

JEROBOAM'S IDOLATRY

July 10, 1904

1 Kings 12: 25-33—Memory Verses, 28-30.

Golden Text—Keep yourselves from idols.—1 John 5: 21.

25 Then Jer'obo'am built She'chem in mount Eph'raim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Pennu'el.

26 And Jer'obo'am said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of Da'vid:

27 If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jeru'salem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, *even* unto Re'hobo'am king of Ju'dah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Re'hobo'am king of Ju'dah.

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 Jeru'salem: behold thy gods, O Is'rael, which brought thee up out of the land of E'gypt.

29 And he set the one in Beth'-el, and the other put he in Dan.

30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, *even* unto Dan.

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 Le'vi.

32 And Jer'obo'am ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Ju'dah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Beth'-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made; and he placed in Beth'-el the priests of the high places which he had made.

33 So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth'-el 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 Is'rael: and he offered upon the altar and burnt incense.

THE LESSON RETOLD

When the kingdom of Israel was divided, Jeroboam took the northern part, while Rehoboam still ruled the tribes of Judah and Benjamin in the south. As Jerusalem with its fine palaces and temple still belonged to Rehoboam, the new king of Israel now set himself to build a palace for himself in the north, making his home at the old town of Shechem, and also making a strong fortress at Pennel.

Until now, the people from both north and south had always gone to Jerusalem at certain times of the year to worship, as God Himself had commanded. But Jeroboam feared that, if his people continued to go to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices and worship in Solomon's temple, their hearts might again be turned to obey the king of Judah. If so, they would kill him, and Rehoboam would be king of the whole nation as before.

This thought so troubled Jeroboam that he now ordered two golden images to be made, something like the golden cherubim, which stood within the inner house of the temple. These he placed, one at Bethel, where his kingdom ended on the south, and the other at Dan, upon the north. Then Jeroboam said to the people, "It is too far for you to go to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice. See, I have prepared two places of worship for you nearer home!" And pointing to the images, he said, "Behold your gods, O Israel, which brought you out of the land of Egypt." And Jeroboam built a temple in each of the cities where the golden images stood.

Now God had also commanded that only those belonging to the family of Levi should act as priests. But, as the Levites refused to take part in the wickedness of Jeroboam, the