



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

Discovery Digs Series, Lesson 2

Lesson Title: Kings of Israel Turn Away from God

Take Home Point: Caution! Don't turn away from God!

Warm-Up:

In November 1978, nearly one thousand people were found dead in a “utopian community” called Jonestown in Guyana, South America. Some had been murdered, others committed suicide, at the direction of their leader, James Jones. The Rev. Jones started out as a preacher within a mainline Protestant denomination in Indiana in the 1950s. He built a faithful following of people who believed his unusual, self-developed teachings. They moved with him to California, then to Jonestown, in efforts to escape investigations into irregular and illegal activities within his group. Jones turned away from God's truth of the Bible and preached his own “gospel,” which his followers accepted. Their faith in his words, instead of the word of God, caused their deaths at his direction.

Read: 1 Kings 11; 12:25—14:20; 15:25-30; 16:34

Observation (What happened?):

How did Solomon allow himself to be led astray from worshipping the true God?

What example did Jeroboam and his son follow?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

Why do you think Solomon forgot his former close relationship with the Lord?

Why was it so easy for the people in the kingdom of Israel to go along with Jeroboam's idolatry? (Read 1 Samuel 8:19-20 for a hint.)

Insight:

In this fallen world, there will always be ideas competing for our attention. Our own sinful desires will compete for our attention and focus, too. Whether we will admit it or not, we are designed to follow something – whether an idea, a person or a creed. God made us that way. We innately seek something that will guide us through life. Worldly ideals and human teaching ultimately fail. How fantastic it is that God in his unfailing love reaches out to us so we can know the way he has for us! This is the root struggle in our soul. *Who will I follow?* Amazingly, Almighty God, our Creator and Sustainer, gives us a free will to choose. He desires our love and trust but will not force us to turn to him. We always have the choice of turning away. It's called sin, caused either by following our own desires or succumbing to external temptation. But God doesn't leave us wallowing in our failure and despair. He offers endless forgiveness as an integral part of his way. As Paul says in Romans 7:24-25, *“What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!”* (NIV)

Application (What does it mean to me?):

Are you turning your back on God in some area of your life? Why is it so easy?

What is one thing you can do this week to follow God's way of truth when tempted to turn away?

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