

## “Worship is Commitment to God”

1 Kings 12:25-33

*God must be sovereign over and the center of our lives.*

*Seek God's Face  
Obey God's Word*

*Seek God's Face*

1 Kings 12:25-31, NKJV

*Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and dwelt there. Also he went out from there and built Penuel. And Jeroboam said in his heart, “Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah.”*

*Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!” And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi.*

God made it clear the kingdom Solomon ruled over would be torn in two because of the sin of the people.

*<sup>29</sup> Now it happened at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met him on the way; and he had clothed himself with a new garment, and the two were alone in the field. <sup>30</sup> Then Ahijah took hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it into twelve pieces. <sup>31</sup> And he said to Jeroboam, “Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: ‘Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you <sup>32</sup> (but he shall have one tribe for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel), <sup>33</sup> because they have forsaken Me, and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the people of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways to do what is right in My eyes and keep My statutes and My judgments, as did his father David. (1 Kings 11:29-33, NKJV)*

Jeroboam established his kingdom in the northern part of what was all known as Israel when David and Solomon ruled over the people of God as a single nation. The downfall of the nation was their worship of the pagan gods of the people who had lived there before them and their refusal to commit to seeking God's wisdom and guidance in all things. Jeroboam was given authority over ten of the twelve tribes of God's people, but was never instructed to change anything of the worship of God's people.

Jeroboam sought to preserve for himself what was given to him by God instead of trusting the Lord to secure his leadership over the people, in spite of where they worshiped. Jeroboam was called by God to lead the majority of God's people, given the power and authority by God whose power cannot be challenged, and instructed on what would ensure his families leadership through future generations. He chose to be committed to maintaining his leadership through his understanding rather than simply committing himself to God and carrying out the instructions the Lord gave him.

Isolation from those in Judah ruled over by Rehoboam was his idea. The requirements of worshiping God made isolation nearly impossible since the people were called to travel to the temple three times a year to worship the Lord (Deuteronomy 16:16). This mandate by God gave the people reason to travel into Judah. The solution for Jeroboam was to remove all reason to go to Jerusalem and set up idols in Bethel and Dan which were at the far southern and far northern extremes of his territory.

Shechem and Penuel were the places from where Jeroboam governed from on each side of the Jordan River. He was making decisions as a king, but completely absent from how he became a king in the first place. This is what always happens whenever people take upon themselves responsibilities that are not theirs in the first place.

Jeroboam attempted to imitate the style of worship that the people were familiar with in Jerusalem, but transferred their focus off of God to empty powerless idols. There was a form of worship that gave the illusion of piety and religion but it was only going through the motions without any real purpose.

Worshiping God changes people's lives through acknowledging Him as Lord and committing to following His commandments and precepts in His Word. Worship of things other than God does nothing to bring about permanent change to reflect the glory of God in the lives of people. The creation of a rival priesthood and places of worship certainly kept the people from traveling south to Judah and mingling with the people there. It also caused the people and tribes Jeroboam was given to rule over to stray far from the true God into worshiping idols and false gods who were powerless to help or change them for the better. Rather, what they worshiped destroyed them individually and nationally.

All of the kings who reigned over the ten northern tribes of Israel were all evil kings because none of them challenged the idol worship by encouraging people to return to God and travel to the temple in Jerusalem. God sent prophets to call the people back to Himself and to bring the idol worship to an end.

Amos was sent by God to proclaim the Lord's desire to see the people of Israel return to Him. God called Amos to proclaim:

*<sup>4</sup> For thus says the Lord to the house of Israel:*

*"Seek Me and live;*

*<sup>5</sup> But do not seek Bethel,*

*Nor enter Gilgal,*

*Nor pass over to Beersheba;*

*For Gilgal shall surely go into captivity,*

*And Bethel shall come to nothing.*

*<sup>6</sup> Seek the Lord and live,*

*Lest He break out like fire in the house of Joseph,*

*And devour it,*

*With no one to quench it in Bethel—*

*<sup>7</sup> You who turn justice to wormwood,  
And lay righteousness to rest in the earth!” (Amos 5:4-7, NKJV)*

God wanted the people to seek Him through authentic worship that pointed them to who He is and provided them with the hope they needed to endure anything they would ever encounter in life. Instead, the people chose to follow Jeroboam into his false religion. Their fear was the same fear Jeroboam suffered from: the fear of the future.

What will happen tomorrow, next year, or in the next five years causes people to make plans based on what they see and know intellectually in the present. There are so many things that are out of the control of people that life tends to become overwhelming unless people turn to and trust in the God of creation who is sovereign over all things, even time itself.

God views worry and fretting as things that do nothing but destroy those He loves and that destroys the beauty and tranquility He created the world to have and for people to know and enjoy. Jesus explained the sovereignty and care of God in this way,

*“<sup>25</sup>...do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air; for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? <sup>27</sup> Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?*

*<sup>28</sup> “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; <sup>29</sup> and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?*

*<sup>31</sup> “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ <sup>32</sup> For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6:25-33, NKJV)*

Seeking God’s face is what He calls mankind to do since He alone is the Author of life. He is sovereign over all things that are seen and unseen as well as over all that has and will ever exist (Colossians 1:15-18). There are few things, if anything at all, people can truly say they are in control of in life. The weather, the aging process, health, the decisions of other people, and circumstances of life often create stress and havoc in life because people attempt to control these things and become frustrated when the results are different than they wanted them to be.

