

# JEROBOAM'S COMPROMISE



**+** **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

Left unchecked, doubt and fear can be the first steps toward sin and judgment.

**+** **BACKGROUND PASSAGE:**

1 Kings 12–14

**+** **SETTING:**

At some point in Solomon's wise reign over Israel, he succumbed to foolishness and worshiped idols. God had declared that He would humble David's descendants when they did not do what was right in His eyes. For Solomon, this took the form of war, but succeeding generations would suffer a divided kingdom. After Solomon's death, his son, Rehoboam, was made king over all Israel, but he did not listen to wisdom and was harsh with the people. Because of this, the kingdom was divided and Rehoboam ruled over Judah while the people established Jeroboam as king over the rest of Israel. Jeroboam now had the responsibility to lead the people to obey God and enjoy His favor.

# DAY 1

## READ:

1 Kings 12

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

1 Kings 12:25-27

NOTES

Death can be an incredible motivator. We spend most of our lives avoiding death. We eat, drink water, sleep, exercise, and avoid pain as best we can to prevent death from getting a hold of us sooner than we like. Have you ever had a near-death experience?

We may avoid certain foods or make certain decisions all in the name of avoiding death. There is a healthy way to pursue safety and longevity in life, but there are also extreme responses. It would be unwise and unfulfilling to stay locked up in a bunker our entire lives for fear of death. In fact, we could do every single thing known to humankind to prevent death, and God still could stop our hearts and remove our breath in an instant.

It was the possibility of death that motivated new King Jeroboam to set up an altar to false gods. To avoid death, Jeroboam was willing to set up idols. Fear of death should never encourage sin. In fact, we have many examples in Scripture of the opposite taking place. Daniel looked death in the face in the lions' den, yet he did not waver in his obedience to God. John the Baptist proclaimed the Messiah was near and denounced sin and was beheaded for it. Countless Christians in other parts of the world are told to denounce their faith every day, and they have given their lives for remaining steadfast to the Lord.

Disobedience to God is not worth your life. It is better to be killed for obedience than to live longer while denying the gospel. Nothing in this world is able to satisfy your deepest desires. Compromising to gain a little admiration, pleasure, wealth, or anything else is more damaging to your soul than to walk away and pursue obedience over everything. You may not be facing death as a martyr at this moment, but you are constantly facing decisions to honor God or not. If you deny Him in the small things, what is to stop you from denying Him in moments of life or death?

**In what ways do you find yourself compromising and disobeying God instead of walking in obedience?**

# DAY 2

## READ:

Matthew 5

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Matthew 5:27-30

## NOTES



### ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #44: TEMPTATION AND SIN

Temptation is not the equivalent of sin. Temptation can refer to natural and good desires that are twisted and directed toward pleasing of self rather than giving glory to God. Jesus was tempted like we are (Matt. 4), and yet, He never sinned but faithfully resisted temptation and followed the will of His Father. Knowing our weakness, we are to be on guard against temptation that may lead us to sin (Matt. 26:41), and we pray for God to deliver us from evil (Matt. 6:13).

Sin is quite sneaky. It is easy to make several seemingly small decisions of disobedience that can lead us to a place where we turn around and have no idea how we got there. We may be tempted to think that the sin we are committing is not a big deal, it isn't affecting anyone, or we have it under control. Yet allowing small threads of sin to pull at our heart and mind could slowly lead to a full unraveling later.

The thread that Jeroboam pulled was doubting whether or not the people of his kingdom would stay under his reign. This led him to create a secondary place of worship, create idols, lead the people into sin, and try to arrest a man of God. It would have been easy for Jeroboam to justify his sinful actions or say he had good intentions. But the reality was his sin led him to idolatry.

The Bible is clear about the seriousness of sin. Even our momentary thoughts are a representation of what we really feel and think. In Matthew 5:28, Jesus states that if someone even looks with lust, they have committed adultery. And the solution is not to shrug our shoulders and hope we do better next time. Instead, it is to cut off the very source of sin and flee far from it.

Ultimately, sin is a heart issue, a faith issue, not believing and trusting that God is who He says He is and will do what He says He will. In our lack of trust, we want to do things our own way. But we must stop, evaluate every little action we do, and ask ourselves, "Is this glorifying God?" or "Could this lead me to sin?"

