

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
FEBRUARY17 2024

Jeroboam sin-drome

Scripture Story: 1 Kings 12:16–14:20; 2 Chronicles 13.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 7.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The story of Jeroboam is a classic case study of what happens when someone refuses to follow God's leading. Through the prophet Ahijah, God called Jeroboam to be the king of the 10 tribes of Israel. Rather than trusting God, however, Jeroboam felt compelled to take matters into his own hands. As Ellen White puts it: "Jeroboam's greatest fear was that at some future time the hearts of his subjects might be won over by the ruler occupying the throne of David. He reasoned that if the ten tribes should be permitted to visit often the ancient seat of the Jewish monarchy, where the services of the temple were still conducted as in the years of Solomon's reign, many might feel inclined to renew their allegiance to the government centering at Jerusalem" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 99). This prompted Jeroboam to establish centers of idol worship in Bethel and Dan. This spiritually derailed Israel and led them down a path that resulted in great pain and destruction.

Such is the inevitable story of sin. Disobedience and compromise will always yield unwanted consequences. The Bible warns: "You may be sure that your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23, NIV). Sin would have few takers if the destructive consequences came immediately. Instead, as we see in the story of Jeroboam, sin woos and coddles us before it rapes us of joy and life.

Fortunately, no sin is beyond the boundary of God's grace. While we cannot escape the unsavory consequences of sinful choices, we can rejoice in the infinite mercy of Jesus. Because of the cross, we can be absolutely secure in our salvation! "The Lord did not give Israel up without first doing all that could be done to lead them back to their allegiance to Him" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 108). God is no more inclined to abandon His relentless pursuit of every person still today.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Learn about the inevitable brokenness that comes from sin. *(Know)*
- Sense the unwillingness of God to give up on His children. *(Feel)*
- Receive the forgiveness for sin that comes from Calvary. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Experience of Salvation, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 10

"In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord, Substitute and Example. This saving faith comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God's grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again

and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. Abiding in Him we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment. (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 45:22; 53; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 33:11; 36:25-27; Hab. 2:4; Mark 9:23, 24; John 3:3-8, 16; 16:8; Rom. 3:21-26; 5:6-10; 8:1-4, 14-17; 10:17; 12:2; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Gal. 1:4; 3:13, 14, 26; 4:4-7; Eph. 2:4-10; Col. 1:13, 14; Titus 3:3-7; Heb. 8:7-12; 1 Peter 1:23; 2:21, 22; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Rev. 13:8.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

The 13-foot snake was the embodiment of evil. He had a scar over his left eye that prevented healthy shedding. Consequently, at least two times a year zookeepers would get the dreaded phone call from a manager in the reptile house, "The cobra shed his skin last week, but the eye cap didn't come off."

According to one zookeeper the task of helping the snake shed the rest of its skin requires a team of five people: three animal keepers, a curator, and a vet. The cobra slithered toward the team, spread its cape, and lifted itself up to full stature. The curator grasped it behind the venom glands.

One of the animal keepers was asked to wad up paper towels and stuff them in the cobra's mouth. The cobra bit and chewed until the towels were yellow and dripping with venom. Full-grown elephants die from King cobra bites, so a man would never survive a bite with a full load of venom.

The trickiest part of any snake-handling procedure is in the release. More people are bitten while trying to let go of snakes than when grabbing or handling them. For you see, when it comes to snakes, they are easy to grab but hard to let go of.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Sound familiar? Any snake in your life that was easy to grab but hard to let go of?

Let's face it, snakes slither everywhere in our culture. Those who indulge in an alcoholic drink here or there are soon caught in the poisonous jaws of a snake that is not so easy to lick. Also, those who look at immoral material on the web or in movies, before they know it, they can't seem to let go. Those who cheat on a chemistry quiz today then fudge on their time card at work tomorrow and in short order they are entangled by a snake of compromise that will destroy their character. All of these habits are easy to form but difficult to break. (Note to Teacher: If you have a personal experience that you feel would be appropriate to share with the students of a "snake in your life," now would be a good time to do so. Your transparency can help the students feel it's safe to be transparent as well. Of course, no one should feel as if they are required to share.)

