analysis of 1 Kings 13:1-32. To Cohn, it appears, on the surface of things, that 1 Kings 13 is secondary. Some of the phrasing in the end of chapter 12 is very similar to the end of chapter 13. For example, “this thing became a sin” in 12:30 (לְחַטָּאת הַזֶּה הַדָּבָר וַיְהִי) and in 13:24 (לְחַטַּאת הַזֶּה בַּדָּבָר וַיְהִי) and “he also made cult places and appointed priests from the ranks of the people” in 12:31 (רֹאשׁ אֲשֶׁר בָּאוּה לְמֹשֶׁה מִקְצֹות כֹּהֲנִים וַיַּעַשׂ בָּמֹות אֶת־בֵּית) and in 13:33 (רֹאשׁ מִקְצֹות כֹּהֲנֵי הָעָם וַיַּעַשׂ). At the end of chapter 13, “the narrator declares explicitly the consequences of this sin: the destruction of the house of Jeroboam (v. 34).”139 “The author could have made this declaration as the immediate conclusion to the initial recitation of Jeroboam’s cultic reforms in 12, 26-33 and then reported Ahijah’s prophecy of destruction.”140 This raises the questions, “Why was the story of the man of

138 See chapter one for Walsh’s the important discussion of the verbal parallelism between 12:30-31a and 13:32b-33 and the chiastic structure of 12:32 and 33.

139 Cohn, “ Literary Technique,” 31.

140 Ibid.
God included?” and “What is its literary purpose?” It is especially important to ascertain its literary purpose because it is at the very center of the chiastic structure of the Jeroboam narrative.

It seems to Cohn that the confrontation of man of God in 13:1-10 marks “the beginning of the reversal of the king’s destiny.” Prophesying the desecration of the altar, the man of God attacks the centerpiece of Jeroboam’s cultic innovation and demonstrates the power of this word of the Lord by withering Jeroboam’s hand when Jeroboam reaches out toward him. “As the kingdom was ‘torn (qara)’ from Solomon’s ‘hand (yad)’ (11, 31), now the altar is ‘torn’ and Jeroboam’s ‘hand’ (13, 4) is rendered powerless.”

Although the purpose of the second part of the tale (13:11-31a) is more difficult to discern, Cohn believes that it sheds light on Jeroboam’s destiny. He sees this part of the tale as a kind of parable or story within a story that sets into relief the theological dynamics of the larger story. “The story of the man of God illustrates how God’s agent can become God’s victim if he does not remain true to his calling.” Cohn concludes,

So the tale of the man of God can be construed to bear directly upon the Jeroboam narrative. This parable, at the very center of the narrative, illustrates the reversal in the fortune of God’s chosen instrument when he disobeys the divine word. If the man of God, who is tricked into disobedience, pays the consequences, how much more so should Jeroboam who failed to walk in God’s ways. Moreover, the attitude of the old prophet who reverses himself and

141 Ibid.
142 Ibid., 32.
143 Ibid., 33.
acknowledges the truth of the man of God’s prophecy contrasts sharply with the attitude of Jeroboam who does not “turn back.” Indeed, by placing the parable of the man of God between the declaration of Jeroboam’s sin and his punishment, the author implies that Jeroboam returns to his sin despite the example of the fate of the man of God. Though his withered hand was “turned back” (13:6) by the power of God, Jeroboam “turned back” (13:33) to his evil ways and sealed his own fate.\textsuperscript{144}

Cohn is surely right in his assessment. The point is that in spite of the warnings of the man of God, Jeroboam did not turn back and in spite of the examples of the man of God and the old prophet, Jeroboam would not turn back. Cohn masterfully shows how this story functions within the Jeroboam narrative. It is the pinnacle, the hinge point if you will, of the story.

However, it is also important to point out that Cohn is working primarily with the Jeroboam narrative alone, but this text’s broadest implications cannot be completely separated from the larger context of the books of Kings, especially since the theme of the sins of Jeroboam continues until 2 Kings 17 and the prophecy of the man of God is not fulfilled until 2 Kings 23:16-18. It seems to me that the symbolism of the man of God from Judah and the old prophet also has larger implications for the South and the North in the time of Josiah. This larger meaning of the text is hinted at in Jeroboam’s divisive purpose in establishing the cult in Bethel in 1 Kings 12:26-27. The Deuteronomist wanted the people of the North to undo Jeroboam’s very intent; he argued that those of the North should “return to the house of David.”

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 34.
C’ Jeroboam’s sin (13:33-34)

As the point has been made several times, 1 Kings 13:33-34 surely parallels 1 Kings 12:25-33. This bookend-like structure makes the point forcefully that in the face of warning, sign and example, Jeroboam still would not turn back from his sin. Obviously, this section of the Jeroboam story reflects upon the implications of Jeroboam’s stubbornness, which is put on display in his encounter with the man of God.

B1’ Prophecy of Ahijah (14:1-16)

Immediately after the assertion that on account of Jeroboam’s intransigence his house “incurred guilt – to their utter annihilation from the face of the earth (13:34),” we are told that Abijah, Jeroboam’s son fell sick. On account of his son’s illness, Jeroboam instructs his wife to disguise herself so as not to be recognized as his wife and go to Shiloh to see the prophet Ahijah in order to inquire of him concerning his ill son. Jeroboam identifies Ahijah as “the one who predicted that I would be king over this people,” thus connecting this story with its balancing counterpart in 11:29-40. Rice states that “the career of Jeroboam is framed by encounters with Ahijah.” Fretheim points out the place of 1 Kings 13 within this frame:

145 For the relationship of the sins of Jeroboam in 1 Kings 13:33-34 to the sins of Jeroboam in 12:25-33 see chapter one’s discussion of Walsh’s “The Contexts of I Kings XIII.”

146 Seow, The First and Second Books of Kings, 112.

147 Fretheim notes that Jeroboam is obviously concerned about succession since the only prophetic word spoken to him since Ahijah is in 13:2-3. Fretheim, First and Second Kings, 84.

148 Rice, 1 Kings, 117. Jones also points out that “the short insertion in v. 2b connects the narrative with another of Ahijah’s prophetic utterances.” Jones, 1 and 2 Kings, 269.
As in chapter 13, a story becomes the vehicle for a prophetic word. The focus is a third prophetic word against Jeroboam, which reinforces and more closely specifies the prophetic judgments of chapter 13. At the same time, the story elements are not so much fluff; the sickness within the royal household and the deceptive attempt at a cover-up enhanced the point of the oracle. Even the name of the dying child (Abijah means “Yahweh is my father”) signals the death of genuine Yahwism in Israel. The “bad news” is spoken to Jeroboam’s unnamed wife by an aged Ahijah, who had earlier brought a positive word from the Lord to Jeroboam (11:31-39.\textsuperscript{149}

Jeroboam tells his wife to take with her ten loaves, some wafers and a jug of honey. Again, the ten loaves possibly recall the original prophetic act when Ahijah tore his new robe into 12 pieces and then gave ten to Jeroboam, symbolizing the ten northern tribes.

Since Jeroboam’s wife is disguised and Ahijah has lost his eyesight, the LORD lets Ahijah know that Jeroboam’s wife is coming to him in disguise and that she is visiting him to inquire concerning her sick son. The LORD also gives Ahijah a message to speak to her. When she arrives, Ahijah hears the sound of her feet, asks her why she is in disguise and then delivers a message for Jeroboam.\textsuperscript{150} His message recalls several

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{149} Fretheim, \textit{First and Second Kings}, 83.
\item \textsuperscript{150} Concerning the editorial activity in this section, Long writes,
\end{itemize}

Critics seem to agree that an old tradition has been heavily edited by the Dtr. editor of Kings, especially in vv. 7-11, 14-16. Of late some have envisioned complex, multileveled stages of redaction (Dietrich, 51-54; Würthwein, \textit{Konige}, 174-175), without reaching agreement, however. Since most disputes of this sort center on the speeches in vv. 7-16, even if one reached a consensus on these matters, the form of the unit as a whole would not be substantially affected.

elements of the Jeroboam narrative: (1) God raised him up, tore the kingdom from the house of David and gave it to him; (11:29-12:24; 14:7, 8a). (2) Jeroboam did not keep the commandments as David had done; an enduring dynasty was promised him contingent on his obedience to the LORD’s laws and commandments (11:33-34, 38-39; 14:8b). (3) Jeroboam acted worse than all that were before him; he made for himself other gods and molten images to vex the LORD (12:28-30; 14:9). As a result of Jeroboam’s disobedience to the law and his creation of other gods, his house will be utterly cut off. In graphic language, Ahijah (Dtr) describes the death of Abijah and the fall of the House of Jeroboam in 10-14:

Therefore I will bring disaster upon the House of Jeroboam and will cut off from Jeroboam every male, bond and free, in Israel. I will sweep away the House of Jeroboam utterly, as dung is swept away. Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the town shall be devoured by dogs; and anyone who dies in the open country shall be eaten by the birds of the air; for the LORD has spoken. As for you, go back home; as soon as you set foot in the town, the child will die. And all Israel shall lament over him and bury him; he alone of Jeroboam’s family shall be brought to burial, for in him alone of the House of Jeroboam has some devotion been found to the LORD, the God of Israel. Moreover, the LORD will raise up a

151 Jones, 1 and 2 Kings, 270, Sweeney, I & II Kings, 183.

152 DeVries, 1 Kings, 178; Fretheim, First and Second Kings, 83; Jones, 1 and 2 Kings, 272; Nelson, First and Second Kings, 91; Seow, The Books of First and Second Kings, 112.

153 Cogan suggests that this is an irrelevant stereotypical Dtr evaluation since Jeroboam was the first king of Israel. Cogan, 1 Kings, 379. While this is true, it is possible that Jeroboam is considered worse than Saul, Solomon and Rehoboam.

154 “The term massēkā, first used of Aaron’s calf in Exod 32:4, 8; Deut 9:12, 16 refers to the golden calves introduced in the shrines of Bethel and Dan (cf. 1 Kgs 12:28; 2 Kgs 17:16).” Ibid.; Fritz, I & 2 Kings, 156; Jones, 1 and 2 Kings, 272.
king over Israel who will destroy the House of Jeroboam, this day and even now.  

Jeroboam’s sins are vitally connected to the destiny of the nation. Ahijah expands his command beyond the house of Jeroboam to the nation itself. “The fate of the nation is linked to Jeroboam.” Just as the southern kingdom cannot be separated from the election of the house of David, the northern kingdom cannot be separated from the sins of the house of Jeroboam.

Regarding Jeroboam’s time in power, Cogan concludes, “The reign of Jeroboam has thus come full circle and is brought to a close; its rise was prefigured by prophecy (11:29-39), and its downfall was likewise predicted by YHWH (14:7-16).” While the Jeroboam story has come full circle, the dark shadow that Jeroboam’s reign casts will continue, as Long asserts, “Thus the legend is the final incident chosen by the Dtr. editor(s) of Kings to characterize Jeroboam’s reign and to set the context for subsequent and untiring references to the ‘sins of Jeroboam.’”

Before moving on to the fulfillment of Ahijah’s prophecy, I would like to suggest several more possible connections between 1 Kings 14:1-16 with 1 Kings 13, other than

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155 “‘This is the day!’ The question – perhaps a later gloss – leaves open the possibility that the Israelite reader might alter the inevitable destiny with death after all.” Seow, The Books of First and Second Kings, 113; See also Nelson, First and Second Kings, 94.

156 Fritz, 1 & 2 Kings, 156; Fretheim, First and Second Kings, 85; Cogan, 1 Kings, 380.

157 As we shall see and as we have already touched on, Israel can be saved by its connection with Judah.

158 Cogan, 1 Kings, 382.

159 Long, 1 Kings, 156.
those already mentioned. First, it seems likely that the Exodus motif is combined with the motif of reversal in 1 Kings 14:1-16. Peter Leithart suggests that the Exodus story gives shape to the Jeroboam narrative, and he demonstrates how this connects with 1 Kings 13:

Jeroboam’s reign begins with an exodus. Like Moses, he confronts Solomon’s son Rehoboam, calling on the king of Judah to “lighten the burden” and “let my people go” (1 Kgs. 12:4). When Rehoboam brusquely threatens (12:12-15), like Pharaoh (Exod. 5:1-14), to make the burden of Israel heavier, Jeroboam leads a defection from the house of David, which has become no better than another Egyptian house of bondage. Yet, as we have seen, Jeroboam quickly proves to be more Aaron than Moses. Instead of allowing Israel to worship in Jerusalem, he sets up high places in Dan and Bethel, where he leads Israel in worshiping golden calves (1 Kgs. 12:25-33). According to Jeroboam, Israel’s worship is still offered to the God of the Exodus (12:28), but the Lord sees it as a contemptuous rejection of him (14:9). It is not so much a violation of the first commandment as of the second, by which Yahweh prohibits the use of images in Israel’s worship (Exod. 20:4-6). As Yahweh threatened, Israel’s dynasties last into only the third and fourth generations. Yahweh sends a man of God from Judah to challenge and confront Jeroboam (1 Kgs. 13), as Moses the man of God confronted Aaron at the foot of Sinai when Sinai was worshipping gold calves (Exod. 32), but still Jeroboam does not turn.\n
Reading the second Ahijah prophecy with the exodus motif and the reversal structure in mind, Leithart sees in Jeroboam a reversal of the Exodus:

In the story of the death of Abijah, the exodus is systematically reversed. At Passover, the Lord preserves the firstborn sons of Israel; but Yahweh does not pass over the son of Jeroboam, apparently the first born and heir apparent of Jeroboam, even though he acknowledges that Abijah is the best that the house of Jeroboam can offer (1 Kgs. 14:13). There is no doorway sprinkled

\(^{160}\) Leithart, 1 & 2 Kings, 104.
with the blood of a substitute, and no angel of Yahweh crossing over to stand at the threshold of the house (Exod. 12:13). There is only the fateful footfall of Jeroboam’s wife on the threshold that proclaims the doom of her son. As she passes through the doorway, her son passes from life to death. This is an inversion of Passover, a Passover in which the best son dies. Even though Jeroboam seeks out a prophet, he finds no relief.\(^{161}\)

This exodus motif and reversal structure ties the Jeroboam story together, with 1 Kings 13 firmly set at the pivot point, participating both in the exodus motif and the reversal structure. The undoing of Jeroboam’s altar prophesied by the man of God sets the trajectory for the ultimate deconstruction of Israel.

Second, there might be a literary connection between the burial of the man of God and the good son of Jeroboam. In 1 Kings 13:29-30, the man of God receives a proper burial in the northern kingdom: “The prophet lifted up the corpse of the man of God, laid it on the ass, and brought it back; it was brought to the town of the old prophet for lamentation and burial. He laid the corpse in his own burial place; and they lamented over it, “Alas, my brother!” In 1 Kings 14:13, Ahijah prophesies that Abijah will receive a proper burial, “And all Israel shall lament over him and bury him; he alone of Jeroboam’s family shall be brought to burial, for in him alone of the house of Jeroboam has some devotion been found to the LORD, the God of Israel.” The other descendents of Jeroboam will not be buried, while the old prophet will be buried with the man of God.

Third, the prophet Ahijah is old in 1 Kings 14 as is the old northern prophet in 1 Kings 13.

\(^{161}\) Ibid., 106.
Fourth, Walsh points out that “this narrative shares with all of chapter 13 the dominant theme of the power of the word of God.”

Fifth, the long range prediction of the man of God coupled with a short range prophecy in 1 Kings 13 can be compared to the short range and long range prophecies in 1 Kings 14. House points out the comparison between the long range predictions in 1 Kings 13 and 14: “The man of God predicted Josiah’s reign, which does not occur until 640-609 B.C., or until 2 Kings 22-23. Ahijah’s prediction of Israel’s fall is not fulfilled until 2 Kings 17.”

_B2’ Fulfillment (in part) of prophecy (14:17-18)_

In this short account, which is parallel in the development of the Jeroboam narrative with Ahijah’s former fulfilled prophecy (11:41-12:24), Jeroboam’s wife returns to Tirzah. As soon as she stepped over the threshold of her house, the child dies. Abijah receives a proper burial and all Israel laments over him. The narrator points out that this was “in accordance with the word that the LORD had spoken through his servant the prophet Ahijah (14:18b).”

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**162** Walsh, _1 Kings_, 200.

**163** House, _1, 2 Kings_, 192.

**164** Tirzah is not mentioned earlier in the story. A move from Shechem to Tirzah must have taken place, with no mention of this change in the text. On Tirzah as the royal residence, see 15:21, 33. Gray favors the Greek reading Zereda here on the supposition that Tirzah did not become the capital of the north until the reign of Baasha. Cogan, _1 Kings_, 381; Gray, _1 & II Kings_, 339; Fritz, _1 & 2 Kings_, 156; Jones, _1 and 2 Kings_, 274; Montgomery, _Kings_, 267; Sweeney, 186.

**165** Walsh points out that the phrases “threshold of the house” (_sap habbayit_) and “ending of the house” (_sop habbayit_) differ by only one vowel. “The death of Abijah is the beginning of the end for the house of Jeroboam.” Walsh, _1 Kings_, 199.
There are four significant points of connection between this account of the death of Abijah and the story of the man of God in 1 Kings 13:

1. Like the man of God, the child is “lamented and buried.”\(^{166}\)

2. Like the man of God, the child’s death points beyond itself to the truth of God’s word to be fulfilled completely only later.\(^{167}\)

3. The phrase “in accordance with the word of the LORD” is an “editorial formula of verification”\(^{168}\) which is also used in 13:26 (cf. 15:29; 16:12, 34; 17:16; 22:38).

4. The death of Abijah becomes another warning sign to Jeroboam in a growing list beginning in chapter 13. Others include “the kings own withered hand (13:4), the breakup of the altar (13:5), and the death of the man of God from Judah (13:26).”\(^{169}\)

A’ Concluding exposition: death of Jeroboam (14:19-20)

Parallel, in the chiastic structure of the Jeroboam narrative, with the introduction to Jeroboam (11:26-28) is the death of Jeroboam.\(^{170}\) The selective nature of the Jeroboam’s reign is indicated with the narrator’s summation of Jeroboam’s career as “how he fought and how he ruled” and the reference to the “Annals of the Kings of Israel.”\(^{171}\) For one who reigned 22 years, the narrator has given us a very small slice out

\(^{166}\) Cohn, “Literary Technique,” 35; Cogan, 1 Kings, 381.

\(^{167}\) Cogan, 1 Kings, 381. The death of Abijah is only a partial fulfillment of Ahijah’s prophecies. The complete destruction of the House of Jeroboam would not happen until 2 Kings 15:29.

\(^{168}\) Ibid.

\(^{169}\) Hens-Piazza, 1-2 Kings, 143.

\(^{170}\) Nelson considers 13:33-34 and 14:19-20 as the frame to this part of the Jeroboam narrative. Nelson, First and Second Kings, 91.