There is much strategizing and planning that takes place to ensure a future when in reality no one knows what could happen tomorrow. Yet many people are like the man who was confident in his planning and forgot that it was God he should have been committed to rather than securing the things of this world.

*<sup>16</sup> Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. <sup>17</sup> And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What*

*shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’<sup>18</sup> So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. <sup>19</sup> And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.”’<sup>20</sup> But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’*

*<sup>21</sup> “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”(Luke 12:16-21, NKJV)*

Commitment to God is worship because He becomes the focus of life, the priority over all other priorities, and the motivation for every activity. Commitment to God is worship because He becomes the single most powerful influential person in life who is given the final say in every decision no matter how small or how big. Therefore, those who are committed to God demonstrate their worship through obeying what God commands.

### *Obey God's Commands*

1 Kings 12:32-33, NKJV

*Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made. So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense.*

People will be quite content and refrain from questioning things that are familiar sounding and looking when they are not concerned or invested in what they believe. Jeroboam mirrored the worship practices of the temple that God had established and ordained in Jerusalem so no one would question the calves that were chosen to represent the true God. It was something that was familiar to the people from their ancestry too as it occurred at the base of Mt. Sinai by the children of Israel.

*<sup>1</sup> Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, “Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”*

*<sup>2</sup> And Aaron said to them, “Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.”  
<sup>3</sup> So all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. <sup>4</sup> And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf.*

*Then they said, “This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!”(Exodus 32:1-4, NKJV)*

Jeroboam hundreds of years later is proclaiming the same thing about the calves he sets up as idols in Bethel and Dan. God made it clear to His people at Mt. Sinai why He chose to appear to them formless so that they would be unable to make any image of Him (Deuteronomy 4:15-19).

What is worshiped is more important than the rituals of ceremonies engaged in for worship. All that is done by Christian congregations is not worship of God. Everything that is done in the life of God's people is not honoring to Him either. Worship takes place anywhere and anytime that the people of God are committed to obey the commandments of God in full submission to the Spirit of God within them.

There are things done to satisfy the worshiper in the gatherings of the body of Christ in many places in the world rather than to glorify the Lord. This is true of the most ornate and liturgical services to the extreme charismatic gatherings and even believers who gather secretly in the wilderness areas of the world to escape persecution from authorities. This is true because of the sinfulness of mankind and their longing to satisfy their personal preferences rather than commit to fully obeying all that God has commanded them as His servants.

People in congregations often care more about the person who presents the Word of God more than the content of the message. Pastors and preachers are graded on their personalities and charisma rather than their faithfulness to Scripture and the content of what they proclaim. People choose congregations they attend and become members of based on music preferences, facilities, location, and programs offered rather than where the Lord is calling them to serve and to support with their talents, means, and spiritual gifts. This leads people to do the same thing that the people who were ruled by King Jeroboam were doing. The people did not complain because they believed the form of worship was of greater importance than who it was they were worshiping.

Obedying the commandments of God is worship since it honors the Lord and reflects His character as His will is carried out in the lives of those who love Him. God who is worthy of worship in all of creation above everything else must never be disconnected from the activities His people engage in every day. Worship therefore is obedience to God in all things no matter where the people of God find themselves or what activity they are participating in. All work in the world is worship when the people of God are living in obedience.

*<sup>5</sup> Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; <sup>6</sup> not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, <sup>7</sup> with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, <sup>8</sup> knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.*

*<sup>9</sup> And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him. (Ephesians 6:5-9, NKJV)*

Obedying the commands of God as worship is more than going mechanically through prescribed ceremonies and rituals. Obedience is taking on the nature and character of

God among God's people as well as out in the world surrounded by those who reject the love of God. Apostle Paul portrays obedience to God's commands as,

*12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (Colossians 3:12-17, NKJV)*

Obedying the commands of God as worship to Him is far from being legalistic since it is a lifestyle regulated by the Spirit of God living in the child of God. It is submitting to the authority of God, walking in step with God, and committed to pleasing Him over others and even self. These are the concepts Jeroboam lost sight of in his reign over the people of God.

Jeroboam did not seek God, but sought to preserve what he received as a gift from the Lord. He did not obey the command of God which his obedience to would have saved him from doing anything to protect his life and leadership. The sovereignty of God alone makes Him worthy of all worship. The Lord's graciousness, mercy, and faithfulness provide great motivation to worship Him. Obedience to the commands of God offered the method to guarantee the worship offered to Him is received by Him.

Jeroboam led generations astray by his institutions of false worship because no one challenged the things he established in his understanding. Jesus has led many people to the truth through His obedience and submission to the Father as the Messiah of God, who was God in the flesh (John 1:14). Following people will always lead those following them astray if what they do and say are never questioned. Following God will always bring people into fellowship and a lifestyle of worship as they seek His face and obey His commands.

The child of God must seek to please Him in all areas of their life. That is what it means to seek His face. It means to follow through with everything that He commands in His Word and calls His people to do in their life. God historically does not ask His people to do things in their strength and knowledge for Him, but challenges His people to what is impossible for them to do without the strength and wisdom of His Spirit residing in their lives.

God is worthy of worship that is more than simply formal ceremony and limited to specific days and periods of time in the week. He is worthy of worship which consumes every breath His children take, captivates every thought of the mind, and each action a person takes throughout their day. Is this the kind of worship the church is involved in today? If it is, let us strive to surrender more to the Lord of our lives. If it is not, let us choose today to worship God by seeking His face and obeying His commands.