

Jeroboam's Golden Calves

1 Kings 12:25 – 13:10

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The city of Shechem became Jeroboam's capital. Then he thought, "When the people go to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices at the Temple of the Lord, what's to keep them from giving their allegiance to King Rehoboam of Judah?"

Jeroboam made two golden calves. He placed them at either end of his kingdom along with an altar for sacrifices – one in the south at Bethel, the other in the north at Dan. He said to the people, "It's too much trouble for you to go all the way to Jerusalem to worship. Look, these are the gods who brought you up out of Egypt!" And the people worshiped the idols.

A man of God from Judah arrived at Bethel as Jeroboam was standing by the altar preparing to make an offering. The man shouted, "O altar, altar! The Lord says: A son named Josiah will be born into the dynasty of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests who now make offerings here. The Lord will give a sign: This altar will split apart and the ashes on it will be scattered."

Jeroboam pointed at the man and shouted, "Seize him!" But his hand shriveled up, and he couldn't pull it back. At that moment the altar split apart and the ashes were scattered on the ground.

The king cried out, "Please ask your God to restore my hand." So the man of God prayed, and Jeroboam's hand was restored.

Then the king said to the man, "Come home with me, have something to eat, and I will reward you."

The man of God replied, "Offer me half of everything you own, and I will still say, 'No.' The Lord commanded me, 'Don't eat or drink anything, and don't return to Judah by the way you came.' " So he left Bethel and started home on a different road.