\(^{171}\) Jones, 1 and 2 Kings, 275; Seow, The First and Second Books of Kings, 113; Walsh, 1 Kings, 200.
of his life, concluding that he “slept with his fathers, and his son Nadab succeeded him as king.”

Seow concludes from this section, along with the Jeroboam narrative in general, that this story’s primary focus is the theological rationale for the downfall of Jeroboam:

The narrative in 1 Kings provides only the theological rationale for the fall of Jeroboam and the eventual destruction of his kingdom. The focus of the narrative, therefore, is judgment on the house of Jeroboam for the sins that he committed.

It is hard to imagine this ending to the Jeroboam narrative having the theological punch and clarity that it has without 1 Kings 13 serving as the literary pivot point of the narrative. Take the story in 1 Kings 13 out of the narrative and it loses its literary power and focus point. The focus and power of 1 Kings 13 allows the narrator to end the

172 With the mention of Jeroboam’s burial and the beginning of his son Nadab’s reign, some commentators see a touch of grace in the end of Jeroboam’s reign. Jones states, “The name Nadab is a short form of Nadabiah, which occurs in one of the Lachish letters (Törczyner, Lachish Letters, no. iii). The meaning of Nadabiah, ‘Yahweh has freely given’ or ‘Yahweh has proved himself generous’ (Noth, Personennamen, p. 193), may indicate that he was Jeroboam’s firstborn.” In Jeroboam’s burial and his son’s name, his reign may have concluded with grace. Jones, 276; Nelson, 96; Rice, 121. This might be indicative of an extension of grace to the northern kingdom in general. Seow concludes,

Amid the reality of divine anger there was ever so slight an indication of God’s favor: “there is found in him [Abijah] something pleasing to the LORD” (v. 13). Jeroboam himself does not suffer the fate prophesied for all the males in his family, and the dynasty does not end immediately; Nadab, another son of Jeroboam, comes to power as one “raised up” by the LORD (v. 14). As for Jeroboam’s people, their punishment would come not strictly because of Jeroboam’s sins but because of their own idolatrous acts (v. 15): Jeroboam caused them to sin, but they would do so themselves. Hence, despite their destined destruction, a question comes that makes no logical sense in its context and, accordingly, baffles all translators: “This is the day! What, then, even now” (14:14). The question—perhaps a later gloss—leaves open the possibility that the Israelite reader might alter the inevitable destiny with death after all.


173 Ibid.
Jeroboam story with “The other events of Jeroboam, how he fought and how he reigned . . .” Without the narrative effect of 1 Kings 13, he could not have legitimately condensed the remainder of Jeroboam’s reign into a single sentence.

Cohn concludes his article,

The chiastic structure undergirds the movement of Jeroboam’s ascent to power and descent to destruction of Jeroboam’s cult, and the transformation of the man of God from God’s ally to his enemy mirrors the fate of Jeroboam himself. Portraying the interaction of the prophetic word and human folly in making and breaking the king and the kingdom, the narrative is self-contained at the same time that it serves as a pivot between the united and the divided kingdoms. It fulfills God’s threat to Solomon and points ahead to the end of Jeroboam’s short-lived dynasty, of his kingdom, and of his cult.  

Before moving on to 1 Kings 13’s importance and function within the larger narrative of Kings, I would like to touch on Walsh’s insights into the Jeroboam portion of Kings from his 13th chapter entitled, “The Whole Jeroboam Story: 1 Kings 11:26-14:20.” While I prefer the way Cohn structures the narrative over Walsh’s scheme—Walsh does not place 1 Kings 13 at the pivot; rather, he puts Jeroboam’s cultic innovations at the center (12:26-31)—Walsh’s structure brings out a very important insight that will prove valuable and will give support to observations made later in this chapter.

Walsh structures the Jeroboam narrative as follows:

A1. Ahijah of Shiloh announces Jeroboam’s kingship (11:26-40)
A2. Closing formula for Solomon’s reign (11:41-43)
B. Political disunity: the rejection of Rehoboam (12:1-20)
C. A Judahite man of God’s approval (12:21-25)
D. Jeroboam’s cultic innovations (12:26-31)

174 Cohn, *J Kings*, 35.
C’. A Judahite man of God’s condemnations (13:1-10)
B’. Prophetic disunity: the prophet and the man of God (13:11-32)
A1’. Ahijah of Shiloh announces Jeroboam’s downfall (14:1-18)
A2’. Closing formula for Jeroboam’s reign (14:19-20)\(^\text{175}\)

This structure invites a comparison between B and B’ which will prove relevant later as we look at the relationship of Israel and Judah in 1 Kings 13 as it relates to the larger theological message of Kings. Walsh explains the significance of the relationship between the secession at Shechem and the conflict between the prophet and the man of God:

> The political separation of Judah and Israel is acceptable; religious schism between the two territories is not. The impression the narrator gives us is that God does not intend the political division of territories to affect the religious unity of Yahweh’s people. The latter is fundamental and unalterable; the former is only temporary (11:39). . . . this commitment to the unity of the people of Israel and Judah explains the way the narrator will organize his subsequent history of the kingdoms.\(^\text{176}\)

Walsh concludes his chapter with a thought that is paramount to understanding the place of 1 Kings 13 in the larger purpose of Kings:

> There is one further transformation of the prophetic word. In the context of the history that will be the subject of the rest of 1-2 Kings, the story of the prophet of Bethel and the man of God from Judah is itself prophetic. The future will see the northern tribes, because of their infidelity to Yahweh, conquered by the Assyrians and driven into exile, never to return. Judah will maintain its political and religious traditions longer, but eventually they too will succumb to idolatrous practices, fall prey to the Babylonians, and go into exile. In that light, we see that the prophet of Bethel

\(^{175}\) Walsh, 1 Kings, 202.
\(^{176}\) Ibid., 203.
and the man of God from Judah mirror their respective kingdoms. (This representative function is easier because the figures are both unnamed; we tend to think of them as types rather than as individuals.) Their tragedy foreshadows what awaits Israel and Judah. Israel has become unfaithful. Judah can still speak the word that Israel needs to hear, but if Judah follows Israel’s lead and compromises its worship, then Judah will be banished from its homeland and the only reunion of the two will be in the tomb of exile.\textsuperscript{177}

Thus, while, as Cohn so eloquently makes the point, the fate of Jeroboam and the fate of the man of God are compared within the more immediate Jeroboam narrative, within the larger story of Kings, the man of God from Judah represents the kingdom of Judah and the old prophet stands for the Kingdom of Israel. The fates of these two Kingdoms are forever linked.

\textbf{1 Kings 13’s Function within the Larger Deuteronomistic Narrative of Kings}

In this part of the chapter we will (1) revisit prophecy and fulfillment as a vital structural component in Kings, (2) follow the development of “the sins of Jeroboam” theme from 1 Kings 13 to 2 Kings 17 and (3) expand on the “two nations under God” idea in Kings as it relates to 1 Kings 13.

\textit{Prophecy and Fulfillment}

Gerhard Von Rad writes of the creative power of the prophetic word within the deuteronomistic history: “There thus exists, the Deuteronomist means, an inter-relationship between the words of Jahweh and history in the sense that Jahweh’s word, \textsuperscript{177} Ibid., 205.
once uttered, reaches its goal under all circumstances in history by virtue of the power inherent in it."\textsuperscript{178} He points out the fulfillments that run throughout the Deuteronomist’s work. This theological schema of prophecy and fulfillment ultimately serves as a literary framework \textit{schema} within the Deuteronomistic History. Von Rad identifies 11 prophecies which are followed by definite fulfillments:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Prophecy:}

Yahweh establishes the kingdom of David at the hand of Nathan. His son will build a house for Yahweh. 2 Samuel 7:13  
\textit{Fulfillment:}

1 Kings 8:20: “Yahweh has fulfilled the word that he spoke.” Solomon has ascended the throne and built the temple.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Prophecy:}

1 Kings 11:29ff: Ahijah the Shilonite: ten tribes will be taken from Solomon’s kingdom, because he has forsaken Yahweh, worshipped other gods and not walked in Yahweh’s ways.  
\textit{Fulfillment:}

1 Kings 12:15b: Rehoboam rends the kingdom, bringing on the catastrophe: “But the cause was from Yahweh to establish the word which he spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.”
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Prophecy:}

1 Kings 13: An unknown prophet: At Bethel a descendant of David—Josiah—will slay the priests of the high places on the altar, and burn men’s bones upon it.  
\textit{Fulfillment:}

2 Kings 23:16-18: Josiah pollutes the altar at Bethel by burning men’s bones upon it “according to the word of Yahweh which the man of God had proclaimed . . .”
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Prophecy:}

1 Kings 14:6ff: Ahijah the Shilonite: Jeroboam, whom Yahweh made prince over Israel, has done evil above all that were before
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{178} Von Rad, \textit{Studies in Deuteronomy}, 78.
him. Therefore Jeroboam’s kingdom will be rooted up, “as a man
takes away dung, until it is all gone.”

Fulfillment:
1 Kings 15:29: the usurper Baasha exterminates the house of
Jeroboam “according to the word of Yahweh which he had spoken
by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite . . .”

Prophecy:
1 Kings 16:1ff: Jehu ben Hanani: Baasha, raised by Yahweh to be
prince over Israel, has walked in the ways of Jeroboam and made
Israel to sin, therefore it will befall him in his house as befell the
house of Jeroboam.

Fulfillment:
1 Kings 16:12: “Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha,
according to the word of Yahweh which he had spoken to Baasha
by the prophet Jehu.”

Prophecy:
Joshua 6:26: “Whoso rebuilds Jericho, let the foundation stone cost
him his first-born, and the setting up of the gates his youngest.”

Fulfillment:
1 Kings 16:34: Hiel rebuilds Jericho: “At the cost of the first-born
Abiram did he lay the foundation, and at the cost of his youngest
Segub did he set up the gates, according to the word of Yahweh
spoken by Joshua the son of Nun.”

Prophecy:
1 Kings 22:17: Micaiah ben Imlah: Israel will be scattered and
without shepherds; let every man return to his house in peace.

Fulfillment:
1 Kings 22:35f: (without being specially pointed out by the
Deuteronomist) Ahab succumbs to his wound. Every man to his
house!

Prophecy:
1 Kings 21:21f: Elijah’s prophecy of doom against Ahab and his
house.

Fulfillment:
1 Kings 21:27-29: Because Ahab humbled himself at the word of
judgment, it will only overtake his son.

Prophecy:
2 Kings: Elijah: Ahaziah of Judah will not recover; he must die.

Fulfillment:
2 Kings 1:17: Ahaziah died “according to the word of Yahweh that Elijah had spoken.”

Prophecy:
2 Kings 21:10ff: Unknown prophets: Because of the sins of Manasseh evil will come upon Jerusalem, “such that whoever hears of it, both his ears shall tingle.”

Fulfillment:
2 Kings 24:2: Yahweh summons the Chaldeans, etc., against Judah, “according to the word of Yahweh which he had spoken by his servants the prophets.” 2 Kings 23:26 is also important: in spite of Josiah’s reform Yahweh does not leave off his great wrath. Because of Manasseh’s provocations, Yahweh had resolved to destroy Judah as well.

Prophecy:
2 Kings 22:15ff: Huldah: Josiah will be gathered to his fathers and not see the evil that comes upon Jerusalem.

Fulfillment:
2 Kings 23:30: The body of Josiah, who had fallen at Megiddo, is brought to Jerusalem and buried there.179

This prophecy and fulfillment theological and literary framework is vital to the way the Deuteronomist structures Kings. It reaches the apex of its power in 1 Kings 13 when it spans from 1 Kings 13 to 2 Kings 23. There are a couple of observations related to the importance of 1 Kings 13 in this structure:

1. The prophecy of the man of God from Judah in 1 Kings 13 reaches back to 2 Samuel 7:13 when it refers to the fact that it will be one from the house of David who will desecrate Jeroboam’s altar.

2. The prophecy in 1 Kings 13 reaches to 2 Kings 23, the longest span between any prophecy and fulfillment, when one from the house of David actually desecrates the altar.

179 Ibid., 78-81.
Thus, as has been noted earlier, 1 Kings 13 is vital in its reach as it functions to bring theological and literary structure and unity to Kings. Regarding 1 Kings 13’s function within this prophecy/fulfillment scheme, Cogan asserts,

Because of the Deuteronomistic affinity with the prophets as forewarners of YHWH’s judgment (cr. 2 Kgs 17:13). Dtr incorporated prophetic tales into his discourse on Israel’s history, the present one serving him in his criticism of Jeroboam. Thus, rather than being “secondary . . . perhaps lined with Amos’ appearance in Bethel” (Eissfeldt 1965, 290) or “post Deuteronomistic” (Jepsen 1971), the tale of the man of God “fits admirably into the larger scheme of prophecy and fulfillment observable throughout the Deuteronomistic History” (Lemke 1976, 317 [for whom 1 Kgs 13 is nevertheless an insertion]; cf. Knoppers 1994, 50-64).180

The Sins of Jeroboam

1 Kings 13:32-34 asserts that in spite of prophetic warnings and signs, Jeroboam remained recalcitrant in his practice of appointing priests for the shrines from the ranks of the people and he ordained as priests of the shrines any who so desired. After Jeroboam established his wicked cult in 1 Kings 12:25-33, a man of God from Judah announced a word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel and, by extension, against all the cult places in the towns of Samaria, but in the face of these warnings accompanied by miraculous signs, Jeroboam did not repent, setting in motion a litany of cultic sins by the kings of Israel that ultimately led to Israel’s exile. The kings of Israel “did what was displeasing to the LORD and followed in the ways of Jeroboam and the sins which he caused Israel

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180 Cogan, 1 Kings, 375.
to commit.” These sins of Jeroboam are mentioned repeatedly in connection with the following Israelite kings:

Nadab 1 Kings 15:26
Baasha 1 Kings 15:34; 16:2
Zimri 1 Kings 16:19
Omri I Kings 16:26
Ahab 1 Kings 16:31
Ahaziah 1 Kings 22:53
Jehoram 2 Kings 3:3
Jehu 2 Kings 10:29, 31
Jehoahaz 2 Kings 13:2, 6
Jehoash 2 Kings 13:11
Jeroboam (son of Joash) 2 Kings 14:24
Zechariah 2 Kings 15:9
Menahem 2 Kings 15:18
Pekahiah 2 Kings 15:24
Pekah 2 Kings 15:28
Israel (in general) 2 Kings 17:21-22; 23:15

The influence of the sins of Jeroboam, from which he would not turn in 1 Kings 13, extends from 1 Kings 13 to 2 Kings 17.\(^1\) Over and over again, the text states that

\[^1\] Although I disagree with Mullen on the occasion of the redaction of the Deuteronomistic History, I agree with him that that the “sins” of the founder of the northern kingdom constitute an important functional and interpretive component of the structure of the accounts of the rulers of Israel and Judah.” E. Theodore Mullen, Jr., “The Sins of Jeroboam: A Redactional Assessment,” *CBQ* 49 (1987): 212-232.
these kings did not turn from the sins of Jeroboam. These royal sins persisted until Israel was deported from their land to Assyria in 2 Kings 17. But 2 Kings 17 is not the terminating point of the sins of Jeroboam. While the royal throne of Israel was permanently cut off and the people were exiled, the sins of Jeroboam continue until 2 Kings 23:15 when Josiah destroys Jeroboam’s cult: “As for the altar in Bethel [and] the shrine made by Jeroboam son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin—that altar, too, and the shrine as well, he tore down. He burned down the shrine and beat it to dust, and he burned the sacred post.” Thus, the sins of Jeroboam extend to the Israelite exile, but beyond there to Josiah’s destruction of the Bethel altar and all the cult places in the towns of Samaria. The sins of Jeroboam, then, frame the narrative from 1 Kings 13 to 2 Kings 23.  

Samuel A. Meier, focusing on the three dynasties which make up this list of Israelite kings explains,

A paradigmatic way of looking at history, where patterns repeat with variations but with consistency, is one of the sinews that hold together the grand history that stretches from Joshua through 2 Kings. The Deuteronomistic History depends upon a paradigmatic view of history, and it is precisely prophets who are most visible in focusing this subject. When the northern kingdom of Israel witnessed a succession of dynasties, one replacing another in a series of bloody coups, the prophets articulated a common theme that bound these events together. According to the book of 1 Kings, each of the dynasties founded by Jeroboam, Baasha, and Omri provoked a prophetic reaction that was formulated with similar words in each case. The reader of the Dtr history consequently hears an echo through time, as events unfold with a clear affirmation of déjà-vu.

See Meier’s table on page 171 for how the Deuteronomist relates the dynasties of Baash and Omri to “the house of Jeroboam” Samuel A. Meier, *Themes and Transformations in the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 170-171.
Comparing the prophecy and fulfillment motif with the sins of Jeroboam, it seems that this section of the deuteronomistic history is framed by the power of the word of the LORD in its defeat of the Jeroboam’s cultic sin.

“Two Nations Under God”

Better than anyone else, Gary Knoppers, in his second volume of Two Nations Under God which focuses on The Reign of Jeroboam, the Fall of Israel, and the Reign of Josiah, shows the importance of 1 Kings 13 within the larger literary purpose of the Kings narrative that extends from Jeroboam to Josiah. In what follows, I will summarize many of the important points in his monograph which illuminate the significance of 1 Kings 13 to the larger narrative of Kings, especially as it relates to Josiah’s reform. In order to understand Knopper’s view of the significance of 1 Kings 13’s part in the larger narrative, it will prove helpful to identify germane points regarding his perspective on the setting and purpose of Kings from the divided monarchy to the renewal under Josiah. What follows are several points which capture the main ideas of Knoppers’ work. These clarifications are necessary for a better understanding of his perspective on 1 Kings 13:

- The Deuteronomist uses events in the early divided monarchy to frame the history of Israel and Judah. Indeed, “Already, in narrating the reigns of the united monarchy’s last king and northern Israel’s first king, the Deuteronomist proleptically sets the agenda for Judah’s decline, Israel’s

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184 Ibid., 1.
ruin and their salvation.” The writings in Kings which focus on the early days of the united monarchy and the divided monarchy are constructed in light of the decisive acts of Josiah in destroying shrines and altars outside of the Jerusalem temple and cult. Read retrospectively, these early narratives demonstrate the ideal relationship between monarchy and temple and they show how Josiah’s acts were justified in light of the sins of Israel’s monarchy from the beginning.\footnote{Ibid., 12, 215.}

- The period that best fits the composition of Kings is the late preexilic period. For example, there is a disproportionate focus on the northern kingdom of Israel and a major concern with Israelite-Judahite relations.\footnote{Ibid., 71, 232, 235-236}
  It is not an exilic creation.

- The sins of Jeroboam did not cease with the Assyrian exile; they persisted among those who inhabited the land of Israel.