God is holy and just and will not stand even an iota of sin. But praise God for His mercy and grace in sending Jesus to die for our sins and to draw us back to Him when we fail His standards!

**In what areas of your life are you not taking your sin seriously and thus giving it a foothold in your heart and mind?**

# DAY 3

## READ:

**1 Kings 12:25-33**

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

**1 Kings 12:28-30**

## NOTES

## VOICES from THE CHURCH

"[Jeroboam's] intention seems to be, like Solomon, to dedicate a temple to the Lord. But he celebrates at the wrong time, in the wrong place, on the wrong altar, and in honour of the wrong gods. Just as there are two nations, two capitals and two kings, now there are also two religions. For the rest of Kings, Jeroboam will be spoken of as the one who led Israel astray."<sup>1</sup>

-Havilah Dharamraj

Fear of God can be a difficult thing to understand, yet it is essential in keeping us from sin. Jeroboam feared men and death more than he feared God. This led him to idolatry. And idolatry is still alive and well today in many of our modern-day pursuits.

If you have ever been more concerned about what a person thinks of you than what God thinks of you, you have feared man more than God. Maybe it's desiring wealth or status, fame or popularity, or just the good life, the comfortable and peaceful life—these too can be symptoms of fearing man more than God and can result in idolatry. It would be easy to raise our eyebrow at Jeroboam and think about how evil he was, but it would do us good to remember that we may only be two or three steps away from being just like him.

You may think to yourself, "I need to stop fearing man" or "I need to fear God more." These are true and right thoughts. However, it can sometimes be difficult to see results just by thinking you should change.

Your fear of man must be completely replaced by fear of God, and fear of God comes from knowing that God is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-sufficient, and perfectly holy, just, and loving. He cannot ignore sin, and we know that sin will not go unpunished. If we let sin rule in our hearts, if we let our fears of man and what they might do control us, then we have no room to let God rule in our hearts.

The worst that a person can do to you is destroy the body, and that is not insignificant. But for those who know Jesus, death does not have the final word. Even if the world hates us and kills us, we have the promise of life in eternity with Jesus. But if we do not repent of our sins, we will spend an eternity in hell apart from God. We must fear the God who punishes sin yet offers life in abundance for us as well (Matt. 10:28).

**What can you do to grow in the fear of the Lord instead of the fear of man?**

# DAY 4

## READ:

1 Kings 13

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

1 Kings 13:8-10

NOTES

There is a common message today that encourages us to be ourselves, to not let anyone tell us what to do, to pursue individuality, and to avoid being controlled by anyone else. This can sometimes lead us to reject authority in our lives or become skeptical of those who tell us how things are to be done. Whether this is a parent, pastor, boss, spouse, or any other person who is requesting a specific kind of behavior or action, we may allow our doubt of their trustworthiness to push us to reject their request.

We may even be tempted to interact with God this way. We may doubt His trustworthiness or think that we know a better way. Or put simply, we just do not want to be “controlled.” We want to protect ourselves, and we do not want anyone else telling us how to live our lives. God’s Word requires uncomfortable things of us. It requires us to deny ourselves to follow Jesus (Matt. 16:24).

Jeroboam is an example of someone who did not trust God as Ruler and Lord of his life. He rejected God’s authority and chose his own path instead. In contrast, there was a man of God. This man was obedient to God’s word (until he was deceived). He was completely submissive to God in every way, even with the possible threat that the king could punish or kill him.

In the story, one is king and one is a nameless voice for God. Who is the hero? Would you rather be a king that’s faithless or be someone who is nameless and devoted? Many of us are nameless heroes in God’s book as we choose to trust and be faithful to God alone. No one will write about us; we may never have a title. But in God’s book, our names will be written.

Choose to be nameless over being a king when faithfulness is asked of you. Choose obedience over self-indulgence. Choose total submission over getting your own way.

**What are some things keeping you from obeying God or from acknowledging His authority in your life?**

# DAY 5

## READ:

Exodus 20

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Exodus 20:3-6

NOTES

As human beings with a sinful nature, it's natural for us to create idols. It could almost be considered impulsive. We may recognize an idol that we've created and then do the work to remove the idol and love God more. But before we know it, there is another idol forming in our hearts and demanding our love, affection, and admiration.

