

False Religions

1 Kings 12:25-33

Introduction: This is a lesson about apostasy. False teachings and a disregard for God's word leads to false religions. We will examine Jeroboam as a case study that illustrates how false religions can quickly begin and how Jeroboam's apostasy resulted in his own false religion.

I. Background of text - 1 Kings 11-12.

A. King Solomon had turned his back on God by giving his heart to the idols of his foreign wives (1 Kings 11:9-13). The start of the divided kingdom.

B. Jeroboam was a servant of Solomon's. Jeroboam was in charge of the labor force and was characterized as industrious (1 Kings 11:26, 28).

C. God chose Jeroboam to succeed Solomon per the Lord's plan (1 Kings 11:29-38). God promised him a prosperous rulership over ten tribes as long as he remained faithful to God's laws.

D. Solomon died and Rehoboam, his son, reigned in his stead (1 Kings 11:43).

E. The people through Jeroboam asked Rehoboam to lighten the burden (taxes) Solomon had placed on them (1 Kings 12:3-4).

F. Rehoboam refused and threatened to increase their burdensome taxes instead (1 Kings 12:13-14).

G. Consequently, the ten tribes revolted and followed Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:19-20).

H. Unfortunately, Jeroboam was not content to trust God's promise by keeping the law but chose instead to modify the law to suit his own purposes (1 Kings 12:26-33).

II. The religion of Jeroboam is fundamentally the same as all false religions.

A. Its source - human wisdom.

1. Jeroboam established his own places of worship, he built his own alters, he appointed his own priests, he made his own idols, he ordained his own feast day, all "which he had devised in his own heart" (vs. 33).

2. Constantine the Great did the same thing when he started Roman Catholic Church in 325 A.D.

3. King Henry VIII did the same thing when he started the Church of England in 1534.

4. Joseph Smith did the same thing when he started the Mormon Church in 1830.

5. So is the case with all false religions (Col. 2:18-23; Acts 26:9; Matt. 7:21-23).

B. Its motive - to make personal followers of the people.

1. Jeroboam was afraid to let the people to go to Jerusalem to worship as God ordained for fear of losing their devotion to Rehoboam (vs. 26-27).

2. The same motive underlines much of the false teaching done today (Acts 20:29-30; 2 Pet. 2:1-3).

C. Its appeal - convenience to make worship easier for the people.

1. Jeroboam said Jerusalem was too far to travel (vs.28).

2. False teachers today use the same appeal (2 Tim. 4:1-4). "It doesn't matter if we sin once in a while."

3. It did not matter that God's will was being ignored (Jude 4).

4. Teachers and hearers need to consider Gal. 1:10.

D. Its appearance - similar to the truth.

1. Jeroboam's feast was "like the feast that was in Judah" (vs. 32).

2. False teachers today make error palatable by giving it the appearance of truth (2 Cor. 11:12-15). It works well in Catholicism as it does in Mormonism.

E. Its effect - progressive apostasy.

1. The religion of Jeroboam lead to all kinds of apostasy (2 Kings 17:7-17).

2. Likewise, false religions lead people away from God (2 Tim. 3:13).

3. Please notice from this passage how one avoids the doctrines of false religions (2 Tim. 3:14-17).

F. Its results - destruction.

1. The nation of Israel was lost (2 Kings 17:18).

2. Eternal damnation follows all false worshippers (Matt. 7:21-23).

Conclusion: The religion of Jeroboam is as false today as it was back then. Let us refuse all false religions and worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).