

Living to Win

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Jeroboam

From Ronald L. Dart's Program Notes

"Never take council of your fears." Andrew Jackson is the one who said that, but it may have come earlier than that. He also plainly read his Bible. It's fascinating how often fear strips a man of victories already won. This was the case of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. After the death of Solomon, God handed him the largest portion of Israel, Ten of the 12 tribes of Israel. He was a good man, an energetic leader, but he was afraid that after having made the break with Solomon's son Rehoboam, the people would eventually return to the unity of the Temple and indeed it was not an unreasonable fear.

The commandment of God said, "Three times in a year shall all your males come to appear before God in the place that he shall choose" (Deuteronomy 16:16). The Bible lays out God's annual Holy Days Israel had to observe, and of course that place was Jerusalem, at the Temple that Solomon built.

Jeroboam thought this over and concluded that, "Every year, come Feast of Tabernacles time, these people are going to get nostalgic for Jerusalem, and they are going to wander back down to Jerusalem

and nostalgia will cause them eventually to return to the rulership of Rehoboam. Then they'll want to kill me and I'll lose the kingdom." Never mind that God had given him the kingdom and stood surety for it. This was God's promise and he would have stood by him come what may, but he was afraid and his fear led him to a decision with disastrous long term consequences

The Story of Jeroboam

The story begins with, "The king took advice from his counselors and

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made two calves of gold, and he said to the people, 'It's too much for you to go up to Jerusalem, this is just too big a deal, behold your gods O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt.' And he set

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How Often Should You Give God an Offering? . . .

You may have attended a church where the offering plate is routinely passed every Sunday morning. But is that Scriptural? The Bible says we are to give God a tenth of the first of our increase—that's giving him a tithe. Is your tithe all God requires? If you have attended our worship services, you may have noticed that only three times in a year do we pass the offering plate. You can read for yourself when those times are in Deuteronomy 16:16. It stipulates that every man shall give as he is able. In other words, what you give depends on the blessings you have received. We are approaching the last commanded day that God requires an offering of you—The Feast of Tabernacles—which we'll be celebrating at the Green Acres Baptist Church Retreat, on Lake Tyler, in Whitehouse, Texas beginning the evening of October 8th, and going through October 16th. We invite you to join us. Check out our website at www.cemnetwork.com or call Linda Benton at 1-888-BIBLE-44 for more information on this exciting, God-ordained, spiritual Feast where the offering plate is only passed once in eight days. We'd love to have you join us.

Let's Do God's Work Together

By Wes White

Good Christian writing is not the writer talking about himself. Good Christian writing is talking about subjects that will encourage the reader to look to Christ. So please forgive me because I am going to talk about myself for just a moment. Ron and Allie recently asked me to come on board as a volunteer consultant to see if there are any opportunities for process improvement within the CEM office. Poking around CEM and asking questions about the operations has been interesting and fun. It's nice to see the inner workings of a ministry devoted to promoting Jesus Christ.

At this time, I would like to say thank you for those of you who allow us to serve you. And thank you to those who support CEM. May I tell you a fictional story? It has to do with time travel.

Let's pretend that we could travel back in time (which we can't) to about 1600 AD. And let's pretend we could bring someone back to our current day—someone who is knowledgeable about the world of his time over 400 years ago. And let's take this person on a tour of our present world.

We would start by taking him to Europe and showing him that Europe today is composed of many nations trying to achieve some degree of unity, but can't because of different languages and religions. Upon seeing this, our time traveling visitor would say, "That's how it was in my day 400 years ago." Then we would take him to China and show him that China is a huge authoritarian empire that is hindered

by government bureaucracy. He would say, "That's how it was in my day."

We would show how the Middle East is a cauldron of Islamic infighting. We would show him how sub-Saharan Africa is suffering from disease and starvation. And show how Japan is homogenous and mistrustful of outsiders. We would show him how Latin America has many rich oligarchs, but is hindered by the majority of its citizens living in poverty. To all this, our visitor would say, "That's how it was in my day." In most of the world, there has not been much change in the last 400 years.

