

Jeroboam's Bad Reputation
2-2-14

The value of reputation is an idea throughout the Bible (Proverbs 22:1, Ecclesiastes 7:1). We know that it is one of the most important tools of evangelism (1 Peter 2:11-12). Let's consider one reputation; that of the King Jeroboam. He had been chosen by God to lead the northern tribes of Israel because of Solomon's sins. Yet although chosen by God, he has a unique reputation among the kings:

1 Kings 14:16 And (God) will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who sinned and who made Israel sin."

*1 Kings 15:34 (Nadab) did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in **the way of Jeroboam**, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin.*

In fact, the way of Jeroboam is mention in connection with most of the sins of the kings of Israel (I Kings 15:34, 16:2, 7, 19, 26, 31; 22:52; II Kings 3:3; 10:29; 13:2; 14:24; 15:9, 18, 24, 28). What was so bad that his reputation was so evil? What is the "**Way of Jeroboam**"?

The Way of Jeroboam is revealed in I Kings 12:26-33 that once Jeroboam was secured as king, he worried the people would leave him to worship in Jerusalem. So to make worship easier, he made an image of Jehovah, he made popular places to worship, and he made unqualified priests to serve these places of worship. Consider that he did not worship false gods or even turn away from Jehovah. Perhaps he even believed in God, loved God in his mind, and wanted to worship God. The way of Jeroboam is still around.....

Many desire to make worship easy. They complain that there are too many meeting times a week, or too long of services, or that it is too far to drive. Unfortunately, when people want easy worship, they end up not worshipping. God cursed this attitude in Israel in Malachi 1:13

Making images of God is still around too. While many may not make a physical image of God, they make an idea of God that is their image of who He should be. They say that "Jesus is non-judgmental" (contrary to Scripture), or "God won't let anyone go to hell" (contradicting the truth). Ultimately, the way of Jeroboam is seen in them in the attitude that "it seems alright to me". When people make an "image" of God, He tends to look like them. God said (Numbers 23:19) that He "is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?". If God said something, we cannot change Him to fit our image of Him.

The Way of Jeroboam is about making popular places to worship. The high places were what people wanted then; today, it is things like bands or coffee shops. Relaxed worship, laid back services that are nothing but "Holy Entertainment". When men seek popular worship, it looks a lot like playing. Remember how that ends? "*Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. And the Lord said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves!"*" (Exodus 32:6)

Finally, the Way of Jeroboam was about making unqualified priests. Many really are ignorant of the qualifications of offices like Pastors (I Tim 3, Titus 1), priests (1 Peter 2:5) and reverends (Psalm 111:9). Even titles like "Christian" and "Sinner" have specific qualifications lost to most. When words lose their meaning, we lose our meaning.

Jeroboam's reputation of sin was in worshipping God his way. We can easily fall into the same trap.