

Idolatrous Worship (1 Kings 12:25-33)

The twelfth chapter of the first book of Kings records the dividing of the nation of Israel. In 1 Kings 12:25-33 we read about the actions taken by Jeroboam, the first king of the new nation of Israel.

Lack of Trust In God's Promises

God had clearly told Jeroboam that he would give him this new nation. (1 Kings 11:35, 37-38 ESV)

1 Kings 11:35-40 (ESV) ³⁵But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and will give it to you, ten tribes. ³⁶Yet 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. ³⁷And I will take you, and you shall reign over all that your soul desires, and you shall be king over Israel. ³⁸And 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. ³⁹And I will afflict the offspring of David because of this, but not forever.'" ⁴⁰Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. But Jeroboam arose and fled into Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

Rather than rely on God's promise, Jeroboam relies on himself. **He comes up with a plan** to protect his kingdom rather than trusting in the word of the Lord.

1 Kings 12:26 (ESV) ²⁶And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David.

Fear of losing (or not getting) what we want. (Religious leaders; material possessions; family or friends)

Proverbs 3:5-10 (ESV) ⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. ⁷Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. ⁸It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones. ⁹Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; ¹⁰then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

The Appeal of False Worship

What Jeroboam says is shocking. **"Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt"** (1 Kings 12:28 ESV).

Some people see God as someone who is to serve them.

<http://themattwalshblog.com/2014/09/04/joel-osteen-wife-heretics-thats-america-loves/2/#wgkqUuDSo8LXpr.99>

MATT WALSH'S BLOG: In a recent video clip, Victoria Osteen implores the audience to **"realize that when we obey God, we're not doing it for God... we're doing it for ourselves."** As her proud husband nods approvingly, Osteen continues. **"Do good for your own self. Do it because God wants you to be happy. When you come to church, when you worship Him, you're not doing it for God, really — you're doing it for yourself, because that's what makes God happy. Amen?"**

"I fail to totally comprehend why Mrs. Osteen's comments sparked such a widespread and sudden backlash. After all, she didn't say anything terribly new or shocking. She only gave voice to the kind of mentality that has long since infected every strand of American Christendom. Walk among Christians of any denomination and you will hear casual heresies very much in line with what the Lady Osteen was attempting to communicate. *"My faith is all about making me happy and comfortable."* Maybe the average mainstream apostate won't say it in quite those terms (although many of them will), but the message is the same. Pornography, abortion, divorce, gay 'marriage' — all are justified with the kind of rhetoric Mrs. Osteen used.

"In my short time as a moderately successful blogger, I have encountered hundreds and hundreds, probably thousands, of Christians in all branches of the Faith who will vociferously defend everything from 'open' marriages, to 'transsexuality', to liberal feminism, to infanticide, to adultery, to *50 Shades of Grey*, and they do it by speaking earnestly of their own desire for happiness.

"None of these things are *ever* rationalized by insisting that they make God happy, or that they honor Christ, or that they are fruits of the Holy Spirit. None of these people will *ever* publicly acknowledge Christianity's command that we deny ourselves, pick up our cross, and follow Christ up that hill to Calvary. They whine about their happiness — *their* happiness, not God's — and cherry pick a few isolated, out-of-context Biblical passages to support their unique interpretation of the Christian message.

"So the Osteens do not represent the theological fringe. They are as mainstream and common as can be. Our nation wants a shallow Gospel that doesn't challenge us to make sacrifices and be righteous, and Joel Osteen has come to give us exactly that. He distorts Scripture and offers up a hollow, empty message, but he is adored because he does it with a smile, he doesn't offend, and he gives off the general vibe of a man who probably chuckles at Family Circus cartoons. In other words, he is exactly what our society believes a Christian should be: nice, non-threatening, non-Biblical, and superficial."

So what are our golden calves that we choose to lead us in this life rather than the true and living God?

Horizontal worship.

What will I get out of the worship? What will others do for me?

Worship is not about us. Worship is not about if the songs were beautiful to our ears. Worship is not about us feeling good. Worship is not about hearing something that lifted your spirits. Worship is not based on you having a personal experience. The church is not a Christian club with weekly gatherings where you pay your dues, listen for a few minutes and go home.

We are deceived when we think that any of this is about us. Worship is vertical. Worship is about giving God glory and honor. When our hearts are engaged in praising the Lord and focusing on him, then we ARE built up. We ARE encouraged. We DO receive a tangible benefit.

Our language reveals how self-centered and false our worship has become.

- We will trade the truth of the gospel to find a church that fits our age group or our style.

- We get upset because people do not pay attention to us like they should. People do not visit us. People do not do things for us. People do not say things to us that we want to hear.
- This thinking is horizontal worship, not vertical worship. Worship is not about you. This church is not about you!

Convenient worship.

Jeroboam offered convenient worship. ***You don't have to go all the way to Jerusalem. It's too far. Just stay in Israel and worship at these golden calves.***

When we say that assembling to worship is inconvenient for us we do not understand what worship is. How convenient was the worship under the Law of Moses with all the sacrifices, feasts, and offerings? How convenient was 1st century New Testament worship as people died for the cause of Christ?

What is more likely: a week without prayer or a week without television? What is more likely: a week without Bible reading or a week without the internet?

We make time and great sacrifices to engage in what we want to do. I'm concerned when somehow we can find a way to work and run our errands, but we can't find a way to attend a worship service or a singing or a Bible study. I'm concerned when somehow we can find a way to feed ourselves three meals day, or go to our sporting events, or watch our favorite shows, but we can't find a way to attend a worship service or a singing or a Bible study.

We have time for recreation. We have time for work. We have time for family. Do we have time for everything else but the Lord? Do we look for excuses to get out of worship rather than giving all we have to be at worship? Where is our passion? Where is our heart?

We must not lose the cross.

God does not worship YOU. God does not yield to YOU.

We either love Jesus for what He has done for us and take up His cross daily, or we go home.

Matthew 6:24 (ESV) ²⁴“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.