

BOOK OF 1 KINGS
THE FOOLISHNESS OF JEROBOAM
1 KINGS 12:25-33

Introduction

Last time we saw how that after the kingdom of Israel was split, Rehoboam amassed an army of 180,000 men from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and was going to fight against their northern brethren who had split off from them.

However, the Word of God came to Rehoboam by a man of God and told him and his army to go home and that they were not to fight their own brethren!

Rehoboam and Judah complied and obeyed the Lord. So Rehoboam and Jeroboam go about reigning over their portion of the divided kingdom and that brings us to our verses for this evening.

(READ — 1 KINGS 12:25-33)

I. WE SEE JEROBOAM'S CONSTRUCTION! (12:25)

Jeroboam does some building in both Shechem and Penuel. Shechem was the land that was given to Joshua and his family when they conquered the land and it was divided among the tribes.

II. WE SEE JEROBOAM'S CONCERN! (12:26-27)

Jeroboam worried that he will lose his power and his throne.

Who brought Jeroboam to power and gave him the throne?

1 KINGS 11:35-38

If God brought him to power and gave him the throne, don't you think the LORD could have worked out this problem that he perceived?

He feared that if the people returned to Jerusalem to worship the LORD, the nation would re-unite, follow Rehoboam, and kill him.

But listen, God clearly promised to bless Jeroboam's reign if he would obey the LORD. God gave him the northern ten tribes to rule.

Jeroboam did what many others do. He didn't believe or he disregarded God's promises.

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We find that he was not willing to obey the LORD and meet God's conditions of blessing.

That describes many a person who has shipwrecked their lives and the lives of their loved ones because they decided to take matters into their own hand rather than just believing God and being obedient to Him!

Many folks lives are messed up because they won't meet God's conditions for blessing! That is right where Satan wants each of us!

Jeroboam feared the people's return to Judah rather than fearing the LORD! He made his own decisions rather than seek from the LORD what he should do to alleviate his concern!

III. WE SEE JEROBOAM'S COUNSEL! (12:28-29)

We are not told with whom the king took counsel, but it certainly wasn't the LORD or any man of God!

Jeroboam followed ungodly counsel which led the northern kingdom of Israel to be an ungodly nation!

Psalm 1:1—Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

Jeroboam did the opposite of that verse! He walked in the counsel of the ungodly! This led to him standing in the way of sinners! It then led to him sitting in the seat of the scornful!

Ungodly counsel is a counterfeit for God's Word!

Jeroboam offered up this counterfeit to keep his power and control over the people. Satan offers counterfeits and stumbling blocks to us to sidetrack us and our families from God's best for our lives!

False gods or idols (specifically, two golden calves) were erected which got their attention from off of the one true God and His worship!

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Satan wants us to have idols in our lives too! He wants us to have ANYTHING that hinders our hearts, minds, lives from what the LORD would have us do! Remember, an idol can be ANYTHING that takes the rightful place of the LORD in our lives!

These calves reveal the influence of Israel being 400 years in Egypt. The sacred bull was worshiped in Egypt as the symbol of the goddess Hathor. The bull was the symbol of strength and fertility.

Jeroboam was either ignorant or he chose to ignore the past. Five hundred years earlier in Exodus 32, God's people were judged because Aaron fashioned a golden calf and the people worshiped it.

These calves became objects of worship. In fact, we find the Prophet Hosea cried out against them later on!

Hosea 8:5-6— “Thy calf O Samaria, hath cast thee off; mine anger is kindled against them: how long will it be ere they attain to innocency? For from Israel was it also: the workman made it; therefore it is not God: but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces.”

IV. WE SEE JEROBOAM'S CONVENIENCE! (Vs 28)

Calves were erected in **Dan** and **Bethel**. **Dan** was located at the far northern part of Israel. **Bethel** was located ten miles north of Jerusalem.

Three times yearly, Jewish men would travel to Jerusalem to worship the LORD. The altar constructed in **Bethel** was to lure the people away from Jerusalem. Hosea called it **Bethaven**, on the east side of **Bethel**.

Hosea 10:5—The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Bethaven: for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and the priests thereof that rejoiced on it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it.

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Bethel means “*House of God.*” **Bethaven** means “*House of Nothingness*” or “*House of Emptiness*” or “*House of Vanity.*”

Jeroboam was trying to lure God's people with that which was convenient, but listen, it was also a counterfeit and artificial!

A convenient but counterfeit lifestyle produces artificial results. When we want things easy and convenient and follow Satan's counterfeits, it leaves us empty.... just like the idols of **Bethaven**.

Bethaven was on the east side of Bethel close, but yet, so far away from the center of Bethel. This was not God's choice for His people's worship of Him.

A lot of “*so-called*” worship today is **not** God's choice but man's choice. There's a Church in our area that advertises their Church on a billboard with this phrase: “**Church the way you hoped it could be.**”

Could I tell you that is idolatrous! Fulfilling peoples desires and giving them what they want rather than giving them what God's desires for them!

