

S.N. March 9, 80 A.M. E

"CAUSING OTHERS TO SIN"

I Kings 22:52

INTRODUCTION:

A text that seems to be a formula in one man's life is what we focus on today. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin.

This text is giving the history of Ahaziah, the son of Ahab. But in giving the history of that King, it tells the life story of Jeroboam. The Bible has much to say about the sin of this man. There are many references made to his sin. His sin cast its shadow over the (reign) of fifteen of the Kings of Israel. His sin was the most serious for that time, and for centuries. It was felt in the life of Israel.

It appears that he should be a warning for others. This perhaps might have been his (mission) in life. It may be the (reason) why it is here. That it might become a warning for even you today.

There are many individuals in history who seemingly have no other mission - than to warn us. And the story of Jeroboam is one.

The story of Herod is another that warns men against sin.

The story of Achan - the man in Joshua's army who brought destruction to his own army.

The story of Judas who sold his Lord for 30 pieces of silver - that was a horrible mission. And now as we think about the mission, of this man Jeroboam, simply stated causing others to sin.

I. A RELIGIOUS PEOPLE

Now if we took the Bible and read it - all that it had to say about this one man, there would be many lessons that would grow out of it as to how he caused Israel to sin.

In the story of Jeroboam, we find that he becomes a leader of a religious people. However, he begins his life's work by turning to the world for help. He did not look up and pray for the help of Heaven, when he came to his throne. He disclaimed, more or less, any need to call upon God. He did not need God's counsel or wisdom. He turned to human wisdom, fleshly cleverness. And he sought to carry forward the Kingdom when he came to the throne.

He felt that with his own hands, he could manage this without council from God.

He found a religious people. Now, we are not saying that they were Christian people. And there may be a great gulf between religion and Christianity. Now all men sometimes, have some sort of religion. Without exception, even an atheist. Who does not claim the name of God will have some kind of religion. He has a conscience, and he has a memory, and he knows that there is going to be a judgement.

Jeroboam came to the throne and he found religious people - that as a rule. He was to rule over these religious people. Now, yet, Jeroboam did not recognize the worship of the true God. Because the worship of the true God meant a rigid way of life. And the worship of the true God meant the cutting off of sin. And the worship of the true God meant death to selfishness. And it meant that you were going to treat men correctly and right. And that you were going to be righteous in every way.

Now findings, as he did, these religious people, he saw that he needed to deal with the situation. So he said, we will divert the people from the worship of God. And we will turn them to the worship of idols.

II. HE REVOLUTIONIZED THEIR WORSHIP

Keep in mind, here is a religious people. Now he is going to revolutionize their worship. He is going to try to change - he is resolved that he is going to somehow keep these people from God. So the record in the Bible points out how he went about it. He made two images, two golden calves, and he set them up in one section of (Bethel) - and then, he built another one and had it set up in the Northern section at (Dan) 12:28. And he said to the people, "I want to encourage you to worship. He probably said something like this - "it is too difficult for you to go up to Jerusalem to worship. That is asking too much. Religion should be an easy thing. There should be no hardship about it. There should be no restraint - no self-denial. No taxing difficulty - no strenuous labor. Nothing rigid. I have brought religion to your own doors. I have made the image of God for you. And you do not have to take a long journey to Jerusalem - there to worship God. But you may worship God right here.

And if Jeroboam was talking today, to a great mass of people - he would say to them - you don't need to go to the house of God to worship. Just turn on the T. V. and you've got it made. And in his sutle way, Jeroboam turned away the true worship of God's people.

*Jim Henry - on TV - you would not come here (Angels things) But down to
Next with letter - not like what said - in Bud - got - proud - church - 1/2 way realized not
have any angels*

Now the thing is, he resolved to keep the people from going down to Jerusalem to the house of God. He persuaded the people that the calves were the true images of God. 12:28.

He (abused the privileges) that divine providence had given him in putting him in that great position. It was God who brought Jeroboam to his position. On the throne, and God Almighty could remove him.

Though he was put there by Almighty God. Just as soon as he got on the throne, without any delay at all, the King sought ways and means whereby he might utterly ignore God, and turn the people away from God.

