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The Evil Power of Government

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

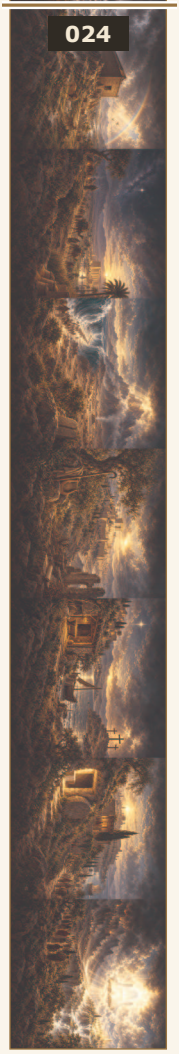
PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

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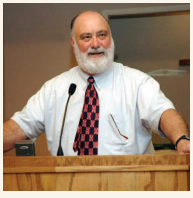
When the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.

PROVERBS 29:2, EXCERPT

Civil power raises questions of authority, justice, and restraint. John Weaver examines government through biblical principles and historical discussion, considering how power may be misused and how believers should assess its claims. These messages invite careful reflection on responsibility and the standards by which rulers are judged.

“Just because a civil ruler happens to be good for a while does not mean that he cannot abuse that power and authority.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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The Evil Power of Government

Civil Government

John Weaver

Weaver Bible College

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The Evil Power of Government

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Edited from the sermon corpus of John Weaver.

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CHAPTER 1

The Evil Power of Government

Part One

Introduction: The Evil Power of Government

I want to begin a message today which I will probably finish next Sunday. I have a preacher friend who said that his sermons were like bologna. You could just cut them off anywhere. Well, mine is not quite like that. I will have to find a logical stopping point where I can begin logically again next Sunday.

In 1 Kings chapter 14, verse 16, I want to bring a message which I have entitled, "The Evil Power of Government." Think with me about the evil power of government. The Word of God says, "And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin." The Bible is saying that He, God, shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin and who made Israel to sin. Everyone understands that government is power.

The Nature of Power and Authority

Lord Acton of England said, “Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Now that statement may be true in relationship to man, but it certainly is not true in relationship to God. God is sovereign, He is supreme, He has absolute power, and He is absolutely holy, righteous, and just. All power belongs to God. Psalm 62 and verse 11 declares, “God has spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.” We are told in Psalm 66 and verse 7, “He ruleth by His power forever; His eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves.”

Yet not only are we told that God rules by His power, we are also told in the Bible that there is none as holy as the Lord. He is holiness personified. Absolute power does not corrupt the incorruptible God. Power does corrupt those who abuse and misuse it. It makes the abusers more corrupt. In reality, it is not power that corrupts. It is corrupt people who use power wrongly, and thus they corrupt the power. They are equally corrupt and equally depraved, and therefore they use power unlawfully.

When I use the word “power” today, I want you to understand that the Greek word used for power refers to power, authority, and jurisdiction. Thus, when I say “power,” think also of “authority”; sometimes I will use those terms interchangeably.

Power may be used lawfully or unlawfully. When power or authority is used lawfully, it is a blessing; when used unlawfully, it is a curse. Lawful power brings freedom, while unlawful power brings tyranny, despotism, and totalitarianism. A husband and father may use his power lawfully and thereby be an educator, disciplinarian, provider, and protector of his family. He may also use his power or authority unlawfully and divide and destroy his family. The problem, then, is not really the power, but the abuse and misuse of that power.

Power is simply a tool to accomplish a certain end. Tools are neither good nor bad in themselves. One may take a hammer and build a house for a widow woman; that is a good use of a tool. Or one may take the same hammer and bludgeon someone to death; that is a bad and unlawful use of the tool. The tool is not the problem; the

one wielding it is. The lawful or unlawful use of the tool depends upon the one using it.

God Ordains Three Institutions

Power is a tool of government. It is impossible to govern without power. God rules by His power. The father must have power to order his house, and the pastor must have power to order the church under Christ. Civil government must have power to fulfill the purpose for which God established it.

Therefore, we must understand this one simple truth: all government is from God. All power and authority are from God. God alone is sovereign, supreme, and possessed of absolute power. Any and other power is delegated power. As a husband and father, the power and authority I have are delegated. As a pastor, the authority and power I have are delegated. As civil government, the power they have is delegated.

Let us take a few minutes and review very briefly certain principles of Scripture. Most people understand these principles, but they need to be considered by those who have never grasped them and by those who listen as well.

In Psalm 75, verses 6 and 7, the Scripture says very plainly, "For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another." So all power belongs to God. All kings, all presidents, all husbands, all fathers, all pastors—anyone who has any authority—receives it from God. God is the one who puts one up, and He is the one who takes one down.

Now consider Daniel, chapter 2, beginning with verse 20, so that we can see that God is in the context. "Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are His." Watch what God does: "And He," God, "changes the times and the seasons. He removeth kings, and setteth up kings: He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding."

Notice what God does. God removes kings, and God sets up kings. This is not merely a general statement about power; it declares that

the changes of times and seasons, the removal of kings, their establishment, and the giving of wisdom and knowledge are in God's hands. Daniel directed this truth toward King Nebuchadnezzar, the arrogant, haughty, proud monarch of Babylon.

In Daniel, chapter 4, verse 25, Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar, "...that they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times," or seven years, "shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will."

Obviously, God is the one who sets up kings, and God is the one who removes kings. These passages establish that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomsoever He will. We will make a few comments on this before proceeding to Romans, chapter 13.

Romans 13:1–2 says, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation,” or condemnation.

The Bible plainly states that there is no power but of God. God is the ultimate, the supreme, and the sovereign. We are also told that the powers that be are ordained of God. Stop and think: God has only ordained three institutions. He ordained the family, which is a ministry of education; the church, which is a ministry of grace; and the state, which is a ministry of justice.

