

KING JEROBOAM

1 Kings 12:25 - 14:20

STRUCTURE

Key-person: Jeroboam

Key-location: Israel (Northern Kingdom)

Key-repetitions:

- Jeroboam sinned against God: he made two golden calves and said they were the gods who brought them out of Egypt (1 Kin 12:28); he dismissed Levites as priests and recruited priests from all sorts of people (1 Kin 12:31); he recruited priests indiscriminately for forbidden shrines (1 Kin 13:33-34).
- Actions of Israelites who sought God: Priests and Levites abandoned their properties and moved to Jerusalem (2 Chr 11:13-14); all who set their hearts on seeking the Lord God migrated to Jerusalem (2 Chr 11:16); they supported Rehoboam during the time he was loyal to the ways of David (2 Chr 11:17).
- Signs/miracles: a man of God prophesied the destruction of Jeroboam's altar and gave a sign that the altar would break apart (1 Kin 13:3); Jeroboam yelled, "Seize him"; Jeroboam's arm became paralyzed and the altar broke; the sign just given (1 Kin 13:4-5); Jeroboam pleaded with the man of God to pray that his arm be healed. The man prayed and the king's arm was healed (1 Kin 13:6).

Key-attitudes:

- Jeroboam's arrogance.
- Man of God's courage to prophesy against Jeroboam's altar.
- People's love of God demonstrated by their willingness to leave their possessions to migrate to Jerusalem.

Initial-situation:

The twelve tribes of Israel divided after King Solomon's death. Ten of the tribes of Israel rebelled against Solomon's son, Rehoboam, and made Jeroboam king. They called their new nation Israel or the Northern Kingdom. Rehoboam continued to rule over two tribes. They called their nation Judah or the Southern Kingdom.

Initial-problem:

King Jeroboam thought, "When these people go up to worship at the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, they'll want to be ruled by Rehoboam, king of Judah.

Final-situation:

All of the kings of Israel imitated Jeroboam and did evil. They all promoted idolatry and immorality.

BIBLE STORY

King Jeroboam thought, "When these people go up to worship at the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, they'll want to be ruled by Rehoboam, king of Judah. They'll kill me and go back to King Rehoboam."

King Jeroboam made two golden calves and told the people, "It's too hard for you to go up to Jerusalem to worship. Here are your gods who brought you up out of Egypt." Jeroboam put one calf in Bethel, and the other in Dan. This was blatant sin against God. Jeroboam created a new festival for the Israelites to worship and offer sacrifices at the altar he built at Bethel (1 Kin 12:25-33).

Jeroboam dismissed the Levites as priests and recruited priests from all sorts of people for worship centers where he installed goat and calf idols. Therefore, priests and Levites throughout Israel sided with Rehoboam, abandoned their pastures and properties, and moved to Jerusalem, the capital city of Judah. Everyone from all the tribes of Israel who set their hearts on seeking the Lord God of Israel, migrated with the Levites to Jerusalem. They supported Rehoboam for the three years, during the time he was loyal to the ways of David (2 Chr 11:13-17).

Jeroboam was standing by the altar in Bethel to make an offering. A man of God cried out the Lord's words, "O altar, altar! The Lord says, 'David's family will have a son named Josiah. Josiah will kill the priests who now make offerings here on you. Human bones will be burned on you. God gives this sign that these things will come to pass: the altar will be split apart and the ashes on it will fall onto the dirt.'"

King Jeroboam stretched out his arm, yelling, "Seize him!" Jeroboam's arm became paralyzed and hung useless. At the same time, the altar broke apart and its ashes spilled into the dirt; the sign that the man of God had just given.

Jeroboam pleaded with the man of God, "Intercede for me! Pray to the Lord your God that my arm may be healed." The man of God prayed, and the king's arm was healed (1 Kin 13:1-10).

However, Jeroboam continued doing evil, recruiting priests indiscriminately for the forbidden shrines. This was the root sin of Jeroboam's government. This was the sin that ruined him (1 Kin 13:33-34). Jeroboam reigned for 22 years, and then died (1 Kin 14:19-20).

All of the kings of Israel imitated Jeroboam and did evil. They all promoted idolatry and immorality.

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why was Jeroboam afraid for his citizens to go to Jerusalem to worship God?
2. How did Jeroboam justify the golden calves?
3. What happened when the man of God prophesied against Jeroboam's altar?
4. What did the priests, Levites, and people who set their hearts on seeking the Lord God do when Jeroboam made the golden calves?
5. Today, what must people give up who set their hearts on seeking the Lord God?
6. How did Jeroboam sin and cause the people to sin?
7. Today, what kind of leaders sin and cause the people to sin?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **False religions have their origin in human beings.** The false religion of Jeroboam originated with his own thoughts (1 Kin 12:26) and was motivated by his selfish desires (1 Kin 12:27).
2. **The person who leads others to do wrong may justify himself by claiming it to be for their own benefit.** King Jeroboam made two golden calves and told the people, "It's too hard for you to go up to Jerusalem to worship. Here are your gods who brought you up out of Egypt." This was blatant sin against God (1 Kin 12:28-31).
3. **Disbelief of God's all-sufficiency will result in using wrongful means to obtain what God promised.** Jeroboam feared that if his people went to Jerusalem three times a year to keep religious feasts, they would return their allegiance to Rehoboam (1 Kin 2:26). Jeroboam doubted God's power to bring about his promises (1 Kin 11:38). Jeroboam adopted sinful ways to safeguard his newly won throne (1 Kin 14:16).
4. **The person who is unwilling to hear God's message will hate the person who tells him God's word, and may try to harm him.** God sent the prophet to warn Jeroboam of God's wrath against his ungodliness and unrighteousness. Jeroboam ordered the prophet to be seized, but God protected the prophet (1 Kin 13:2-4).
5. **The worst sinners are those who lead others to do wrong.** Jeroboam sinned and caused Israel to sin (1 Kin 14:9, 16; 15:30). Jesus said it would be better for the person who teaches others to sin to have a millstone tied around their neck, and be thrown into the sea (Mk 9:42).
6. **Anyone is qualified to represent a god that is worthless.** To represent the Lord God Almighty, a person must live by God's standards, not man's. Jeroboam built forbidden shrines and recruited priests from all sorts of people (1 Kin 12:25-33).

Anyone who wanted to become a priest, Jeroboam consecrated for the local shrines (1 Kin 13:33-34).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Sharing Groups:

Jeroboam doubted that God would keep his promises and build up his dynasty if he were faithful to God. So he built idols to prevent his citizens from going to Jerusalem to worship.

Invite the listeners to divide into small groups of three or four. Encourage each one to share one area where they tend to doubt God's all-sufficiency; and as a result, they use human methods to get for themselves what God has promised them.