

1 Kings 12:25-33 **The sins of Jeroboam which made Israel to sin**

Jeroboam's building projects

25 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and dwelt there. Also he went out from there and built Penuel.

Jeroboam's Golden Calves

26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: 27 If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah."

28 Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!"

29 And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan.

30 Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. 31 He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi.

Jeroboam's Feasts

32 Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made. 33 So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense.

NKJV

Facts Revealed:

Jeroboam's building projects

- ✧ 25 Then Jeroboam built **Shechem** in the mountains of Ephraim, and dwelt there. Also he went out from there and built **Penuel**. [1 Kings 12:25]
- ✧ **Shechem** is about midway between Jerusalem to the south and Nazareth to the north where Jacob first stayed in the Promised Land and Dinah his daughter was raped. [Genesis 33:18-20]
- ✧ Jeroboam built Shechem up, fortified it, and made it his capital city.
- ✧ **Penuel** is east of the Jordan almost directly east of Shechem at the place where Jacob wrestled with the angel before he crossed the Jabbok and met Esau, not far from Succoth to the west where Jacob built a house and booths for his animals. [Genesis 32:24-32, 33:17]
- ✧ Jeroboam rebuilt the fortifications of Penuel which had been destroyed by Gideon after he defeated the Midianites. [Judges 8:13-17]

God had said to Jeroboam:

- ✧ **If you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you.** [1 Kings 11:38]
- ✧ Assurance of the kingdom was conditioned only on Jeroboam's obedience toward God.

Jeroboam's Golden Calves

☆ 26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, "**Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: 27 If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah.**" [1 Kings 12:26-27]

- ◇ Jeroboam did not believe God, and using human reasoning, out of imagined fear, he rationalized himself into the sin of turning completely from God to idolatry.
 - ◇ Human reasoning when in conflict with the Word of God is not reliable, but motivates inappropriate behavior.
 - ◇ Political grasping for power exacerbates the error to the destruction of a nation.
 - ◇ Israel was never able to rid itself of the influence of the sin of Jeroboam which caused Israel to sin to the day of their destruction by the Assyrians. [2 Kings 17:22-23]
- ☆ 28 Therefore the king asked advice, **made two calves of gold**, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. **Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!**"

29 And he set up **one in Bethel**, and **the other he put in Dan**.

30 Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. 31

He made shrines on the high places, and **made priests from every class of people**, who were not of the sons of Levi. [1 Kings 12:28-31]

- ◇ Seeking counsel from the ungodly, results in the same evil behavior that was present when Israel, after receiving the Law of Yahweh, built the golden calf at Mount Horeb which had cost the lives of 3,000 men of Israel. [Exodus 32:1-4, 28]
- ◇ It is also interesting that the sin at Horeb is repeated double by Jeroboam.

Jeroboam's Feasts

☆ 32 Jeroboam ordained a **feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month**, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made.

And **at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made**.

33 So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the **fifteenth day of the eighth month**, in the month **which he had devised in his own heart**.

And **he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense**. [1 Kings 12:32-33]

- ◇ Jeroboam exalted himself above the God of Israel, appointing his own priests, creating his own gods, and ordaining his own feasts.
- ◇ The people of Israel eagerly followed the folly of Jeroboam to their own destruction.
- ◇ It is so easy for people to follow leaders of their own choice into all manner of evil practices without ever considering the consequence of the choice.
- ◇ God said, "Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" [Deuteronomy 32:29] NKJV

From all the tribes of Israel, all who had a heart for the lord moved to the kingdom of Judah

13 And from all their territories **the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel took their stand with him (Rehoboam)**. 14 For the Levites left their common-lands and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them from serving as priests to the Lord.

15 Then he (Jeroboam) appointed for himself priests for the high places, for the demons, and the calf idols which he had made.

¹⁶ And after the Levites left, **those from all the tribes of Israel, such as set their heart to seek the Lord God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord God of their fathers.** ¹⁷ So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong for three years, because they walked in the way of David and Solomon for three years. NKJV [2 Chron 11:13-17]

- ✧ Jeroboam was right that the people faithful to God would move to the southern kingdom to worship the God of Israel at Jerusalem.
- ✧ Jeroboam was wrong to think his idolatry would strengthen his hold over all Israel.
- ✧ The paganism of Jeroboam actually drove those who had a heart for God to leave his realm.
- ✧ This became a point of decision for the people and separated those who sought godly righteousness from those who rejected the God of Israel.
- ✧ God wants us all to choose between Him and His Word and the influence of the pagan world around us.
- ✧ Choosing to walk with God when the world is calling us to rebel against Him demonstrates love for our Creator that the Lord desires to prove those who are His and separate them from those who are not.
- ✧ God still calls us today to choose between His plan of Salvation, and the desires of the flesh.
- ✧ It is still a choice between Heaven's Glory, and Hell's torment.
- ✧ May we today choose wisely.