God, who is sovereign, has delegated certain power and authority to these three institutions. He has set the limits, boundaries, and functions of each sphere. Moreover, He has set the qualifications for each one to exercise power or authority in his proper sphere. It is God who tells the father what he may and may not do. It is God who tells the pastor what he may or may not do. It is God who tells the state, or the civil ruler, what he may or may not do.

Romans 13:3–4 gives the reason why God set up civil government: “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is

good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid. For he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

The purpose of civil government, based upon the Word of God, is simply twofold: civil government has been ordained to protect the righteous and to punish the wicked. God has never ordained civil government to be a minister of education; that is the responsibility of the family. God has never ordained it to be a ministry of welfare; that is the ministry of the individual, the family, and even the church. God has never instituted civil government to be a minister of economics.

When Government Becomes Tyrannical

Stop and think about that. God is the one who created the silver and the gold. Do you realize that in the founding of this country, and for years afterward, if you found gold and silver on your farm or land, after the U.S. Mint was established, you could have your own gold and your own silver, take it to the U.S. Mint, and have it coined for you and handed back to you?

Government is not a ministry of education, welfare, or anything else. It is a ministry of justice. First Peter 2:14 tells us that God ordained civil government for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do well. We must understand that abused and misused power is not of God. God has never ordained tyranny—in the home, in the church, or in civil government. Tyranny, despotism, and totalitarianism are not God-ordained forms of government. All government, whether family, church, or civil, is ordained for our good. Look back at verse 4: "For he," the civil ruler here, "is a minister of God to thee for good."

Loss of life and loss of liberty are not good. The word "good" here refers to that which is good, pleasant, agreeable, and beneficial. Life and liberty are good; death and slavery are not good, pleasant, agreeable, or beneficial. When civil government leaves its God-ordained sphere of protection and punishment, it ceases to be the ordinance of God, since God has not ordained it for any other purpose.

When civil government ceases to function as God ordained it, it becomes tyrannical and may therefore be lawfully resisted. It is only when one resists God's lawful ordinance of government that he is brought under condemnation or damnation. But if government becomes something other than that which God ordained, it may be lawfully resisted. It is not God.

Does God require any wife to live with an abusive and murderous husband? Does God require a Christian to sit under an abusive, Bible-denying, and tyrannical pastor? No. What do you think God requires you to do there—to sit under abusive, tyrannical, and despotic civil government without resisting it?

And the answer is absolutely no. Civil governments that seek to enslave people and destroy their rights, liberties, and freedoms may be lawfully resisted.

I saw a young lady with a T-shirt on the other day, and I thought, How true, how true. All she had written on her T-shirt was this: "Our founding fathers would be shooting by now." I thought, Well, that's the truth. Can you imagine what Patrick Henry, George Mason, George Washington, Richard Henry Lee, or any of those people that were responsible for founding our government, who resisted George III and his tyranny, would be doing today? In fact, they probably would have been shooting a long time ago.

Wicked Government as God's Enemy

Now, I want you to listen. Civil government that transgresses the law of God and ceases to function as God has ordained it not only becomes tyrannical and therefore resistible; it also becomes the enemy of God and therefore must be resisted. I'll show you that from the Bible.

Look in your Bibles very quickly to Psalm 94, verses 20 and 21. Look what the Bible says. Here is the question, and I've explained this verse before, but I'll do it one more time: "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?" Now note the word "throne." We are talking about civil power, about government. God calls it a throne of iniquity, meaning a wicked civil government. So here is the question: Shall a wicked civil

government, watch carefully, have fellowship with God, which frames mischief by law? In the Bible, the word “mischief” is another word for sin.

So here is what it is asking: Shall a wicked civil government have fellowship with God, which makes sin legal? The answer is obviously no. Here is what wicked civil rulers do: “They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.” What do you think has been happening in our country for years? What do you think has been happening in every tyrannical, totalitarian, despotic government around the globe? They are gathering themselves together against the blood of the innocent. They are pillaging, taxing, stealing, and murdering. God says, “It’s no friend of mine; it does not have fellowship with me.”

The Bible says in Hosea 5 and verse 10, “The princes,” speaking of civil government, “the princes of Judah were like them that removed the bound.” That is, they removed the boundaries that God placed. Therefore, God says, “I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.” Water pours very liberally, freely, and easily. God said, “I’m going to pour my wrath out upon these wicked civil rulers who removed the bounds that I set for them.”

When government becomes the enemy of God, it becomes subjected to the curse and judgment of God, and therefore becomes a danger to the people under that government. Here is a sad truth: Governments do not immediately lose their power when they transgress God’s law. That power does become evil, however, and is used for the destruction and enslavement of the people.

If I were to start beating up Alice daily, do you think she has a responsibility to stay with me and let me continue until possibly I beat her to death? No. Just because I start beating her, I may be abusing my authority and power, but I have not ceased to be her husband. I am still her husband; I am now an abusive and murderous husband.

So when a government begins to transgress God’s law, it does not necessarily instantly lose its power. All that power becomes an evil power, used for evil instead of good. The message I am beginning,

which hopefully I will finish next week, concerns the dangers involved in acquiescing to the evil power of civil government.

Jeroboam Made Israel to Sin

I was reading recently through 1 Kings and 2 Kings, and I was impressed with a statement that occurs over and over. I had seen it many times before, but this time it impressed me so greatly that I had to stop and consider it again. The Bible tells us in 1 Kings chapter 14, verse 16: "For He," God, "gave Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, who made Israel to sin." That is our text.

Do you realize that this statement concerning Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin, occurs nineteen times in the Bible? It occurs more than that with different wording, which will be shown momentarily. Consider nine of the nineteen passages. In 1 Kings 15:26, we read about Nadab, the son of Jeroboam: "And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin." That is the second time the Bible said he made Israel to sin.

First Kings 15:30 says: "Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger." Verse 34 says: "And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin." We are being told over and over that Jeroboam made Israel to sin.

