

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

Evangelist W. Paul Redmond Sr.

Volume 8, Issue 11

April 2012

How Will You Be Remembered? (Part 4)

I Kings 14:16; II Kings 12:2; 18:5

Last month we considered Jeroboam's reaction and how it was based on insecurity. Now we will ponder a second aspect of His Reaction. It *Brought about Idolatry*. I Kings 12:28 says, "*Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*" Because Jeroboam did not believe what God had told him back in I Kings 11:38, he led the ten northern tribes into idol worship. Jeroboam could have been a great king and could have led his nation into a great period of devotion to God, but he went in the opposite direction. As we saw so clearly earlier in the message, Jeroboam had the potential to do great things for God. God chose him out of all the men of Israel to take these ten tribes and gave him some wonderful promises. But Jeroboam rejected God's promises and went his own way. People today are still doing like Jeroboam—they are rejecting God's way for their own way. God's message of truth is written in the Bible and is proclaimed by his faithful preachers, but still men and women choose their own way.

Jeroboam tried to make this idolatry look good because he fashioned these idols out of gold. But these golden idols did not impress God. Even though it would be highly valued by men, it was abominable to God. God had clearly stated in Exodus 20:4, "*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.*" That one time alone would have been enough, but God repeated the prohibition against idolatry many times. Israel suffered because of their idolatry in the period of the judges, and it is the very reason that God took the complete kingdom

-2-

from Solomon's descendants and gave these ten tribes to Jeroboam. Jeroboam should have been aware of how much God hates idolatry. To top it off, God specifically reminded Jeroboam through the words command and commandments used in I Kings 18:38 that idolatry was prohibited. In spite of the written Word of God in Exodus and the spoken Word of God directly to him, Jeroboam still made these idols.

As I started to say earlier, Jeroboam could have reasoned that God would accept these idols because he was using gold. It was a precious metal even in Bible times and would impress men, but it would not find acceptance with God. The streets of the New Jerusalem are paved with gold, so gold is nothing with God. It may have been a sacrifice to Jeroboam to make these idols because he may not have had much gold yet, but he should have been mindful of what God told Saul in I Samuel 15:22, "*Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.*" Whatever reason Jeroboam may have put together to make these idols, God was not impressed, nor would he accept them. People today act the same way. They do things, sometimes sacrificially, and think that God is impressed with what they do and will give them salvation. But God is not impressed with the work of sinners. God looks at what sinners do and sees those works as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). As God said to Saul, he says to us—"I want obedience, not sacrifice." How can a sinner be obedient to God? By accepting Jesus Christ as Savior. Jesus is the only way of salvation. It is not in what man can do. It is in what Jesus has done at Calvary.

As we continue looking at this account of Jeroboam, we can see some more of his reasoning. In I Kings 12:28, he says, "*It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem.*" Perhaps Jeroboam, in his own mind, had to make a valid reason for these idols. He came up with the perfect idea—to make things easier for the people. Men have always wanted things easier, but more often than not, especially in the Biblical realm, easier things go contrary to the Word of God. That is certainly the case here.

As we mentioned earlier, God had commanded the men of Israel

to go up to Jerusalem three times a year. For those living in the northern part of Israel, that could have been a journey of several days. Jeroboam is trying to appeal to their laziness and say, "I have an easier way." But God did not give Jeroboam permission to change His commandments. God did not say, "The kingdom is now divided, and so go ahead and establish a new place of worship." Jeroboam is going against God's commandments and God's way of worship. It would be his downfall. God did not think it was too much. Whom do you think knew better? Jeroboam or God. I will go with God.

As I ponder this statement, "*It is too much for you,*" I cannot help but think of ways that we in our Fundamental, Independent Baptist churches have adopted this same philosophy. We try to make things "easier" and "less hard" for people of today. It has not helped them or our churches, but rather, has harmed everyone. Some will get mad and disagree, but that does not bother me. This is the way that I see it. One area is our revival meetings. Fifty years ago and more, our church revival meetings would last for two weeks. Souls would be saved and churches strengthened, but about thirty or forty years ago the meetings were shortened to a week. Later in the 1980's and 1990's, they were shortened to three days. Why were they shortened? The response you always hear is "to make it easier on everyone." But what I do not understand is why we have to have things so easy. Are we working so hard today as opposed to our parents and grandparents? The answer is, "No, we are not." If you look at the number of hours that people work today as opposed to the early part of the twentieth century, you will find that work hours, as a whole, have decreased. So, what is our problem? Why do we find it so hard to attend revival meetings for more than a few nights a week? The issue is not a physical problem. It is a heart problem.

Some will argue and say that the Bible does not say anything about revival meetings and how long they should run. They are right about that. What I would ask in response is this, "Why did the meetings last for two weeks years ago?" Are we closer to God today than the people were then? I do not think anyone would say that

people today are closer to God than the people of the past. Then why did they have longer meetings? Personally, I think they wanted to hear from God and most people today do not. Our problem today is a spiritual problem. We care more for the things of the world—sports, entertainment, etc.—than the things of God—church, revival meetings, etc. To accommodate people of today, we use the language of Jeroboam, "It is too much for you." As a whole, Fundamental, Independent Baptists have said, "It is too much for you to come every night for two weeks." So we made it easier, and in doing so, we have reaped the churches and families that we have today.

Let me mention one other thing that has really bothered me and is an example of Jeroboam's philosophy of "easy" religion. When I was growing up, only liberal churches cancelled or did not have Sunday night services. Now Fundamental, Independent Baptist churches are cancelling Sunday night services. Often it seems that more cancel Sunday night services than have them. Why is it so hard to have a regular Sunday night service? Is it too hard to come to church twice a Sunday?

In connection with that, some are going to a Sunday afternoon service. The idea is that we will bunch all of our services together, so people will only have to drive to church once on Sunday. What ends up happening is that the afternoon service is shortened to just one song and a short Bible study. The Sunday night service of extra singing and a good Bible message is eliminated. Why is this done? The answer is often, "To make it easier on people." For the life of me, I cannot figure out what is so hard about coming to church twice on Sunday. To be honest, the Sunday night services are often the most enjoyable service of the week. To do away with them is to do away with, possibly, the best service. Many will mention that the price of fuel is high, so we want to help people. But why is church what we eliminate. People do not stop driving everywhere else, but they cannot spend \$5-\$10 extra to go to church. The problem is not with time or fuel or anything else that we say that it is. The problem is with our heart. The real problem is that we do not love God, nor

His Word. If we did, we would be begging for extra services, not cancelling them. We have adopted Jeroboam's philosophy, "It is too much for you." But it is not too much to go to church twice on Sunday. We, as a whole generation, are just lazy and love the world too much.

Jeroboam would go on to utter the blasphemous words, "*Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt*" (I Kings 12:28). That anyone, let alone a king of Israel, would say these words are beyond my imagination. Yet these are the same words that Aaron had said in Exodus 32:4 when he made a golden calf. Jeroboam should have remembered the catastrophe from that earlier occasion, but either forgot it or neglected it. It amazes me that Jeroboam said that these gods had delivered the nation. He had just made them. How could they have delivered the nation 500 years earlier? I am guessing that he is saying that they represent God. But that is utterly despicable. As Aaron did, Jeroboam made an Egyptian god. God had shown many times that He is real and all other gods are false. Jeroboam is replacing the true God for a false one. The nation would never recover.