

A Bad Witness

Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian Church

Romans 2:24, "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written."

This was said to King David by Nathan the prophet in **2 Samuel 12:14**. It happened because of David's sin with Bathsheba. David had let his desires rule instead of him keeping God's law. The result was adultery, abuse of his power, and murder. Sins cannot be hid for long and when those who are supposed to be men of God do such things people belittle not only the man, but the way of God.

In our day the same holds true. When a Christian, or someone who is thought to be a Christian, sins, people mock the church. They figure that there is nothing to Christianity if a believer does things that an unbeliever does. Even so, there is a difference between a person failing in a moment of weakness and the person who sins by choice. Any, and all of us, err at times, but a hypocrite makes a habit of sinning while claiming

to be a follower of Jesus.

For example a person who says that he believes and lives for the Lord, but does not live for anyone but himself is a hypocrite. So many claim to be following Jesus but care little for his words. This happened in the time that Jesus walked the earth to the extent that he asked, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" **Luke 6:46**. There is no answer that a person can give to excuse such behavior. People who do not follow, nor try to obey, the Lord may be sinners, but they are not stupid. They know that a Christian is supposed to live a better life than the lost person.

When a Christian doesn't care for the commands of God he encourages the sinner to continue in his way. People have been heard to say, "He, the Christian, doesn't do any better than me, for he does many of the same things." One of the commands of God is to put the Lord first and to worship in spirit and in truth. So often people miss church for some silly reason. They went visiting, to some event, or one of the family didn't feel like coming; so all the family stayed home. Putting God first? I don't think so. **Hebrews 10:25** and **26** warns against forsaking God.

Parents even teach their children to do this. You may not think so, but when a child sees the parents place a low priority on church they learn by the example. The lost person is influenced by the same example.

Some church folks don't seem to have any, or little, desire to read and study the scriptures. People have different interests and desires. One should be to learn of the Lord and to know his will. **Ephesians 5:17**, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." And **1 Peter 2:2**, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Those that are lost and apart from God look at the church and by what they see, they judge that there is something to it, or they mock it.

You see, if we don't take the Lord seriously, we hurt not only ourselves, but the lost who may continue in sin thinking that there is no help from the Lord. If we err, and at times we all do, go to the Lord and ask forgiveness. Don't make a habit out of failing to keep the word of God.

Remember, you and I are not going to heaven by accident. Those who go are going because they have done like the old hymn says, "Trust and obey."

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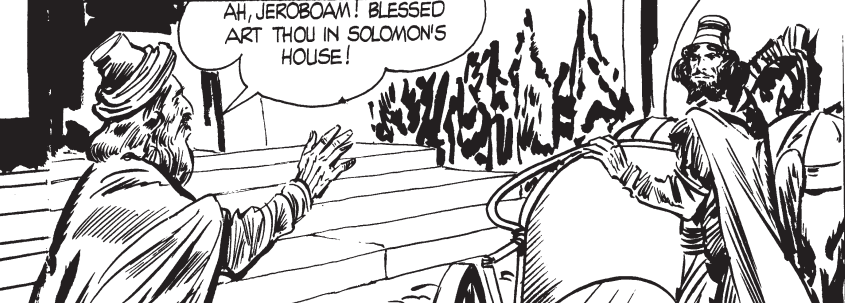
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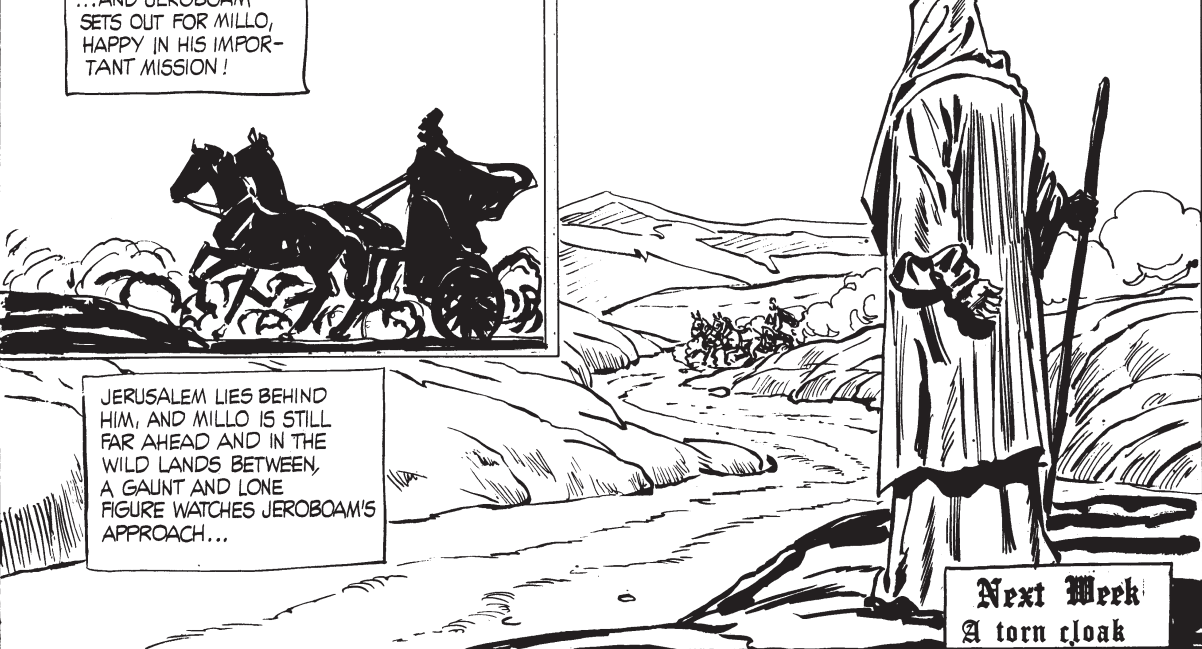
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