First Kings 16:2 says: "Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel; and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins." Verse 13 says: "For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities."

In 1 Kings 16:26, we read, "For he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities." Look also at 2 Kings 10:29: "Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the

son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Bethel, and that were in Dan." Verse 31 says, "But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin."

Over and over, we are told that it was Jeroboam who made Israel to sin. There were a few other kings who made Israel to sin as well. There are ten other passages which say this, but look at 2 Kings 17:20-21 for another passage that teaches the same truth without using the exact same words.

The Bible says, "And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until He had cast them out of His sight. For He rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drave," not "made" here, but "drave," "Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin." Here the word "drave" and the word "made" are used together.

The Hebrew word for "drave" is "nadach," which literally means to drive, to thrust, to impel, to push, or to make. Keil and Delitzsch renders this word as "he called to depart away from the Lord." Now look at Deuteronomy 13:5. Deuteronomy 13 deals with seduction, in the sense that people are trying to seduce others away from worshiping the one true and living God.

In Deuteronomy 13, Moses is talking about a false prophet: "And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee."

Note the word "thrust." If Robert is standing here by me and I thrust him away, I push him, usually violently. I force him to leave. I take care of him in that sense of the word.

The Bible says that Jeroboam made Israel to sin. So the question has to be asked: How did Jeroboam make Israel to sin? How did he

drive them, or thrust them, away from following the Lord? How did he use the evil power of government to destroy his people?

You say, “I sure wish you would talk about something that was relative to our world today.” What has happened to America? Have we been driven away from the Lord? Have we been thrust away from the foundations upon which our country was built? The answers are the same to all these questions. Depravity has not changed. Corruption has not changed. Politicians have not changed, and the evil power of government has not changed.

Jeroboam's Politically Correct State Religion

To answer how Jeroboam made Israel sin, turn to 1 Kings chapter 12. We will begin with verse 25 and read through verse 33, then come back and start. We cannot finish it today; we will continue next Sunday. Watch 1 Kings 12, verse 25: “Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel. And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David. If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem.”

"Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi."

"And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a

feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense."

How did Jeroboam make Israel sin? How did he drive them and force them into idolatry? First, he promoted a politically correct state religion which was instituted for his own benefit.

He left the covenant foundation upon which Israel was built. The covenant was with God and God's law. He disparaged God's law and the foundational agreement between God and the people, putting it aside and instituting a politically correct religion.

Jeroboam did not believe in the Lord God of Israel, and he did not trust His promises. How can I make such a statement, and how do I know that? The answer is that he did not act upon the Word of God given to him by the prophet Ahijah.

Look back in your Bibles to 1 Kings 11, verse 38. Here is the promise that God gave to Jeroboam when he separated the ten tribes from the other two. God said through the prophet Ahijah 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.” What? God said to Jeroboam, “If you will worship me, if you will obey me, I will build you a sure house, I will give Israel to you.” What did Jeroboam do? He instantly turned his back upon God and God’s promises.

Now, here is something very important. In order to turn the people to idolatry, Jeroboam must first turn them away from the true worship of God. In order to turn America into something other than it was ordained or set up to be by our founding fathers, our rulers must first turn us away from our Christian heritage and biblical foundations. How many schoolchildren today are taught of the biblical and Christian heritage of America? None. Zilch. Zero. None. We older people are harder to turn away because we were taught a little differently, or at least we read and studied some.

The Counsel and Deception of Jeroboam

But the younger people know nothing. I have heard people say, "Well, I'll teach my child at home." I am not talking about homeschooling now, but teaching your child right at home. Go ahead. What are you going to do, one hour a week, trying to teach your child at home when you are sending him to government schools for forty hours a week? Who do you think he is going to listen to?

In order for this country to be turned into a politically correct state religion, we must be turned from our historical Christian foundation. That is exactly what Jeroboam began to do. In 1 Kings chapter 12, verse 26, we read: "And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David."

In other words, he did not believe God. He said, "If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah."

Notice that he speaks of the house of the Lord at Jerusalem. The people must not be allowed to return to Jerusalem. Why? The temple was there. The political—or the Levitical—priesthood was there. The offerings and sacrifices were there. In fact, no sacrifice could be made unto God except in Jerusalem. The reading of the law was also carried out there.

So what was he saying? "We have to turn the people away from all this." They could not be allowed to keep going back there and hearing the truth if they were to worship the calves at Dan and Bethel. Not only were all the sacrifices in Jerusalem, but God demanded that three times a year every male in Israel appear before Him in Jerusalem, and they could not appear empty. The women and children often came as well, but every male was required to do so. You will find out exactly why He set up His own feasts. He did not want those people going down to Jerusalem. Why? Because if you are going to turn someone to idolatry, the first thing you have to do is turn him away from the Lord.

Why was Jeroboam so concerned about the people going to Jerusalem? Rehoboam was the son of Solomon and the grandson of

David. You remember the Davidic Covenant, in which God promised David that his sons would sit upon the throne. Jeroboam was not of the lineage of David, and he said, "I cannot allow that to happen." The true seed of David, just like the true seed of Abraham, is none other than Jesus Christ Himself.

Jeroboam knew he was not in the Davidic line. So he said, "I cannot allow anybody to go down and worship there." Here is why: "And they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah." In other words, Jeroboam's politically correct religion was not about truth or worship, nor was it for the good or benefit of the people. It was about preserving himself—his life, rule, power, family, and kingdom.

Politicians have not changed. If you think our politicians today are truly interested in serving us, the people, you have had your head in a hole for a long time. A politician is interested in two things: election and re-election. Once he is in, he is concerned about money, power, and control. The point is obvious: just as it was with Jeroboam, so it is with politicians today.

Likewise, the politically correct religion of statism, which endorses, upholds, sustains, and subsidizes wickedness, sin, disobedience, irresponsibility, and idolatry, is only for the benefit of the state. I just heard about a pastor who was rebuked and kicked off the radio because he made a politically incorrect statement. Whatever happened to freedom of speech? Today, you are free to speak as long as it is politically correct.

