**Tailor-Made Religion**

Prepared By Nathan L Morrison For Sunday February 11th, 2018

Text: I Kings 12:25-33

# Intro

1. We live in a society where if something doesn’t suit you, you alter it to fit you.
	1. Like clothing: If a piece of clothing doesn’t fit you just right, you can take it to a tailor and have it made to fit you.
	2. Laws (Federal & State) have been altered to allow things not previously allowed (Such as: same-sex marriage and marijuana).
	3. Religion: People have always sought to do things that please themselves and call it worship! *Still happens today!*
2. There are things people understand to have set laws:
	1. Physics: Won’t change no matter how many people disagree with it or seek to change it. (Can you imagine gravity changing because of a petition with X amount of signatures?)
	2. Sports: Players understand that to compete there are rules set, and there are penalties and consequences if one goes outside those rules. Imagine a Baseball player petitioning the MLB (Major League Baseball) to create 4 Outs instead of 3.
3. II Tim 2:5: Even athletes compete according to the rules. The world can understand that principle, and yet, when it comes to religion, they seem to forget what God said about His word: *Man is not to tamper with it* *(Gal. 1:6-9; II Jn. 1:9; Rev. 22:18-19)*
4. Many take the application of “Tailoring” to religion as well.
	1. They come up with a customized, Tailored Religion; *something that fits them just right.*
5. Jeroboam tailored a religion to suit him long ago! (*Eccl. 1:9-10: Nothing new under sun*)

# I. Jeroboam's “New” Religion

1. Background:
	1. Solomon is dead. The 12 Tribes of Israel are split. Ten Tribes in the north follow a man by the name of Jeroboam, while the 2 in the south (Judah mixed with Simeon – Josh. 19:9) still follow the House of David, Solomon’s son Rehoboam.
2. I Kings 12:25-33:
	1. Jeroboam is afraid the Tribes in the north will turn back to Judah’s rightful king, and that his life may be in jeopardy if that happens. *So he changed a few things!*
3. Jeroboam's “little” changes:
	1. **Object of worship (12:28): Two Golden Calves**
		1. Worshipped them as the gods who brought them up from Egypt. God said to have no other gods before Him *(Ex. 20:3-6).*
		2. Aaron tried the golden calf before & allowed the people to proclaim it the one who delivered them *(Ex. 32:4-5).*
		3. Jeroboam built two golden calves! In so doing, he violated the first three commandments (*Ex. 20:3-6*): No other gods, no idols, not to worship idols!
	2. **Place of worship (12:29): Bethel & Dan**
		1. God said to celebrate the feasts in the place of His choosing, and provides a provision for those too far away; they can eat at home (*Deut. 12:5-7, 11, 13-14, 17-18, 21).*
		2. I Kings 9:3: God told Solomon that His dwelling was in Jerusalem where the temple was built.
		3. Dan & Bethel were not of God’s choosing; they were Jeroboam’s.
	3. **Leaders of worship (12:31): From among *ALL* the people who were not Levis**
		1. Priesthood to go to the Levites because of Phinehas’ act of justice in the name of God *(Num. 25:10-13).*
		2. Made priests of ***all*** the people not just of the Levites.
		3. He violated the covenant & command of God in changing the religious leaders!
	4. **Time of worship (12:32-33): Eighth month on the fifteenth day**
		1. *Ex 12:2-3:* The Passover was to be celebrated in the 1st month on the 10th day, that is the month Abib (Hebrew) or Nisan (Babylonian).
		2. *Lev 23:24, 27, 34:* The feast of Trumpets is celebrated in the 7th month on the 1st, which is the month Ethanim. The feast of Atonement would be the 7th month on the 10th, & the feast of Tabernacles (Booths) to be celebrated in the 7th month on the 15th.
		3. Jeroboam changed the feast day to the 8th month on the 15th, which is the month Bul, and since the feast in Judah was referenced, they would have just celebrated the feast of Booths so this could be his substitute, though by announcing the people were to just go to Dan & Bethel to worship, it could be understood that they would go there for the Passover too!
4. Jeroboam's “justifications”:
	1. Personal preservation (I Kings 12:26-27): Afraid he would lose the people to the House of David.
	2. Convenience (12:28): Too far to travel yearly, so he offered a substitute.
	3. Too exclusive (12:31): The Levitical priesthood was too limited as to who could join.
	4. Similarities (12:32-33): Made a similar feast to those held in Judah, replicated the feasts of Trumpets, Atonement & Booths all in one feast. ***Offered a better party!***
5. Jeroboam’s tailored religion was selfish and caused great harm to Israel!

