

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The god of convenience

(Jerry Fite)

Jeroboam, worried about losing his authority as king to Rehoboam, devised a plan for keeping his people from having to travel to Jerusalem for worship. To accomplish his goal, Jeroboam “*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.’ And he set the one in Bethel, and the other in Dan”* (I Kings 12:28-29).

Jeroboam relied upon the tendency of people to do things out of convenience. He said, “*it is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem:*”. He placed his golden calves where it would be convenient for worship. For those in the northern portion, they could worship in Dan. For those in the southern portion of the kingdom, they could go to Bethel for worship. The plan worked. But not for righteousness sake: “*And this thing became a sin; for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan”* (I Kings 12:30).

What was right was for males to appear before God in Jerusalem three times a year for the feasts of unleavened bread, the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles (Deuteronomy 16:16). What was

right was for the people to refuse to worship idols (Exodus 20:4-5). But convenience won out over righteousness in the lives of the Israelites. Sin resulted.

While these golden calves were placed in convenient places, do we today serve the god of convenience? Do we make sure we do the right thing; even when doing so might be difficult, and not the most convenient thing to do?

We know it is right for us to assemble with the saints for edification and worship (Hebrews 10:24-25, Col. 3:16, Acts 20:7, I Corinthians 11:20-29). But, do we attend only when we have our sleep out, or we do not have too far to travel, or even more alarming, we don’t have any other thing to do at that time? Plans and sacrifices had to be made for the people to make their pilgrimages to Jerusalem. Serving God today demands that we set priorities (Matthew 6:33), and carry them out, even when it is difficult.

We also know it is right to withdraw our social contact with our brethren who persistently refuse the appeals to live according to God’s righteous standard (I Corinthians 5:9-13, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15, Titus 3:10, Matthew 18:15-17). But is our

lack of social contact with the brother withdrawn from due to the fact we do not have much contact with him anyway? Is it a matter of convenience, or is it due to the godly purpose to save the soul of the one who persists in his or her sin, and stop the leavening influence from occurring among those who are striving to be faithful to the Gospel?

One way to see if we have started serving the god of convenience or the true righteous God is to see if we carry out God’s instructions for withdrawal among those with whom we have been close. Do we deliberately withdraw pleasurable social interaction with the individual because it is right, regardless who they are? Do we willingly carry out God’s instructions that demand difficult and drastic measures, or do we serve the god of convenience?

May we never do things because they are convenient, but always do things because they are right. The god of convenience seems to be always available to receive your service. The god of convenience will always lead us away from the path of righteousness. Are you taking the easy route to Dan or Bethel; or the old paths that are trodden by the righteous?