- The author views the state sponsored cults at Bethel and Dan as un-Israelite. It is not the existence of Israel that is wicked; it is the presence of these altars and shrines that causes their guilt.\footnote{Ibid., 2, 229-230, 239.}

- The author has a continuing preoccupation with Israel. The immense literary effort involved in writing the history of Israel at least a century after the Assyrian exile proves this point.\footnote{Ibid., 15.}

- The Deuteronomist distinguishes the fate of Israel’s monarchy and the fate of the cult. Granted, the monarchy leads Israel into exile because it follows in the cultic sins of Jeroboam, but the cultic sins continue after the termination of the monarchy.\footnote{Ibid., 15.} Repentance and cultic reform are necessary even after the exile. “Since, in fact, the destiny of Israel was contingent upon its stance toward the Jerusalem temple, the fall of Israel demonstrates the centrality of the Jerusalem temple to the destiny of all

\footnote{Ibid., 67, 239.}

\footnote{Ibid., 67, 69.}
who remain.” But this fall did not end the LORD’s concern for Israel; her wellbeing was still contingent on her attitude toward the Jerusalem cult.\textsuperscript{191}

- The Deuteronomist synchronizes the histories of Israel and Judah because he views them as two nations disunited by the LORD’s promises to David and Jeroboam but united by a single cult. This point of view prepares the way for justifying Josiah’s campaigns in the south and the north.\textsuperscript{192}

- “The nation of Israel is finished, but its people, land and cult are not. The very trouble foreign settlers experience in worshiping their own gods, courtesy of marauding lions, implies that YHWH has not rescinded his claim to the land of Israel (2 Kings 17:25).”\textsuperscript{193}

Thus, the Deuteronomist wrote not in the time of the exile or after but during the reign of Josiah. Relevant to this time, he uses the events of the united monarchy and early divided monarchy to set the trajectory of Israel and Judah’s history, to provide a basis from which to interpret and judge that history and to create a picture of the ideal relationship between the monarchy and the temple. In so doing, he makes sense out of Josiah’s reforming work in both the South and the North. In addition, the Deuteronomist shows that, at the time of Josiah, the LORD is still interested in the northern land, people and cult. The northern kingdom’s welfare is vitally connected to the condition of the monarchy and cult in the southern kingdom and to her relationship to the southern king, temple and nation.

With this understanding of the larger literary purpose of the united and divided monarchies material in Kings, we will look at how Knoppers fits 1 Kings 13 within this

\textsuperscript{191} Ibid., 71.
\textsuperscript{192} Ibid., 237.
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid., 240.
narrative program. First, the Deuteronomist uses 1 Kings 12:26-14:18, which contains the early events of the divided monarchy, to frame the history of both Judah and Israel and to justify the fall of Israel and the reforms of Josiah two and three years hundred years later.\textsuperscript{194} Thus, 1 Kings 13, which is at the center of 1 Kings 12:26-14:18, “functions as an \textit{apologia} for the Josianic reform, elucidating his imperial program and marshalling historical support.”\textsuperscript{195} “Retribution only comes, as the man of God predicted, with the reforms of Josiah of Judah.”\textsuperscript{196}

Second, one might think that 1 Kings 13 is no longer relevant and necessary after the fall of Israel. On the contrary, “the renascence of the Bethel cultus after the Assyrian exile renders the prophecies of the man of God and the Bethel prophet about the Bethel cultus and the northern sanctuaries more probable than ever (1 Kgs 13:2, 32).”\textsuperscript{197} In fact, the revival of Jeroboam’s cult (2 Kings 17:23-33), “ironically (re)creates the conditions under which the ancient prophecies of the man of God from Judah (1 Kgs 13:2) and the old prophet from Bethel (1 Kgs 13:31-32) can be realized.”\textsuperscript{198}

In order to emphasize the connection between the cultus in the northern kingdom between the times before and after the exile, “the Deuteronomist narrows the target of 1 Kings 13 to the Bethel altar, the high places and their illegitimate priests. Thus, “by

\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., 2, 46, 69, 71, 203.
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid., 8, 71, 245.
\textsuperscript{196} Ibid., 71.
\textsuperscript{197} Ibid., 9, 69.
\textsuperscript{198} Ibid., 240.
narrowing the issue he establishes a continuity in northern religious practice despite
Israel’s exile, extending to the time of Josiah. The triumph of the divine word in the lives
of southern and northern prophets points toward the triumph of the divine word in the
reign of Josiah.”199 “Having documented the revival of Jeroboam’s cult in the wake of
the Assyrian exile, the Deuteronomist can explain Josiah’s decimation of the Bethel altar,
his extirpation of the Samarian shrines, and his slaughter of priests by recourse to ancient
prophecy (2 kgs 23:15-20).”200

Third, the way the Deuteronomist develops the motifs within 1 Kings 13 reveals
his larger purpose. Rather than violating the motifs within the chapter, the
Deuteronomist actually develops and deploys in new ways the motifs for his larger
narrative purposes.

The Deuteronomist plays on the series of sudden reversals depicted
within his sources to underscore the ultimate demise of the Bethel
sanctuary. No sooner has Jeroboam established the cults at Bethel
and Dan than he witnesses both a prophetic repudiation of the
Bethel cultus and a prophetic pledge of Josianic retribution. The
Deuteronomist embellishes older prophetic legends with a view to
the larger aims of his work.201

There is another example of how the Deuteronomist develops motifs already
present within the chapter. When Josiah leaves the prophets’ bones untouched but
destroyes all the northern high places (2 Kings 13:19), he realizes the prophecies of both
the northern and southern prophets. “In word and in action, in life and in death, the man

199 Ibid., 46.
200 Ibid., 245.
201 Ibid., 46.
of God from Judah and the prophet from Bethel ultimately testify to the same truth.” In this way, and especially in the case of 1 Kings 13, the Deuteronomist’s method is to reuse the tradition so that it speaks with a new voice. “The *traditio* becomes a new *tradtum*. Not only are Josiah’s actions consistent in both South and North, but his northern iconoclasm comports with prophetic tradition.”

Fourth, 1 Kings 13 is used to show how Israel’s election is bound up in its relationship to Judah.

The coherence between an age-old prophecy and its fulfillment approximately three centuries later involves human characters, but is not reducible to them. The deity continues to be active in the former northern kingdom, employing Josiah as his instrument. Josiah’s cultic initiatives also have political ramifications. By negation Josiah’s reforms reaffirm Israel’s election. If Jeroboam’s enfranchisement of a cultus at Bethel (and Dan) violates the exclusive claims of the Jerusalem temple, Josiah’s abolition of the Bethel cultus reestablishes Jerusalem’s exclusive status. Josiah’s success manifests the deity’s reassertion of sovereignty over land, history and people.

Israel’s election and Josiah’s part in affirming Israel’s election are further affirmed by the old prophet’s words and actions in relationship to the man of God from Judah, along with Josiah’s relationship to the old prophet’s prescience.

The attention the Deuteronomist accords to the Bethel prophet marks a shift from the focus of 1 Kings 13, the oracle of the man of God against the Bethel altar, to a sub-theme within 1 Kings 13, the instructions and asseverations of the Bethel prophet (1 Kgs 13:27-32) . . . The reverence with which the men of the town treat the

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202 Ibid., 63.
203 Ibid., 204.
204 Ibid., 209.
bones of both the man of God from Judah and the prophet from Samaria signals the beginning of this focus on the Bethel prophet (2 Kings 23:18). The Bethel prophet is responsible for this peculiar burial arrangement . . . 2 Kgs 23:18 conveys that not only the Judahite man of God, but also the Bethel prophet was prescient. The Bethel prophet’s premonition that the fate of his bones would only be secure if he linked his fate with that of the man of God turns out to be correct. 205

Thus, as the fate of the prophet’s bones is connected to the fate of the bones of the man of God, so the election of Israel is bound up in the success of Josiah’s reforms. Although Josiah’s reforms do not establish Israel’s election, they reaffirm the northern kingdom’s election.

Summary

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate 1 Kings 13’s vital function within its immediate context, the Jeroboam narrative, and its larger context, the agenda of Deuteronomist within Kings. For its more immediate context, we focused on Cohn’s article which argues that the Jeroboam narrative pivots upon the reversals of 1 Kings 13. Jeroboam should have taken warning when he observed what happened to the man of God, but he didn’t. For its larger context, we revisited prophecy and fulfillment as a vital structural component in Kings, followed the development of “the sins of Jeroboam” theme from 1 Kings 13 to 2 Kings 17 and beyond to 2 Kings 23 and unpacked the “two

205 Ibid., 210. In Knoppers view, “the Deuteronomist engineers this shift to legitimate Josiah’s campaign against the northern high places and his massacre of their priests.” Earlier I have argued that the old prophet’s instructions regarding the bones of the man of God from Judah and his own bones are a vital part of the pre-deuteronomistic text. This is another example of the Deuteronomist reading out of the tradition and emphasizing what is already truly present in the story.
nations under God” idea in Kings as it relates to 1 Kings 13, using Knoppers’ work in 
*Two Nations Under God*.

It appears that there is one Word of God for two nations, one nation is elect while 
the other is spared from destruction through its connection to the elect. In the next 
chapter, we will look at 1 Kings 13 in its canonical and theological setting by focusing on 
Karl Barth’s exegesis of 1 Kings 13 in *Church Dogmatics, II.2: The Doctrine of God*, 
“The Election of the Individual.”
CHAPTER 4:

KARL BARTH’S THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF 1 KINGS 13

Hans Urs von Balthasar described part two of volume two of Barth’s *Church Dogmatics* as “the most magnificent, unified and well-grounded section of the whole work. Written with the greatest love, it is the heartbeat of his whole theology.”²⁰⁶ In Volume II, Part 2 of *Church Dogmatics*, Karl Barth turns his attention to the doctrine of the election of God.²⁰⁷ The following few sentences summarize briefly the four sections 32 through 35 of Barth’s exposition of the doctrine of election: (1) The beginning of Barth’s exposition of the doctrine of election, section 32, is taken up with correctly orienting the reader to the doctrine. Barth explains that “The doctrine of election is the sum of the Gospel because of all words that can be said or heard it is the best: that God elects man; that God is for man too the One who loves in freedom.”²⁰⁸ (2) Following this orientation to the doctrine, in section 33 Barth moves on to the election of Jesus Christ, who, for Barth, is the both the electing God and elected man.²⁰⁹ (3) In section 34, which


²⁰⁸ Ibid., 1 (3).

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 108- 111 (103-106).
is taken up with the election of the community, Barth speaks of one community, made up of Israel and the Church. Through this one community “Jesus Christ is to be attested to the whole world and the whole world summoned to faith in Jesus Christ.”²¹⁰ In section 35, which focuses on the election of the individual, Barth begins to “consider in greater detail the witness to Christ in its first and basic form as prophecy and announcement; the witness to Christ in the Old Testament.”²¹¹ In his comments on the election of the individual, Barth considered this Old Testament witness to Christ in three movements: prior to the monarchy, at the initial stages of the monarchy and at the division of the monarchy in the story of 1 Kings 13. We now turn our attention to these three movements.

**Setting 1 Kings 13 within its Old Testament Narrative**

*Genesis Narratives*

First, in the section addressing the movement prior to the monarchy, Barth initiates and sets the direction of his survey with Cain and Abel. Abel is elect and Cain is rejected, yet Abel dies and Cain is protected. Thus, “for all the fact that their situations


²¹¹ Ibid., 162 (354). For a more thorough contextualization of Barth within the theological stream of Augustine, Calvin and the Synod of Dort as well as within the flow of his argument in *Church Dogmatics*, see Appendix 2. For a comparison to Schleiermacher’s doctrine of election, see Matthias Gockel, *Barth and Schleiermacher on the Doctrine of Election: A Systematic-Theological Comparison* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006). For a direct comparison between Calvin and Barth on the doctrines of election and Christology see David Gibson, *Exegesis, Election and Christology in Calvin and Barth* (Louisville, KY: T & T Clark, 2009).
are so different and non-interchangeable, Abel and Cain do very largely enough stand for one another in their own place and fashion.”  

Cain and Abel set the trajectory for others in the patriarchal narratives such as Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Rachel and Leah, Joseph and his brothers, Ephraim and Manasseh, and Perez and Serah. Barth concludes his comments on Cain and Abel and the patriarchal tales:

> The tradition could not be clearer as to the continually operative principle of the distinguishing choice; the freedom with which this choice cuts across and contradicts all distinctions that are humanly regulated or planned on the basis of human predilections, and the relativity of the distinctions actually made; the fact that those who are cut off, who are not distinguished by actual choice, are not on that account utterly rejected, but do in their own way remain in a positive relation to the covenant of God. The nearest approach to total rejection is in the case of Judah’s sons, Er and Onan; otherwise it is clear throughout that those who are first condemned are also blessed in their own way, and that in their situation on the left they, too, fulfill a divinely ordained destiny.  

### Leviticus Sacrifices

According to Barth, this individualistic differentiation seems to disappear after the patriarchal period and before the monarchy when the nation as a whole begins to be separated from all peoples of the earth. Yet, the differing choices of Genesis are taken up in the ritual laws of Leviticus. Barth points out how the historical examples of election and rejection are played out in the ritual laws of Leviticus 14 and 16. Leviticus

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212 Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Section 34-35, 163 (355).

213 Ibid., 164 (356).

214 Although he made the point that Israel is set off from the nations, Barth acknowledged that, while the nations are often doomed to destructions, there are those who receive mercy, for example, Ruth, the Egyptians, the Edomites, Rahab, the Gibeonites, etc., Ibid., 164 (356-357).
14 addresses the cleansing of a leper. In this ritual, two clean and living birds are brought to the priest. One bird is killed over running water and its blood is caught in an earthen vessel. The other bird is dipped in the blood of the slain bird. The leper then is sprinkled by the blood of the slain bird while the bloodied, living bird is allowed to fly away. The ritual of Leviticus 16 concerns the Day of Atonement. This ritual involves two goats. One is offered as a sin offering to the Lord; the other “scapegoat,” after the iniquities of the people are ritually placed on his head, is sent into the wilderness. Barth explained the relevancy of these sacrifices to the history of Israel:

At any rate as they are systemized in Lev. 14 and 16 it is obvious that the following form is common to both. Two creatures which are exactly alike in species and value are dealt with in completely different ways. The selection is inscrutable, and that it is really made by God Himself. It is also obvious with what special purpose and meaning these two acts accompany the history of Israel, and to which special moment of this history they refer as sign and testimony of the divine intention. We obviously face the special aspect of this history according to which it is the history of the divisive divine election of this and of that man. What these choices mean, or what it is to which the whole history of Israel points as a history of such choices is attested by these particular rites, the witness being given a fixed and permanent form by the detailed legal regulations.215

Next, Barth focused on the meaning of Leviticus 14 and 16 separately and, then, together, for, while they are similar, they signify different things and in signifying different things the fullness of what they mean can only be understood together. Barth first explained the meaning of Leviticus 16. He connects his explanation with the narrative in Genesis:

215 Ibid., 165 (357-358).
There have to be two creatures and two men, to whom the one thing intended and to be represented by both distributes itself as a duality. Therefore in the picture, the ritual of the Day of Atonement, the one usable creature is accompanied by a second and unusable. Or rather it is accompanied by a creature that is solemnly used in its very unusability. The death of the one, which is, in fact, full of grace and salvation, is accompanied by the life of the other, which is, in fact, the essence of desolation, indeed of death itself . . . It is the image of the non-elect as they (Cain, Ishmael, Esau) stand apart from the elect; the embodiment of man as he is in and of himself, as he is even now without the grace of election; the demonstration of what is the sole possibility and future of this man. Yet we must observe that the second goat is also ‘placed before the Lord,’ that the treatment meted out to him and the tragic record of his unusability also form an integral part of the sign and testimony set up on the day of Atonement. Cain is just as indispensable as Abel, and Ishmael as Isaac. For the grace which makes an elect man of the first can be seen only from the second, the non-elect, as in a mirror that from which he was taken, and who and what the God is who has delivered him from it.  

It takes two creatures to communicate the one reality, the reality of the elected and rejected together. Yet more is necessary. Another picture is required as expressed in the sacrifices of Leviticus 14:

The ceremony described in Lev. 14 obviously runs in exactly the opposite direction . . . The treatment of the first bird speaks of this necessary presupposition of his purification. The bird is slain, its blood is shed and then made ready for what follows, as in the case of the first goat in Lev. 16. But this time everything really depends on what follows, i.e., the purpose for which this death and blood shedding are used and which they serve, namely, that the second, surviving bird is dipped in the blood of the first, together with the prescribed articles of which at least the cedar-wood and the hyssop, signifying the largest and the smallest things, together exhibit the totality of the object purified. The healed leper is sprinkled seven times with this blood, while simultaneously the second bird is allowed to fly away ‘into the open field,’ i.e., across

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216 Ibid., 167-168 (359-360).
the surface of the field, to freedom. Thanks to the fact that the first bird has yielded its life and blood for the purification of the second bird, the latter is actually pure, and freedom may and must be given it—and when the healed leper is sprinkled with the same blood, he is told that he is now removed from the realm of divine wrath, and is once more a free member of the congregation.  

At this point it is necessary for Barth to combine the two pictures of election, history and sacrifice to give the full meaning of these chapters:

The recipient of the fruit of election is obviously the non-elect. How can we fail to see that Cain and Ishmael and Esau are not given yet another right than that which is remotely visible in Lev. 16? They are witnesses to the resurrection reflected in Lev. 14. The promise addressed to the men on the right hand is manifestly fulfilled in those on the left. The one exalted by God through his election is humbled unto death in order that the one humbled by God through his rejection may be exalted. The humbled is not there merely as a dark shadow to emphasize the light in which the exalted stands... He dies that the other may rise and live. Where then, in the mirror of Lev. 14, in the picture of the second bird springing to freedom from the blood of the first, is there even the remotest appearance of any unrighteousness of God towards the non-elect? If, according to Lev. 16, the non-elect, those who are separated and rejected, stand in the shadows in order that the grace of God may illumine and continue to illumine the elect, we are also taught by Lev. 14 that it is into the realm of Azazel that the light of God’s grace is poured and streams abroad. Let us gratefully know ourselves to be elect in the picture of the first goat of Lev. 16—grateful that we are accepted to sacrifice ourselves, grateful that we may suffer the saving judgment of the wrath of God, which is the wrath of His love, as only the elect can and may do! But let us with equal gratitude recognize ourselves as the non-elect in the picture of the second bird of Lev. 14—grateful because there is ordained for us the life for whose painful birth the other is elected, the resurrection for whose sake the elect must go to his death!  

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217 Ibid. 168 (360).

218 Ibid., 169 (361)
Following in the Christian tradition and exercising his own faith, Barth saw within Leviticus 14 and 16 types of Jesus Christ. As in Leviticus 14, like the first bird, Jesus Christ "steps into the place of the leper." He becomes the leper and dies the death without which the leper cannot be purified. But he "is also the cured leper, the second bird lifting itself to freedom."  

