CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
FEBRUARY 17 2024

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

Jeroboam sin-drome



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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).

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)

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.