

Levites - cont.

Others who are seeking the Lord will leave worldliness and materialism. Others will leave denominationalism.

Seeking the Lord and putting him first will cause faithful Christians to leave what is wrong. This will probably require great sacrifice and commitment. We have to leave when others don't want the truth (Acts 19:8-9). We have to leave when we are living in the world (2 Corinthians 6:17). We have to leave when the local church is unfaithful and doesn't want to change (1 Corinthians 11:19).

3. The Faithful Strengthened the Kingdom

When a Christian today faces a crisis of faith, he or she will be strengthened in the faith and help others to be strengthened. In this account, the kingdom of Judah got stronger when the faithful came to them from the north (2 Chronicles 11:17). Yes, great sacrifices are made when one leaves (Hebrews 11:37-38). Yet, there will be great rewards for all who leave for righteousness' sake (Luke 6:22). Spiritual strength is one of those great rewards that comes to the faithful who leave what is wrong and who seek the Lord in what is right. - *Chris Reeves*

- Word of the Week -

“Leaven” (Gr. ζύμη) is a substance like yeast that is put in bread. It creates a chemical reaction in the dough that puts off CO₂ gas and makes the dough rise. Leaven in the New Testament is also used figuratively for moral influence. Christians are not to be influenced by error or worldliness around them (Matthew 16:6; 1 Corinthians 5:6; Galatians 5:9). Instead, Christians are to act like “leaven” and influence those around them for good (Matthew 13:33). Let's go out this week and influence, but not be influenced.

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

And the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to him out of all their border. For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons cast them off, that they should not execute the priest's office unto Jehovah; and he appointed him priests for the high places, and for the he-goats, and for the calves which he had made. And after them, out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek Jehovah, the God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice unto Jehovah, the God of their fathers. So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years; for they walked three years in the way of David and Solomon.
- 2 Chronicles 11:13-17 -

After Solomon's death, the kingdom of Israel divided (2 Chron. 9:31; 10:19). This was indeed a sad time for God's people because they were now divided after being united in one kingdom for 120 years.

Division among God's people was not the only problem. One other major problem among God's people was a separation in religion and an introducing of false religion by Jeroboam. True worship remained in Jerusalem with Rehoboam and the southern kingdom

of Judah, while idol worship was set up with Jeroboam in the northern kingdom of Israel (1 Kings 12). This caused a problem among the faithful Israelites in the north. Would they remain true to the Lord, or would they apostatize (fall away) from him to idolatry? This introduction of false religion presented God's people in the north with a challenge and crisis of faith. What would they do now? How would they act?

1. The Faithful Left

Sometimes when a Christian today faces a crisis of faith he or she just has to leave. What we learn from this account is the Levites in the north left because of unauthorized worship (2 Chron. 11:13-14). They did not want to serve God in an unauthorized way, so they left. Sometimes breaks have to be made in order to be right with God. When such is necessary, are you willing to pay the price?

The Levites also left because they were cast out; unwanted (2 Chron. 11:14). And, they left because the authorized priests were replaced with unauthorized priests (2 Chron. 11:15).

Today, that which is authorized in the New Testament church is being replaced with the unauthorized. Instrumental music has replaced singing only. Women preach-

ers, elders, and deacons have replaced male leadership only. Serving the Lord's supper on Saturday has replaced serving it on the first day of the week. Social and recreational works of the church have replaced the saving of the lost. I could go on, but you get the point. When brethren force these unauthorized things on the faithful, the faithful have to leave.

2. The Faithful Set Their Hearts to Seek the Lord

When a Christian today faces a crisis of faith, he or she has to continue to set their heart to seek the Lord. One reason why these faithful left was because they had a heart set on seeking the Lord (2 Chronicle 11:16). Will you leave when you find yourself in such a situation and will you have a heart that seeks the Lord?

Seeking the Lord involves obedience (2 Chronicles 14:4; Isaiah 51:1;) and separation (Ezra 6:21). We have to leave when we choose to follow Christ and we have to separate from the world (Mark 10:28-29).

Today, people who are seeking the Lord will leave pride, intellectualism, and human wisdom. - *continued*