By the way, I do not like Don Rickles or his sense of humor. I do not think cutting people down is funny. But I was amused by one thing he said: "I know I'm not supposed to say anything against black people. But President Obama is a personal friend of mine. He said he was over at my house just recently." "But he didn't stay long before his mop broke." Now, you just stop and think about that.

Why would it be politically incorrect to make a statement about someone who is obviously a socialist, a communist, a Marxist, and is doing everything he can to destroy America? Yet it is politically incorrect to say it. How, then, do we have a politically correct government that will subsidize sodomy, abortion, and

irresponsibility? A politically correct state religion seeks to control the people by license and by licentiousness. When people have a license to sin from the government, how can they complain when the government sins? Wickedness in the government begets wickedness in the people.

The Bible, in Hosea 7:3, says, "They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies." How do they make the king glad with their wickedness? If the people are wicked, they cannot say anything about wickedness in the government. How could David—King David—complain about Joab murdering Abner and Amasa when he had murdered Uriah? How could he condemn Joab without condemning himself? How could he condemn Joab without condemning his own son Absalom, who had murdered his own brother Amnon?

In 1 Kings 12:28, the first part, we read, "Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold."

You must understand that Jeroboam's politically correct religion was deliberately planned. He took counsel. Nothing happens in politics by accident. If it happens, it was planned; there is a purpose for it. The king took counsel from men he had chosen to aid him in the continuance and furtherance of his kingdom. The counsel may have been ungodly and unbiblical, yet, humanistically speaking, it was the right counsel to solidify the government and his control over the people.

The counsel these men gave Jeroboam was much like the counsel Ahithophel gave Absalom. When Absalom had come back into Jerusalem after his father had been run off the throne, Ahithophel said unto him, "Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father."

"Then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong." What Absalom was about to do was not only immoral, unbiblical, and ungodly; it was an insult to his father. How could Ahithophel give such counsel? Anyone who followed Absalom would understand that he had broken all ties with his father, and that he was either going to kill his father or his father was going to kill him.

In other words, it was a fight to the death. A king's son can be forgiven, but those who follow him could not. They knew that this was basically an unpardonable sin, so to speak. It was bad, ungodly counsel, but good counsel in the sense that it would solidify those men under Absalom. The same thing was true here: it would solidify Jeroboam's control over the people and solidify his government.

Jeroboam's religion was designated and designed for his own benefit and for the perpetuation of his kingdom. Neither God nor the people figured into his plans. Yet he was going to say the opposite. Does that sound like a modern-day politician? If they were truthful, they would say, "Do not listen to what I tell you; watch what I do."

Notice how Jeroboam made the people sin, not only by instituting a politically correct state religion, but by making the people think it was for their benefit—that he was thinking of them, their ease, and their comfort. Look in verse 28: "Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem." Then: "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." It was too much and too difficult. They did not need to travel all the way to Jerusalem to worship; it was a heavy yoke laid upon them.

“Here’s what I’m going to do. I’m just thinking of you. I’m going to provide for your devotion at home. I will be the guardian of your spirituality. You trust me, the civil ruler, and I will provide all your means and all your needs.” That was the message he was conveying. Is that not the message that comes from Washington, D.C., today? “Trust me, we’ll take care of you. You just give us all your money, all your allegiance, and all your devotion, and we’ll take care of you. After I’ve taken everything I’ve got from you, I don’t need you anymore.” That is what happens, though that is not exactly what they say. What they say is, “Just trust me, we’ll take care.”

Idolatry in Dan and Bethel

In order to prove that he was genuinely concerned about their spirituality, he set up two golden calves: one in Dan, in the northernmost section of the country, and one in Bethel, in the southernmost section, closest to Judah and Jerusalem. Evidently, these two calves were supposed to be guardians of his kingdom or

something like that. You must remember that the Egyptians worshipped Apis the bull.

It was the similitude of this bull or calf that Aaron had made for the children of Israel in the wilderness, in Exodus chapter 32. So he made these two calves, probably after the order of Apis. He put one in Bethel, which would draw away from Judah and Jerusalem those who were susceptible to idolatry, and one in Dan as well. Evidently, the one in Dan was placed first, for in verse 30: “And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan.” Dan, the tribe of Dan, was the northernmost tribe and territory in the land.

Now notice what he said: “It’s too much for you to go to Jerusalem.” Instead, they were to come up to Dan and worship. In going to Dan, they were probably traveling twice or three times as far to worship before that calf as they would have traveled to Jerusalem. Every time you read in the Bible about going to Jerusalem, it is always up.

No matter whether you are south of it or north of it, it does not matter. You go up; you do not go down, although south is down to us and north is up. But it is too much to go there. They went twice as far, three times as far, to worship according to their own inventions than they did in the way which God had ordained. Have you ever noticed that men are always willing to sacrifice more, spend more, and do more in their own interest than they are in God's interest?

Now let me ask you a question. Why do you think He would put the calf first in Dan? There is another reason. The children of Dan were already used to idolatry. In Judges 18:30–31 we read, “And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.”

Idolatry had already taken place in Dan. They had this graven image. Why not go ahead and set it up there? Although Jeroboam professed to worship Jehovah, he set up these golden calves. He

tried to worship Him according to the designs and desires of his own heart.

Conclusion: Tyranny Serves Itself

What Jeroboam was doing was much like that which Cain did. When Cain brought his own offering, he did not care that God required a blood sacrifice or a blood atonement. He simply brought the fruit of the field; that was sufficient. So Jeroboam was refusing to worship God in the way God had ordained. He was going to worship God in the way he had ordained. Jeroboam actually believed that his way of worship was equal to God's way of worship.

There were two calves. The two calves would basically be a denial of the unity of God, or the unity of the Godhead. By the two calves, Jeroboam was teaching the polytheism of the pagans: there are two gods, two separate gods, not one God, and you can go to either one. He was turning the people away from the law of God and making them follow his own law, turning them from the worship of the one true and living God to the worship of the calves. Thus, his law became totally anarchistic, in the sense that he made it up.

This came from the Supreme Court, Olmstead versus the United States: "In a government of laws, the existence of the government will be imperiled if it fails to observe the law scrupulously. Our government is the potent, the omnipresent teacher. For good or for ill, it teaches the whole people by its example. Crime is contagious. If the government becomes a lawbreaker, it breeds contempt for law. It invites every man to become a law unto himself. It invites anarchy."

Do we have today a government of law? No. What was it Alcee Hastings, the congressman, said? "We make up the rules as we go along." That is exactly what Jeroboam was doing, making up the rules as he went along.

A tyrant always talks about the interest of the people, but he always serves himself. He talks about the good of the people, but he is always establishing his politically correct religion. A tyrant is interested in one thing: himself and his rule. What Jeroboam did to Israel, if you observe it enough, you can see that Washington, D.C., is

doing to America, has done to America, and will continue to do to America until it stops.

The evil power of government: government may use power lawfully or unlawfully. One definition of a tyrant is an individual who uses lawful power unlawfully. That is exactly what we have in this country: lawful power being used unlawfully. Let's pray.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, help us to be, as You've said, wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Help us, Lord, to see, understand, and know where we are, where we have been, and where we're being carried, so that we may apply ourselves to Thy word and by law bring our lives into conformity to Your word, and serve Thee and Thee only, not a politically correct religion. Give us grace, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

The Evil Power of Government

Part Two of Two

SCRIPTURE READING - 1 Kings 14:16; 1 Kings 12:25-33 (KJV)

Review of Jeroboam's Sin and the Nature of Evil Government

In 1 Kings chapter 14 and verse 16, we read this concerning God: "And He shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin." Nineteen times in the Bible we are told specifically that it was Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin. There are other times when Jeroboam is mentioned, but not necessarily in those exact words. Nineteen times those words are used exactly: Jeroboam was the one who made Israel to sin. Jeroboam was indeed the individual who personified wickedness and who made Israel sin.

In 1 Kings chapter 12, beginning with verse 25, we read: "Then Jeroboam built Shechem in Mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein;

> and went out from thence, and built Penuel. And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."
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> "And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense."

Whenever government ceases to function according to the ordinance of God, it ceases to be the ordinance of God and therefore becomes resistible. Jeroboam is the classic example of government gone bad. In such an instance, we are responsible, according to Acts 5 and verse 29, to do what the apostles did. When they were commanded to violate the law of God, they answered, “We ought to obey God rather than men.”

When government ceases to function the way God ordained it to function, it also becomes the enemy of God according to Psalm 94 verses 20 through 21, which we covered last week. Jeroboam is therefore an excellent example of the evil power of government. The Bible says that Jeroboam used his power to drive, thrust, push, or

force Israel into sin and idolatry. When governments go bad, they do not lose their power instantly; it simply becomes an evil power.

Jeroboam's Politically Correct Religion for Self-Preservation

This is true of family government, church government, and civil government. If I were to begin abusing Alice and beating her up on a daily basis, I would not necessarily cease to become her husband. I would still be her husband. But the power and authority that God had given me would then be used in an evil manner instead of a good, positive, and righteous manner. That power, instead of being a blessing, would become a curse.

The same is true of civil government. It is like Saul, who sinned against God and was rejected by God. Saul still reigned another twenty years or so after God rejected him, yet his power was then used in an evil way. The very first thing that Jeroboam did was institute a politically correct religion for his own benefit.

Everything that Jeroboam did, as recorded in 1 Kings chapter 12, he did for his person, his life, his power, and his kingdom. Everything was for his benefit. Therefore, in verse 27, Jeroboam said, “If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.”

Jeroboam understood that he was not in the lineage of David. If the people returned to Jerusalem, sooner or later they would return to Rehoboam, so he had to do something. The politically correct religion Jeroboam established was not about truth, worship, or the good and benefit of the people. It was all about Jeroboam. Likewise, the political correctness of this day is concerned only with the power, prestige, program, and party of those who are in control.

Politicians have not changed. It is still all about money, control, and power. As it was with Jeroboam, so it is today. There is no real concern over principle, truth, history, heritage, or what is best for the people. An evil government is concerned only with preserving itself. Jeroboam understood one simple principle: to turn the people

into an idolatrous state, he first had to turn them from the true worship of God and from the Word of God. Thus, he would not allow them to return to Jerusalem to worship.

Notice in our present-day government how Christ, Christianity, the Bible, and even our founding fathers are mocked, ridiculed, degraded, and derided by the powers that be. The systematic dismantling of Christianity has gone on for a long time. Legislatively, executively, and judicially, every branch of our government is now basically anti-Christ and anti-Bible. They are doing everything within their power to destroy biblical Christianity and to reduce everyone to one monolithic state religion, so to speak.

The Provider Government and Modern Parallels

Jeroboam pretended that his main concern was the comfort, ease, and welfare of the people. In verse 28, the king took counsel—deliberately, not by accident—and made two calves of gold, saying, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." He told them, "It's too much for you to do this." Jeroboam therefore instituted what we would call a provider government. He wanted the people to look to him to provide their needs. Likewise, instead of the limited government our founding fathers set up, visualized, and instituted, we now have an unlimited, uncontrolled federal government. It has become a provider government. In 2006, for instance, the federal government spent $92 billion in direct and indirect subsidies to businesses in the private sector. This is called corporate welfare.

That does not count the trillions of dollars later on that has been given to various banks, the bank bailouts. Let me just give you a little bit of this. Citigroup got 2.5 trillion dollars. Morgan Stanley, 2.41 trillion. Merrill Lynch, 1.9 trillion. Barclays, 868 billion. Bear Stearns, Goldman Sachs, Royal Bank of Scotland, all of these banks, received trillions and billions of dollars. Corporate bailout.