219 “For—slain and bathed in His own shed blood—He leaves death behind Him in the revelation and proclamation of the complete righteousness and purity of those for whom He has died.”  

220 As in Leviticus 16, Jesus is the chosen, blameless, and spotless Lamb of God foreordained before the foundation of the world to shed his precious blood, but he is also the rejected one who is sent out of the camp into the wilderness bearing the sins of many.  

What is true of the rituals can also be said of the Genesis narratives. Jesus is “both the Elect of God and the Rejected of God, rejected because He is elect and elect in his rejection.”  

222 If this is true of the exegesis of the New Testament, then it must be true of the Old Testament elections and we must regard them as prophecy of Christ “even in their striking duality.”  

223 Referring to the Genesis election dualities, Barth explained:

None simply repeats the witness of the others. The historical multiformity of the individual elect and non-elect, of those placed on the right and those on the left, cannot be ignored, and no sound exegesis can afford to ignore it. But this multiformity of historical

219 Ibid., 173 (365)  
220 Ibid., 173 (365).  
221 Ibid.  
222 Ibid., 173 (366).  
223 Ibid.
appearances is best observed and maintained if here too the final word in exegesis is actually the name of Jesus Christ, if He is understood as the individual in whom we recover both the unity of that which they all commonly attest, and that which is the peculiar individuality of each.\textsuperscript{224}

\textit{Saul and David – the Beginning of Israel’s Monarchy}

Second, in the next movement, Barth turned to Saul and David at the beginning of Israel’s monarchy. Saul is the rejected king who bears the marks of the elected. David is the elected king whose sins are worse than the rejected king. Here again we have the four-fold picture of rejection and election: the rejected one shows signs of election and the elected one appears worse than the rejected.

The rejected monarchy of Saul is ultimately manifested in the kingship of Samaria and the northern kingdom; the elected monarchy of David is played out in Jerusalem in the southern kingdom. The seeming irrelevance of the these stories for the post-exilic communities, their blatant honesty concerning the sins of the elected king(s) and their placement in the Hebrew Bible as “nebiim” or prophecy proved for Barth that these stories were words of prophecy looking beyond themselves. For the Christian exegete, they are prophecies of Jesus Christ. “The fact that this king takes several forms—at least two, or more precisely four in this case too—and that these forms cannot be reduced to any common denominator, and are full of inner contradictions, characterizes them as prophetic figures in distinction from their fulfillment actualized in the person of Jesus

\textsuperscript{224} Ibid.
Christ.” The four-fold witness of Saul and David finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. This four-fold picture is merged together into one complexity. “Continually, the picture of the elect king merges into that of the rejected.” And “we cannot forget the rejected king in the elect.” “If Saul’s portrait does not lack the reflection of the glory of grace, neither do the portraits of David and Solomon lack the shadows of the divine judgment of wrath.”

(Jesus Christ’s) kingdom is complete in both aspects, and that is the secret of the intrusively positive element in the portrait of Saul and of the intrusively negative element in the portrait of David. They are both one in Him, as in the One who is subject to whom their stories points—the one true King of Israel in the same peculiar sequence, in the same internal contradiction which characterizes each, and in the same relationship of the overcoming of the one by the other in which they stand to one another in the Old Testament.

The pattern here is one of complexity finding its unity in Jesus Christ. There is the rejected individual as opposed to the elected individual. There is the elected element within the rejected individual and the rejected element within the elected individual. This four-fold complexity is united in the one person Jesus Christ, the Elected One and the Rejected One. In Jesus Christ the elected one is elected and the rejected one’s rejection has been rejected, and in Jesus Christ the elected and the rejected are one. Since rejection

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225 Ibid., 196 (389).
226 Ibid., 198 (391).
227 Ibid., 199 (392).
228 Ibid.
229 Ibid.
is a nothing, a void, a negation of election, then election is the only thing that is lasting and real.

**Barth’s Exegesis of 1 Kings 13**

Third, in the final movement of this section, Barth illustrates the differentiating election of God using the variegated story of 1 Kings 13. At this point, it is important to note that all we have said so far comes to bear on Barth’s use of 1 Kings 13. While attempting to allow the text to speak with its own voice, he reads this story within the larger canonical narrative of election and rejection. For him this narrative functions as a window into the text.

Barth identifies the theme of the text as the “manner in which the man of God and the prophet belong together, do not belong together, and eventually and finally do belong together; and how this same is true of Judah and Israel.”230 The man of God from the southern kingdom of Judah is the elect one from the elect kingdom; the prophet from the northern kingdom of Israel is the rejected one from the rejected kingdom. Within Barth’s interpretation of the function of the man of God and the prophet his four-fold analysis of election and rejection come into play; that is, the elect shows signs of rejection and the rejected shows signs of election.

First, Barth looks at the man of God whom he connects with the elect side of things: Judah, Jerusalem, Josiah and the Davidic Monarchy. “The double-picture on the

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230 Ibid., 200 (393).
right is that of the man of Judah, with the figure of Josiah at a distance behind him: authentic, divinely commissioned prophecy, as a representative of the authentic.”231 For Barth, the authentic is “the Davidic Monarchy and kingdom as the abode and bearer of authentic divine prophecy.”232 Barth explains that this double picture manifests itself in the man of God’s positive aspects: (1) his dramatic approach and confrontation with Jeroboam, (2) his refusal to dine with the king and (3) his initial refusal to go home and eat some food with the old prophet. God confirms the reality of the prophet’s authentic election and witness: (1) Jeroboam’s hand withers when raised against the prophet, (2) the altar at Bethel cracks as a sign of a worse fate and (3) the worse fate ultimately follows the sign. Also, God confirms the legitimacy and election of the prophet when, soon after the prophet ceases to live according to that which he truly is, the lion of Judah kills him but does not devour him. His body is preserved and buried. Admittedly, in a foreign grave, but it is buried properly with honor. Even later when judgment breaks out against Bethel, the bones of the man are providentially spared. Barth concludes his exposition on the positive aspects of the prophet:

His bones at least are preserved from destruction. No genuine man of God, however serious his trespass, stands finally under any other sign. Neither Jerusalem, nor Judah—in spite of their sins! His remains are preserved. The stock of David, hewn down to the ground, is preserved. For the grace of God cannot weaken, the covenant of peace cannot fail. That grave in Bethel is the powerful sign of this grace and covenant.233

231 Ibid., 205 (398).
232 Ibid.
233 Ibid., 205-206 (399).
But there is a negative aspect to this elect man of God. His basic mistake is a failure to take the true Word of God which he has heard and balance it against a false word of God. In his failure, he betrays the whole cause bringing Judah and Jerusalem, and correspondingly the kingdom of David, with him into tolerance, compromise, and ultimately, disobedience. In the many kings that follow, Jerusalem and Judah will go the way of this prophet as they resist Isaiah, Micah and Jeremiah who will proclaim judgment on them. Eventually, although their commission will not be taken from them, the lion of Judah will turn on Judah and they will be buried in foreign graves. This is the negative aspect of the picture on the right.

Second, there is the picture on the left of the prophet who is the representative of the dark Kingdom: Israel, Bethel, and Jeroboam who is Saul redivivus. This is the rejected prophet of the rejected kingdom. He is an illegitimate professional prophet, representing the Israelite nationalistic Yahweh believing form of Canaanite vitalism, who lies to the man of God in an attempt to compromise and to bring into fellowship the elected southern kingdom with the rejected northern kingdom. Barth explains how deeply evil were the objectives which this prophet represented:

The peculiar sinful element in the sins of Jeroboam and of the northern Israelites as a whole is not that they question the divine judgment and render themselves liable to it, but that in so doing they compromise the house of David, and his people, and the temple in Jerusalem and therefore the promise and hope of Israel. In this way, they attack the very substance of all life in the covenant with God. Formally, the attack seems harmless enough to begin with, but in fact it is fatal from the very outset. And according to 1 K. 13 the instrument of this attack is the prophet of Bethel, the very experienced and therefore all the more dangerous representative
of the evil cause of Samaria. That is why the prophet is the main character on this negative side of the picture to the left.\textsuperscript{234}

This is not the total picture of the left and the prophet. There is a positive aspect to this double picture: (1) In God’s patience, there is a future aspect to the warning given to Jeroboam. A sign is given before the actual judgment; there is time to repent. The Word of God can still be heard and obeyed. (2) Jeroboam’s withered hand is healed. Forgiveness and healing are available to the northern kingdom. (3) Most importantly to the story, the prophet, the real Satan in the story and a theologian of the worst sort, becomes the bearer of the real Word of God. In receiving and speaking the Word of God, he turns from institutional prophecy and becomes the forerunner of Elijah and Elisha. In giving voice to the Word of God, he demonstrates that there is an election and calling for the ungodly also. In the figure of the prophet, God is revealed as the God of Israel; his Law and his promises still stand for them; God is the substance of the covenant of grace between Himself and his people and, as such, the substance of the covenant is indestructible. In the end, the elect suffer the pain of rejection while the rejected inherit the benefits of election:

The lion slays the man of God from Judah, while Jeroboam survives with his healed hand, and the prophet is at least able to meet his end in peace. He, the most guilty, goes free. He is even preserved beyond his death; for together with the bones of the man of God from Judah, his bones are spared and preserved on the day of judgment. That is the light which falls on the picture to the left, the positive aspect which it obviously does not lack.\textsuperscript{235}

\textsuperscript{234} Ibid., 208 (401).

\textsuperscript{235} Ibid., 209-210 (403).
Finally, Barth, in characteristic fashion considers the interconnection and blending of the two pictures to the left and right.

God wills one people of God. He wills Israel, the northern kingdom, for himself. This story occurs just after the division between Rehoboam of the South and Jeroboam of the North. God is seeking to return his people to himself. The separation of the two kingdoms, between the Davidic Monarchy and the Saul redivivus Monarchy, is a separation between what is true and what is false, between the promise of God as a means of salvation and the skill and power of people as the means of salvation. God’s faithfulness is unshaken and his promise continues open to the northern kingdom, who are his people. In fact, in the divided kingdom, monarchy and prophecy become the “authentic occasions for authentic revelations of God, and as such reveal the authentic meaning of the existence of Israel, speaking eloquently of what in all its distinctions is in itself the one will of God for Israel, of what makes divided Israel more than ever His people.”236

Again Barth begins on the right with Judah and the true prophet. The right’s election is established in its mission to speak the Word of God to the left. Judah is under obligation to Israel to speak the Word of God to Israel and not to enter into a compromised fellowship with Israel. Only by speaking the Word of God, which is a word of grace, to Israel does Judah live out its election and only by this word is unity and fellowship possible. But the man of God compromises God’s grace and seeks a lesser

236 Ibid., 210 (403-404).
fellowship, one not based on covenant and promise, with Israel and as such becomes a sign to Israel of their own future outside of God’s promise. But the prophet from the North speaks the Word of God, which inevitably cannot be silenced. What cannot be executed by the true Israel, to its shame and destruction, is now executed by the false Israel, and against the true but obviously on behalf of all Israel. Barth conclude his thoughts on the right:

It should be noted in this conclusion of the story that the superiority of the one side over the other is never abolished, and that there is no retraction of the qualification that the one is the false and the other the true Israel. The man of Judah has not ceased to be the elect, nor has the prophet of Bethel ceased to be the rejected. But in their union as elect and rejected they form together the whole Israel from which the grace of God is not turned away. For the rejected acts on behalf of the elect when he takes over the latter’s mission. And the elected acts on behalf of the rejected when he suffers the latter’s punishment. Similarly, at the end, the rejected acts for the elect by making his own grave a resting-place for the latter. While again the elect acts for the rejected in that the bones of the latter are kept and preserved for his sake, and together the true Israel. It is exactly the same with the distinction and mission of the true Israel. It is betrayed in this way by itself, and yet also honored in this way by God. What better thing can overtake the true Israel than this humiliation and exaltation?237

Next, Barth turns to the left. Israel has cut herself off from the covenant and the promise preserved in Jerusalem, Judah and the Davidic Monarchy. The man of God brings to her a message of judgment. She is rejected, but there is a solidarity between hearing Judah and unhearing Israel; it is the one Word of God addressed from Judah to Israel, an extension of God’s grace from the elect to the rejected. Israel reveals her own rejected state by rejecting the Word of God from the southern man of God. When the

237 Ibid., 213 (406).
man of God himself falls into the orbit of the rejected, it appears that the whole of God’s covenant people will sink into the abyss of common guilt. It is then that the professional prophet becomes the bearer of the Word of God and it is then that the elect man of the South bears the sin of the rejected prophet from the North. The southern man is buried while the northern prophet goes free. In this, the unworthy one represents the worthy one as the bearer of the Word of God. Still yet, the rejected prophet is not complete without the elected man. His mission means nothing without the covenant and the promise of God within Jerusalem, Judah and the Davidic Monarchy. Symbolic of this reality, “the remains of the rejected are to be laid alongside the remains of the elect, Israel alongside of Judah, and not the reverse; just as, when judgment falls, the remains of Israel are to be preserved and protected for the sake of the remains of Judah, and not the reverse.”  

Thus, in the man of God and the prophet of God we see two distinct figures making up one nation under God, distinguishable figures with an inseparable witness to the divine promise. The same is true in the Monarchy; David and Saul are two figures who bear witness to the one true King. The same is also true in the sacrificial system; two goats and two birds each bearing witness to one sacrificial meaning. Thus, the elect and the rejected are necessarily together, each distinguishable from the other but inseparable in the one promise and covenant of God’s grace.

According to Barth, the ultimate meaning of this passage cannot be discovered within the confines of the Old Testament. At the end of the story there is only one grave.

238 Ibid., 215 (408).
“And in it the elect and the rejected, the worthy and the unworthy, the confessional and
the professional prophet, Judah and Israel, Jerusalem and Samaria, in all their unity,
diversity and relatedness, lie finally together in that corruption and decay which is our
last human possibility and expectation.”239 Thus, the message of 1 Kings 13 within its
Old Testament confines is found in Isaiah 40:8: “But the Word of God endures for ever.”
The man of God and prophet are dead, but the Word of God continues. “It may well be
said that this is in fact the beginning and end, the sum and substance, of 1 Kg. 13—that
the Word of God endures through every human standing and falling, falling and standing
on the left hand and on the right.”240 But how does the Word of God remain? How does
the Word of God proclaimed by them remain to all eternity? How is it truly an enduring
Word? For Barth the answer cannot be found if limited to the confines of the Old
Testament, but if Jesus Christ is also seen in the story then the Easter story explains how
the Word of God endures:

But this story, too, does point to one real subject if Jesus Christ is
also seen in it, if at the exact point where this story of the prophets
breaks off a continuation is found in the Easter story. The Word of
God, which abides forever, in our flesh; the man from Bethlehem
in Judah who was also the prophet of Nazareth; the Son of David
who was also the king of the lost and lawless people of the north;
the Elect of God who is also the bearer of the divine rejection; the
One who was slain for the sins of others, which He took upon
Himself, yet to whom there arose a witness, many witnesses, from
the midst of sinners; the One lifted up in whose death all was lost,
but who in His death was the consolation and refuge of all the
lost—the One truly died and was buried, yet He was not forgotten
and finished on the third day, but was raised from the dead by the

239 Ibid., 215 (409).
240 Ibid., 216 (409)
power of God. In this one prophet the two prophets obviously live. As so, too, do the two Israels—the Israels which in our story can finally only die, only be buried, only persist for a time in their bones. They live in the reality and unity in which they never lived in the Old Testament, but could only be attested. They remain in Him, and in Him the Word of God proclaimed by them remains to all eternity.241

Observations Concerning Barth’s Exegesis of 1 Kings 13

There are several observations from Barth’s exegesis of 1 Kings 13 which are relevant for the understanding of this prophetic story specifically and Old Testament theology and exegesis in general.

First, Barth recognizes the existence of sources that underlie that passage. With Simon and many others, Barth acknowledges that “the passage appears to be drawn from another source than its context.”242 It would seem that he understands that the passage originated due to concerns within the prophetic community.

At the very beginning of Barth’s exposition of 1 Kings 13 there is a beautiful example of the interaction between Barth’s interpretation of the story as it is in its canonical form and his use of source criticism to enlighten his understanding of the canonical story. The first thing to notice is that in his extended commentary on the story, he devotes only a few sentences to the source, but the comments that he does make quickly turn to the relevance of the source for his exposition of the 1 Kings 13 narrative.

241 Ibid.
242 Ibid.
He asserts that “the passage appears to be drawn from another source than its context.”

He suggests that the source might be from the Elijah cycle at the beginning of 2 Kings, but most important to his exposition to follow is his observation that “it certainly reflects the thought and judgment about the connexion between the authentic man of God and the professional prophets, and the parallels to the Book of Amos are so remarkable and distinctive that it is not impossible that what we have here—not in form, but in substance—is a fragment of ancient tradition concerning the nature of the Israelite prophet and the relationship between the two kingdoms.” Later in his exegesis, Barth will discuss the problem of the institutional prophet as compared to the authentic man of God. Thus, while source criticism is certainly not prioritized, it is leveraged to shed light on the plain sense meaning of the text.

Second, there seems to be an example of Barth using historical criticism as a window into the text in his exegesis of 1 Kings 13. Albeit, it is a negative example

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243 Ibid., 200 (393).

244 Ibid. I would deny that a primary emphasis in the original source is the “relationship between the two kingdoms.” Rather, according to my findings from Simon in chapter one, I would argue that the main issue is the power of the Word of God. The two kingdoms are the setting of the story regarding the Word of God. Barth himself picks up on this important Word of God theme in his exegesis.

245 Ibid. 200-202, 207, 210 (394-395, 400, 403)

246 Of the accusation that Barth is the declared enemy of the historical critical method, Jüngel writes:

“I am no ‘pneumatic.’ . . . I am no ‘declared enemy of historical criticism.’ ” Barth had no intention of letting the theologians of the historical-critical school pressure him into rejecting historical criticism. On the contrary, he understood himself as a critical theologian throughout his life; in the year before his death, he amiably but firmly rejected Rudolf Smend’s call for a “postcritical interpretation of scripture.” He demurred, without having properly understood the proposal, because of the term “postrcritical.” Similarly, when he took leave
almost illustrating Barth’s use then unuse of historical criticism, but it does illuminate Barth’s consciousness of historical critical methodology. At the end of a paragraph in which he retells the story of the man of God’s encounter with Jeroboam at Bethel, he acknowledges, “Up to this point, we could almost think we are dealing with a rather more circumstantial variant of the encounter which took place at the same place between Amos and Amaziah, the priest of Jeroboam II (Am. 7:10).”\(^{247}\) Barth makes this observation to set up a contrast. In the next paragraph, he continues, “But in 1 K. 13 the encounter between the bearer of this divine utterance and the Caesaropapism of Northern Israel is only the material and presupposition for the real subject.”\(^{248}\) At the beginning of the next paragraph after explaining that Jeroboam is “no more than an introductory figure in the conflict which is depicted,”\(^{249}\) Barth states where the real subject of the passage materializes: “The conflict itself emerges in the third section (vv. 11-19). A new figure is

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of liberal theology, he did not wish to leave historical criticism behind. Instead, he wanted to press on to the real hermeneutical task, “the task of understanding.” This is why he summons up the old doctrine of verbal inspiration, for it had always pointed to the necessity of this task. This is why he demands that historical critics be more critical. At any rate, some kind of criticism of historical criticism itself is necessary, a hermeneutical metacriticism that can direct historical criticism to its proper task. In his dispute with the historical critics of that day, Barth’s theology proves to be very much metacritical theology. This can be seen in his reaction to the charge that he was a “declared enemy of historical criticism.”


