

Jeroboam's Idolatry

by C.I. Scofield

The sermon warns against the dangers of apostasy and the substitution of false religions for true ones.

Scripture: Genesis 3:1, Deuteronomy 11:29, 2 Samuel 7:11, 1 Kings 12:28, Isaiah 14:13

Topics: "Idolatry", "Apostasy"

Description

C.I. Scofield delves into the story of Jeroboam in 1 Kings 12:25-33, highlighting the dangers of substituting true religion with false religion and the consequences of apostasy. Jeroboam's apostasy began with his rebellion against God's authority, leading to the establishment of his own altar, priesthood, and religious practices. This serves as a warning against forsaking divine truth and creating man-made rituals and beliefs, even if they are disguised with Christian elements.

Transcript

(1 Kings xii 125-33.)

I. The Analysis.

1. The king's substitute religion (verses 25-31). The choice is never between true religion and no religion, but between true religion and false religion. Man must have something which at least pretends to respond to the soul's demand for God, and to the accusings of conscience. Cain had a religion, the heathen have religions, and antichrist will have a religion.

2. The king's innovations (verses 31-33). The student of Scripture has but to compare the two feasts of Pharaoh, charged as they were with great typical and dispensational meanings, with Jeroboam's substitutes to see how poor and barren are mere human rituals.

II. The Heart of the Lesson.

Jeroboam is the finest instance in Scripture of an apostate. Apostasy and heresy are widely different things. Heresy is error about truth; apostasy is deliberately forsaking truth. Note the marks of Jeroboam's apostasy. It began in his unwillingness to be subject to the authority of God. For it was God who established the kingdom in the family of David (2 Sam. vii:11-17), and to reject the rule of that royal line was to reject the authority of God. All apostasy begins in self will, in insubordination to the divine ordering of things. The first apostate, Satan, began by saying, "I will" (Isa. xiv:13). The underlying motive in the great apostasy into which Christendom is now rushing is rebellion against the authority of holy Scripture.

And an able and energetic apostate easily draws away with him all the tribes of those who hate God's way. Satan's "Yea, hath God said?" (Gen. iii:1) is speedily followed by "Ye shall not surely die."

But an apostate must have a religion, so only that it be not a religion of divine authority. Jeroboam, therefore, having set aside God's king, now sets aside God's altar and God's priests, and substitutes an altar and a priesthood of his own making. Jehovah had appointed Jerusalem as the alone place where sacrifices might be offered and the tribe of Levi as the priestly tribe, but all that was nothing to Jeroboam. The great apostasy from the purity and simplicity of apostolic Christianity has substituted for the Christian priesthood of all believers equally an order of priests or "clergymen," who alone have right to preach, to baptize, or to administer the Lord's table. Jeroboam knew, also, the desire of the natural heart for holy places and religious ceremonial, and provided these things. But, most of all, the apostate king showed that satanic craft which marks all apostasy by building his new religion so largely out of genuine Jewish materials. He established his city between Ebal and Gerizim, and his temple upon the latter, the mount of the blessings (Deut. xi:29); and he made much of Peniel, where Jacob had wrestled, and Bethel, where Jacob had dreamed. It is a solemn truth that one may call oneself a Christian, and build a religious system very largely out of Christian things, adopting the Christian standards of morality and good works, and yet be an utterly godless apostate. For if I reject the absolute authority of God's Word, and make a Christ to please myself, I am an idolater, even though I call my human conception by His holy name and erect a cross upon the summit of my costly church. Only he who receives the Christ of God is that God-Man who saves through the shedding of His precious blood all who simply believe on Him.

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