That does not include the individual welfare, such as free housing, free food, free cell phones, free cars, WIC, EBT, food stamps, schooling, and summer programs. Do you realize in our day and time, under our governmental welfare system, it is possible for a

couple to have a child and never ever be responsible for that child for one day? You say, how can that be? Well, they can be getting food stamps, WIC, and Head Start—everything the government provides, medically, dentally, scholastically, economically. So what began as a limited government has become a provider government.

That's exactly what Jeroboam began in 1 Kings chapter 12. Now, how far did Jeroboam go? The Bible says very clearly about these two calves that he made, that he put one in Bethel and the other put he in Dan. And the Bible says in verse 31, "And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi."

Jeroboam's Control Over Religion: Priests, Temples, and Feasts

Jeroboam the king made a house of high places; that is, he made his own temple, and he made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. So the king then was over the department of religion. He appointed the ministers. He believed that he had the authority to make priests. He paid their wages. Therefore, they were obligated to him for their power, their position, and profit. They represented the king. They would instruct the people in the new way and in the new feast days. They would make sure that the people were submissive and compliant.

Does that ring a bell? Do you remember during Hurricane Katrina, a number of 501(c)(3) state preachers began reinterpreting Romans 13 as unlimited submission to the government, and those preachers were trained by the federal government to quell the people and to keep the people in submission? Let me put it like this: yes, Virginia, there are statist preachers. And there have been many that have been trained by the government.

In other words, they were going to make sure, just as in Jeroboam’s day, that everyone submitted unconditionally. The Levites, who were the true priests, did not accept Jeroboam’s innovations, and consequently they were driven from office. Jeroboam was not hindered at all by the true priests of God being driven from office.

He probably considered it a real boon. He could now legally, or at least morally in his own mind, confiscate their houses, lands, and suburbs and add them to the king's treasuries and possessions. Jeroboam not only assumed the power to make priests; he undertook the priesthood himself. He offered upon the altar and no doubt considered himself the chief priest, or high priest—or, to use a term you might recognize, Pontifex Maximus. That is the title of the Pope. Undoubtedly, Jeroboam and the people under him believed they were holy and godly because of all the altars they had built under this new state religion.

God does not look upon the work of man the way man looks upon his own work. God saw those altars and that humanistic religion, and counted them as sin and rebellion. He said in Hosea 8:11, "Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin." Everything Jeroboam had done was sin.

To demonstrate Jeroboam's absolute control over this new religion, consider that he transferred the date of the Feast of Tabernacles to the eighth month, a month he devised of his own heart. In verses 32 and 33 we read: "And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel. And he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense." Thus he made Israel sin: he seduced them from the worship of God into idolatry and forced them to worship the calves he had set up in Dan and Bethel.

The King as Head of Church and State

Have you ever considered our English word "holiday"? Have you noticed that it is a corruption of "holy day," and thought about how many secular holidays the government gives us? What has happened to all of the Christian and historical holidays? In the French Revolution, the French tried to destroy everything Christian. In fact, they erected a statue of a prostitute to be worshipped and even

changed the days of the week. They wanted to make sure that they were not Christian at all.

So Jeroboam has compounded his sin. He has not only turned the people from the true worship of God into the worship of his own state religion; he is now considering himself the chief priest, the head of the church, the head of religion. Basically, what he has done is this: he has dethroned God and enthroned himself. All of his descendants followed in his steps.

Amos went up to Israel to prophesy against Israel because of their sins, wickedness, and ungodliness. Amaziah, who happened to be a state preacher, told him, “Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there.” In other words, go back where you came from; you may eat your bread there, and you may preach all you want to there. Then he said, “But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court.”

What has happened? The king has now become the head of the church and the head of state. This is exactly what Jeroboam I was doing. I hope you understand that this is a denial of the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

I hope you also remember that in Rome, people were not put to death for being Christians. You say, “But many Christians were put to death.” Yes, they were, but they were not put to death simply because they were Christians. In Rome, you could believe whatever you wanted to believe. If you wanted to worship Aphrodite, go for it. If you wanted to worship Zeus, have at it. If you wanted to worship Jesus Christ, you could do so.

The only problem was this: once every year, you had to swear allegiance to Caesar and say, “Caesar is Lord.” The word “Caesar” is the one that gives me the privilege and the right to believe whatever I want to believe, and Christians refused to say that Caesar is Lord. Christians said, “Jesus Christ is Lord,” and hence they were put to death, not simply because they were Christians, but because they were considered traitors and treasonous to the Emperor cult.

Henry VIII claimed to be the head of the state and the head of the church. It was under Henry VIII that the Anglican Church was

begun. So here, Jeroboam is doing the same. Those who follow are doing the same. As it was in Jeroboam's day, so it is in our day. Government and religion have mixed together. However, it is not government and the Christian religion; it is government and humanism, which is the religion of fallen man.

James Madison's Warning and the Mixing of Government and Humanism

The truth of the matter is, we have forsaken God, we have forsaken the Bible, we have forsaken our history and our heritage, and we were warned of this by none other than James Madison himself. James Madison was considered the father of the Constitution because he was secretary at the Constitutional Convention. Listen to what James Madison said: "If Congress can employ money indefinitely to the general welfare, under the sole and supreme judges of the general welfare, they may take the care of religion into their own hands. And they may appoint teachers in every state, county, and parish, and pay them out of the public treasury. They may take into their own hands the education of children, public schools, establishing in like manner schools throughout the union. They may assume the provisions of the poor, welfare. They may undertake the regulation of all roads other than post roads. In short, everything from the highest object of state legislation down to the most minute object of police would be thrown under the power of Congress."

"Were the power of Congress to be established in the latitude contended for, it would subvert the very foundations and transmute the very nature of limited government established by the people of America." Everything that he said and warned against, we have become. So the very first thing that Jeroboam did, he instituted a politically correct state religion, which was basically for his own benefit. The second thing is that he persecuted those who refused to participate in his religion. When power becomes evil, it will always be used in an evil and insidious way. Jeroboam was no different from any other tyrant. He made it absolutely impossible for the priests and the Levites to stay in Israel. He drove them out.

Persecution of True Believers and the Reduction of Religion

He planned on starving them out. Thankfully, a great many of them, along with some other folks, had enough conviction and sense to get out. They fled to Judah so that they could worship God according to His law. Moreover, many people also left and went to Judah because they saw the handwriting on the wall.

Here is what Jeroboam did: “And the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to him,” that is, to Rehoboam, “out of all their coasts. For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the Lord.”

“And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made. And after them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers.” Note specifically that the Bible says Jeroboam and his sons cast them off from executing the priest's office.

In other words, he kicked them out. The interesting thing is that verse 17 says, “So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years: for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon.” All of these priests and Levites, after being kicked out, came down to Rehoboam.

Here is what was asked of Jeroboam: “Have ye not cast out the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of other lands? so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods.” What did he do? He kicked out the real, genuine priests, the sons of Aaron, and all the Levites. Anybody who came with the proper amount of money, anybody who wanted to be a priest and brought the proper offerings, could be made a priest.

It did not matter what his life was. It did not matter whether he was God-called or God-ordained or not. You remember how Ahab and Jezebel persecuted the prophets of God. Obadiah hid a number of them in a cave and fed them with bread and water while the

priests of Baal feasted at the tables of Ahab and Jezebel. Ahab basically ran off, persecuted, and killed all the prophets of God that he could, while at the same time exalting the prophets of Baal. Here is what I want you to understand: according to 1 Kings chapter 12 and these passages in 2 Chronicles, he had kicked out the true priests of God and the true Levites, and had made anyone and everyone who brought the proper offering a priest.

I want you to notice the reduction of religion to its lowest order, or its lowest level. Anytime civil government claims the right and the power to control religion, even the Christian religion, it will always be reduced to the lowest common denominator. Civil government is going to make sure that everyone is saved, or that everyone is recognized on an equal footing, even though their lives are completely contrary to what God has ordained and what God demands.

I hope you remember that egalitarianism was a word used frequently during the French Revolution. All that means is that everyone is equal; everyone is on a level. That is why you will hear it said today that Christianity is just another religion. In other words, those in power think that Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Shintoism are all on the same level. They are all equal. That is basically what Jeroboam was doing: reducing everyone to the lowest common denominator so that anyone who wanted to be a priest could be a priest.

One of my favorite stories, which I know most of you are familiar with, is George Orwell's "Animal Farm." If you have never read "Animal Farm," I trust that you will. You remember how the two pigs, Napoleon and Snowball, had basically taken over the farmer's house. They were living inside, while all the other animals were outside. There had been a set of rules posted, and one of the rules said, "All animals are equal." When the other animals began complaining that Napoleon and Snowball were living in the house while they were living in the barn, the pigs told them to go back and read the rules. They did, and the rule now said, "All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others."

The Danger of Trusting in Rulers and the Certainty of Judgment

While everyone under the government is supposedly put on an equal footing, that does not apply to the elite. Who does the ruling? All are equal, but not as equal as others. I have had so many cops pass me flying down the road at eighty-five or ninety miles an hour, with no blue lights and no siren. Why can they do that? Because they are cops. All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others. If you did that, they would put you under the jail.

This is what Jeroboam was doing. He was equalizing everyone with the exception of the ruling class. Humanistic governments, governments that exercise their power in an evil manner, never like to be rebuked. I hope you notice that when Obama made his statement that he was going to legalize all of these illegal aliens just in time to vote in November, although they were not capable of voting legally, a reporter tried to ask him questions. He became upset, said he was not answering any questions, turned around, and walked away. I understand that.

In 2 Chronicles 25:14, Amaziah was one of those arrogant reprobates. “Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them.” Can you imagine someone being so stupid as to get the gods of a people he had just defeated? If those gods had any power, they would have protected their own people.

But he did not think like that. Verse 15 says, “Wherefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against Amaziah, and he sent unto him a prophet, which said unto him, Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand?” As the prophet talked with him, the king said, “Art thou made of the king's counsel? forbear; why shouldest thou be smitten?” Then the prophet forbare, and said, “I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel.” What did the king say?

"Are you one of my counselors?" Of course he was not. And he said, "You better shut up lest you be smitten." The prophet said, "Okay, because I understand that God has decreed to destroy you." You see, a few tyrants will put on a good show for a few years in order that they may deceive the people, biding their time until conditions are right, until their power is consolidated, and then they will demonstrate their true colors.

Jeroboam had driven all of these priests and Levites, and many of the people, out of Israel; they had gone down to Rehoboam. "So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years: for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon." What happened after three years? "And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him." Isn't that amazing? After three years, when he said, "I've got it made now. I don't need God. I don't need the people. I'm in control." Rehoboam simply used God and His law and His people for one purpose.

He used them to consolidate his kingdom and gain his power, and after he got that, he forsook God and the people. It is not enough to start out right. One must continue right and in the right way as well. It is not enough to start out in the faith; you must continue in the faith and end in the faith. That is true not only concerning individuals, but also concerning civil rulers.

This should explain why practically every politician who has ever run for office claims to be a Christian. What are they doing? They are using God and the people of God to get into office. Then you do not listen to what they say; you watch what they do. Men and women who claim to be Christians begin to promulgate laws that are anti-Christian, anti-God, and anti-Bible, destroying the liberty and freedom of the people. Never listen to what a politician says. Watch what he does.

Do you realize that even a good king—even a good ruler—can abuse his power and authority? Just because a civil ruler happens to be good for a while does not mean that he cannot abuse that power and authority. Look in your Bibles at 2 Chronicles 16. Asa was basically a good king, yet he abused his power and authority and was

rebuked by the prophet Hanani. In 2 Chronicles 16:7 we read: “And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the Lord thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand.”

He reminds him of another fact: “Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thine hand.”

“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.” Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa oppressed some of the people the same time.

Isn’t that amazing? Here was a good king who became angry because the prophet of God rebuked him. He put the prophet in prison and, because of his anger, turned around and oppressed some of the people of God.

I hope you're beginning to understand why the center verse of the Bible is very important. Psalm 118 and verse 8 says, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man." The verse right under it says, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." And that's certainly true. Anytime you put confidence in man, you're going to be disappointed.

We've been looking at Jeroboam and making applications to our time today. But how bad can it get? I travel all over and hear people say, "I don't think it can get any worse." Believe me, it can, and it will. Let me show you how much worse it can become. Look in 2 Chronicles chapter 33 and verse 9.

This refers to Manasseh, who was the most wicked king of Judah. The Bible says, "So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel." Wow! He not only drove them into idolatry, which is bad enough, but he made them do worse

than the heathen that God drove out of the land because of their sins.

Do you realize a civil ruler does not have to be blatantly wicked in order to lead the people astray? Wicked rulers are bad in and of themselves, but you can have a decent civil ruler who still does not do right in some areas, and he can still lead the people astray. Uzziah was a good king and reigned for 52 years.

But he sinned against God by going into the temple, where no one but the priests was to go, and attempting to offer incense to God himself. Azariah and some of the other priests confronted Uzziah and told him to get out: "This is not going to be for your honor. Get out." Uzziah was enraged. "I'm the king. I can just about do what I want." That is what he thought. The Bible says that God instantly smote him with leprosy in his forehead. As the priests drove him out, "yea, he himself hastened to go out."

And from that time forth until the day he died, he had to live in a separate house because he was a leper. Since God smote him with leprosy and he had to live separately, Jotham, his son, became the ruler. Jotham was a decent king, but notice what he did not do and how he caused the people to sin. 2 Chronicles 27:1 says, "Jotham was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem." His mother's name also was Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok. "And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah did: howbeit he entered not into the temple of the Lord. And the people did yet corruptly."

Jotham said, in effect, "I'm not going to the house of God. I mean, I know what happened to my father." So instead of obeying God and doing what he should do—to go there to sacrifice and worship—he stayed away. Therefore, the influence of Jotham led the people still to do corruptly.

How Civil Rulers Make a People Sin and the Final Outcome

How did Jeroboam make Israel sin? Let's rephrase that and ask it like this: How does any civil ruler make a people sin and go into

idolatry? Because that's what Jeroboam did. First of all, he removed Israel from its foundation and covenant way of life. Any civil ruler who wants to push America into idolatry need only remove us from the Bible, from our godly covenant, and from the Constitution, our history, and our heritage. Then we will be driven into idolatry. First, he removed Israel from its foundation and covenant way of life.

Secondly, he made it easy to follow his idolatrous religion and difficult to follow the way of the Lord, His Word, and the way of worship. "Come on to Dan. Come on to Bethel. That's an easy thing to do. We've got plenty of priests. We've got plenty of things." But he drove the priests and Levites, and anyone else who believed in the Lord God, out of Israel. Thus he made it easy to follow his state religion, his politically correct religion, and difficult for anyone to be biblical and godly.

Thirdly, he changed the object of worship. Think about that. He diverted worship from the one true and living God to the calves. Fourthly, he changed the place of worship.

You don't have to go down to Jerusalem. You can either worship in Dan or Bethel. They're equal to Jerusalem according to Jeroboam. So he changed the place of worship. He changed the way of worship. You no longer had to worship God according to His Word. Now you had to worship God, Jeroboam's God, according to his word. He changed the priesthood. He changed the feast days. He began a feast which he devised of his own heart.

And eighthly, he persecuted the true believers, elevated the wicked and the ungodly, and required submission or else.

One question yet remains to be answered: What eventually happens to all Jeroboams and their false religions? In 2 Kings chapter 23, verse 15, we read: "Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove."

It was prophesied that Josiah would be born and would do this. God killed Jeroboam and his family; He had them totally wiped out. Verse 16 says: "And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the

sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the Lord which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words."

So what happens to the Jeroboams and their religions? They're totally, completely destroyed and overthrown. What happens to their kingdom and their rule? In 2 Chronicles chapter 24, verse 23, the Bible says this concerning Joash: "And it came to pass at the end of the year, that the host of Syria came up against him: and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people, and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus. For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the Lord delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers."

What happened to the kingdoms of those who forsake God? They're destroyed.

For the Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel; for he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the Lord. And Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not. For Ahaz took away a portion out of the house of the Lord, and out of the house of the king, and of the princes, and gave it unto the king of Assyria: but he helped him not. And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord: this is that king Ahaz. For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel.

Anytime you turn your back upon the one true and living God of Israel, you will find that you, your family, your kingdom, and everything that you have will be destroyed.

Our Lord said it plainly and truthfully in Proverbs 8:35-36: “Whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.” Whoever finds Jesus Christ finds life and favor from the Father. But listen to verse 36: “But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.”

That is true individually, societally, and nationally. All who hate Jesus Christ love death. If you die unsaved, or live disregarding, despising, and hating Jesus Christ, you love death, and that is exactly what you will get: eternal death. This is true not only individually, but in our society. Our society will die without God and without His laws. Our nation will die without God and without His laws.

You can talk about the power of the Bilderbergers, the Warbirds, and the elite all you want. Their power will come to naught, and death will be their due, because Jesus Christ is Lord. He is the victor. He is the conqueror. Our trust, our life, and our faith are in Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee this day.

We thank You for Your love, mercy, and grace. We pray, Lord, that You would indeed teach us, build us up in the most holy faith, help us to love Thee, live for Thee, and stand true to Thee in the face of every obstacle and circumstance. In Thy name we pray. Amen.

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