

OUR PARTNERSHIPS

That Christians are in and not of this world is a very clear Bible teaching (John 17:11,14; I Corinthians 5:9,10). To act otherwise is to fall prey to the devil and incur the displeasure of God. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (II Corinthians 6:14).

Within the next few verses Paul asks a series of questions making the following contrasts: "righteousness (those justified/saved)--unrighteousness (the lost); light (children of God, Ephesians 5:8)--darkness (children of the devil); Christ--Belial ("worthless one"); believer--infidel (unbeliever); temple of God (Christian/church)--idols." Note the words he uses to describe the foolish and faulty relationships misguided Christians form with the ungodly: "fellowship (partnership); communion (participation); concord (from "symphony"--no "music" to be made with such); part (portion, means "share in the division"); agreement ("vote with consent"). You see, brethren, when we conform to and go along with the world, we are practitioners with them in their evil; we become "dividers of the spoil who cast their vote in agreeing to sin." In other words, we become the very seeds of division and denominationalism which we are to oppose and hopefully convert to the truth: that there is but one church of our Lord!

Far too many of our brethren of late have become just such: seedlings of apostasy. They are teaching such nonsense as "we are not the only Christians...we must have fellowship with "other" Christians in the religious world...to claim that one baptism is better than any other is narrow-minded." Please do not forget that it was the Lord who spoke of one baptism, what it is, what it is for, and who may partake in it.

Paul then turns to the positive in chapter seven, saying "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1). The promises refer to what was said in verses 17,18 of chapter six: that God will receive us, be our Father and we would be His sons and daughters! Imagine, the Almighty wants us to be His own children. He will dwell with us and do all that a loving Father ought to do. These are indeed special promises. Let us live in such a way that we do not lose them. Let us cleanse all such influences of the world off of us. Let us be pure and holy, blameless in His sight until the coming of His Son Jesus (Philippians 2:15).

THIS BECAME SIN

"And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth" (1 King 13:34). The "thing" this text refers to is the substitutions that Jeroboam made in religious matters. The religious world today is full and overflowing with the substitutions of men in the name of religion. They think that God will be pleased with them and their replacements offered, many times in the name of Christ. How little some seem to know regarding what it takes to do *anything* in the name of Christ.

Error seems to breed error. When one generation is steeped in it, the next generally just follows suit. Solomon's oppressive tax legislation paved the way for his son Rehoboam's even heavier burdens laid upon the people. Jeroboam's idolatry made way for all the kings of Israel to be wicked, all 20 of them!

When Jeroboam made his changes in the worship of God, he was actually showing his lack of faith and obedience, egotism, greed and pride. James 1:26 describes him and his breed perfectly: *"If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain"*. See, Jeroboam thought himself to be religious. The record states, *"And Jeroboam said **in his heart**, Now will the kingdom return to the house of David" (1 King 12:26).* He did not want the people to return to David's house, but for the majority to stay with him. He had deceived his own heart, *"And he went up unto the altar which he had made in Beth-el on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, even in the month **which he had devised of his own heart**: and he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and went up unto the altar, to burn incense" (1 King 12:33).* The result was nothing but a vain worship, a vain attempt to serve God, and a sin. Hear the word of the Lord, *"And this **thing became a sin**; for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan" (1 King 12:30).*

In any religious activity, the real question we ought always to ask is: *"For what saith the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3).* As we look at Jeroboam's substitutions, we can learn what kinds of things to avoid in our practice of religion today. First, he substituted **gods**. *"Whereupon the king took counsel, and **made two calves** of gold; and he 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" (1 King 12:28).* Notice the Egyptian influence in this action. Many of God's

people today are surrounded with denominational influence and will thus copy their practices. Many of the “fads” and “programs” that some congregations adopt were first found in the denominational world. This does not mean that all of them are not useful tools if conducted properly, but many of them are without any authority. Still they are practiced upon a pragmatic basis, that is, “if it works it must be okay.” It will be too late when some realize their error, being described by Paul as those who “walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is perdition, **whose God is the belly**, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things” (Philippians 3:18,19).

Second, he substituted **priests**. “And he made houses of high places, and **made priests from among all the people, that were not of the sons of Levi**” (1 King 12:31). Not all the people were authorized to act as priests. Neither are all people today. Only certain people may be priests of God: those who become children of God, Christians (I Peter 2:5-10). How tragic to hear some of my brethren refer to “Christians in the denominations” or “the pious unimmersed” or their “denominational brethren!” All such phrases are contradictory oxymorons.

Third, he substituted **feasts**. “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 went up unto 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 that HE HAD MADE**” (1 King 12:32). Notice how that in this one verse, all his substitutions are outlined. All of these are those “that he had made.” We see the same actions among the religious world today: different days for worship; for eating the Lord’s supper; different, elevated men and/or women to act as priests above the people. All such changes are forms of idolatry in that they are things which these “religious” folks have made.

Let us always beware of those who would advocate making changes in God’s ordained worship and practice. The Lord knows them that are his, and, let him who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness (II Timothy 2:19).

RAGER ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES:

SUNDAY MORNING	BIBLE STUDY	9:30 A.M.
	WORSHIP	10:30 A.M.
SUNDAY EVENING	WORSHIP	6:00 P.M.
WEDNESDAY	BIBLE STUDY	7:30 P.M.
Preachers:	Robin W. Haley	614-751-1082
	James Grayson	614-409-0941

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Weekly Budget: \$1360.00

Wednesday’s Wisdom:

“Will you not tell it today?” Robin Haley

Thank God for our wonderful nation; pray for our leaders; be good citizens and especially live righteously so that we may be an exalted nation
(Proverbs 14.34).

It is not too late to turn a question in to Robin for our study tonight.

Ladies’ night out at sister Lee’s home, December 17.

Haley Holiday Open House at Robin & Cheryl’s place, Sunday afternoon of December 20, 2pm till time to go to evening worship assembly. Come and enjoy some holiday cheer & refreshment in our home.