

What Could Have Been — A Lesson from Jeremiah {concluded}

by Bill Crews

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land of Egypt” (2 Kings 12:28, and the very words that Aaron had spoken of the golden calf there at Mt. Sinai — Ex. 32:4). One he set up at Dan and the other at Bethel, where he had also made an altar of sacrifice. Besides this, he made houses of high places and selected priests that were not Levites. To take the place of the approaching feast of tabernacles, which was ordained of God and began on the 15th day of the seventh month, he decreed a feast for his subjects to begin on the 15th day of the eighth month. A prophet of God was sent from Judah to Bethel to denounce Jeroboam’s altar and idols and departures and to make a dire prophecy. 2 Kings 13:3-34 makes it very clear that Jeroboam did not learn the lesson he should have learned, but continued in his abominable idolatry.

Instead of the good blessing that God had promised to Jeroboam, he chose the course that brought down God’s wrath upon his head and house. His son who was sick was to die, the house of Jeroboam would be cut off and afflicted in horrible ways, a future king would destroy what was left of Jeroboam’s house, and the kingdom of Israel would eventually be rooted out of their land and scattered beyond the river. Read the words of the prophet Ahijah to the wife of Jeroboam in 1 Kings 14:7-16. Jeroboam reigned a total of 22 years; his son, Nadab, reigned but two years and was overthrown by Baasha of the tribe of Issachar and perished with the rest of the house of Jeroboam.

And how was the name of Jeroboam remembered and used thereafter? and what was the extent of his influence for evil? Did you know that fifteen kings of the northern kingdom of Israel are said to have followed the sinful ways of Jeroboam (usually referred to as *“the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat”*)? They are Nadab (1 Kings 15:25-26), Baasha (1 Kings 15:34; 16:2), Zimri (1 Kings 16:18-19), Omri (1 Kings 16:29-31), Ahab (1 Kings 16:30-31), Ahaziah (1 Kings 22:51-52), Jehoram (2 Kings 3:1-3), Jehu (2 Kings 10:29, 31), Jehoahaz (2 Kings 13:1-2, 6), Jehoash (2 Kings 13:10-11), Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:23-24), Zechariah (2 Kings 15:8-9), Menahem (2 Kings 15:17-18), Pekahiah (2 Kings 15:23-24), and Pekah (2 Kings 15:27-28). Talk about influence, bad influence, that’s a lot of it, extending over a period of more than 200 years (c. 931 to 721 BC), and affecting fifteen (specifically mentioned) of the eighteen kings that followed him. The northern kingdom of Israel comes to an end in 2 Kings 17, and the reasons for it are given. *“Jeroboam drove Israel from following Jehovah, and made them sin a great sin. And the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; until Jehovah removed Israel out of his sight, as he spake by all his servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day”* (2 Kings 17:21-23).

Think of **what could have been** in view of the promise God made to Jeroboam before he had even begun to reign. God makes some wonderful, even greater, promises to you and me through Christ, but all of them are *conditional*. If we ignore those conditions, we not only forfeit those promises; we also bring upon ourselves and others consequences, unthinkable and horrible consequences, in time and eternity. 331003