

In Nomine Iesu

The Eighth Sunday after Holy Trinity 2026

God alone is faithful, true, and merciful – 1 Kings 12:26-33

“Jeroboam said in his heart, ‘Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David. If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the Lord at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.’ So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, ‘You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.’ And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Then this thing became a sin, for the people went as far as Dan to be before one. He also made temples on high places and appointed priests from among all the people, who were not of the Levites. And Jeroboam appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like the feast that was in Judah, and he offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made. He went up to the altar that he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, in the month that he had devised from his own heart. And he instituted a feast for the people of Israel and went up to the altar to make offerings.”

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There are faults or fractures in the earth’s crust like cracks in a piece of pottery. The best known one here on the west coast is the San Andreas Fault in California. Scientists and history both tell us that any major seismic disturbance in California is likely to occur in or near the San Andreas Fault. Like a crack in one of your plates or cups, you know that if any stress is put on it, it will break where the crack is. Before Israel broke apart during the reign of Rehoboam, Solomon’s son and successor, there was already a fracture in the nation of Israel that went back to the time of Saul and David, if not much farther. The pride of Rehoboam and Jeroboam would be the stress on that fault line.

The first clear indication that stress would increase on the fault line came when King Solomon, “gave [Jeroboam] charge over all the forced labor of the house of Joseph.” (1 Kings 11:28) The house of Joseph refers to the half-tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, who occupied central Israel and dominated the other tribes of the northern kingdom.

I

Solomon was wise. He understood human nature. He succeeded as a ruler. He even wrote three of the books of the Old Testament. But he was not the man of peace that faithful Israel hoped for as David’s successor. He did not trust as David did. His son and successor Rehobom was even less the promised King of Peace than Solomon. What is more, he lacked his father’s wisdom! Rehoboam foolishly tried to hold Israel together by force. But like a broken piece of pottery, Israel would never be the same again. Only the true King of Peace, of whom David’s Psalms spoke, could reconcile rebellious Israel to its faithful and merciful God and also bring together brothers at odds.

Jeroboam was a very capable man, as Solomon had observed. As the king of his newly created nation he was able to lead it into accepting his reform of the church – if reform you can call it. But he never grasped what his benefactor Solomon wrote, “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” (Proverbs 16:18) Jeroboam did not learn from God’s promise or Solomon’s unfaithfulness. God gave Jeroboam the kingship of Israel’s northern tribes, **because** of Solomon’s unfaithfulness. If Solomon did not fully grasp the nature of the kingdom God had established in Israel, Jeroboam did not appreciate it at all. Jeroboam was not made king to be David’s replacement. He was not given a kingdom that would last forever. He was given a calling to serve not as

a spiritual, but an earthly king to open the eyes of faith in Israel to see what God actually had promised to David, what was the true nature of His kingdom.

But “Jeroboam said in his heart, ‘**Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David.**’ If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the Lord at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.” Consider the nature of Jeroboam’s pride. He said, “Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David.” Apparently, Jeroboam didn’t care whether his people, the ten northern tribes, would be part of the eternal kingdom of God – the God who gave him his office as king.

Ahijah the Shilonite, God’s prophet, had said to Jeroboam: “But I will take the kingdom out of [Solomon’s] son’s hand and will give it to you, ten tribes. Yet to his son I will give one tribe, that David my servant may **always** have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where **I have chosen to put my name.** And I will take you, and you shall reign over all that your soul desires, and you shall be king over Israel. And if you will listen to all that I command you, and will walk in my ways, and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, I will be with you and will build you a sure house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you. And I will afflict the offspring of David because of this, **but not forever.**”

Jeroboam did not keep God’s commandments. Instead of listening to God, he listened to counsel advising him to do what Aaron had done at Sinai, create a new image of God, an idol, a golden calf - as the first commandment explicitly forbids! He had two of them made, one for the south and one for the north, so one of them would always be closer to the people than Jerusalem. He appointed a new feast day – in place of the three God had commanded. He opened the priesthood to anyone, not just to descendants of Aaron. He replaced the God-ordained way of worship with his own innovations, and called it the worship of the same, true God. And people foolishly believed him.

Rehoboam, on the other hand, heeded God’s admonition not to try to force the ten tribes back into his kingdom. He also welcomed into his southern kingdom all the priests and Levites that Jeroboam dismissed from their positions. In this Rehoboam did right. But in his later reign he did not. Rehoboam was not a good and faithful king. He didn’t try to correct the pagan practices introduced in the reign of his father, Solomon. But at least he did not actively turn against the worship of God in the temple in Jerusalem.

II

In the Psalms David wrote, “In the **pride** of his face the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, ‘There is no God.’” (Psalm 10:4) We must understand what St. Peter would later say to the people of God and those who guide them in the light of the psalm, “So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, **all of you,** with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’” God opposes the proud, that is, He opposes all those whose pride causes them to disregard His word.

God didn’t give mankind His word to ignore, neglect, debate, or interpret it in a way that exalts man’s understanding over God’s wisdom and grace. He gave it to be believed, to be trusted above all other wisdom. You might say, “But God’s word isn’t always clear.” Well, if it isn’t clear how could it be said in Psalm 119 - which very likely is Jesus’

prayer while on the cross - "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path"? (Psalm 119:105) He walked that path in all His thoughts, words, and deeds. It must have been clear to Him. To which you answer, "Yes, but He was perfect. His understanding was not clouded by sin." Ahh, dear friends, now you begin to see the truth

God's word is clear. We are unclear. **The problem is not with it, but with us.** We are all like Jeroboam at times, like Rehoboam, like Solomon, like, yes, David, who though he was a man after God's own heart, that is, he trusted in God, he sinned and doubted as we do. We all sin and fall short of the glory of God. Only One did not, Jesus. His trust in the Father never wavered. He trusted God's word always and was never put to shame. It was His kingship and His kingdom that, David was assured, would have no end.

In the New Testament era we have much more freedom than did the people of the Old Testament. But let us understand well what that means in light of the evil changes that Jeroboam made in Israel's worship. First, he made a new image for Israel to focus on in their worship, **absolutely ignoring what the First Commandment said,** "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, **visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,** but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments." (Exodus 20:3-6) In the New Testament the image held before us is **of God's choosing,** the crucified Christ.

Jeroboam changed the festivals from three to one, and that on a day of **his own choice,** instead of on Passover, Pentecost, or the day of Atonement. In the New Testament the Son of David was born on Christmas Day, rose from death on Easter Sunday, and then poured out the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. We cannot change those. They commemorate historical facts of the Savior's completed work on earth. They commemorate the great acts of God who saved us through them.

Jeroboam ignored God's word as to who would attend the tabernacle/temple to bless His people Israel. In the New Testament God commands us that His ministers be "above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church. He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil." These are His commands for the ministry of grace instituted by His beloved Son.

Did the sin of Jeroboam continue in Israel? Yes, it did. Kings and Chronicles record all evil that resulted. Was it passed down from one generation to the next as God indicated He would allow in the First Commandment? Yes, sadly, it was. Kings and Chronicles tell us 30 times that the sin of Jeroboam continued. Could that still happen in our day? Yes, it can. Just look at the state of Christianity today. Dear friends in Christ, all these things happened to the Old Testament people for our learning. Let us learn. Then let us examine ourselves and repent. Let us trust God's word when it says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding," for He who so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life," (John 3:16) is faithful, true, and forgiving. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria