

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 9, High Places – Asa, Jeroboam – Golden Calves Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 9, High Places – Asa, Jeroboam – Golden Calves, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Vannoy's lecture explores the complex issue of "high places" in the Old Testament, questioning their legitimacy as worship sites. He analyzes passages from Kings, Chronicles, Numbers, Exodus, and Deuteronomy, noting God commanded that Canaanite high places be destroyed, and altars be built only at divinely sanctioned locations. **The lecture grapples with apparent contradictions in the text, specifically regarding King Asa, who both removed and did not remove high places.** Vannoy suggests that some high places were dedicated to pagan worship while others were for the Lord, though often abused and leading to syncretism. **The lecture goes on to discuss Jeroboam establishing illegitimate worship and the story of a prophet from Judah who is judged for disobedience despite accurately delivering God's message.**

2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 9 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Exodus to Exile).



**Vannoy_ExtoExileK_
Session09.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 9, High Places – Asa, Jeroboam – Golden Calves

Here's a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided lecture notes on 1 Kings, focusing on high places, Asa, and Jeroboam:

Briefing Document: 1 Kings Lecture

Main Themes:

- **The Ambiguity of "High Places":** The lecture primarily revolves around the concept of "high places" in ancient Israel and the complex, often contradictory, biblical perspectives on their legitimacy. It explores whether worship at these sites was inherently wrong, or if it depended on the context, the deities worshipped, and adherence to specific regulations.
- **The Reign of Asa and Covenant Renewal:** The lecture examines the reign of King Asa of Judah, highlighting his initial reforms, victory over the Cushites (Zerah), covenant renewal, and subsequent failings (alliance with Ben-Hadad).
- **Jeroboam's Idolatry and Its Consequences:** The lecture analyzes Jeroboam's establishment of idolatrous worship in the Northern Kingdom, particularly his creation of golden calves at Bethel and Dan. It explores the motivations behind this act and its lasting impact.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **High Places and the Law: Initial Prohibition:** The Israelites were explicitly commanded to destroy Canaanite high places upon entering the land (Numbers 33:52, Deuteronomy 7:5, 12:3). "Drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images and their cast idols, and demolish all their high places."
- **Divinely Sanctioned Sites:** Altars were ideally built only at locations where God had manifested himself or "caused his name to be honored" (Exodus 20:24). "Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you."
- **Debate on Multiplicity of Altars:** Scholars disagree on whether a multiplicity of altars was permissible after the temple was built, provided the conditions above were met. Deuteronomy 12 is central to this debate.

- **Syncretism:** The lecture notes emphasizes that the use of pagan high places for the worship of the Lord led to religious syncretism, "combining the worship of Baal with the worship of the Lord," which was strongly condemned.
- **Not inherently wrong?:** "I don't think you're to conclude from that necessarily that all the high places were wrong. I think it depends on what kind of worship was being carried on there and whether the site was a divinely sanctioned site; considerations of that sort."
- **Examples of Sanctioning:** Bethel is given as an example. "Jacob went there; he had a dream about the ladder. He built an altar there, and the Lord appeared to him."
- **The Case of Asa: Contradictory Accounts:** 1 Kings 15:14 states Asa did not remove the high places, while 2 Chronicles 14:3 states he did. The interpretation offered is that Asa removed *foreign* altars and high places associated with pagan worship. "Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord, he removed the foreign altars and high places."
- **Heart Fully Committed:** Despite not removing all high places, 2 Chronicles 15:17 emphasizes that "Asa's heart was fully committed to the Lord," suggesting worship of the Lord occurred at some of these sites. "Although he did not remove the high places from Israel, Asa's heart was fully committed to the Lord."
- **Alliance with Ben-Hadad:** Asa's decision to bribe Ben-Hadad of Damascus to break his treaty with Baasha of Israel is presented as a strategic error and a lack of trust in God. He was rebuked by Hanani the seer for this (2 Chronicles 16).
- **Consequences:** Asa imprisoned Hanani and suffered a foot disease, seeking help only from physicians, not the Lord (1 Kings 15:23, 2 Chronicles 16:12).
- **Jeroboam's Sin: Fear of Losing Control:** Jeroboam established worship centers at Bethel and Dan out of fear that the people would return to Jerusalem for religious observances, undermining his authority.
- **Golden Calves:** He created golden calves, echoing the incident during the Exodus (Exodus 32), and declared, "Here are your gods, O Israel, that brought you out of Egypt" (1 Kings 12:28).
- **Second Commandment Violation:** The lecture posits that Jeroboam's sin is more a violation of the second commandment (against graven images) than the first