Spare yourself the brutal task of breaking potentially fatal habits by steering clear of the snakes. It's just no fun to get bit. Jeroboam's story reminds us of this spiritual truth.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

- *Underline* all of the mistakes that people made.
- Who are the main actors in the story? Who are some of the actors in the Bible story that are not included in the *Into the Story* section?
- What aspects of the story are new to you?
- What part of the story do you relate to the most? Why?
- What lessons can we learn from Jeroboam?
- *Circle* the words or phrases that capture the essence of the story.
- If Jeroboam were alive today and attended your school, what kind of person do you think he would be?
- What were the strengths of Jeroboam? What were his weaknesses?
- What does the story of Jeroboam teach us

about making decisions?

- What picture of God emerges from this story?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story: Matthew 7:24–27; 1 Timothy 6:18, 19; Ephesians 4:17–32; Ezekiel 33:10, 11; and Galatians 5:16–21.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

1. Second Kings 17:22, 23 (NIV) gives this sobering picture of Jeroboam's legacy: "The Israelites persisted in all the sins of Jeroboam and did not turn away from them until the LORD removed them from his presence, as he had warned through all his servants the prophets. So the people of Israel were taken from their homeland into exile in Assyria, and they are still there." Indeed Jeroboam's name lives on with an ugly blight against it, for it means "He made Israel to sin." "The apostasy introduced during Jeroboam's reign became more and more marked, until finally it resulted in the utter ruin of the kingdom of Israel" (Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 107.) What does this teach us about the long-term impact of the choices we make?
2. First Kings 13:2 (NIV) records this prophecy: "By the word of the LORD he cried out against the altar: 'Altar, altar! This is what the LORD says: "A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you." ' "

   Three hundred years later this prophecy was fulfilled when Josiah killed the pagan priests on their own altars. Read about it in 2 Kings 23:1–20. How do biblical prophecies such as this one affirm your faith? How can we understand such prophecies in light of our free will?
3. Jeroboam selected the cities of Dan and Bethel to be the alternate places of worship rather than Jerusalem. In the south he selected Bethel because of its sanctity in the history of Israel (see Judges 20:26–28; 1 Samuel 7:16). In the northern part of Palestine he selected Dan, which did not have the same sacred character as Bethel but was still regarded by many Israelites as a holy place. The result of Jeroboam's choice to establish holy cities besides Jerusalem proved to be disastrous.

   The unnamed man of God from Judah in 1 Kings 13 trumpets a stern warning against Jeroboam for disobeying God. Ironically, the prophet had received orders from God not to eat or drink while on this mission (13:9). He died because he listened to a man who claimed to have a message from God, rather than listening to God Himself. Both the story of Jeroboam and the unnamed prophet

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* Prophets and Kings. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

Modes of Learning

"God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well" (Romans 12:6, NLT). Keep this text in mind when you're teaching the lesson. There are many ways to learn, and everyone learns in different ways. We each have some stronger and some weaker learning styles. The temptation of teachers is to assume students all learn best in the style in which they themselves do. These modes of learning or types of intelligence are not mutually exclusive, but keeping in mind certain categories can help you see ways that personalities differ. The following chart offers a brief overview of some of the styles to keep in mind when teaching.[1]

Learning Style	Learns by:
Linguistic	Reciting, hearing, and reading
Logical-mathematical	Patterns, numbers, right and wrong answers
Musical	Sounds, rhythms, singing
Visual-spatial	Drawing, visualizing, designing
Tactile-kinesthetic	Handling, touching, moving

underscore the point that we must trust in God's Word explicitly; we dare not listen to our own premonitions or to the interpretations of others.

Challenge the students to live uncompromisingly according to God's Word. Discuss the story of the unnamed prophet. Does God seem to come down on him too harshly? Was God too lenient with Jeroboam when He quickly healed the king's shriveled hand? How are we to understand God's actions in this story?

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

God is eager to hear our confessions of sin. After all, God knows all of our faults better than we do. So close this lesson by encouraging the young people to ask God for forgiveness. God is faithful to *always* forgive and forget!

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

The story of Jeroboam is a treasure that teaches us that great lives can be destroyed by small decisions. We are reminded in the story that God will not be mocked. When He says that He will allow no other gods besides Himself, God means business! To choose otherwise is to put your soul in great peril.