Church is not to be about **the way we hoped it could be** but the way God wants it to be! This isn't Burger King! Church is not a “**have it your way**” thing though many have made it that way! Christ instituted the Church and He has the right to say what goes on in Church! (e.g. The messages in **Revelation 2-3** to the Churches in Asia Minor)

My grandparents in Dothan, AL didn't have running water when I was growing up. They had an old-fashioned well where you had to let a bucket down with a rope to draw up water. Listen, the rope had to be long enough to reach down into the water! If the rope wasn't long enough...if it fell short...you would come up with an empty bucket.

That's the way some folks worship is. It falls short of what the LORD requires and they come up empty!

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Notice the excuse Jeroboam offered there in the latter part of *verse 28*: In so many words here he was saying, *"It's too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. We will make it convenient for you by erecting two places for you to worship!"*

Many want to make Christianity a religion of convenience. That's because so many people in our day and time don't want anything to do with *commitment, conviction, inconvenience, hard work, sacrifice or service to Christ*. They believe that Church takes too much of their time, money, and crowds their schedule.

For these reasons people think you're crazy when you go to Church on Sunday night or Wednesday night or come to revival meetings. Listen, the excuses for not serving God are destroying our Churches!

I heard of one pastor who decided to have *"No Excuse Sunday"* for missing members. He said, *"To make it possible for everyone to attend church next Sunday, we are going to provide the following items.*

1. There will be cots in the foyer for those who say that Sunday is their only day to sleep in.
2. There will be a special section with lounge chairs for those who feel the pews are too hard.
3. Eye drops will be available for those whose eyes are tired from watching TV late on Saturday night.
4. We will have steel helmets for folks who think the roof will cave in if they walk into the church.
5. Blankets will be provided for people who think the church is too cold and fans will be provided for those who think it is too hot.
6. Scorecards will be available for those who wish to list the hypocrites present.

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7. One section will be devoted to trees and grass for those who like to seek God in nature.
8. Doctors and nurses will be present for folks who plan on being sick Sunday.
9. The auditorium will be decorated with both Christmas poinsettias and Easter lilies for those who have never seen the auditorium without them.
10. We will provide hearing aids for individuals who can't hear the preacher and cotton for those who can! Hope to see you there!

Jeroboam was making things convenient for the people, but note also...

V. WE SEE THE PEOPLE'S CORRUPTION ! (12:30-31)

Jeroboam's religion was the epitome of man-made worship. It contained counterfeit gods and priests. The Word of God said that Priests were to be from the tribe of Levi, but these that Jeroboam chose were of the lowest of the people.

Abijah was the next ruler in Judah after Rehoboam and this is what he had to say about Jeroboam:

2 Chronicles 13:9—Have ye not cast out the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of other lands? so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods.

Man-made religion takes the focus away from the Lord and His Word:

It corrupts God's Salvation!

From Grace through Faith to either a universal salvation or a works based salvation.

It corrupts God's Worship!

From what pleases God to what pleases one's flesh!

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It corrupts God's Word!

Whatever version you want is OK!

It corrupts God's Ways!

Walk however you want to walk!

Jeremiah 6:16-17 16 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. 17 Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken.

Jeroboam's counterfeit became a snare to the people. His roots of rebellion yielded the fruit of rebellion. You will never grow spiritually with a rebellious heart. Your areas of resistance will hinder further spiritual growth.

The place where you get out of God's will is the place where you get back in it.

VI. WE SEE JEROBOAM'S COUNTERFEIT FEAST! (12:32-33)

Jeroboam instituted a counterfeit feast.

The Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated in the seventh month. The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated for seven days after the Day of Atonement. People lived in temporary booths made of branches to commemorate the dwelling in tents for forty years in the wilderness.

God did not want them to forget about their deliverance from Egypt nor the reason they had to wander in the wilderness for forty years. The reason, of course, was disobedience to the Word of God.

Jeroboam disobeyed the Word of God, instituting his own feast, on his schedule, in the place of His choosing, and in his own way. He did what he wanted to do, and what he devised in his own heart.

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Well, those who were righteous had enough and left the northern tribes.

2 Chronicles 11:14-16—For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the Lord: [15] And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made. [16] And after them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers.

Sometimes we can be guilty of doing the same with the Lord in our lives. Implementing our own will instead of His. Doing things our own way instead of the Bible's way?

Sometimes we get angry and bitter toward those who offend us, but God says we should practice forbearance and forgiveness!

Sometimes we get selfish in our giving when the LORD moves on our heart for us to be sacrificial.

Sometimes we may lax into unfaithfulness in the things of the LORD while knowing God says we should be faithful.

Sometimes we get impatient and get ahead of the LORD's direction rather than waiting on Him!

Listen, let's not fall for Satan's counterfeits! Let's not allow ourselves to be enticed away from the LORD by the lures of this world.