(having other gods). The golden calves might have been intended as pedestals for the invisible form of Yahweh.

- **Subordinating Worship to Politics:** "Jeroboam doing is subordinating worship to politics. He was concerned for the security of his kingdom and the loyalty of his people."
- **Altering Religious Practices:** Jeroboam changed festival dates (1 Kings 12:32-33), indicating a willingness to revise Mosaic law to suit his purposes.
- **The Prophet from Judah: Prophecy of Josiah:** An unnamed prophet from Judah condemned Jeroboam's altar at Bethel and prophesied that a future king named Josiah would desecrate it (1 Kings 13).
- **Long and Short Term Prophecy:** In verse 3, there was a short-term prophecy given as a sign. "The same day the man of God gave a sign. This is the sign the Lord has declared: The altar will be split apart and ashes on it will be poured out."
- **Disobedience and Judgment:** Despite accurately delivering God's message and proving that with short-term prophecy, the prophet was deceived by an old prophet and disobeyed God's command not to eat or drink in Bethel. He was subsequently killed by a lion as punishment.
- **Balaam Analogy:** "I think this story shows you have to make a distinction between a good man and a bad prophet. Balaam was evil, but he prophesied nevertheless."

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 9, High Places – Asa, Jeroboam – Golden Calves

The High Places, Asa, and Jeroboam: A Study Guide

Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What were the two clear restrictions regarding altars that the Israelites were to follow upon entering Canaan?
2. What is the significance of Exodus 20:24-26, and what does it imply about altar construction?
3. What is the debate surrounding Deuteronomy chapter 12 and its implications for worship in Israel?
4. How did the use of high places eventually lead to religious syncretism in Israel?
5. What evidence suggests that not all worship at high places was inherently wrong?
6. What did Asa do that resulted in him being rebuked by Hanani the seer, and what were the consequences of his actions?
7. What was the significance of Jeroboam establishing places of worship at Bethel and Dan?
8. How did Jeroboam violate the Mosaic commandments through his actions?
9. Describe the long-term and short-term prophecies given by the prophet from Judah in 1 Kings 13.
10. What is the significance of the prophet from Judah's disobedience and subsequent death?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The two clear restrictions were that the Israelites were not to take over heathen altars and convert them for the worship of the Lord, and altars were to be built only at divinely sanctioned sites. This meant destroying the high places of the Canaanites and adhering to the "law of the altar" when constructing new ones.
2. Exodus 20:24-26, also known as the "law of the altar," outlines regulations for altar construction, such as using earth or uncut stones. More importantly, it

suggests altars should only be built where God has manifested Himself, indicating divinely sanctioned locations.

3. The debate surrounding Deuteronomy 12 concerns whether it mandates the temple as the *only* legitimate place for worship after its construction. While some scholars interpret it this way, others argue it emphasizes the temple's *primary* role while allowing for other altars at divinely sanctioned sites.
4. The pagan high places were being used for the worship of the Lord. Eventually, this practice would lead to religious syncretism, which is the mixing of different religions and worship practices.
5. The Elijah story and other scripture verses suggest it. The narrative of Elijah rebuilding an altar and the Lord answering with fire implies divine sanction of worship outside Jerusalem. 2 Chronicles 33:17 even mentions people sacrificing at high places, but only to the Lord.
6. Asa made an alliance with Ben-Hadad of Damascus against Baasha, the king of the Northern Kingdom, using silver and gold from the temple treasury. This act was rebuked by Hanani the seer, leading to Asa imprisoning Hanani and ultimately suffering from a disease in his feet.
7. Jeroboam established places of worship at Bethel and Dan to prevent people from the Northern Kingdom from going to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices. This action was viewed as a violation of Mosaic commandments and a means of ensuring the loyalty of his people.
8. Jeroboam violated the second commandment, "Thou shall not make for yourself a graven image..." and perhaps the first commandment because he set up golden calves in Bethel and Dan. The text implies that Yahweh was worshipped, it was done in an illegitimate way.
9. The long-term prophecy was that a child named Josiah would destroy the altar in Bethel and burn the bones of illegitimate priests. The short-term prophecy was that the altar would split apart and the ashes on it would be poured out.
10. The prophet from Judah's disobedience highlights the importance of complete obedience to God's commands, even after performing great acts. Despite his role in delivering a powerful prophecy, his failure to adhere to God's instructions led to his death, serving as a warning against partial obedience.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the complexities surrounding the legitimacy of high places in ancient Israel, using scriptural evidence and scholarly interpretations to support your argument. Consider the significance of divinely sanctioned sites and the potential for syncretism.
2. Analyze the reign of Asa, highlighting both his positive reforms and his significant errors. How did his actions impact the religious and political landscape of Judah, and what lessons can be drawn from his example?
3. Examine the factors that contributed to Jeroboam's establishment of illegal worship in the Northern Kingdom. How did his actions deviate from Mosaic Law, and what were the long-term consequences of his sin on the subsequent kings of Israel?
4. Explore the themes of obedience and disobedience as portrayed in the story of the prophet from Judah in 1 Kings 13. How does this narrative illustrate the importance of complete obedience to God's commands, and what implications does it have for believers today?
5. Compare and contrast the leadership styles and religious practices of Asa and Jeroboam. How did their decisions shape the destinies of the Southern and Northern Kingdoms, and what lasting legacies did they leave behind?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **High Place:** Elevated sites, often hills or mounds, used for religious worship in ancient Israel and surrounding cultures. Their use by Israelites could be legitimate if sanctioned by God or illegitimate if used for pagan worship.
- **Syncretism:** The amalgamation or attempted reconciliation of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought. In the context of ancient Israel, it refers to the blending of Israelite worship with pagan practices.
- **Divinely Sanctioned Site:** A location that has been specifically chosen or approved by God for worship or other religious activities. These sites are often marked by a theophany.
- **Theophany:** A visible manifestation of God to humankind.
- **Baal:** A Canaanite deity associated with fertility and storms. Worship of Baal was often condemned in the Hebrew Bible as a form of idolatry.
- **Law of the Altar:** Refers to the regulations for altar construction outlined in Exodus 20:24-26, emphasizing the use of earth or uncut stones and prohibiting the use of steps.
- **Levites:** Members of the tribe of Levi, who were designated to serve as priests and temple assistants in ancient Israel.
- **Mosaic Law:** The body of laws and commandments given to Moses by God on Mount Sinai, as recorded in the Pentateuch.
- **Jeroboam's Sin:** Refers to the establishment of idolatrous worship practices, particularly the construction of golden calves, by King Jeroboam in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
- **Covenant Renewal Festival:** A religious event in which the people of Israel reaffirm their commitment to God's covenant, often involving oaths, sacrifices, and celebrations.
- **Annal:** A record of events arranged in chronological order, typically used to document the reigns of kings and significant historical occurrences.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Exodus to Exile -- Kings, Session 9, High Places – Asa, Jeroboam – Golden Calves, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided text, formatted in markdown:

1. What were "high places" in the context of ancient Israel, and why were they significant?

High places were elevated sites, often hills, where altars were built for worship. They were significant because they were frequently associated with Canaanite religious practices. After the Israelites entered Canaan, the legitimacy of worshipping at these high places became a point of contention. God commanded the Israelites to destroy pagan altars and high places, indicating that they were not to simply adopt and adapt these sites for their own worship.