The story of the prophet from Judah underscores this important point that God is serious about our full devotion. To follow any voice other than God's is to invite hardship and heartache. God has our best interests at heart and we can fully trust Him.

Sin destroys. Obedience to God results in life—true, abundant life! Invite your young people to experience this rich and rewarding life with God.

[1] Adapted from "Teaching," Sunday School Sources, accessed March 28, 2023, https://www.sundayschoolsources.com/Teaching.htm



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 7.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: 1 Kings 12:16–14:20; 2 Chronicles 13.
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Jeroboam sin-drome



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keytext

"Even after this, Jeroboam did not change his evil ways, but once more appointed priests for the high places from all sorts of people. Anyone who wanted to become a priest he consecrated for the high places. This was the sin of the house of Jeroboam that led to its downfall and to its destruction from the face of the earth."

(1 Kings 13:33, 34, NIV)

flashlight

"Placed on the throne by the ten tribes of Israel who had rebelled against the house of David, Jeroboam, the former servant of Solomon, was in a position to bring about wise reforms in both civil and religious affairs. Under the rulership of Solomon he had shown aptitude and sound judgment; and the knowledge he had gained during years of faithful service fitted him to rule with discretion. But Jeroboam failed to make God his trust" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 99).

what do you think?

Mark each statement T (true) or F (false).

___ What may be a sin for you may or may not be a sin for me.
___ Sin is nothing more than a bad choice.
___ Some sins are worse than others.
___ There are always bad consequences to sin.
___ If we ask forgiveness for our sins, God forgets them forever.
___ If my sin doesn't harm anyone, it's not really a sin.
___ God despises sin, but always loves the sinner.
___ Sin is separation from God.
___ Sin is too often ignored in churches today.

did you know?

First Kings 13:33 records: "Anyone who wanted to become a priest [Jeroboam] consecrated for the high places" (NIV). This was a grave sin before God. Under penalty of death, God had forbidden anyone outside of the tribe of Levi to be a priest (see Numbers 3:10). Levites were guaranteed a salary from the tithe. This allowed them to focus completely on their duties as priests, without having to moonlight in order to survive. In the case of Jeroboam's priests, they were paid by the king. Thus they had to mix priestly and secular duties; before long they were corrupted by bribes and sold out to the political interests of the king.

INTO THE STORY

"Jeroboam thought to himself, 'The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David. If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam.'

"After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, 'It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.' One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. And this thing became a sin; the people came to worship the one at Bethel and went as far as Dan to worship the other."

"By the word of the LORD a man of God came from Judah to Bethel, as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make an offering. . . . That same day the man of God gave a sign: 'This is the sign the LORD has declared: The altar will be split apart and the ashes on it will be poured out.'

"When King Jeroboam heard what the man of God cried out against the altar at Bethel, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, 'Seize him!' But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back. Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the LORD.

"Then the king said to the man of God, 'Intercede with the LORD your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored.' So the man of God interceded with the LORD, and the king's hand was restored. . . .

"Now there was a certain old prophet living in Bethel, whose sons came and told him all that the man of God had done there that day. They also told their father what he had said to the king. Their father asked them, 'Which way did he go?' And his sons showed him. . . . He found him sitting under an oak tree and asked, 'Are you the man of God who came from Judah?'

" 'I am,' he replied.

"So the prophet said to him, 'Come home with me and eat.'

"The man of God said, 'I cannot turn back and go with you, nor can I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. I have been told by the word of the LORD: "You must not eat bread or drink water there or return by the way you came." '

"The old prophet answered, 'I too am a prophet. And an angel said to me by the word of the Lord: 'Bring him back with you

to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.' " (But he was lying to him.) So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house.

"While they were sitting at the table, the word of the LORD came to the old prophet who had brought him back. He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, 'This is what the LORD says: "You have defied the word of the LORD. . . . Therefore your body will not be buried in the tomb of your ancestors." ' "

(1 Kings 12:26-30; 13:1, 3–6, 11–22, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Ellen White refers to three stories in her chapter entitled "Jeroboam." She writes: "In the rent altar, in the palsied arm, and in the terrible fate of the one who dared disobey an express command of Jehovah, Jeroboam should have discerned the swift displeasure of an offended God, and these judgments should have warned him not to persist in wrongdoing" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 107).

