

Unexpected – Well That Escalated Quickly 4.14.2019

Replay message at: <http://www.northpointeFL.org/messages>

**Memory Verse: Isaiah 44:6**

“This is what the LORD says—Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies: “I am the First and the Last; there is no other God.”

**Read:**

1 Kings 12:25-33 (NLT)

**HISTORY & BACKGROUND**

After the days of King Solomon, the twelve tribes of Israel divided into two kingdoms. The first leader of the northern kingdom was a man named Jeroboam – one of the more interesting and tragic figures of Israel’s history. Jeroboam was anointed and called by God, but very quickly became more interested in holding onto power than in honoring the God who gave it to him. Now when Jeroboam led the 10 northern tribes in their rebellion, he wanted to break every tie with the southern kingdom of Judah. However, the city of Jerusalem was in Judah – and it was *that* place that all the children of Israel were commanded to bring their sacrifices. Afraid to allow his people to visit Jerusalem and Judah, Jeroboam set up *his own* altars at the cities of Dan and Bethel.

The Bible tells us, “Now this thing became a sin.” It was a sin when Jeroboam suggested it, but it was more of a sin when the people followed it. The people were so attracted to the religion of Jeroboam that they went as far as Dan (at the far north of Israel) to worship at the shrine of the golden calf there. Today, you can visit Israel and the site of ancient Dan and see exactly where the altar and golden calf stood.

Jeroboam went even further; “he made shrines on the high places.” He made more places of worship than the main centers at Bethel and Dan. These high places were even more convenient for the people.

Then he abolished the priesthood that God commanded, he “made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi.” Jeroboam rejected the commandments of God regarding the priesthood of Israel and established a priesthood of his own liking.

Jeroboam also arranged for a special feast to be held “in the month which he had devised in his own heart.”

This statement best summarizes Jeroboam’s religion – it was devised in his own heart. Jeroboam is an example of those who create their own religion according to their own taste. For the most part, the world today believes in the religion of Jeroboam. Not necessarily his particular expression of golden calves and high places, but a religion created according to its own taste. You could say that Jeroboam believed in “Jeroboamism” – it was all devised in his own heart. He was his own priest and created his own theology – basically, he created a god in *his own image*.

The tendency to do the same is in us all, but fortunately God has revealed to what He is like – He tells us in the Bible. We come to realize that my *opinion* about God isn’t any better or worse than that of anyone else – but *what God says about Himself in the Bible* reveals to us the God who is really there; not just the figment of my imagination or the creation of my own heart.

- Why do you think the people were so attracted to Jeroboam’s religion?
- What other religions and/or ideas do you see now that people are attracted to (for the same or different reasons)?
- All people involved in worshiping false idols were sinning, but Jeroboam’s sin was greater. Why is this?

It is up to each of us to carefully examine our own idea of God and ask: “Did I make this myself or does God Himself tell me this in the Bible?” At the end of it all, all the gods we make in our own image are illusions – the God of the Bible is the one who is there, He is not silent, and He is the one who can rescue and help us.

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