\(^{247}\) Ibid., 201 (394).

\(^{248}\) Ibid.

\(^{249}\) Ibid., 202 (394-395).
now introduced. This is an old prophet, dwelling in Bethel.”\(^{250}\) The real conflict, and thus the real subject of the text, occurs between the old prophet, who takes the place of King Jeroboam, and the man of God from Judah. In this instance, we see how Barth leverages a historical critical observation to enlighten a literary nuance in the text.

Third, Barth reads closely the verbal details of the text. One of my favorite instances of word play in Barth’s interpretation of 1 Kings 13 is the various meanings he observes in the old prophet’s assertion to the man of God from Judah: “I am a prophet also as thou art.” (1) In Barth’s original exposition of the text he calls this sentence “ambiguous.” “The ambiguity of his existence as a profession prophet permits him to make this ambiguous statement.”\(^{251}\) Barth recognizes that this statement is representative of “a devilish temptation to accept the Israelite form of Canaanitism (“I am a prophet as thou art.”) as the Israelite way of life, as a possible and legitimate form—within the divine covenant—of the life of the one people of God.”\(^{252}\) This ambiguous prophetic statement becomes a word of hope:

If the saying of the prophet of Bethel: “I am a prophet also as thou art,” was at first only a presumption and a lie, and if the saying, whose falsehood the man of Judah could not only discern, echoed mockingly in his ears upon the fatal road which he now had to travel, yet the same word was filled with consolation and promise in view of the grace of God that triumphed in his weakness. I am a prophet also as thou art. That which upholds both thee and me is independent of thy standing or falling. It is not whether thou and I

\(^{250}\) Ibid.

\(^{251}\) Ibid., 202 (395).

\(^{252}\) Ibid., 208 (401).
are prophets that saves us, but this—God does not cease to give prophets to His people.  

(4) Finally, this ambiguous statement, which is originally coupled with a lie or a deceptive message, becomes a statement that he does indeed deliver an authentic, prophetic Word from God: “And in the case of the prophet of Bethel his own ambiguous word is fulfilled: ‘I am a prophet also as thou art.’ He, the unworthy can now represent the worthy in the proclamation of the Word of God.”

Fourth, Barth pays close attention to the narrative structure of 1 Kings 13, as illustrated by his careful structural analysis of the development of the story:

1. 1 Kings 13:1-5
2. 1 Kings 13:6-10
3. 1 Kings 13:11-19 – First Crisis
4. 1 Kings 13:20-26 – Second Crisis
5. 1 Kings 13:27-32 – Third Crisis
6. 1 Kings 13:33-34 (Provisional Epilogue)
7. 2 Kings 23:15-20 (Real Epilogue)

Fifth, Barth recognizes the pivotal importance of this narrative as it relates to the narrative of Kings as well as the history of Israel. This text is strategic and vital in its revelation of the will of God:

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253 Ibid., 212 (406).
254 Ibid., 214 (407-408).
255 Ibid., 200-2004 (393-397).
The very significant position which is assigned even externally to the story of 1 Kings 13 in relation to the historical record of the Old Testament must not pass unobserved. It comes directly after the account of the disruption under Rehoboam and Jerobaam, and in some sense explains it. But it also constitutes a kind of heading, not only for the whole ensuing history of the two separated kingdoms of Israel. For what is the real subject of the whole ensuing history? For one thing, it is obviously the unity of the will of God for the whole people whom He led out of Egypt, through the wilderness and into the land of Canaan. To this extent it is also the unity of the people itself, of the relatedness of its whole history, of all its tribes and kings and prophets. Then, of course, it is the internal distinction made by the one will of God. Just because these men—the peoples, kings and prophets—on both sides of this relation show themselves to be so incomplete and so helpless on their own account, they become completely authentic occasions for authentic revelations of God, and as such reveal the authentic meaning of the existence of Israel. The fullness of these relations and occasions already emerges, in title-form, in 1 K. 13. We therefore go on to ask how far these two double-pictures belong to one another, and how far they are opposed, not merely mutely but eloquently—speaking of what in all its distinctions is in itself the one will of God for Israel, of that which makes divided Israel more than ever His people.  

For Barth, because of the strategic position of this story, it speaks well beyond itself into the larger historical and theological concerns of Israel. The divided kingdom is leveraged to speak penetratingly and authentically concerning the one will of God for Israel.

Sixth, Barth sees what Simon has observed in his analysis of the prophetic narrative: the primary theme of this text is the Word of God, its enduring and overcoming nature. Barth notes that it is not David who ultimately has the power to unite all Israel.

Ibid., 210 (403-404).
“This power belongs to the Word of God alone.” The following sentences from this paragraph illustrate Barth’s emphasis that this text is a witness to the Word:

1. “It has the commission of the divine Word in respect of Israel.”

2. “The disruption did not mean that the north was released and expelled from the sphere of the Word of God, and therefore from the scope of His grace.”

3. “And the right to existence of these Jews was their message, the Word of God given them for themselves—yet not for themselves alone, but for all Israel.”

4. “It is only by going to the north with this Word that the man of the south can confirm and justify his own election.”

5. “Genuine fellowship between the true and false Israel cannot and will not consist in the conclusion of any peace between them, but in the addressing of the Word of God by the former, as the messenger of God, to the latter.”

6. “But it is also the grace of God in the disruption that His Word is present, that the utterance and the hearing of His Word are not ended but now have a new beginning.”

7. “It is not from a secure elevation, but from the depths of the same distress, sustained by the unmerited grace of God alone, that Judah addresses and necessarily must address Israel by the mouth of its prophets, and must speak to it the one Word, i.e., the Word of God, which is its own support.”

8. “It is just because this other and better fellowship, which is based upon the Word of God and continues in their common guilt, is already present, that the existence of the false Israel now means the serious jeopardising of the true Israel.”

9. “Everything now depends upon the realisation of this fellowship between the two and not another: not any other; not one in which the Word of God is stifled and the common need denied.”

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Ibid., 211 (404-406).
10. “The **Word of God** must be spoken and heard.”

11. “It’s only remaining option is the guilt which certainly binds it to the other, the sin of David which of itself has no power to unite all Israel—the power belongs to the **Word of God** alone—but which can only tear David apart.”

12. “For the **Word of God** cannot be silenced, nor can the common need be denied, even though Israel as a whole now seems to have chosen the false possibility, the rejection of the grace of God.”

13. “For if the lion must and does kill him, he is also saved by the fact that the **Word of God** is not actually silenced, nor the common guilt denied.”

Again, Barth acknowledges that the message of 1 Kings 13 within its Old Testament confines is found in Isaiah 40:8: “But the **Word of God** endures for ever.” For Barth, the **Word of God** spoken in the Old Testament is an enduring and abiding Word. This idea is theologically grounded for Barth in this pivotal 1 Kings 13 prophetic story. The **Word of God** as witnessed in the Old Testament could be said for Barth to be a “Word without end.”

Of course for Barth the **Word of God** is ultimately Jesus Christ. He is the **Word of God**, who abides forever, in our flesh. As such, he is:

- “The man from Bethlehem in Judah who was also the prophet of Nazareth.”

- “The Son of David who was also the king of the lost and lawless people of the north.”

- “The Elect of God who is also the bearer of the divine rejection.”

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258 Ibid., 210-213 (404-406).
• “The One who was slain for the sins of others, which He took upon Himself, yet to whom there arose a witness, many witnesses, from the midst of sinners.”

• “The One lifted up in whose death all was lost, but who in His death was the consolation and refuge of all the lost—this One truly died and was buried, yet He was not forgotten and finished on the third day, but was raised from the dead by the power of God.”

In Jesus Christ:

• The two prophets live in this one Prophet.

• The two Israels live in a reality and unity in which they never lived in the Old Testament.

For Barth this Old Testament story cannot be read as an end in and of itself. As a Christian who possesses another Testament, he reads this story in the light of the coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is not read into this text but he is read out of it as the fulfillment of its prophetic word. Thus, as a prophetic word, it speaks to the meaning and implications of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Again, the Word is an abiding Word because it lives on through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Seventh, Barth uses scripture to interpret scripture. Some of the most obvious examples are:

• He combines three texts to interpret the significance of the lion in 1 Kings 13. For Barth, it is not without significance “that it was a lion which had to execute judgment.” This lion is the Lion of Judah:

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259 Ibid., 216 (409).
260 Ibid.
261 Ibid., 204 (397).
- **Genesis 49:9**: “Judah is a lion’s whelp; on prey, my son, you have grown. He crouches, lies down like a lion, like the king of beasts—who dare rouse him?”

- **Amos 1:1**: “He proclaimed: The LORD roars from Zion, shouts aloud from Jerusalem; and the pastures of the shepherds shall languish, and the summit of Carmel shall wither.”

- **Amos 3:8**: “A lion has roared, who can but fear? My LORD God has spoken, who can but prophesy?”

- He compares the old prophet placing in his own tomb the man of God with Joseph of Arimathea placing in his own tomb the body of Jesus (Matthew 27:59-60).²⁶²

- Stating that the questions that this text raises are questions that cannot be answered within the confines of the Old Testament, he then describes the grave of the old prophet and the man of God as “a grave ‘which indeed appears beautiful outward, but is within full of dead men’s bones, and all uncleanness’” (Matthew 23:27) and explains that “certainly it is a grave of prophets, which as such could be built and garnished, and which obviously was built and garnished, so that much later it was recognized for what it was by Josiah and his people” (Matthew 23:29).²⁶³

- He uses Isaiah 40:8 to make a point from the prophets’ temporality and another point from their grave’s preservation: (1) Since all flesh is like grass that fades away, the prophets too will fade, but (2) their grave will be preserved indicating that the Word of God endure forever. The prophets die, but the Word of God endures.²⁶⁴

- Although he does not state a specific text, like in the instances above, there are obvious canonical allusions, both Old Testament and New Testament, in the following examples:

  In the very moment when the wrath of God does actually break forth (as it did not before), when the lion of Judah slays and kills—this whole dark kingdom can let itself be represented by the elect of God in the bearing of the punishment of the sin

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²⁶² Ibid., 215 (408).

²⁶³ Ibid., 215 (408-409).

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 215-216 (409).
which is indeed the common sin, but _in concreto_ is primarily its own, the seducer’s sin. It is he who now lies prone upon the road. It is he who must now be buried in a foreign grave. But they go free.  

For one thing, it is obviously the unity of the will of God for the whole people who He let out of Egypt, through the wilderness and into the land of Canaan. To this extent it is also the unity of the people itself, of the relatedness of its whole history, of all its tribes and kings and prophets. Then, of course, it is the internal distinction made by the one will of God. He does indeed will this whole nation. That is, He wills them for Himself; for His service and blessing. He wills, therefore, to sanctify them. But that means that he does not will this sin, but excludes and cuts it off. In other words, in this people He loves His own Son . . .

Barth is reading canonical texts in light of one another without, in my opinion, violating their plain sense meanings. He is reading texts in their wider and narrower contexts simultaneously without transgressing the literal meaning of their closer and farther textual settings.

Eighth, obviously, from what is summarized above, Barth reads 1 Kings 13 within the larger narrative of the Old Testament. He recognizes a larger narrative that has to do with the nature of divine election. When he comes to the story of the man of God and the old prophet he brings this understanding of divine election with him. I will expand on this a bit in the next chapter.

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265 Ibid. 214 (407).

266 Ibid., 210 (403).

Ninth, as seen above in the exposition of his exegesis, Barth works tirelessly to allow the *per se* voice of the story to speak for itself. The literal and literary details of the text are the first and primary focus of his exegesis.\(^{268}\)

With reference to Isaiah, but with implications for the interpretation of the Old Testament outside of Isaiah, Seitz writes in *Word without End: The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness* of the Old Testament’s “*per se*” voice, he speaks of “reciprocal character of the relationship between the two testaments” and he claims that “the Old Testament is not authoritative only where it is referred to in the New Testament, but also when it is deferred to.”\(^{269}\) But what does he means by these descriptions of the Old Testament’s place in the Christian Bible? He explains, “I have attempted to argue, on the basis of the New’s own witness, for a different conception, one that returns the church to hear the witness of the Old as illuminating the New, and not just the reverse, precisely where there is an apparent silence or muting in the New’s reception of the Old. Deference, not critical discontinuity, may be a correct interpretation of the New’s attitude in respect of certain key themes.”\(^{270}\)


\(^{269}\)Christopher R. Seitz, *Word without End*, 222.

\(^{270}\)Ibid., 223-224. It is interesting to note the following observation by Seitz, especially in light of the fact that Simon claims Isaiah 55:11 sums up the theme of 1 Kings 13:
Again, it seems to me that this is what Barth attempts to do as he combines the Old Testament’s own *per se* voice in 1 Kings 13 with the New Testament in order to view the entire horizon of the Christian Bible’s doctrine of election. He reads the text of 1 Kings 13 as laying the foundation, defining the parameters and shaping the meaning of the New Testament doctrine of election. Thus, the New Testament’s election story is written within the trajectory of the Old Testament narrative. Barth is not reading the New Testament back into the Old Testament, he is allowing the *per se* voice of the Old Testament to tell the larger story of election and rejection in Jesus Christ, which in turn informs our understanding of the plain sense meaning of the Old Testament.

Tenth, Barth sees a reciprocal relationship between the reading of the Old Testament and an understanding of the mission and meaning of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection, informs how we read the Old Testament and how we read the Old Testament, in its own voice, informs how we “read” Jesus Christ. Put another way, for Barth Jesus Christ is read in the context of his Israelite history and his Israelite history is read in light of Jesus Christ’s own life.\(^\text{271}\)

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To hear the Old in lectionary pairings with the New means for both preacher and listener an invitation to confront the gospel in all its fullness. As a word of promise, as word of sure confidence, as a word of judgment and exhortation, and as a word of final hope. Old in New, New in Old: the twofold witness of the Christian canon to the work of God in Christ, illumined in its richness and in its claim by the power of the Holy Spirit, who is at the same time the author of the twofold witness and the guarantor that, as Isaiah puts it, inspired by the same Holy Spirit: the “word will not return to me empty, but will accomplish that for which I sent it.” \(^\text{227}\).

\(^\text{271}\) See Barth, *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963), 20-30. An example of the connection which Barth sees between the history of Israel and the history of Jesus Christ follows:

Theology responds to the Word which God has spoken, still speaks and will speak again in the history of Jesus Christ which fulfills the history of Israel. To
In the next chapter, using, secondarily, the work of David Bosworth and, primarily, Karl Barth himself, I will argue for the legitimacy of Barth’s exegesis of 1 Kings 13.

reverse the statement, theology responds to that Word spoken in the history of Israel which reaches its culmination in the history of Jesus Christ. As Israel proceeds toward Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ proceeds out of Israel, so the Gospel of God goes forth.

For the issues surrounding the idea that Jesus was a Jew see the excellent analysis by Katherine Sonderegger, That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew: Karl Barth’s “Doctrine of Israel” (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992).
Several scholars have challenged Barth’s interpretation of 1 Kings 13. For example, Martin Noth’s verdict on Barth’s exegesis is as follows:

When K. Barth sees in the transaction between the man of God and the prophet a dialectical game of a multiple role reversal between ‘the elected’ and ‘the rejected,’ he goes far beyond that which the story really says or can say or even gives to understand in a background sense. It does not at all correspond with the intention of the story to apply the concepts ‘election’ and ‘rejection’ to the two (anonymous) main actors. Also, the fact that according to vv.20b-22 Yhwh makes use of the prophet as proclaimer of his word is to be understood not as an act of ‘election’ according to the Old Testament perspective (in this respect we cannot even speak of as a role reversal in this case). Yhwh is free to use from time to time this or that representative. In the course of the eventful story both main actors, the man of God and the prophet, recognize the ‘rejection’ of Bethel (and the ‘election’ of Jerusalem).\footnote{Martin Noth, \textit{Konige I} BKAT (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1968), 306-307. David Bosworth, “Revisiting Karl Barth’s Exegesis of 1 Kings 13,” Biblical Interpretation, 10.4 (2002), 373.}

Uriel Simon adds that Barth’s “interpretation, meticulously worked out and impressive in its depth and complexity, nevertheless remains in the class of free theological discourse.” Furthermore, it “has no basis in the literal meaning of the biblical
text” and is “an over-interpretation which ascribes to the Writ a conceptual system based barely on associative innuendo.”

This chapter will argue for Barth’s exegesis of 1 Kings 13, not so much every fine point of his interpretation but the larger framework and methodology of his exegesis. It is hoped that this chapter will, at least in some small way, encourage others not to dismiss or write off as “a violation of the intention of the story” or as “an over-interpretation” of Barth’s view of 1 Kings 13, but will be give his exegesis a fresh, careful reading and thoughtful hearing.

The Prophetic Figures in 1 Kings 13 are Parallel to their Respective Kingdoms.

Before allowing Barth to speak in defense of himself, we will begin with a recent direct defense of Barth against Noth and Simon. In “Revisiting Karl Barth’s Exegesis of 1 Kings 13,” David Bosworth takes on the criticisms of Noth, Simon and the like. He claims that “the central thrust of Barth’s interpretation can be supported by comparison with the history of the divided kingdom as told in Kings. The analogy that Barth makes between the prophetic figures and the kingdom from which they come stand up remarkably well.” Bosworth demonstrates how “the relationship between the man of God and the old prophet unfolds in four main stages. These four stages correspond to aspects of the relationship between Judah and Israel.”

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Stage One: At first, the man of God and the old prophet are mutually hostile yet mindful of their kinship. The relationship between Judah and Israel in Kings is a similar mix of hostility and amicability.

Stage Two: The next phase of the relationship between the man of God and the prophet is friendship. The man of God joins the prophet for a meal. The communion is based on the prophet’s lie and cannot stand. Similarly, Jehoshaphat initiates Judah’s alliance with Israel during Ahab’s reign. As the larger, wealthier and more powerful kingdom, Israel takes the lead in the alliance with Judah. Instead of Judah influencing Israel toward more correct worship, Judah is seduced into Baal worship. The alliance seems to imitate the united kingdom, but it lacks two critical elements: the political leadership of the house of David and the centralization of worship in Jerusalem. Like the friendship between the man of God and the prophet, the alliance between the two kingdoms is founded on a lie and cannot stand.