Consider these three stories and write the primary lesson we learn from each one.

1. The rent altar _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

2. The palsied arm _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

3. The unnamed prophet who disobeyed God and ate with the false prophet _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

punch lines

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life" **(Galatians 6:7, 8, NIV).**

"I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh" **(Ezekiel 11:19, NIV).**

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" **(1 John 1:7, NIV).**

"If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them" **(James 4:17, NIV).**

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing" **(Luke 13:34, NIV).**

further insight

"You are just as dependent upon Christ, in order to live a holy life, as is the branch upon the parent stock for growth and fruitfulness. Apart from Him you have no life. You have no power to resist temptation or to grow in grace and holiness."

—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 68

Sabbath

Read James 4:17.

Compare your answers in the *What Do You Think?* section with the answers given by a friend. Discuss any differences you may have.

Write your definition of sin: _____

_____

List three sins that teenagers consider to be OK:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Sunday

Read 1 Kings 12:26–30, 13:1–6, 11–22.

Review the section *Into the Story* and reflect on the following questions.

- In 1 Kings 12:26–30 Jeroboam had been assured by the prophet Ahijah that God was going to make him king of the ten tribes of Israel. Still, Jeroboam was very insecure about his kingdom. Thus he set up centers of worship in Bethel and Dan to discourage his people from visiting Jerusalem in the southern kingdom of Judah. Do you think Jeroboam's legacy would be different had he freely allowed his people to visit Jerusalem? In what way? In what area of your life are you tempted to feel spiritually insecure?

_____

- What does the story in 1 Kings 13:1–6 about the shriveled hand tell us about the character of God? Think about the courage of the unnamed prophet. What does his story teach us about speaking truth to power? In what area of your life is God calling you to uncompromising commitment?

_____

- How might the story in 1 Kings 13:11–22 apply to our lives today? Do you feel any sympathy toward the prophet from Judah? Why or why not? How would you respond to someone who claims this story exposes a very harsh and unreasonable side of God?

_____

Monday

Read Galatians 6:7, 8.

Wayne E. Oates observes: "Marketplace thought about the presence of God is one of sentimental familiarity. Country-western songs speak of 'having a little talk with Jesus' almost as if the Lord were a chum with whom one has a chitchat. . . . In stark contrast, however, is the persistent biblical wisdom that God's presence comes to us when we know it not. At the least, our awareness of the presence is an afterthought." How does this statement sync with this week's *Key Text*? Might Jeroboam's chummy, "sentimental familiarity" with God have influenced his disastrous choice to allow anyone to serve as a priest? What does this teach about reverence for our holy God today?

_____

_____

Tuesday

Read Hebrews 4.

Marinate your mind on Ellen White's statement: "[Jeroboam] was in a position to bring about wise reforms in both civil and religious affairs. . . . But Jeroboam failed to make God his trust" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 99).

Read Psalm 91. Write your own psalm that expresses the need and desire to put your trust in God. (You can use the Notes pages in the back of your study guide.)

Wednesday

Read Psalm 51.

One of the *Punch Lines* offers this promise from God: "I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 11:19, NIV). Compare this promise to that of Ezekiel 36:26 where God says: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (NIV). After reading today's Bible passage from Psalm 51, pray to God, asking Him to give you a new, undivided heart.

Thursday

Read 1 John 1:7.

What is God trying to teach me through the story of Jeroboam?

_____

How does this lesson inform the way I'm called to live this week?

_____

What are the specific benefits to me when I sell out to God?

_____

Friday

Read Luke 13:34.

Prayerfully consider the comments of Ellen White as she concludes her chapter on Jeroboam.

"Yet the Lord did not give Israel up without first doing all that could be done to lead them back to their allegiance to Him. Through long, dark years when ruler after ruler stood up in bold defiance of Heaven and led Israel deeper and still deeper into idolatry, God sent message after message to His backslidden people. Through His prophets He gave them every opportunity to stay the tide of apostasy and to return to Him. . . . Even in the darkest hours some would remain true to their divine Ruler and in the midst of idolatry would live blameless in the sight of a holy God. These faithful ones were numbered among the goodly remnant through whom the eternal purpose of Jehovah was finally to be fulfilled" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 108).

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 7.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.