But then we take him to North America and show him a nation with a vibrant economy and a population that is successful when it comes to great inventions, a representative system of government, a splendid highway system, innovative research and development programs, a considerably wealthy population, and really good health care. His jaw would drop. He'd say, "Wow! In 1600 this continent was sparsely populated and had absolutely no knowledge of the Bible!" In the last 400 years, the North American continent is where there has been immense and incredible change. This is the world we live in.

Although CEM serves people all over the world, its primary support comes from the U.S. Again, we thank you for your support no matter where you live.

But I have been asking myself this question a lot recently: "What

are the people of this great land doing to promote the Gospel message?" I have come to the conclusion that the answer is, "Not enough! Not nearly enough!" Considering the assets that this country possesses, we are not even coming close to doing what we can to promote Jesus' saving grace. Rather than putting their efforts into promoting the Bible to all nations, our people are more preoccupied with polarizing politics, sports, and reality TV. This is wrong!

At CEM, we do not attempt to judge any individual in matters such as good works. These things are between each person and God. Only He can judge.

But we do feel the necessity to issue a warning: We don't know exactly why God has blessed this nation so greatly. We can only ponder the thought that, if we don't do God's Work, is it possible God will remove these wonderful blessings from our country? This is not a prophecy or a prediction. It is only a question.

Many of God's people are diligently supporting the Work of God through various ministries. CEM does not claim to be the only ministry doing God's Work. We have brothers and sisters in other organizations who are doing God's Work. We applaud them and pray for them.

The point of this article is to encourage you to support God's Work and to encourage others to support God's Work. And not just with financial assistance. As Christians, we should be using our

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*Jeroboam**continued from page 1 . . .*

one of them in Bethel in the southern end of his kingdom, and the other he put in Dan in the north. This thing became a sin, the people went to worship before the one in Bethel, and before the other as far as Dan,” and they even went all the way up there, if they had to, rather than go to Jerusalem (1 Kings 12:28-30). This incident is uncannily similar to what Aaron did while Moses was upon the mountain receiving the Ten Commandments. He made a golden calf (Deuteronomy 9:16) of a god and he said, “These will be your gods, O Israel, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.” It’s astonishing, Jeroboam had to know that, and yet he still did it.

The seduction to idolatry in that world must have been extremely powerful, and since a lot of it was based on sex, that probably had something to do with it as well. What Jeroboam did here was to substitute a political religion for the real thing.

The Sins of David and Solomon

The lesson learned from David and Solomon is so easily lost. If you have read the story of David’s life, you would know that David was a sinful man and he did a lot of bad things. He made many serious moral errors. He committed adultery with another man’s wife then had the man killed in combat (2 Samuel 11). All these things he did were wrong but he never, ever went to another god. There is no taint of idolatry in David’s kingdom or history. When

Solomon came along, he married 700 wives, some from pagan societies (1 Kings 11). He begins to build shrines to these other gods and the Israelites, the Judean people, began to worship these gods. This cost his son, Rehoboam, the kingdom.

Jeroboam was about to make the same mistake. The important thing to understand from this is that, in spite of all the errors that David made, the fact that he never went after an idol, left the way back to God open to him. He always had an avenue to repent. But once you leave God, once you go after an idol, once you begin to worship a false god, the way back is gone, it’s lost.

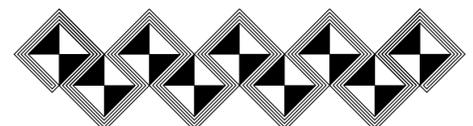
The Temple and its rights were designed to centralize the worship of Jehovah. It was the major unifying symbol to the nation. It was more than that; it also pointed the way back to God anytime anyone became lost.

Well, Jeroboam went further; he made a house of the high places and he made priests of the lowest of the people, who were not of the sons of Levi. He didn’t want strong people in the priestly office because he knew, well enough, the priestly office was an office of power and he didn’t want any conflicting power (1 Kings 12:31-32).

“Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. He did it in Bethel. He sacrificed to the calves that he had made, He placed in Bethel the priests of the high

places he had made and he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month. He had devised these things out of his own heart and he ordained a feast to the children of Israel and he offered upon the altar and burnt incense.” Jeroboam did this out of his own heart without any authority to do this. God gave him a kingdom, not a new priestly authority.