Stage Three: The friendship between the man of God and the prophet ends with reversal. The prophet who lied announces a genuine oracle against the man of God. While Athaliah expands the worship of Baal in Judah, Jehu eliminates it from Israel. The formerly wayward Israel reforms even as the formerly faithful Judah strays into idolatry. The role reversal between the kingdoms mirrors the role reversal between the man of God and the prophet.

Stage Four: The man of God acts on behalf of the prophet by protecting the prophet’s bones when Josiah spares them both for the sake of the man of God. Similarly, by removing the cult of Jeroboam, Josiah eliminates the cause for the North’s destruction.
and lays a firm cultic foundation for a renewal of the united kingdom. Josiah’s activity on behalf of the North mirrors the man of God’s act on behalf of the old prophet’s bones. The salvation and rehabilitation of the North depends on the efforts of the South.\textsuperscript{276}

In spite of Noth and Simon’s objections, it seems that Barth’s association of the man of God with the southern kingdom and the Jerusalem cult and the identification of the old prophet with the northern kingdom and the cult at Bethel hold up under scrutiny; the associations are grounded within the text of Kings. At this point, it is significant that Noth admits that in the course of the eventful story both main actors, whom we have established are representative of their respective kingdoms and cults, recognize the “rejection” of Bethel and the “election” of Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{277} If the man of God and the old prophet can be legitimately identified as symbols of their representative kingdoms and cults, and indeed it does appear that they are representatives of Judah and Israel, then it follows, from Noth’s own acknowledgment, that Bethel is rejected and Jerusalem is elect, that the man of God is elect and the old prophet is rejected. The elect and rejected are ultimately buried together in a single grave. Thus, it seem that, through a holistic reading, that election and rejection as meaningful categories are appropriate to 1 Kings 13, since the chapter is set within the larger narrative of the election of Judah, the Jerusalem cult and the Davidic Monarchy along with the rejection of the northern kingdom’s cult at Bethel and sinful monarchy (although, by virtue of its origination and

\textsuperscript{276} Ibid., 379-381.

\textsuperscript{277} Noth, \textit{Konige}, 307.
connection with the southern kingdom, the northern kingdom is not totally and finally rejected).

**Barth’s Exegetical Methodology in His Own Words**

In *Church Dogmatics II.2: The Doctrine of God* pages 169-171 (362-364) and 195-196 (388-389), Karl Barth lays out the exegetical methodology that he employs beginning with the Genesis Narratives, continuing in Leviticus, proceeding through the beginning of the monarchy and reaching unto 1 Kings 13. The relevant point here is that one cannot talk about Barth’s exegesis of 1 Kings 13 without setting it within his larger exposition of the election of the individual in II.2. Although his exegetical methodology was briefly discussed in the flow of the previous chapter, we will look at it in greater detail in this chapter. For clarity’s sake, it is necessary to summarize some of the content of the previous chapter in order to set in context Barth’s explanation, or possibly better his justification, of his exegetical method.

*The Genesis Narratives and Leviticus Sacrifices Considered Together and Interpretation Defended*

In the Genesis narratives, Barth discovers pairs of the elected and the rejected. There are those who are Elected (with a capital E) but rejected (with a small r) and those who are Rejected but elected. These pairs cannot be understood apart from one another, but must be expressed together in order to be fully comprehended. That is, there is a unity between these Elected and Rejected. What these pairs communicated about the doctrine of election cannot be understood fully unless they are understood together. In
fact, they communicate something about election and rejection that is so large that it
could not be understood within the confines of a single Old Testament individual.

These pairs are:

- Cain and Abel
- Isaac and Ishmael
- Jacob and Esau
- Rachel and Leah
- Joseph and his brothers
- Ephraim and Manasseh
- Perez and Serah

After the Genesis narrative these pairs seem to cease, but what they
communicated about election is taken up again in the two different pair forms in
Leviticus 14 and 16. In Leviticus 16 one goat is elected and the other is set apart in his
non-election. One is usable and the other is used in his unusability. These two are one,
understood fully as a unity in their mirror image. Leviticus 14 runs in a different
direction. The first bird, the elected, is slain so that the second bird, the non-elect, might
be purified and set free. Thus, the healed leper is cleansed and free to return to the
congregation.

It is at this point that Barth combines the pictures present in the Genesis narratives
and the Levitical sacrifices to demonstrate their unity, complexity and simplicity. It is a
robust and rich picture of the Elect and Rejected, which, for Barth bears witness to the
Elected Man and Rejected God. But is he making an incredible exegetical leap? Can his
exegetical methodology ever be justified? Is he truly allowing the Old Testament to speak in its *per se* voice? How does Jesus Christ legitimately factor into this picture?

Here in the *Dogmatics* Barth stops to consider his reading of these Genesis narratives and Levitical sacrifices, as he understands them together as an Old Testament witness to the election of Jesus Christ. Before wading into Barth’s explanation and justification, it might be helpful to list some of the dynamics he employs in his interpretive methodology of these Old Testament witnesses:

1. *Per se* voice: One must read the Old Testament on its own terms listening to its voice. It must be allowed to speak and speak clearly its own message.

2. Unity: Karl Barth argues that these pairs are presented together in the Old Testament, therefore they cannot be understood apart from one another, but together they communicate an inscrutability which cannot be resolved within the confines of the Old Testament.

3. Questions: With these pairs, the Old Testament raises questions which cannot be answered within its own parameters. In this way, it bears witness to a reality outside of itself. It contains complexities, united and mutually defining complexities, which cannot be fully comprehended within the contours of the Old Testament.

4. Faith: One must read these passages with the Apostles as witnesses to Jesus Christ. This is not first and foremost an exegetical move, though in no way does it violate an exegesis of the Old Testament in its own setting or stifle the authentic voice of the Old Testament text, but it is an act of faith. By faith one believes that the truest subject of the Old Testament is Jesus Christ.

5. The Void: If not Jesus Christ, what? If the true subject of these pairs is not Jesus, what is their subject? What do they mean? Is there no meaning, no completion, no answer to the questions they raise? Do they speak into a void? Have they nothing to say?

Again, here Barth takes a break in his exposition of the Old Testament’s witness to the election of the individual to justify his exegesis of the Genesis narratives and
Levitical sacrifices. First, he starts with the Levitical sacrifices. These two pictures, the birds of Leviticus 14 and the goats of Leviticus 16 must be understood together. “Both are concerned with the will and way of God with men, and both affirm that death and life are decreed by God for man; first death, then life.”278 Death speaks to God’s goodness to people as a saving judgment of God. Through this death, people are purified and set free. Life has two meanings: (1) the wretched life of a person who does not deserve this saving death and does not participate in it and (2) the new liberated life of the person who has merited this death and by means of it received salvation. These pictures of death and life cannot be fully understood apart from one another. “Both death and life always refer to the one complete man.”279 This is inscrutable. Death here on behalf of people is an act of love, which purifies and gives life. Who could die such a death which gives life? We do not know such a one. There is no person known to us who totally transcends the realities of death as we know them. What about the life spoken of here? We know of no such life, the life of one who is both cast out into the “wretched realm”280 of Azazel and ultimately transferred into the land of freedom. These pictures transcend the human reality known in the Old Testament. Barth surmises that “this death and life are too superhumanly great to be expected of the Israelites themselves or enjoined upon them.”281

Further, there is another inscrutability here. How can a person both die and live? How

278 Barth, Church Dogmatics, Sections 34-35, 169 (362).
279 Ibid.
280 Ibid.
281 Ibid., 170 (362).
can one God decree a single reality for a person which includes both life and death, not just one or the other but both?

At this point, Barth raises the level of complexity and inscrutability in these Levitical pictures by combining them with the Genesis narrative pairs:

These stories of the elect and rejected, to which these sacrificial rituals are primarily related, do not escape the same duality. Hence it is clear enough that the stories themselves are only witnesses—conformed by the counter-witnesses of the ceremonies; repeated, as it were, in the ceremonies—and that they, too, point beyond themselves. Always in these stories the one figure represents only the elect of God, used by Him, and the other only the rejected of God, not used by Him. But then there are, of course, the intersections, in virtue of which the relationship seems suddenly to be reversed, and suddenly and in spite of everything God reveals Himself to the rejected and unused. This shows how inherently fluid are the testimonies of these stories, so that we are prohibited from too hastily identifying the elect with certain persons, or too hastily identifying the rejected with other persons in the stories. But all the same, even in this fluidity, they are always the stories of two figures, and speak with just the same emphasis as the present passage of what is always the completely different divine treatment of these characters. Cain is not also Abel, nor Jacob Esau, nor Rachel Leah. Yet always in one of the characters God’s election is manifest, as an election which genuinely divides. The stories to which the ceremonies of our passages are related have, therefore, the same provisional character as the ceremonies themselves. And in this way the Old Testament as a whole, in this matter at least, is determined as the witness to a reality of which, even in the Old Testament itself, we can only say positively that it is that which it attests, its true and proper subject.  

Barth concludes that we are thus faced with a twofold enigma in connection with two Old Testament witnesses:

\[282\] Ibid., 170-171 (363).
1. The inscrutability of the death and life of the person to whom both the sacrificial rituals, and the election stories of Genesis upon which they comment, refer.

2. The inscrutability of the unity of this man. Since the commentary in the sacrificial rituals makes it clear in the election stories we are concerned with this one slain and living man, it cannot and does not try to set aside the riddle of either his death and life or of his unity.

According to Barth, this enigma confronts us with a choice between two options:

(1) the solution to these inscrutabilities is an unknown. Possibly the resolution has not yet appeared. But, perhaps, the Old Testament has “no subject at all” or that its testimony “points to a void.” The stories and sacrifices point to nothing at all. There pictures lead to nowhere. There is nothing to see and will never be anything to see. 

(2) the resolution to these inscrutabilities is found in Jesus Christ: “The subject of the Old Testament witness may be accepted as identical with the person of Jesus Christ as it is seen and interpreted and proclaimed by the apostles because He had Himself revealed and represented Himself to them in this way.”

While Barth would argue that the choice is based upon exegesis, he admits that it is not a matter of exegesis alone. Most essentially, “the choice between these two possibilities is not an exegetical question; it is a question of faith. It is therefore, to be distinguished from exegesis. But it is inescapably posed by it; and in the answer to this

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283 Ibid., 171 (363).

284 Ibid.

285 Ibid., 171 (363-364).
question, whatever it may be, exegesis is forced (even in the form of a *non liquet*) to speak its final word.**286**

When the Old Testament speaks in its *per se* voice it raises questions it cannot answer. It communicates inscrutabilities that cannot be resolved within its own confines. At this point is where the faith of the Apostles, based on Jesus Christ’s own understanding of the Old Testament, steps in and answers the question. Jesus Christ is the object of the Old Testament’s inscrutable witness. If not Jesus Christ, what? The void?

*The Beginning of the Monarchy Considered in Connection with the Genesis Narratives and Levitical Rituals and Interpretation Defended*

After this explanation and justification of the methodology he employs to understand the Genesis narratives and Levitical sacrifices together, now Barth turns to the beginning of the monarchy. Saul is the rejected king who bears the marks of the elected. David is the elected king who sins worse than the rejected king. The rejected monarchy of Saul plays itself out most clearly in the kingship of Samaria and the northern kingdom and the elected monarchy of David plays itself out in Jerusalem and the southern kingdom. These monarchies net themselves out in the “historical books” which are classified under *nebiim* in the Hebrew canon. Thus, the historical books were “estimated as prophetic and symbolic words, and could be estimated only in this way in view of their

286 Ibid.
total content.”²²⁷ Typically, Barth raises the questions, “But whom or what could be found prophesied in them? Who or what could be the subject which the community glimpsed or tried to glimpse as it read them?”²²⁸

With this question hanging in the air, Barth turns back to Leviticus 14 and 16 and adds additional questions: “Do these passages have a subject which is still unknown to us, as to the Jewish reader? Or are they void in themselves because they have no subject at all? Or is the New Testament answer to the question both authoritative and valid?”²²⁹

Barth turns to several New Testament texts for the answer. First, he examines Acts 2:25 in which Peter is introducing a quote from Psalm 16:8-11:

I saw the Lord always before me,
For he is at my right so that I will
Not be shaken;
Therefore my heart was glad, and my
Tongue rejoiced;
Moreover my flesh will live in hope.
For you will not abandon my soul to
Hades
Or let your Holy One experience
Corruption.
You made known to me the ways of
Life;
You will make me full of gladness with
Your presence.

In his introduction to these verses, Peter claims that David said these words to the dead and resurrected Jesus of Nazareth. After quoting Psalm 16:8-11, Peter explains,

²²⁷ Ibid., 195 (388).
²²⁸ Ibid.
²²⁹ Ibid.
“Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, ‘He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption (Acts 2:29-31).’”

Second, Barth points out that the same exposition of this Psalm appears in Paul’s speech in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch in Acts 13:34-35. Paul introduces this quotation with some words from Isaiah 55:3: “I will give you the sure promises made to David.” Prior to his quotation of Isaiah and the Psalm, Paul had given a brief survey of the history of Israel and closed with the following recollection:

Then they asked for a king; and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, who reigned for forty years. When he had removed him, he made David their king. In his testimony about him he said, ‘I have found David, son of Jesse, to be a man after my heart, who will carry out all my wishes.’ Of this man’s posterity God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised (Acts 13:21-23).

A few verses later in Acts 13, Paul says “And we bring you the good news that what God promised to our ancestors, he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising Jesus (Acts 13:32-33a).” Barth concludes: “The Old Testament history of the kings did have a subject, then, according to the apostles.”

For Barth, the exegesis of the Old Testament cannot answer the questions it poses? Thus, exegesis of the Old Testament alone cannot identify the true subject of the Genesis narrative pairs, the Levitical sacrifices or the Israelite monarchy. “The ultimate

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290 Ibid., 196 (388).
exegetical question in relation to these passages—the question of their subject—is identical with the question of faith: whether with the apostles we recognise this subject in the person of Jesus Christ or with the Synagogue both then and now we do not recognise Christ.” For Barth, the Old Testament passages cannot answer this question of identity. But the answer is Jesus Christ if we listen to the apostles.

But how can we know this? How could the apostles know this? How could they know the answer to the questions posed by the Old Testament? Had they trumped Jewish scholarship? No, they knew this because Jesus Christ himself opened up the scriptures to them. Barth explains,

They did so because the Old Testament (Lk. 24: 27f.) was opened up to them by its fulfillment in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and because in the light of this fulfillment Old Testament prophecy could no longer be read by them in any other way than as an account of this subject. If we accept the decision of the apostles—for the same reasons they did, compelled by the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, and therefore as a decision of faith in Him—then the affirmation that the elect king, of whom they speak, is Jesus of Nazareth, will be not merely possible but necessary as the last word in exegesis of these passages. We have remained within the Old Testament world and its possibilities. We have tried in this world to bring out and think through what is said there about the elect king. But we have been forced to the conclusion that the entity in question cannot be brought out or apprehended within the Old Testament world: whether we think of it in terms of the monarchy as willed by God, or of the person of the elect king; whether we think of the matter itself or its unity. Therefore the decisive question: What is the will of God in this matter? and whom does He will for this purpose? Is not a question which can be unambiguously answered from the passages themselves.

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291 Ibid.

292 Ibid., 196 (389).
Thus, Barth concludes his exposition of the beginning of the monarchy in Samuel with this challenge: “And if there are those who for any reason cannot accept our ‘if,’ i.e., the presupposition of the apostolic exegesis of these passages—very well, then, let them show us a better key to the problem of the elect king of the Books of Samuel.”

This is Barth’s defense of his exegesis and, consequently, it is mine. If not Christ, then what? If we accept the witness of the apostles, must we not also, by faith, accept the witness of the Old Testament as prophecy to Jesus Christ? Must they not also bear witness to the Elect Man and Rejected God, the one who was dead but is now alive granting purity and freedom to humanity?

A review might be called for at this point before moving on the Barth’s final exposition of a major text in his “The Elect and the Rejected” section of II.2. The Genesis pairs set the trajectory of the Elect/rejected and Rejected/elect construct which will ultimately find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. The rituals in Leviticus 14 and 16, carrying forward the idea of four-fold election and rejection, defined these categories in light of death and life. Only in Jesus Christ do these inscrutable pairings find meaning. Only in him could these superhuman constructs, inseparable yet distinguishable, find coherence. Finally, at the fountainhead of the monarchy we see David and Saul, the Elect/rejected and Rejected/elected. Apostolic testimony gives witness to the revelation that Jesus Christ is the true subject of the monarchy.

293 Ibid., 200 (393).
At the very beginning of the divided monarchy, at the initial stages of Israel and Judah and the beginning of the conflict between Samaria and Jerusalem, emerge the man of God from the South and the old prophet from the North who are the Elect/rejected and the Rejected/elected characters in the story. From the beginning of the divided kingdoms stretching almost to the very end of the monarchy, these two prophets, the Elected and Rejected, remain together buried in one grave, representing their two kingdoms. With our new understanding of Barth’s methodology we quote once again the conclusion to his exegesis of 1 Kings 13:

But this story, too, does point to one real subject if Jesus Christ is also seen in it, if at the exact point where this story of the prophets breaks off a continuation is found in the Easter story. The Word of God, which abides forever, in our flesh; the man from Bethlehem in Judah who was also the prophet of Nazareth; the Son of David who was also the king of the lost and lawless people of the north; the Elect of God who is also the bearer of the divine rejection; the One who was slain for the sins of others, which He took upon Himself, yet to whom there arose a witness, many witnesses, from the midst of sinners; the One lifted up in whose death all was lost, but who in His death was the consolation and refuge of all the lost—the One truly died and was buried, yet He was not forgotten and finished on the third day, but was raised from the dead by the power of God. In this one prophet the two prophets obviously live. As so, too, do the two Israels—the Israels which in our story can finally only die, only be buried, only persist for a time in their bones. They live in the reality and unity in which they never lived in the Old Testament, but could only be attested. They remain in Him, and in Him the Word of God proclaimed by them remains to all eternity.294

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294 Ibid., 216 (409).
In closing this section, Barth again raises the central and forceful question: “What else is chapter 1 k. 13 if not prophecy? Where else is its fulfillment to be found if not in Jesus Christ? These are the questions which must be answered by those for whom the suggested result of our investigation may for any reason be unacceptable?” It’s either Jesus Christ or a question left unanswered. It’s either faith in Jesus Christ or the void.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter we noted Simon’s estimation of Barth’s interpretation of 1 Kings 13. He stated that Barth’s “interpretation, meticulously worked out and impressive in its depth and complexity, nevertheless remains in the class of free theological discourse.” Furthermore, it “has no basis in the literal meaning of the biblical text” and is “an over-interpretation which ascribes to the Writ a conceptual system based barely on associative innuendo.”

