

## “It Is Too Much...”

Dub McClish

Ten centuries before Christ, ten of the twelve tribes of Israel revolted at the promised harsh measures of Rehoboam, Solomon’s son and successor. Jeroboam was the first king of this newly formed northern kingdom of Israel. He feared that the temple in Jerusalem would draw those in his kingdom back to the southern kingdom of Judah. To prevent this, he established a rival religion to “keep them at home,” complete with two golden calves, a new priesthood, and new feast days. He justified his unauthorized religion to the people thus: “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem” (1 Kin. 12:28). In so doing, he implied that God’s decree was too rigorous, that He did not mean what He had decreed, and that the doctrines and practices of men are as acceptable to God as those He had ordained.

Many things have changed since these events of almost 3,000 years ago, but human beings still behave in many of the same ways and make the same mistakes, especially in religion. Consider some modern examples of “the Jeroboam syndrome” regarding the New Testament of Christ. “It is too much...”:

- **To honor Biblical morality.** “It is too much” for millions to remain sexually chaste until marriage and then to remain faithful to one’s spouse afterward. Sexual intimacy outside of marriage **between a man and a woman** “defiles the bed”; it constitutes fornication and/or adultery (Mat. 19:6–9; Heb. 13:4). The sex education courses in public schools and endorsed by not a few religious leaders ridicule God’s law of abstinence. Those who engage in such sins and do not repent will not be in the heavenly kingdom (1 Cor. 6:9–10; Rev. 21:8).
- **To engage in Scriptural worship.** Thousands of sects that claim to follow Christ create their own worship practices. “It is too much” to meet each Lord’s day and observe the Lord’s supper (Acts 20:7), sing (not play) songs of praise and admonition (Col. 3:16), pray (1 Cor. 14:15), engage in Bible study through preaching (Acts 2:42; 20:7), and contribute money to advance the Truth (1 Cor. 16:1–2). Jesus said worship is vain if it springs from the doctrines of men (Mat. 15:9) and that it **must** be “in spirit and truth” (John. 4:23–24).
- **To practice Scriptural baptism.** The word *baptism* means to dip, to immerse, to overwhelm, to bury (Acts 8:38–39; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12). “It is too much” for millions who have rejected God’s way for their own ways. Sprinkling or pouring water on someone is not baptism. The purpose of baptism is to bring the sinner into contact with the blood of Christ, by which one is cleansed from sin (Mark 16:16a; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3–4; Rev. 1:5). “It is too much” for most folk, who reject its place between the sinner and salvation.

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