This whole story is a series of bad decisions by people who had every reason to know better. Jeroboam had every reason to know better than what he did and he did it anyway. One lesson you should gain from this is, whenever you feel God has told you something, it’s a good idea to trust him enough to do as you are told. Some people operate from a different set of rules. When all else fails, then do as you are told. But first we have to find out for ourselves and sometimes we find out at a great cost to ourselves and to the people we love. The rich lessons on this CD, titled *Jeroboam*, are vitally important for you to understand—that turning your back on God’s commands is a very bad idea. Sins such as Jeroboam’s have been passed down through generations. They have impacted even the days Christians keep holy. Return the enclosed card or call us at 1-888-BIBLE-44 so we can rush you this most important and fascinating CD. I promise you’ll learn and enjoy it.



time, talents, and treasures to promote God's Work.

Now the skeptic is going to say, "Wes is making an attempt at financial gain." No. I am not on any salary. I am retired and feel a responsibility to assist whatever brethren and ministries I can within my time limits.

May I get really frank at this point? Some skeptic might now be wondering that this is all perhaps a cynical ploy to increase money on behalf of Ron and Allie. Let me tell you what I have recently discovered. Ron (who has been an effective servant of God and his people for decades) makes a lower salary than I did before I retired as a contract analyst in a rural hospital system. Allie makes no salary from

CEM at all. Their primary source of income is from real estate that Allie has been working on for years. CEM is a labor of love for the Darts and they are not getting rich from it.

Have I been too blunt? Please permit me to be even more blunt. It is the desire of Ron and Allie to only continue spreading Bible knowledge at this time. It is also their desire for the CEM ministry to continue after they go to "sleep with their fathers." I believe in the mission of CEM, so I too desire to see CEM continue for decades. You know that Ron's teachings are timeless and will be of value 50 or 100 years from now, just as they are today. Are you in agreement with this?

Again, we thank you for allowing CEM to serve you. We thank you for your support. And not just financially. Please continue to pray for this ministry daily. Yes, daily. Please don't let a day go by without praying for CEM. We need God's blessing which comes from your prayers. Please stay connected with us via social media. For example, you can friend us on Facebook. Then, when CEM puts out a post on Facebook, you can share it with others whom you are friends with. You can encourage people you know to tune into our weekly Sabbath services. You can encourage others to request our literature.

Please share your thoughts with us. We look forward to hearing from you.

Affordable 2014 Feast Offers Fun, Food, Fellowship

Yes, you can afford to join us at the Green Acres Baptist Church Retreat in Whitehouse, TX. Low-priced one bedroom, one bath hotel-type rooms are available at the Retreat Center but numbers are limited. First come, first served. Call Debbie at 903-523-1116 to make your reservation. CEM will provide a coffee/donut bar each morning and a delicious lunch every day except the Sabbath. The Magnuson Hotel, located about seven miles from the retreat is offering CEM a wonderful rate of \$70 a night if you call them directly at 903-593-3600. There are several RV parks in the Tyler/Whitehouse/Bullard area. KE Bushman's Camp, 903-894-822, at 51153 US Hwy 69 N in Bullard is new with many amenities. For more information

about the area check out www.borntowin.net and www.lake-tyler.com/lake-tyler-lodging-cabins-hotels.htm. The 2014 Feast speakers include Mardy Cobb, Dan Botha, John Beasley, and Wes White. The activities include a picnic, pie and ice cream game night, old fashioned praise and worship sing-along, a golf outing, a CEM office open house and movie night and much, much more. God really opened the windows of heaven and poured out an enormous blessing when he provided us with this outstanding spot for you to celebrate the Feast. Nestled among the East Texas trees and right on Lake Tyler where you can fish, swim, or boat. The setting is conducive to drawing near to our Creator God. Please don't miss this

opportunity to join us. We are planning more opportunities for fellowship and friendship bonding in a relaxed atmosphere. We will worship together, learn together, sing together, laugh together, and break bread together. Come join us for a most memorable Feast! We love you and want to see you there! Call Linda Benton at the CEM office, 1-888-BIBLE-44 (1-888-242-5344) for more information.

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*That the man of God may be proficient and
equipped for every good work.*