In my estimation, Simon, and many others have vastly underestimated and under read Barth. It seems to me that Barth gives every effort to understand the plain sense of Old Testament texts, allowing them to speak with their own voice. Employing historical, source, and redaction critical methods along with literary, structural, verbal and grammatical analysis, he gives his best effort to hear what the text has to say on its own terms and in its own right. But he has also to deal with the complete canon which he has received. 1 Kings 13 appears within a larger, canonical narrative. It cannot be

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295 Ibid., 216 (409).

understood simply as a prophetic narrative which stands alone. No, it must also be read within a larger Old Testament drama. Moreover, Karl Barth has received a canon with another testament which bears witness to a resurrected Lord and Savior, a testament which makes certain faith claims about Jesus Christ and about how Israel’s history shapes our understanding of who he is and what his mission is. This New Testament coupled with the Old Testament bears witness to Jesus Christ as the Word of God, the voice that has spoken, is speaking and will speak through the text of Scripture, the one who is both the Elected Man and Rejected God. If the Old Testament scriptures do not speak of this one, if he is not their true subject, then what?
CHAPTER 6:
CONCLUSION

Three Stages and a Methodological Recommendation

This study has been framed in three stages or movements. First, in chapter two, I separated out the pre-deuteronomistic text from its deuteronomistic context in Kings. After excising it from its deuteronomistic redactions, a unified, understandable story, exhibiting great literary artistry, was left. A prophetic community most likely produced this story during Josiah’s reforming work. Through the twists and turns of the story emerges a singular hero: the Word of the LORD. Everyone in the story fails (Even Josiah did not know of the prophetic legend, had to ask about its significance and was actually acted upon by the Word of God). Only the Word of the LORD succeeds. Only the Word of the LORD does not stray from the path. All of the story’s diverse elements work together to emphasize a singular theme: “From beginning to end the story dwells on a single theme—the fulfillment of the word of the Lord in its appointed time, after it transcends the weakness of its bearer and converts into affirmers those who would violate it.”297 Ultimately, the Word of the LORD triumphs over every force which opposes it,

297 Simon, Reading Prophetic Narratives, 154.
including a king and his cult, prophets, a lie, wild beasts, death and time, and accomplishes its objective.

Second, I placed this story back into its deuteronomistic context and showed its function within the immediate and broader setting within Kings. Within its immediate context, 1 Kings 11:26 – 14:20, 1 Kings 13 functions as a pivot between the rise and fall of Jeroboam, explaining how God’s chosen instrument can become God’s enemy. Within, the story, the path taken by the man of God mirrors the path of Jeroboam. This prophetic narrative allows the Deuteronomist to tell Jeroboam’s story in a compacted yet impactful way. Without this short story, the sins of Jeroboam would not have their punch in the rest of Kings, since, in this story, the Word of the LORD confronts him directly and powerfully, and since the consequences of rebellion against the Word are illustrated in the life and death of the man of God, yet Jeroboam did not repent. After all this, Jeroboam did not turn from his sins.

In its larger function in Kings, 1 Kings 13 frames all of the divided kingdom’s history from its division to the reform under Josiah. Although the north and the south are united by a singular Word of the LORD, the divisions are clear: Jeroboam and Josiah (David), Israel and Judah, Samaria and Jerusalem, the false cult and high places and the one, true Temple. In the end, God has not given up on Israel. He is still at work in the northern lands even after the Assyrian exile, but Israel’s blessing and survival is vitally connected to her relationship to Judah, just as the old prophet’s bones will be saved through their connection with those of the man of God. It might appear that Israel has
been rejected, but through repenting and acknowledging Judah, Jerusalem, David and the
Temple’s LORD, she can be saved. God still blesses through his chosen ones.

It seems to me that the Deuteronomist did not read all of this into the prophetic
narrative; rather, he read out what was implicit within the text. It is all there (At least it is
mostly there; the Deuteronomist did make a few redactional moves to make the implicit
very explicit, like the tearing of the altar and the prophecy given specifically against the
high places of Samaria.), but for the pre-deuteronomistic prophetic narrative, much of
this geography was merely the literary setting to make the story’s main point: the power,
durability and effectiveness of the Word. Contrariwise, for the Deuteronomist these
details, which turn on the man of God being from the south and the old prophet from the
north, were vital to his agenda. For him, the LORD was reclaiming his sovereignty over
the north by virtue of this reformer from the south.

Third, using the work of Karl Barth in Church Dogmatics, I placed 1 Kings 13
within its larger canonical narrative, reading it as a part of a two testament Bible. This
reading began with the Genesis narratives which show the interplay and relationship
between the elect and the rejected. In the case of Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael,
Jacob and Esau and others, one is elected and the other is rejected, while, strangely
enough, the elect show signs of rejection even as the rejected bear the marks of election.
This pattern ceases after the Genesis narratives, but is taken up and instituted in two
Levitical sacrifices: the birds of Leviticus 14 and the goats of Leviticus 16. In each case,
one is rejected and the other is elected, while the elect are in some way rejected and the
rejected are in some way elect. In the Genesis narratives and the Levitical sacrifices,
each of the pairs must be considered together. Together, they communicate a superhuman message that just one or the other alone could not represent. This pattern is detected once again in the beginning of the monarchy with Saul and David. Saul is Rejected, but elected; David is Elected, but rejected. These two monarchs’ election and rejection are played out in the election and rejection of the northern and southern monarchies.

This is our canonical entrance into the prophetic narrative. The man of God, who is Elected and rejected, represents Judah, Jerusalem, the Temple, and David; the old prophet, who is Rejected and elected, represents Israel, Samaria, the Bethel cult and high places in the towns of Samaria, and Jeroboam. The two are buried together, united in death by a single Word of the LORD, and, ultimately, the rejected is saved by the elect. The two can be distinguished, but not separated.

Where does all of this point? The exegete in possession of an apostolic witness, by exercising his faith, can say, “Easter.” In Jesus Christ, who is the Elect Man and Rejected God, the elected and the rejected find their full and final unity. One in Jesus Christ, united by a single Word of the LORD, they rise from the grave of their shared death. “They live in the reality and unity in which they never lived in the Old Testament, but could only be attested. They remain in Him, and in Him the Word of God proclaimed by them remains to all eternity.”

\[298\] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Section 34-35, 216 (409).
As a result of this methodological approach to this prophetic narrative, I would recommend that future studies keep these three stages of the story in mind as a basic framework for interpreting the text. Even if one chooses to focus on one particular stage, the interpreter must be conscious of the other levels. It is hoped that those who approach this text come to it with a critical and analytical eye, but also with a mind for synthesis. While taking it apart, a larger narrative must not be forgotten. This is a story within a bigger story. It seems to me that the methodological framework I have employed has proven itself to be a useful one for achieving both critical analysis and theological synthesis.

A United Story with a Single Theme

I would conclude from this study that 1 Kings 13 is a unity, a singular story with a focused theme, but it is also a story that, in order to be appreciated fully, must be read in its various contexts. In each context the meaning becomes richer and more robust, but the initial theme of the Word of the LORD’s power prevails. In every twist and turn and in every failure and success, the Word of the LORD, which has the power to divide and, ultimately, the power to unite, overcomes every force that comes against it. This is one story, with a singular, expansive theme.
APPENDIX A:

THE PRE-DEUTERONOMISTIC TEXT OF 1 KINGS 13 AND 2 KINGS 23:16-18

Key:

Yellow – the work of the deuteronomistic redactor
Red – removed for text critical reasons
Green – added or retained for text critical reasons
Green or no color – part of the pre-deuteronomic prophetic narrative

1 Kings 13
וַיְדַבֵּר אֵלֶּה אֲנִי הַנָּבִיא:  
וְהִנֵּה לֶחֶם רְתָּא עָשָׂה בָּא כְּלִי מִצְוָה לְאָכְלֹו אִתָּךְ.  
וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיָּבֹאוּ לוֹו וַיָּשֹׁב שָׁבַר שָׁבָר
וְלָקָבְרֹו׃ 30 אָחִי׃ הֹוי עָלָיו וַיִּסְפְּדוּ בְּקִבְרֹו אֶת־נִבְלָתֹו וַיַּנַּח 31 וַיֹּאמֶר אֹתֹו קָבְרֹו אַחֲרֵי וַיְהִי בֹּו קָבוּר הָאֱלֹהִים אישׁ אשר בַּקֶּבֶר אֹתִי וּקְבַרְתֶּם בְּמֹותִי לֵאמֹר אֶל־בָּנָיו הַנִּיחוּ עַצְמֹתָיו אֵצֶל אֶת־עַצְמֹתי׃ 32 בְּבֵית־אֵל אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה בִּדְבַר קָרָא אֲשֶׁר הַדָּבָר יִהְיֶה הָיֹה כִּי וְעַל שֹׁמְרֹון בְּעָרֵי אישׁ בָּתֵּי פ׃ 33 בָּמֹות כֹּהֲנֵי הָעָם מִקְצֹות וַיַּעַשׂ וַיָּשָׁב הָרָעָה מִדַּרְכֹּו יָרָבְעָם לֹא־שָׁב הזה הדבár אחר בָּמֹות׃ כֹּהֲנֵי וִיהִי אֶת־יָדֹו יְמַלֵּא הֶחָפֵץ 34 וּלְהַכְחִיד יָרָבְעָם בית לְחַטַּאת הזה הדבár וַיְהִי הָאֲדָמָה׃ פְּנֵי מֵעַל וּלְהַשְׁמִיד את־העואות וַיּוֹאמְרוּ רֹאֶה אֲנִי אשר הלז הַצִּיּוּן מָה וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֲדָמָה׃ 16 וְיִשְׁתַּחַח בָּהָר אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם אֶת־הַקְּבָרִים וַיַּרְא יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ וַיִּפֶן 17 יָרָבְעָם בַּעְַמֹד הָאֱלֹהִים אישׁ קָרָא אֲשֶׁר יהוה כִּדְבַר וַיְטַמְּאֵהוּ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיִּשְׂרֹף מִן־הַקְּבָרִים את־הדברים קָרָא אֲשֶׁר הָאְֶלֹהִים אישׁ עַל־קֶבֶר אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיִּשָּׂא וַיָּשָׁב פֶּן וַיִּעַל־הַמִּזְבֵַּח ב 18 אִישׁ־הָאֱלֹהִים הַקֶּבֶר הָעִיר אנשי אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמְרוּ רֹאֶה אֲנִי אשר הַלז הַצִּיּוּן מָה וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֲדָמָה׃ 1 Kings 23:16-18
APPENDIX B:

CONTEXTUALIZING BARTH’S VIEW OF ELECTION AND REJECTION
IN JESUS CHRIST

Saint Augustine

To understand Augustine’s thinking on election, one must see his perspective against the backdrop of the Pelagian controversy. Augustine explained that the Pelagians “think that ‘having received God’s commands we are of ourselves by the choice of our own free will made holy and immaculate in His sight in love; and since God foresaw that this would be the case,’ they say, ‘He therefore chose and predestinated us in Christ before the foundation of the world.’” 299 Contrary to the Pelagian position, Augustine viewed God’s choice of us as prior to our choice of him. God did not choose us because we believed but so that we would believe. “‘Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.’ For He chose us, not because we believed, but that we might believe, lest we should be said first to have chosen Him, and so His word be false (which be it far from us to think possible).” 300 God’s choice of us was not based on any merit on our part but wholly


300 Ibid.
on the grace of God. This point is so important to Augustine because, contrary to the Pelagians, he taught salvation is not based on merit of any sort but wholly on the grace of God. Faith then from first to last is not a work of humans but the gift of God, originating in the choice of God.\textsuperscript{301}

This position necessarily raises an unpleasant question: If the faith required in salvation is given freely by God at the choice of God, then does not this suggest that God chooses some to salvation while he passes over others? Augustine addresses this issue head on. “Faith, then, is God’s gift; and let no one have any doubt whatever, unless he desires to resist the plainest sacred writings, that this gift is given to some, while to some it is not given.”\textsuperscript{302} Would not this disturb any sensitive, thinking person? Augustine did not think a believer should be disturbed by this scriptural reality. He argued that in truth all are worthy of condemnation. It is only because of God’s mercy that some are delivered. God would be just and righteous to allow all to perish, but in his mercy he chooses some to deliverance. In this way, God’s glory is upheld and our pride is put down. “Whence it is plain that it is a great grace for many to be delivered, and to acknowledge in those that are not delivered what would be due to themselves; so that he that glorieth may glory not in his own merits, which he sees to be equaled in those that are condemned, but in the Lord.”\textsuperscript{303}

Augustine can not and will not explain the criteria

\textsuperscript{301} Ibid., chapters 16 and 39.

\textsuperscript{302} Ibid., 16.

\textsuperscript{303} Ibid.
for God’s choice. Why does he choose some out of his mercy to salvation and leave others in his justice to destruction?

But why he delivers one rather than another,—“His judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out.” For it is better in this case for us to hear or to say, “O man, who art thou that repliest against God” than to dare to speak as if we could know what He has chosen to be kept secret. Since, moreover, He could not will anything unrighteous. 

Thus in Augustine, we understand that before the foundation of the world God predestined some to salvation and some he passed over. His choosing some demonstrates his mercy and his passing over others shows his justice, since through the sin of Adam all are worthy of condemnation. For Augustine, even if this is hard for some to receive, this is the plain sense of Scripture. Augustine dealt with this difficulty by explaining that the reason he chose some but did not choose others is an unsearchable mystery, past finding out. In regard to God’s predestination, there is a line of secrecy that our inquiring minds are not permitted to cross because the incomprehensible truth of God’s election of some but not others is beyond searching out. Ultimately, his choice of some will prove his mercy and his passing over others will affirm his justice. In the final analysis, we may rest assured that God could not will anything unrighteous.

In preparation to read Barth, it might be helpful to ask of Augustine in what way our predestination is related to Jesus Christ’s election. Jesus Christ is an “illustrious instance” of predestination. Jesus Christ’s predestination informs our understanding of our own predestination:

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304 Ibid.
He, therefore, who made of the seed of David this righteous man, who never should be unrighteous, without any merit of His preceding will, is the same who also makes righteous men of unrighteousness; that He might be the head, and they His members. He, therefore, who made that man with no precedent merits of His, neither to deduce from His origin nor to commit by His will any sin which should be remitted to Him, the same makes believers on Him with no preceding merits of theirs, to whom He forgives all sin. He who made him such that He never had or should have an evil will, the same makes in His members a good will out of an evil one. Therefore He predestinated both Him and us, because both in Him that He might be our head, and in us that we should be his body, He foreknew that our merits would not precede, but that his doings should.305

It seems that in Augustine, Jesus Christ’s own predestination illustrates our own and he is the fountain of our election benefits, but the idea that our election is in him is not as developed.

John Calvin

John Calvin is in line with Augustine’s view of election, as Calvin admits, “If I wanted to weave a whole volume from Augustine, I could readily show my readers that I need no other language than his.306 But I do not want to burden them with wordiness.”307

Election for Calvin occurred before creation since election is not associated with the foreknowledge of an individual’s merit, but with the free will of God. “For all

305 On the Gift of Perseverance, chapter 67; see also On the Predestination of the Saints, chapters 30 and 31.


benefits that God bestows for the spiritual life, as Paul teaches, flow from this one source: namely, that God has chosen whom he has willed, and before their birth has laid up for them individually the grace that he willed to grant them.” 308 Thus, as in Augustine, Calvin’s doctrine of election is inseparable from his theology of salvation by grace alone apart from an individual’s merit.

Although Calvin pushed harder on the issue of double predestination than did Augustine, he called upon Augustine for support, saying, “I, at least, maintain this teaching of Augustine’s: where God makes sheep out of wolves, he reforms them by a more powerful grace to subdue their hardness; accordingly, God does not convert the obstinate because he does not manifest that more powerful grace, which is not lacking if he should please to offer it.” 309 Calvin elaborated on predestination and reprobation:

Indeed many, as if they wished to avert a reproach from God, accept election in such terms as to deny that anyone is condemned. But they do this very ignorantly and childishly, since election itself could not stand except as set over against reprobation. God is said to set apart those whom he adopts into salvation; it will be highly absurd to say that others acquire by chance or obtain by their own effort what election alone confers on a few. Therefore, those whom God passes over, he condemns; and this he does for no other reason than that he wills to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestines for his own children. And men’s insolence is unbearable if it refuses to be bridled by God’s Word, which treats of his incomprehensible plan that the angels themselves adore. However, we have by now been taught that hardening is in God’s hand and will, just as much as mercy is [Rom. 9:14ff.]. And Paul does not, as do those I have spoken of, labor anxiously to make false excuses in God’s defense; he only warns that it is unlawful for the clay to quarrel with its potter [Rom. 9:20]. Now how will

308 Ibid., 3.22.2.
309 Ibid., 3.23.1
those who do not admit that any are condemned by God dispose of Christ’s statement: “Every tree that my . . . Father has not planted will be uprooted” [Matt. 15:13 p.]? This plainly means that all those whom the Heavenly Father has not deigned to plant as sacred trees in his field are marked and intended for destruction. If they say this is not a sign of reprobation, there is nothing so clear that it can be proved to them.310

Calvin located election and predestination within the eternal decree of God. “We call predestination God’s eternal decree, by which he compacted with himself what he willed to become of each man. For all are not created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others. Therefore, as any man has been created to one or the other of these ends, we speak of him as predestined to life or to death.”311 Obviously, this view incited opposition. Calvin responded to this resistance much like Augustine. The eternal decree of predestination, for Calvin, is hidden in his justice. Mere human intellect cannot attain to such a high level of divine righteousness. It is “higher than man’s standard can measure, or a man’s slender wit can comprehend.”312 “With Augustine I say: the Lord had created those whom he unquestionably foreknew would go to destruction. This has happened because he has so willed it. But why he so willed, it is not for our reason to inquire, for we cannot comprehend it.”313 There is a line of secrecy and mystery in the decree of God that cannot be crossed. It is useless to try to search out the unsearchable and to comprehend the inscrutable. “It will do us no good to

310 Ibid., 3.22.1
311 Ibid., 3.21.5
312 Ibid., 3.23.4.
313 Ibid., 3.23.5.
proceed farther, for neither will it satisfy their petulance nor does the Lord need any other defense than what he used through his Spirit, who spoke through Paul’s own mouth; and we forget to speak well when we cease to speak with God.”

Calvin understood our election in Christ to mean that Christ is the mirror in whom we must contemplate our own election. Since it is into the body of Christ that the Father has destined us from all eternity to be engrafted, then we are assured that we are inscribed in the book of life if we are at present in communion with Christ. Therefore, we seek assurance of our election within Christ alone. Calvin asserted that Christ, along with the Father, is an agent of election, that is, he chooses for himself those who will be saved, but Calvin never really developed the idea of Christ as elected and elector.

Canons of the Synod of Dort (1619)

According to the Canons of the Synod of Dort, faith and salvation are a free gift of God. “That some receive the gift of faith from God, and others do not receive it, proceeds from God’s eternal decree.” God softens the hearts of the elect while he leaves the non-elect in their own obduracy. The decree of election and reprobation are revealed in the Word of God. Election is defined as . . .

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314 Ibid.
315 Ibid.
316 Ibid., 3.21.7.
The unchangeable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundation of the world, he hath, out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of his own will chosen, from the whole human race, which had fallen through their own fault, from their primitive state of rectitude, into sin and destruction, a certain number of persons to redemption in Christ, whom he from eternity appointed the Mediator and head of the elect, and the foundation of salvation.\textsuperscript{318}

This election was not founded on foreseen faith, but the good pleasure of God was the sole cause of gracious election. While God has elected some to salvation by his grace, he has decreed to leave others in the common misery in which they have by their own will plunged themselves. “And this is the decree of reprobation which by no means makes God the author of sin (the very thought of which is blasphemy), but declares him to be an awful, irreprehensible, and righteous judge and avenger.”\textsuperscript{319}

To those who murmur at the free grace of election, and the just severity of reprobation, the Canons rebuke those who reply against God (Rom. ix.20) and express holy adoration for the unsearchable judgments of God (Rom. xi.33-36).\textsuperscript{320}

As far as Jesus Christ’s place in election goes, God has decreed to give to Christ the elect to be saved by him. They are drawn into communion with Christ by the Word and Spirit so that he might bestow on them faith, justification, and sanctification and, ultimately, glorification.\textsuperscript{321}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{318}{Ibid., 98.}
\footnote{319}{Ibid., 100.}
\footnote{320}{Ibid. 100-101.}
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Karl Barth’s Theology of Election and Rejection

The doctrine of election takes up the entire second section of the second volume of Barth’s *Church Dogmatics*. Surprisingly, Barth placed his discussion of election under the theological category of the doctrine of God, the subject of *Church Dogmatics*’s second volume. He explained the reason for this placement, It is part of the doctrine of God because originally “God’s election of man is a predestination not merely of man but of Himself. Its function is to bear basic testimony to eternal, free and unchanging grace as the beginning of all the ways and works of God.”

Early in his exposition of election, Barth separated himself from Augustine and those that followed Augustine who divided the mercy of God from the justice of God when they spoke of the elect and non-elect. In his search for the reason why some believe and are saved and some do not believe and are damned, Augustine found the answer in a double divine decision from all eternity. The fact that God elects some demonstrates his mercy and that he rejects others shows his justice. Barth went right after the heart of the matter:

> It is certainly true that God’s mercy and righteousness are both active in God’s dealings with believers and unbelievers. But in view of the unity of the divine essence, we must at once ask whether it is possible to allocate the two attributes to different dealings of God, as though only His mercy were at work in the one case and only His righteousness in the other. Above all, we must ask what biblical or inherent authority Augustine has for relating God’s dealings in this way, as though we had only to look at God’s work here and his work there and to understand them as a unity in

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order to find the premise for this inter-relationship. At any rate, in Holy Scripture there is no parallelism of this kind in the treatment and proclamation of the divine election and rejection. 323

Thus, Barth went right at the heart of the mercy for the elect and justice for the non-elect tradition that began with Augustine and continued in Calvin. First, he asserted that this thinking divided the very essence of God, compromising his unity. Second, he argued that this kind of division is found nowhere in Scripture. Third, he explained later that the implications of making election and rejection in this way distorted the evangelical message into a grace and non-grace, salvation and reprobation message. For Barth the evangelical message was not a Yes/No message but a message of Yes. In this respect, he acknowledges the merits of the Canons of the Synod of Dort in that “a definition of predestination was there given which, although it did not, of course, exclude the divine reprobation, did not include or append it as an autonomous truth, being content rather to state positively what election is.” 324 Ultimately, Barth argued for a doctrine of election and rejection that placed election and rejection in a hierarchical relationship with election in the supreme position and that proclaimed the gospel with a tenor such that the free grace of God was “the dominating theme and specific meaning of the whole utterance.” 325 For Barth, this was the biblical position.

Barth praised Augustine, Calvin and the Reformers for the good start that they made with their allusion to Christ as the mirror of election: “The elect must always look

323 Ibid., 14 (16).
324 Ibid., 15-16 (17).
325 Ibid., 17 (18).
to Jesus Christ in matters of election because whoever is elected is elected in Christ and
only in Christ. There is no basis for divine election in man as such, and no such basis
may be found in man. When they pointed to our election in Christ, Augustine and the
Reformers were undoubtedly right, and faithful to the teaching of the Bible on this
matter.326 Unfortunately, the assertion that election is in Christ was never seriously
developed. In fact, election was actually worked out in a way that regarded it as a
decision made by the Father independent of Jesus Christ and only executed by him. In
this scheme, prior to the decree to send Jesus Christ to provide salvation for the elected
ones, the hidden God decided to save such and such. It is only after the decree to save
certain persons that God made the technical decision to call the elect and to bring them to
salvation by means of his Son. Thus, for Augustine and the Reformers election was
located in a mysterious, hidden decree of God; it was not truly a decision made in
Christ.327 Barth put it succinctly, “It is evident that to Christ must be ascribed not the
function of the electing God Himself, but only that of the organ which serves the electing
will of God, as a means towards the attainment of the end foreordained for the elect.”328

Barth worked vigorously to replace this decretum absolutum, the secret decision
of God to elect some and reject others prior to his decision to send Christ to provide the
means of the elect’s salvation, with a Christological doctrine of election. This
replacement did not lead to the denial of the election and the free grace of God. Rather, it

326 Ibid., 63 (62).
327 Ibid., 64-65 (63-64).
328 Ibid., 67 (65).
was necessary to demonstrate that Christ himself replaced the *decretum absolutum*. “It must be shown that in Him we have to do not only with elected man but with the electing, the truly and freely electing God.”

Thus, the concept of the electing God and elected man must not be considered in the abstract, but in the concrete reality of Jesus Christ who is both electing God and elected man.

In this we find two key assertions: first, Jesus Christ is the electing God and second, Jesus Christ is the elected man.

The election of Jesus Christ is the eternal choice and decision of God. And our first assertion tells us that Jesus Christ is the electing God. We must not ask concerning any other but Him. In no depth of the Godhead shall we encounter any other but Him. There is no such thing as Godhead itself. Godhead is always the godhead of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of Jesus Christ. There is no such thing as a *decretum absolutum*. There is no such thing as a will of God apart from the will of Jesus Christ. Thus Jesus Christ is not only the manifestation and *speculum nostrae praedestinationis*. And He is this not simply in the sense that our election can be known to us and contemplated by us only through His election, as an election which, like His and with His, is made (or not made) by a secret and hidden will of God. On the contrary, Jesus Christ reveals to us our election as an election which is made by Him, by his will which is also the will of God. He tells us that He himself is the One who elects us.

In this statement, Jesus is also asserted to be the elected man. To explain what this means for humanity, Barth turned to Ephesians 1:4 as his leading text. Jesus is not one of the elect among or with others. He is the one elect man, over and before all others.

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329 Ibid., 80 (75).

330 Ibid., 122-123 (115).
And it is in him that all humanity is elect. “In Him means in His person, in His will, in his own divine choice, in the basic decision of God . . . What singles Him out from the rest of the elect, and yet also, and for the first time, unites Him with them, is the fact that as elected man He is also the electing God, electing them in His own humanity.” With this, Barth concluded that in the predestination of the man Jesus Christ predestination is always and everywhere “the acceptance and the reception of man only by the free grace of God.” In summation, this is so because Jesus Christ is the electing God which answers the question of the Subject of the eternal election of grace and Jesus Christ is the elected man which answers the question of the object of the eternal election of grace.

In replacing the *decretum absolutum* with Jesus Christ, the electing God and elected man, the mystery of God is not removed but changed. Whereas the mystery of the eternal decree to elect some and reject others was an unsearchable and incomprehensible secret hidden behind a wall of abstraction, the revelation of predestination in Christ is a concrete, historical reality which reveals the very intentions and purposes of God. Yet, this revelation is still a mystery, but a mystery of a different character. The whole relationship between God and man is revealed out in the open in the relationship between God and man in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is not the reflection of our election, but its very substance. And our knowledge is not “with the menacing reservation that in some dark background everything is perhaps quite different, but with the certainty that in this matter background and foreground are one and the same, and that

331 Ibid., 124 (117).

332 Ibid., 125( 118.)
as the foreground may be known the background may also be known.” But this does not remove the mystery of God’s election but changes the content of the mystery.

   It is the light of revelation, the light of God. It is not something close to us but worlds removed. Of all ideas, it is the one which is in itself unthinkable, the one which is thinkable only in faith and by the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit: that God Himself should Himself become the Son of Man as His own eternal Son; that He should will to take up the cause of the Son of Man as His own cause; that the will by which He did this should be the eternal will of God which constitutes the beginning of all things and our own beginning; that we should stand under the foreordination of this will even before we were born and before the world was; that from the very beginning in God’s willing of the world the love of God should be the rule over everything and all things. If there is any mystery of God, if there is any secret which, even as we know it and it is revealed to us and manifest before us, still proclaims and characterizes itself more and more as a secret, then this is it.⁹³⁴

The mystery is God’s love revealed in Jesus Christ, the elected and electing One.

So far we have addressed the problems with the division of the mercy and justice of God and the secretive nature of the *decretum absolutum* within Augustine, Calvin and Dort, but what about double predestination? What about the view that some are elected but others are rejected? Amazingly, Barth saw in the election of Jesus Christ, which is the eternal will of God, that God has ascribed to man election, salvation and life and to Himself He has given reprobation, perdition and death. God has elected and predestinated himself to fellowship with people and he has elected and predestinated people to fellowship with himself. This means to Barth that people have only to gain but

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⁹³³ Ibid., 168 (159).

⁹³⁴ Ibid., 169 (160).
God has only to lose. God’s love then is selfless and genuine since he elected for himself people’s deserved rejection. From all eternity he determined in Jesus Christ that he would love us this way. Barth refers to God’s willingness to take on people’s reprobation as God’s “No.” In effect, God speaks a “No” to himself so that he can speak only a “Yes” to people. In this innovation Barth brings together God’s mercy and justice in Christ:

God’s eternal decree in the beginning was the decree of the just and merciful God, of the God who was merciful in His justice and just in His mercy. He was just in that He willed to treat evil seriously, to judge it and to sentence it, to reject and condemn its author, delivering him over to death. But he was merciful in that He took the author of evil to his bosom, and willed that the rejection and condemnation and death should be His own. In this decree of the just and merciful God is grounded the justification of the sinner in Christ and the forgiveness of sins.

Predestination means then that God from all eternity has determined to acquit people at his own cost. God has spoken a “No” to himself so that he may only speak a “Yes” to humankind. God is rejected; People are elected. It is important to note here that God’s “Yes” is bigger than his “No.” His “Yes” is the reality of his love. The “No” is simply the negation of God’s “Yes.” If sin had an essence, it would be saying “No” to God’s “Yes.” But God has taken the sin of “No” on himself so that he speaks only a “Yes” to humankind.

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335 Ibid., 170-176 (161-166).
336 Ibid., 176 (167).
This view of reprobation and predestination, of rejection and election is not a static decision but a dynamic, living reality that operates within God’s creation. It is an operative principle within this world that is both hidden and revealed. It is the way God acts within the world. There is within time an electing by God and an election of people, as there is also a rejecting by God and a rejection of people. Therefore, election is an event in Jesus Christ and an activity operative within history.

Before turning to how this operative principle plays itself out in the election and rejection of the individual, it may be helpful to look at the community of God, composed of Israel and the Church, as the “mediating” body between the election of Jesus Christ and the election of the individual. “It is mediate, that is, in so far as it is the middle point between the election of Jesus Christ and (included in this) the election of those who have believed, and do and will believe, in Him. It is mediating in so far as the relation between the election of Jesus Christ and that of all believers (and visa versa) is mediated and conditioned by it.\(^{338}\) This is the “ecclesiastical” form of what Barth described in Christological terms earlier.\(^{339}\)

The function of this community, whose election is bound up in Jesus Christ’s own election of grace, is to attest Jesus Christ to the whole world and to summon the whole world to faith in Jesus Christ. In its Israeliite form it represents divine judgment; in its Church form it represents divine mercy. In its Israeliite form it is determined for hearing;


\(^{339}\)Ibid., 3-4 (198).
in its Church form it is determined for believing. In its Israelite form the community is passing; in its Church form it is coming.  

Barth employed a “bow” analogy to guard against the view that Israel exclusively represents rejection while the Church represents election:

> These are the two forms of the elected community, the two poles between which its history moves (in a unilateral direction, from here to there) but in such a way that the bow of the one covenant arches over the whole. For all the necessary sharpness, therefore, restraint is also needed. For antithesis between the two cannot be formulated in exclusive terms. Behind and above the human obduracy characteristic of the Israelite form of the community there stands indeed the divine rejection, but there stands also God’s election in which He has determined Himself to take upon Himself the rejection. And behind and above the divine calling characteristic of the Church form of the community there stands the rejection God Himself has taken upon Him. The ineffaceable differentiation of the two forms of the community has certainly to be noted. But it has also to be noted that thereby its indissoluble unity is also brought to light.  

Together, and indissolubly, Israel and the Church attest to Jesus Christ to the world and mediate between the election of Jesus Christ. It is now that we turn to the election of the individual, the one for whom Jesus Christ is the elected One and the one to whom the community of God attests his or her election.

In review, the traditional doctrine of predestination finds within the eternal decree of God, prior to the decision to send Christ to procure salvation for the elect, a double predestination of some to salvation and others to destruction. Barth places this double

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340 Ibid., 1 (195).

341 Ibid., 5-6 (200).
predestination within Jesus Christ. Simply put, “We have understood Jesus Christ as the one Elector and Elect (in whom the many [read all individuals\textsuperscript{342} since “it is individuals who are chosen and not the totality of men”] are elect), and again as the one Rejector and Rejected (in whom the many [again read all individuals] are not rejected).”\textsuperscript{343} In the pages previous to this quote, Barth had explained that each individual person has rejected his or her election; that is, he or she has said “No” to God’s “Yes” or, put another way, has refused God’s grace. But in effect, God rejected this rejection. He took the individual’s rejection on himself and said “No” to this rejection so that in Jesus Christ these individuals are elected. This tells the person rejecting God’s grace that “he does it all in vain, because the choice which he thus makes is eternally denied and annulled in Jesus Christ, and because he for his part may deny and annul everything else by his own choice, but cannot possibly deny the gracious choice of God.”\textsuperscript{344} Jesus Christ takes on the double predestination of election and rejection so that individuals may embrace God’s grace through faith as the community of God bears witness to their election. Barth contrasted this gospel message with that of those who hold to the traditional construction of double predestination:

The concept of divine decree independent of the election of Jesus Christ carries with it at once the idea of a community whose task, as it would appear from these definitions, is to proclaim to the many another absolute will of God apart from that fulfilled in Christo and per Christum. If the divine decree is identical with the

\textsuperscript{342} Ibid., 118 (313).
\textsuperscript{343} Ibid., 130 (325).
\textsuperscript{344} Ibid., 122 (317).
election of Jesus Christ, then the task of the chosen community in respect of the many is exclusively that of proclaiming the Gospel in which each one is promised his election in Jesus Christ. But with the concept of a divine decree independent of the election of Jesus Christ, there arises also the possibility that the many (the individual, the ungodly, each one) may regard themselves as neutral, i.e., that the election of Jesus Christ may possibly mean something for them, but it may equally well mean nothing. The consequence is that the statement of predestination divides into two sections . . . The first deals with the “elect” (for whom Jesus Christ was elected and died and rose again). The second deals with the “rejected” (for whom in actual fact He means nothing). If Jesus Christ is the beginning of all the ways and works of God, the many cannot be neutral in relation to Him, nor can there be any such division into these two groups.345

In Barth’s scheme there is one message: In Christ, God has borne the brunt of your rejection. You have rejected his grace, but he has not rejected you. In fact, He has rejected your rejection and He has become the rejected one on your behalf (the Rejector and Rejected) so that you might become the elected one in Jesus Christ (the Elector and Elect). In Jesus Christ, this is the good news of double predestination. And it is the mission of the community of God to call individuals to hear, believe, and live according to who they truly are, not the rejected, but the elect of God, and to live in the fact “that in Jesus Christ his rejection, too is rejected, and his election consummated.”346

Surprisingly enough, this did not mean for Barth that there are not those who are the elect and those who are the rejected. It is at this point that we begin to drive forward toward Barth’s exposition of 1 Kings 13 for it is in the chapter of Church Dogmatics

345 Ibid.

346 Ibid., 124-127 (320-322).
volume II section 2 entitled, “The Election of the Individual,” under the section “The Elect and The Rejected” that we find his exposition. He began this section by setting up the idea of the elected and rejected individual. One may think of the elect and the rejected as two classes of people, “the called and the uncalled, the believing and the godless, and therefore the elect and apparently rejected.” But these two classes of people find their solidarity within Jesus Christ, who is the elected and the rejected. Important to Barth’s synthesis of these two in Christ is the fact that the elect often stray and live as the rejected while the rejected live a lie in that they are truly elect. This is true because they are living out the operative principle of the ultimate Elected and Rejected One. And it is true that ultimately the elect and rejected people are united as one people in Jesus Christ and together they bear witness to the reality of Jesus Christ’s election and rejection:

Thus Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head and Subject of the witness both of the “the elect” and also the “rejected.” For all the great difference between them, both have their true existence solely in Him. It is in Him, who originally is both the Elect and the Rejected, that their mutual opposition finds its necessity. But it is not simply the relativity of their opposition which is established in Him, but also the fact that in all their opposition they are brothers, mutually related in their being and function, forming an inalienable and indissoluble unity.

Thus, Barth seems to identify a four-fold witness within these elect and rejected. The elect have tendencies toward a life like that of the rejected so that the elected also

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347 Ibid., 159 (351).

348 Ibid., 161 (353).
bear witness to rejection. The rejected live out a lie because in truth they are elected in Christ. This four-fold witness is possible for the class of the rejected and the class of the elected because they meet in solidarity within the One who is both elect on behalf of the rejected and rejected on behalf of the elect. A word of caution here: it must be remembered that Jesus Christ is the Rejected One only and primarily because of his election so that rejection, of itself a void and a nothing, exists only to serve election. In the final analysis, in Christ it is only “Yes.” In Christ, all are elect.
Deuteronomistic History and the Nature of Its Prophecy


**1 Kings 13 and 2 Kings 23:16-18**


**Karl Barth’s Doctrine of the Election and the Rejection of the Individual**


**Canonical and Theological Exegesis**


