

IT IS SETTLED!

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13b)

By Howell Lasseter

Departures: Jeroboam

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning..." (Romans 15:4a). We continue to study the question, "Is God pleased with man's changes to His commands?" Today, we consider Jeroboam, who was a servant of King Solomon, and a man of valour (1 Kings 11:26,28). Ahijah, God's prophet, told Jeroboam God would give him 10 of the 12 Israelite tribes after Solomon's death (vs.29-37). Read God's promise to Jeroboam: *"And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee"* (v.38). After Solomon's death, Jeroboam and all Israel made a request of King Rehoboam, Solomon's son, asking that the king lighten the yoke placed upon them by Solomon. After 3 days of consultation, Rehoboam not only denied their request, but said he would make the yoke heavier (1 Kings 12:1-16). Ten Israelite tribes rebelled, and made Jeroboam king. But, King Jeroboam was worried. He feared if the people went to Jerusalem to worship, they would depose him, returning to Rehoboam (vs. 19,20,26,27). So, he made 2 golden calves, saying, *"Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."* He set 1 of the idols in Bethel, and 1 in Dan, so the people could worship in these 2 cities, not in Jerusalem, as God had designated. Although God clearly commanded that only men from the tribe of Levi could be priests, Jeroboam appointed men from other tribes. He ordained a feast on the 15th day of the 8th month, *"like unto the feast that is in Judah"* (v.32). *"So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the 15th day of the 8th month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart..."* (v.33). Was God pleased with these changes? Did He tolerate them? *"Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel,...thou hast not been as my servant David...; but hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back: therefore, behold I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam,...and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam...And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin"* (14:1-16). These words of God are clear; they need no comment or explanation. Today, any man or "church" who departs from God's Word is grouped with Jeroboam! Study carefully 1 Kings 11:26-14:20, and consider well Jeroboam's actions. We will re-visit Jeroboam in December, the time designated by many religious people to observe the "birth of Jesus."