2. Were all "high places" inherently wrong, or were there circumstances where worship at these locations was considered acceptable?

Not all high places were inherently wrong. The text suggests that some high places were used for worship of the Lord. The key distinction seemed to be whether the altar was built at a "divinely sanctioned site," where God had manifested himself or caused his name to be honored. However, even when worshipping the Lord at a high place, if the site wasn't divinely sanctioned, it was still considered illegitimate.

3. What does the "law of the altar" in Exodus 20:24-26 say about constructing altars, and how does it relate to the concept of "divinely sanctioned sites"?

The "law of the altar" outlines regulations for building altars. It allowed for multiple altars, but stipulated they should be made of earth or unworked stones, and without steps. More importantly, it stated altars should only be built "wherever I cause my name to be honored." This phrase indicated that altars were to be constructed at locations where God had somehow manifested himself, thus establishing it as a "divinely sanctioned site." Jacob's altar at Bethel after his dream is cited as an example of such a site.

4. How did King Asa of Judah deal with the high places during his reign, and what apparent contradictions exist in the biblical accounts of his actions?

The biblical accounts present conflicting information regarding Asa's actions towards high places. 2 Chronicles 14:3 states that Asa "removed the foreign altars and high places," implying he eliminated sites of pagan worship. However, 1 Kings 15:14 and 2 Chronicles 15:17 indicate that Asa "did not remove the high places," specifically those where the Lord was worshipped. This is reconciled by understanding that Asa removed high places associated with pagan Canaanite worship but allowed some places where the Lord was worshipped to remain, even if those sites weren't always legitimate.

5. What was Jeroboam's motivation for establishing alternative worship sites at Bethel and Dan, and how did these actions violate Mosaic law?

Jeroboam established worship sites at Bethel and Dan out of political and strategic concerns. He feared that if the people of the Northern Kingdom continued to travel to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices, they would eventually return their allegiance to the Southern Kingdom. His actions violated the second commandment by creating golden calves for worship. Although he claimed these calves represented the God who brought Israel out of Egypt (Yahweh), he was introducing unauthorized images and altering the established practices of worship. He also altered the calendar for festivals.

6. How was Jeroboam judged for establishing illegal worship?

Jeroboam was consistently judged negatively for originating and perpetuating the worship of the golden calves. Biblical texts frequently condemn kings of the Northern Kingdom for causing Israel "to walk in the way of the sin of Jeroboam son of Nebat." This sin became a defining characteristic of the Northern Kingdom's apostasy.

7. What is the story of the unnamed prophet from Judah in 1 Kings 13, and what does it illustrate about obedience and divine judgment?

The unnamed prophet was sent to Bethel to condemn Jeroboam's altar and prophesy its future destruction by Josiah. He gave a short-term sign, the splitting of the altar, which was immediately fulfilled, authenticating his message. Despite his initial obedience, the prophet disobeyed God's command not to eat or drink in Bethel after being deceived by an old prophet. As a result of this disobedience, he was killed by a lion, demonstrating that even those who deliver God's message are subject to judgment for their actions. The story also reveals the distinction between a man's character and their prophetic ability; even an evil man may utter accurate prophecy.

8. What was Asa's alliance with Ben-Hadad, and how did this alliance lead to his rebuke and eventual affliction?

Asa formed an alliance with Ben-Hadad, the king of Aram (Syria), to break Baasha of the Northern Kingdom's blockade of Judah. While this alliance was successful in alleviating the immediate threat, Asa was rebuked by the seer Hanani for relying on a foreign king rather than trusting in the Lord. Hanani reminded Asa of God's past deliverance from the Cushites when Asa relied on God. Asa's anger at this rebuke led him to imprison Hanani. As a consequence, Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet and, even in his illness, sought help from physicians instead of the Lord.