How do we overcome this? It feels daunting and hopeless. If we create idols by nature, then when will our struggle with idolatry end?

If you've been a Christian for very long, you've probably had moments in your life when you have been frustrated by your sin. You can't seem to stop a certain sin, or you do for a while and then it rears its ugly head all over again. How do we deal with this? Is there hope for us?

We must recognize that we live in the "already/not yet." What this means is that Jesus has already paid for our sin and has counted us righteous before God, but we are not yet perfect. God's kingdom has already come, but it is not yet complete. Day by day, we are being transformed into the image of God (2 Cor. 3:18), but daily we are reminded that we have not yet arrived.

In the meantime, we continue to trust in Christ as our Savior, whose death has given us righteousness before God. Though we still sin and break God's commands even when we don't want to, we do not live with the burden of hopelessness or the consequences of death.

Our hope for salvation and for sanctification is in Christ. We still strive for holiness in the power of the Holy Spirit, but we do not despair in our sin. We know that when we reach eternity, we will be made perfect and our hearts will no longer create idols.

**What idols or sins do you find yourself returning to?  
How will you live today in light of your hope in Christ for future freedom from sin?**

# GROUP

NOTES

## VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Jeroboam's first impiety was that he cast aside the promise of God . . . He trusted in his own providence and counsel, imagining that he defended himself and had gained the kingdom by himself. In a second clear impiety, he then cast aside those things of God that God had commanded in Deuteronomy. He raised up golden calves as gods, along with ways of worshiping that differed from the law. Third, he thrust this seemingly holy pretext onto future generations."<sup>2</sup>

-Johannes Bugenhagen  
(1485-1558)

**POINT 1: Doubting God's promises leads to fear** (1 Kings 12:25-27).

Jeroboam \_\_\_\_\_ God's \_\_\_\_\_ to give him a secure kingship through his obedience, and this would result in disobedience to God.

**?** Why is doubt a dangerous way to view and relate to God?

Jeroboam's doubt led to fear. He misjudged his circumstances, which led to a fear of \_\_\_\_\_ over the fear of \_\_\_\_\_ .

**?** What reasons do we have to fear God over man?

**POINT 2: Fear leads to idolatry**  
(1 Kings 12:28-33).

## ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #44: TEMPTATION AND SIN

Temptation is not the equivalent of sin. Temptation can refer to natural and \_\_\_\_\_ desires that are twisted and directed toward pleasing of \_\_\_\_\_ rather than giving glory to God. Jesus was tempted like we are (Matt. 4), and yet, He never sinned but faithfully \_\_\_\_\_ temptation and followed the will of His Father. Knowing our \_\_\_\_\_ , we are to be on guard against temptation that may lead us to sin (Matt. 26:41), and we pray for God to \_\_\_\_\_ us from evil (Matt. 6:13).

**?** What are some ways we can resist temptation to sin?

Jeroboam's self-reliance and desire to take matters into his \_\_\_\_\_ hands led to sin of the deepest kind— \_\_\_\_\_ and usurping \_\_\_\_\_ throne.



**What reasons do we have to trust God's wisdom over our own?**

### **POINT 3: Idolatry leads to judgment**

(1 Kings 13:1-10).

An \_\_\_\_\_ man of God spoke God's judgment against Jeroboam and his idolatry. The Lord will \_\_\_\_\_ ignore distractions from His glory.



**Why should we listen to those who speak God's truth to us?**

Though Jeroboam \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord, God graciously healed his hand, yet there remained \_\_\_\_\_ fellowship between them.

## **MY RESPONSE**

Because God has proven Himself to be faithful to all of His promises, we live not in doubt and fear but with boldness and confidence, declaring Christ to the nations no matter the cost.

- **HEAD:** What are some areas in your life where you are doubting God, trusting your own wisdom?
- **HEART:** How has God been faithful to you, and how will you remember those things so you don't let doubt grow into fear?
- **HANDS:** How will you help others to trust Jesus by your life, words, and actions? How will you address your doubt and disobedience?

NOTES

### **VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY**

"Miracles performed by good people on account of evil may themselves produce nothing but testimony for condemnation where there is no faith or conversion, having been found frightening more than inspiring. Ungodly people hear the man of God but do not heed him."<sup>3</sup>

-Konrad Pellikan (1478-1556)