

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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How Will You Be Remembered? (Part 3)

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

Last month while considering Jeroboam's Reminder, we closed out looking at the words statutes and commandments in I Kings 11:38. The statutes were often used in reference to the Feast days that God instituted in Leviticus. Though the nation was going to be divided, each part was still to keep the ceremonies that God had given the united nation in Leviticus. The word commandments is the noun form of the verb used earlier in the verse. It is the same word for the Ten Commandments. God is reminding Jeroboam that the ten tribes are still to worship Him and that they are not to make any graven images.

God then mentions, "*as David my servant did.*" Jeroboam was not alive when David reigned, but no doubt, he heard about how great David's reign was. Only forty years had passed since David's death and older people could readily describe the magnificence of David's kingdom. David had failed God in committing adultery, but he never worshiped a false god. Solomon had turned away from God and worshiped many idols which is why the kingdom was being divided. God wanted another king like David who would remain faithful to Him and not fall into idolatry. It does not seem that difficult to do. After all, how hard could it be to be devoted to the God Who made everything? Who would want to follow and worship an idol that they themselves had made of wood, stone, or metal? Jeroboam had a seemingly easy decision to make—follow God and worship Him. But as we will see, Jeroboam chose another route.

After telling Jeroboam what He expected, God gives a promise. God says, "If you will follow me, then *"I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house."* What an amazing promise! God is giving to

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Jeroboam the ten northern tribes and making him the king over them. He gives Jeroboam the throne and promises a continued line. God even equates this promise to the promise He had made to David in II Samuel 7. Jeroboam would be as great as David, if he followed God. The tasks that God demands do not seem too hard. Follow Him, obey Him, and worship Him. He is not asking Jeroboam to run a marathon or fight Rehoboam in hand to hand combat. God is not asking for any great physical feat. God is asking and demanding complete spiritual obedience. Jeroboam will not be willing to give that.

Even the promise of God's eternal presence in Jeroboam's life and the promise of a continued line will not be enough to make Jeroboam follow God. As you read this verse and see what God tells Jeroboam, you would think that Jeroboam would have an easy decision to make—follow God and be blessed by God. But to the flesh it is not so easy. Each of us could testify from our own struggles with following God that the decision is not easy. It is far easier to the flesh to follow what can be seen than to follow God by faith. Jeroboam would see with his eyes and follow that path rather than see with his heart and follow God.

Jeroboam had a chance to follow God and do something great for Him. But instead of heeding the reminder that God gave, Jeroboam rejected it. I Kings 12:26-31 describes His Reaction.

The first part of I Kings 12 describes the division of the kingdom that God had said would happen in I Kings 11. After the ten northern tribes follow Jeroboam, he seeks to establish his kingdom. He builds a city called Shechem and lives there. Then he sets about to unify his kingdom through worship. That is a very good way to unify the people. Jeroboam has a good idea, but he rejects the reminder that God gave and chooses his own way.

Why does he do that? Why does he react the way that he does? As we read I Kings 12:27, we can determine that Jeroboam's reaction was *Based on Insecurity*. The verse says, "*If this people go up to do*

sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.” Jeroboam has just been on the throne for a few months. As the time for the sacrifice draws near, Jeroboam sees the situation and makes a decision that in his own mind and to his own flesh seems reasonable. But in following his way, he rejects the Word of God that had been given him. This is always the case. If we follow what we say, we will reject what God says. All of the false religions of this world seem reasonable to some degree to the human mind. But they are contrary to what God says! God says that man must accept Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation. Human reasoning says that man must do something on his own to satisfy God. Man’s reasoning is wrong! God’s way is right! We must choose God’s way and follow Him!

Let us examine in detail Jeroboam’s thoughts. He said, *“If this people go up.”* God had told Israel in Exodus 23:14-17 that the men were to go up to Jerusalem three times a year. They were to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Harvest (Pentecost), and the Feast of Ingathering (Tabernacles). Though the nation was divided politically, God had not divided it religiously. They were to keep the same sacrifices and feasts. Remember what God had told Jeroboam in I Kings 11:38 concerning the statutes. That word is referring to the Feast Days. I pointed this out earlier because it is so important. Before the nation was divided, God said that the feasts and sacrifices were to remain the same. Another order of sacrifices and feasts was not to be instituted. God had established His order of worship at Mount Sinai, and it was not going to change. Jeroboam was told that explicitly. The kingdom was divided, but worship was to remain the same.

But insecurity overwhelms Jeroboam. He goes on to say that if the men go to Jerusalem, *“then shall the heart of this people turn again...unto Rehoboam.”* He thought that if the Northern tribes worshiped in Jerusalem, then they would reunite with Rehoboam.

This sounds logical to the flesh, but it is not what God said would happen. God had divided the kingdom and there was nothing that could reunite it. Following God’s way of worship would not have weakened Jeroboam; rather, his kingdom would have been strengthened. How do I know this? Because that is what God said in I Kings 11:38. Again, to human reasoning Jeroboam made a sensible choice. But it was completely contrary to what God had said to do. Sometimes God’s commands do seem strange to our way of thinking. But it is not for us to understand God. Romans 11:34 says, *“For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?”* God does not tell us to understand all of His commands. God tells us to obey them. Jeroboam made a decision that seemed reasonable to him, but it would cost his family the kingdom, and it would ruin his name forever.

Jeroboam further shows his insecurity by saying, *“They shall kill me.”* Again, he is listening to his reasoning rather than what God says. God had promised the kingdom to Jeroboam in I Kings 11:38. If Jeroboam followed and kept the statutes and commandments, God promised to be with him. There is no greater place of protection than in God’s presence. If Jeroboam had kept the sacrifices and feasts as God commanded, no one could have laid a hand upon him. He did not reach a greater place of protection by choosing his way. He chose the wrong path and encountered greater danger. God’s way is always best and is always the safest path to follow.

What caused this insecurity in Jeroboam? Unbelief. He did not believe what God told him through the prophet Ahijah. God demanded obedience and promised a kingdom and protection, but Jeroboam did not believe God. Why? We can only speculate, but perhaps he thought it would be too hard for God to keep the nations separate, if they worshiped the same way. It came down to Jeroboam’s rejecting the unlimited power of God. There could have been many other reasons, but it all comes down to believing God. Jeroboam did not.

The same is true of all people, not just Jeroboam. God tells us plainly in His Word how one can have eternal life, but people do not believe what He says. He tells us the secret to joy and peace in this life, but people do not accept what God says and try their own path. They never find peace and joy because those blessings can only be found in Christ. They are not found in the riches, pleasures, or attainments of this world.

What about you? Do you believe God? First, have you believed in Christ for salvation? Christ is the only hope for man's soul. You must accept Him or you will experience the eternal wrath of God in the lake of fire. Second, what about you who have trusted in Christ for salvation? Are you trusting God for all of your daily needs? Are you trying to live the Christian life in your own strength? You cannot do it, but you can live the Christian life in the strength of Christ. Finally, are you obeying God's commands? Do you search the Word of God daily to find out how He wants you to live? Do you faithfully attend church so you can hear His Word proclaimed, and you can live closer to Christ? Jeroboam heard God's commands but did not believe what God said. Do you believe what God said?