



Old Testament Reading: Psalm 90:1-17
New Testament Reading: Hebrews 10:19-25

Lessons From Amos

“How the Spirit of Jeroboam Has Infected Today’s Church”

2 Kings 17:7-23

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The American Church is on the abyss of a numerical and spiritual recession, as church membership is at its lowest point in 80 years and still shrinking.

- **The baby boomers are dying out** – tithes and offerings are diminishing.
- **The baby busters are dialing out** – Gen X weekly attendance in church has dropped from 41% in 2020 to 28% today.
- **The Millennials are dumbing out** – they are attending the mega-churches that are strong in stirring emotions but weak on teaching biblical doctrine and theology.

- **The Gen Z group is doubting out** – less than 1% of them have a biblical worldview. They do not accept the Bible as the final authority on matters of faith and moral issues.

The paradigm shifts many churches made in the 1990's, from God-focused worship and Christ-centered preaching to market-driven ministries that address people's felt needs, has failed.

- While 62% of Americans claim to be Christians, that is down from 78% in 2007. Christianity is the fastest-declining religious group in the U.S., with 29% of Americans claiming no affiliation with any of the major religions.
- 100,000 American churches are projected to close or be repurposed over the next decade. Thirty percent of churches in the U.S. are on the brink of extinction. Each month, 1,700 pastors quit the ministry, mainly because of discouragement, personal failure compared to megachurch pastors, financial needs their churches cannot provide, marital issues, severe loneliness, and moral failure. With fewer young men entering the ministry, and with most of today's pastors facing retirement within the next decade, it's no wonder so many churches will close their doors.
- For the last 40 years, the American church has focused on getting people to decide to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior, rather than discipling the saved to be evangelists to the lost. The soft-sell gospel message, centered on happiness rather than holiness, has produced churches filled with false converts; people who think they are saved, but aren't.

Two kings named Jeroboam ruled the Northern Kingdom of Israel in the Bible.

- **Jeroboam I reigned over the Northern Kingdom of Israel around 931-910 B.C.** He set up the golden calves at Bethel and Dan and started idol worship. Jeroboam I was the wicked ruler who led the people of Israel into a pattern of sin against God.
- **Jeroboam II ruled over the Northern Kingdom of Israel from 793-753 B.C.** While God used him to restore the original borders of Israel, he followed the evil ways of the first Jeroboam, which caused God to send the prophets Amos and Hosea to warn His people to put away their idols and return to the true worship of the one true God, for His judgment was on the way.
- Therefore, when we say “**the spirit of Jeroboam has influenced the western churches,**” we mean that, overall, modern churches are not following the biblical model of worship God ordained for His people. Instead, they follow the continually innovative ideas and philosophies of man.

- Today's church is not about leading believers in corporate worship of God through the public reading of the Scriptures, prayer, the proclamation of God's Word, and the corporate singing of the great hymns and choruses of faith.
- Today's church is about doing whatever it takes, including softening the gospel message, adjusting the style of the music, and limiting the study of the Scriptures, to attract unchurched people to a religious event.

Four evidences of the spirit of Jeroboam:

1. The Religion of Convenience and Pragmatism –

- According to Exodus 34:23 and Deuteronomy 16:16, all adult Israelite men were required to present themselves before the Lord at the Temple in Jerusalem during three specific festivals:
 - Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover)
 - Feast of Weeks (Shavuot or Pentecost)
 - Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot or Booths)
- To make it more convenient for the people, Jeroboam built shrines at Bethel and Dan, including two golden calves.
- The Western church is heavily infected with the “**spirit of convenience**” – facilities designed for comfort, worship services timed to fit within the people's schedules, an entertainment-based worship experience to produce an emotional response, rather than bowing before a Holy God with reverence, respect, and entering in with a sacrificial offering.

2. Tailoring Worship to Retain Numbers and Power –

- Jeroboam's religious system was born of a fear of losing people to a rival power, and many modern church leaders operate out of the same fear.
- Instead of preaching uncompromised truth, today's preachers are trained to alter the message to fit those who do not have any level of basic Bible knowledge; to water down theology, and avoid “offensive” biblical truths to keep pews filled and the offerings coming.

3. Devising Feasts and Truths “From One's Own Heart” –

- In 1 Kings 12:33, Jeroboam ordained a religious festival on a date “***which he had devised in his own heart.***” He substituted God's commanded holy days with a counterfeit religious event.

- This mirrors the theological liberalism and moral relativism we see in many churches today: rewriting the moral ethics of the Christian Faith to match the cultural spirit of the age.

4. Unsanctioned Leadership and Lowered Standards –

- Jeroboam bypassed the divinely appointed Levitical priesthood and appointed priests “from all sorts of people” who had no spiritual calling or qualifications.
- This is likened to the elevation of leaders based on secular metrics like charisma, business acumen, and marketing skills, rather than strict biblical qualifications, holiness, sound doctrine.
- Less than 50% of the pastors in the pulpits today have a Bible College or Seminary background.

In 1 Kings 11:38, God had promised to bless Jeroboam if he would follow the path of David. ***“If you do whatever I command you and walk in obedience to me and do what is right in my eyes by obeying my decrees and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you.”***

- But, in turning to half-worship, i.e., in places and in ways God had not ordained, and in returning to calf-worship, i.e., replacing the worship of the Creator God with that which man had created and called it god, Jeroboam spurned God’s goodness and brought about his own demise, for this was the sin that angered the Lord the most, and ***“The sin of the house of Jeroboam that led to its downfall and its destruction from the face of the earth.”***
- Jeroboam didn’t abolish the people’s religious practices; he reshaped them. He placed golden calves at Dan and Bethel and declared, ***“Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt”*** (1 Kings 12:28).
- He kept the name of God but changed the worship to fit political and cultural needs.
- Progressive Christianity has done the same thing: it has kept the language of faith, but it has redefined the terms.
- Jesus is now a moral teacher rather than the risen Lord. Sin is now a moral injustice rather than rebellion against God and His Word. Salvation is now a declaration of God’s forgiveness of our sins, based upon our confession; there’s no requirement of repentance, must less the need for the bloody death of the Lord Jesus on the cross.
- Progressive Christianity makes the same mistake. It uses the language of the world, the values of humanism, and the practices of mysticism, but God said, those who truly worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

- If there is to be a revival of the Church, it will be by God's grace alone. Still, we can express our desires for revival by turning our eyes away from the world, including every form of worldly worship, and falling on our knees before a holy God.

“Worship must not be designed to please the unbeliever or the believer. True worship should be designed to please God.”

R.C. Sproul