We might say here, that any man who is given success, and uses that success in the wrong way, will be brought to ruin. There are people who are given leadership, prominence, and they become selfish and use that success in the wrong way. And they divert it from a high and a holy aim, and the day is going to come when that individual will be defeated. Let any man in that position - God will see to it that such a man who wastes his influence - gets to the place where he cannot lead men at all. We find this true in history. Yet, here is a man who trifles with it for his own glory. And without exception - there are men who have discredited God - think about Napoleon. He was a genius in the military world. And Gladstone said of him, the greatest marvel

is more brain packed into his human skull than any other man, in the way of leadership. As he led over men - he was unparalleled - but he used his leadership to a selfish end. And while he was there on the lone island of St. Helena, exiled and defeated - he died.

This ought to be a lesson to politicians who are clever - today, they are up on a pedestal, but they are in the ditch tomorrow. They will sooner or later be defeated. Let him forget the high claims of the state and the best interests of the citizens, and go on improperly using the success that God has given him, it will bring him down to his own defeat. To defeat and doom.

The whole lesson is that no people should suffer themselves to relax the discipline of life. It will lead to deterioration tomorrow.

Now when the King came to the throne - he must have said something like this - it is too much for the people to go up to Jerusalem. It is too much. The journey is too long. The labor is too much. The problems are too many. Let us make religion simple and easy. Let us somehow bring religion right to your own homes. Now instead of going to Jerusalem to worship, I will make images of God. And put him right here at your gate. It will be an easy thing for you to worship - and we will have not the need for discipline to worship God - but just relax, and we find that general deterioration and the character of Israel set in because he persuaded the people to do this.

You know, this was the decision of an insincere man. He did not mean to conform his life to what was right. In fact, he was not interested in doing what God wanted done.

He was trying to fool those people to think that he was reaching some end by some sort of means. There is no need for a man to be so strict and conscientious. About his religion Jeroboam said - why, let's (be flexible.) And lets substitute the great principle of going to God's temple. And lets make some substitutions - and at that moment, the nation was doom for downfall. Because the text declares, Jeroboam made Israel to sin. You read that whole story - and it is an awful phrase to see how Israel sank, how Israel went down in forgetfulness of God. Idolatry, into passion, into waste, into wreck, and into doom.

We have to understand his whole formula was bound up in causing others to sin. He found a religious people when he came on the throne. Solomon had acknowledged God. And there had been a let down. But now when this man comes to take over the Northern Kingdom, following Solomon's death - we find that he revises and revolutionizes their worship.

III. REAPING YOUR INFLUENCE

So from the religious people to the revolution of worship, we find the reaping of influence. Our Scripture text says to us, that Jeroboam not only sinned himself, but he caused others to sin. 15:33-34. It tells about Baasha - the king of Israel. The ways of Jeroboam. And in his sin. 16:2, 19. You read about the consequences of this man's sin.

How contagious a man's influence is - he so behaves himself as to make all of Israel sin. Now here is the peril and the power of influence. Is there anything that so stirs a man's heart today, as the power of influence.

If you could sit down for 12 minutes and think soberly and think about your influence and about its power, it would stir your heart.

Jesus said, it were better for a man than a millstone hanged about his neck. That he be cast out into the depths of the sea. That he should cause some little one to stumble.

We can trace influence on every side of life.

What about the books, the magazines, the leaflets, and the pamphlets that people read. Some people make their contribution in life through a book. And many times, it is filled with poison. Little by little, that person puts a virus into the very blood of the public. John James, the noted Englishman said this, when he was a boy, a bad man put into his hands a pamphlet which he read in 15 minutes. But, which left its taint on his life even to the hour when he was writing - and he was then an old man.

Many a time the writer of a newspaper, or a magazine article, or a tract, or a book - a man may write something down that will be very poison, to a soul. And it will be awful poison -- and it will kill the body.

We see this take place in public life, in the lives of men who live in the public. They are careless. And reckless with their influence. They cause others to sin. A young man said, one day, in answer to the reply - how did you get started.