# II. The Consequences of Jeroboam's “Little” Changes

1. Sinful *(I Kings 12:30):* Caused the people to sin.
2. Affected others *(II Chr. 11:13-17):* The Levites left the northern kingdom for Judah because they were completely excluded from Jeroboam’s priesthood.
3. Opened the door for further apostasy *(I Kings 16:30-33):*
	1. King Ahab walked in the sins of Jeroboam till even that didn’t satisfy him and he married a foreigner (Jezebel, princess of Tyre) and made Israel to worship the Baals & Asherah!
	2. He provoked God to anger more than all the kings before him. Jeroboam opened the door to this.
4. Led to the destruction of the House of Jeroboam – I Kings 13:34 *(I Kings 15:25-30: Baasha)*
5. His legacy (II Kings 17:16, 21-23) ultimately led to the destruction of the nation of Israel
	1. Specifically stated or implied —every king of the Northern Kingdom (18 kings after Jeroboam’s death) walked “in the ways of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.” *(I Kings 16:26; 22:52; II Kings 3:3; 10:29; 13:2, 11; 14:24; 15:9, 18, 24, 28)*
	2. Even kings that rejected Ahab’s idolatry of Baal clung to Jeroboam’s sin *(Jehoram, son of Ahab: II Kings 3:1-3; Jehu: II Kings 10:28-29).*
6. Jeroboam’s selfish tailored religion was so attractive it captivated Israel and led to their demise!

# III. Lessons from Jeroboam’s Tailored Religion

1. N.T. warnings about departing from the faith.
	1. *Eph. 4:4-6:* There is only One body, One faith, One baptism & One God.
	2. I Cor. 4:6: Not to exceed what is written.
	3. *Gal. 1:6-9:* Not to preach any other gospel than what the apostles taught.
	4. *II Tim. 1:13:* Retain the standard of sound word (teaching).
	5. *I Pet. 4:11:* Speak as the oracles of God, in all things to glorify God.
	6. *II John 9:* Going too far from the teaching (NKJ: “doctrine”) of Jesus does not have God.
	7. *Rev. 22:17-18:* Do not tamper with the word of God. It is not for man to change.
2. Tailoring God’s word to fit us “just so” allows further apostasy:
	1. II Tim. 2:16-18, 3:13: Evil men will proceed from bad to worse.
	2. II Tim. 4:3-4: Men would fall away from the faith to attain teachers who would tell them what they wanted to hear!
3. II Tim. 2:5: Must play “according to the rules” — not only in sports, but when it comes to religion: Our souls depend on it!

# Conclusion

1. Are you walking in God's ways?
	1. Instead of tailoring God’s word to suit us, we must tailor our lives to conform to the image of His Son! (Rom. 8:29; 12:2)
2. Or, like Jeroboam, are you seeking to tailor God’s word to fit you just right? *(I Cor. 4:6)*
3. To those who “overcome” by conforming our lives to His word, there is a crown of life waiting! *(II Tim. 4:8; Rev. 2:10; 21:7)*
4. If not a child of God, stop tailoring life to fit you, but rather tailor your life to fit God’s will for you. Repent & be baptized!
5. If child of God with unrepented sin, repent & ask for forgiveness. Conform to God’s word!
6. Let your requests be made known by coming forward ***NOW*** while we stand & sing.