



God's Grand Story: King Jeroboam—Choosing Between God's Word & Pragmatic Politics

January 22, 2023

What do we know about Jeroboam?

King Solomon had earlier recognized Jeroboam's abilities, and placed him over all forced labor.

Many Israelites were forced into servitude, and Jeroboam runs a major part of this operation.

1 Kings 11:28 — "Now the man Jeroboam was a valiant warrior, and when Solomon saw that the young man was industrious, he appointed him over all the forced labor of the house of Joseph."

Based on Jeroboam's popularity later with the northern tribes, he must have run it in a humane way.

Read 1 Kings 11:29–39

We don't know if Jeroboam shared this prophetic word with others, but something caused Solomon to be suspicious of Jeroboam and to want to kill him.

1 Kings 11:40 — "Solomon sought therefore to put Jeroboam to death; but Jeroboam arose and fled to Egypt to Shishak king of Egypt, and he was in Egypt until the death of Solomon."

1 Kings 12:1–3 — "Then Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king. Now it came about when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard of it, that he was living in Egypt [for he was yet in Egypt, where he had fled from the presence of Solomon]. Then they sent and called him, and Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying... 'Jeroboam is with the people when ask Rehoboam to lighten the load of their forced labor.'"

Solomon's advisors suggest that Rehoboam agree to this, but his personal advisors tell him this is his chance to assert his authority, and that he should be even harder on the people than Solomon was.

1 Kings 12:15 — "So the king did not listen to the people; for it was a turn of events from the LORD, that He might establish His word, which the LORD spoke through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat."

When all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, they called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel.

The Sin of Jeroboam

1 Kings 12:25–27 — "Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and lived there. And he went out from there and built Penuel. And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom will return to the house of David. 'If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will return to their lord, even to Rehoboam king of Judah; and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.'"

Due to law of the time, there was conflict between participating in the religious events at the temple in Jerusalem, and maintaining distance from the now-foreign country of Jerusalem. Jeroboam reasons that he is in political danger if he continues to worship in Jerusalem.

So Jeroboam turns from following God.

Read 1 Kings 12:28–33

- Jeroboam sets up two golden calves, one in the northern part of his kingdom, and one in the south.
- He chooses non-Levite priests from men of every tribe.
- He himself acts as high priest, and establishes festivals according to his own plan.

He compromised the Word of God in order to hold on to political power.

He did it by maintaining enough of the old religion to keep their consciences appeased.

He continued the sacrifices... *but with different altars and priests.*

He continued the feasts... *but made them local and avoided the long, arduous trek to Jerusalem.*

He continued the priesthood... *but no longer limited it to the Levites.*

18 Kings of Israel that followed Jeroboam followed in his footsteps, and practiced the sins of Jeroboam.

The sin of Jeroboam was compromising truth for political power.

Today is Sanctity of Human Life Sunday — A Sunday where thousands of churches will make a clear stand that human life has been made in the image of God and is therefore sacred and must be protected.

And yet, much of the church in America won't mention it because it is controversial. Not controversial in the Bible, but it is in politics.

Many churches, for political reasons, have compromised the truth.

Many political leaders, who claim to be Christian, have also compromised the truth for political power.

What happened to all these politician's convictions?

Like Jeroboam, for political reasons, they compromised the truth. And like Jeroboam, many have followed in their footsteps and compromised the truth for political reasons.

What is the truth about the sanctity of human life?

- *Genesis 1:1 — "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."*
- *Genesis 1:26 — "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'"*
- *Genesis 1:27 — "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."*
- *Psalms 8:4 — "What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him?"*
- *Psalms 8:5 — "Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty! "*

You've been made in the image of God and crowned with glory and majesty. He knit you in your mother's womb. You are no accident. Because of that truth, there is no place for things like racism, classism, abortion, and euthanasia.

We must never, for political reasons, compromise the truth.

Here is the uncompromising truth of the Word of God:

**You are the precious creation of God, made in the image of God,
crowned with glory and majesty.**

**So is every other person including the unborn,
the severely handicapped,
and the elderly.**

It is outrageously sinful to kill anyone made in the image of God.