Where on earth did you contract this ruinness habit of drink! Where did you get it from. He said, I got it from going with my superiors. My employers. We took trips, we went on excursions. And the older men, older than I, drank morning, noon, and night. My employer pressed it again and again into my hands and said, boy, do not be timid. Drink with us. Now the boy, who started out that way - is in the clutches of drunkenness. Fighting tremens.

Now there have been a lot of Jeroboam's who have broken many mother's hearts. And have contributed to the damnation of young daughters. There have been Jeroboam's who have taken sleep from the father's eyes. Making many a drunken son. There have been Jeroboams who have marked many a young man for a drunkards grave. That means a drunkards Well. What can Jeroboam mean to be so careless with his conduct and his example. And his influence - by bringing such results as these.

This Old Testament story has a bearing every where today.!

We could make application today in the affairs of the state. In the affairs of this city. There are laws that are made that destroy public conscience. Jeroboam can make all of Israel to sin. By perverting and debasing laws.

A man can be careless in the management of a city's life. This entire city. And produce a terrible forgetfulness, of the will of God. The forgetfulness of God by any city, will produce gangrene in the city - and mark it for destruction.

Men in position, in the city, in the state, who do not look for guidance from God, what if they fail to do this. Well, they tear down. Rather than build up.

influence has not been what it ought to be, you will decide right now - I am going to correct the error of my wrong way.

The second thing that you will decide to do is - seek God's mercy for forgiveness.
And saving grace.

I want to close with this story. It is a story told by Dr. George W. Truitt. He was preaching in a Texas city. And there were two young lawyers who had been seen in the congregation. And he was deeply interested in these young men. And one day, he stopped by their law office to confer with them about their personal religion. They received him, and he asked them why are you not openly and positively on Christ's side. They said, we will give you a reason - perhaps, you will not think it is a good one. And then they mentioned the name of a distinguished judge of the city whom the preacher had known for some years. And they said, he is not a Christian. He is not a church member. And we have taken him for our model.

The minister's reply was - you have indeed chosen a splendid man. He is one of the most interesting men I have known.

Then they said, he rarely goes to church. He is a brilliant lawyer. He is a most useful citizen. And we have concluded if he can afford to pass up personal religion - we can afford to follow his example.

After a word more, the man of God left and went straight way to the judge's office

And fortunately, found him alone, He greeted him and the Judge invited him to be seated. The minister said, I need not sit down Judge - you are busy and so am I. I've come to ask you a question in ethics.

Alright, he said - what is your question.

And he said, does a man have a moral right to occupy a position in the occupancy of which position he will hurt somebody else.

With deep earnestness - he promptly answered - a positive "No". A man has no such moral right. But what is the application of your question in ethics.

Then the minister told him of his visit to the two young lawyers, and what they had said, and how they were sheltering behind him. It brought a little agitation to the Judge. He went over to the window - looked out across the city - for several moments. He came back and he said - I cannot answer that question, can I?

The minister said, only one way, sir.

He took the preacher by the hand and said, I will be at the services tonight. And without another word, he left. The day passed on and night fell. And the man of God stood up to preach. He saw the two young lawyers in the audience. And just then, the Judge entered and was seated near the front. That evening, he preached as to one man. When the sermon was finished, he gave the invitation. Which the Judge

knew he was included. And promptly he arose and came forward - and grasp his hand and said - your question in ethics got me this morning. As soon as you left my office, I locked the door, fell on my knees and said, oh God, has it come to this - that I am staying out of the Kingdom of God myself! And by the power of my personal influence, causing others to take the downward way. Forgive me and help me that my influence may be saved as well as my soul. //

He had just finished saying this to the preacher - and the preacher said, look Judge behind you. Turning, he saw the two young lawyers waiting to take the hand of the minister. And they said, when we saw you start Judge, it was settled with us.

The power of influence for evil or for good, is great.

Which shall it be in your case? The soul destiny of others as well as your own. Maybe determined by the answer you make.

What a sad story recorded in the Scripture - Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. I hope and I pray today - that your decision may be right in the sight of God.