

In First Kings, we read about a man of God who came to Bethel and prophesied against King Jeroboam's pagan altar. The king stretched out his hand, ordering him to be seized, but was left paralysed. Immediately he asked the Prophet to entreat the favour of God and restore his hand.

When King Jeroboam's request was granted, he invited the man of God to his house to dine and receive a gift. However, he refused, because the Lord had told him not to eat or drink or return the way he came.

The story goes on to say that when an old Prophet of Bethel learned of this, he went out to meet the young man and lied to him, saying an Angel said he should come and eat at his house. Some commentators have suggested the old Prophet had obviously not spoken the truth when he initially claimed that an Angel had spoken to him.

First, the fulfilment of the prophecy itself should persuade us of the error in this conclusion, but there is more. There is no record of the old Prophet being punished later anywhere in Scripture, which would be expected if he had spoken out of his own heart.

It is clear the Lord designed the whole incident to communicate the very simple and important truth that disobedience to His Word carries severe consequences. No person or authority, not even an Angel, is above it. The young Prophet had failed his obedience test in this matter.