

“Mercy in Judgment”  
1 Kings 14:1-20  
(Preached at Trinity, March 7, 2021)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As with previous chapters, we are reminded at the beginning of **Chapter 14** that the chapter and verse divisions were not a part of the original. This chapter flows seamlessly from the previous passage. Jeroboam did not repent after the visit from the man of God, his hand dried up before his eyes, and his altar supernaturally broke in two. Hardened sinners do not easily give up their sins. Instead of repenting, he only increased his sin. He increased the number of priests and continued to lead Israel in their idolatrous worship. The final verse of **Chapter 13** pronounces God's judgment:  
**1 Kings 13:34 NAU** - "This event became sin to the house of Jeroboam, even to blot *it* out and destroy *it* from off the face of the earth."  
God was now going to completely destroy the house of Jeroboam.
2. As we open **Chapter 14** we find the beginning of this judgment. Jeroboam's son had become seriously ill. Jeroboam tells his wife to conceal her identity and make a visit to Ahijah the prophet to seek if the child will recover.
3. Another important point that will characterize the remainder of 1 Kings and into 2 Kings is the divided kingdom. We will now view the separate history of the Northern and Southern kingdoms with their separate kings and the distinct affairs that pertain to each kingdom. We will also witness the continuing strife between the two kingdoms.
4. In all likelihood, this was Jeroboam's eldest child, his heir to the throne. His death would be the first in a complete devastation of the house of Jeroboam. Every male would be killed ending Jeroboam's reign forever.  
**1 Kings 14:10-11 NAU** - "I am bringing calamity on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male person, both bond and free in Israel, and I will make a clean sweep of the house of Jeroboam, as one sweeps away dung until it is all gone. <sup>11</sup> "Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city the dogs will eat. And he who dies in the field the birds of the heavens will eat; for the LORD has spoken *it*."
5. What a contrast from God's promise to Jeroboam had he been faithful to his calling.  
**1 Kings 11:37-38 NAU** - "I will take you, and you shall reign over whatever you desire, and you shall be king over Israel. <sup>38</sup> "Then it will be, that if you listen to all that I command you and walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight by observing My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build you an enduring house as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you."
  - A. As we've seen, it was not in Jeroboam's heart to walk in the ways of God and do what in His sight. The human heart is desperately wicked and loves sin.

- B. The lost man is full of pride, envy, deceit and every form of lust. He wants to be lord and reign over his own life.  
**Romans 1:28 NAU** - "And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper"
6. Grieved over the sickness of his son, Jeroboam determines to send his wife to the prophet if perhaps they might receive some wisdom on how to care for the child and bring him to recovery. Notice, he didn't seek the aid of his false gods. He didn't cry out to his golden calves or call upon his counterfeit priests for aid.  
 He knew in his heart that God was the one true God. His problem wasn't ignorance. His problem was wicked rebellion. This is the problem of all of fallen humanity.  
 Jeroboam came seeking aid from God's prophet. We must not fail to notice that we have no record that he ever came seeking the counsel of Ahijah in how to righteously govern God's people. And this isn't his intention now.
7. Jeroboam knew clearly that he had rejected God's statutes and ordinances and failed to give God the glory He deserved. He feared to approach God's prophet. He tells his wife to disguise herself—to put on common clothes and gifts of a peasant, not silver and gold but baked goods and produce.
- A. In the darkness of his heart he actually thought he could deceive God. But this is what we do. We don't think God knows, or that He actually approves of our sin. John Woodhouse – "Ridiculous as it undoubtedly sounds, trying to deceive Almighty God is a common human pastime. We sin, somehow thinking that God will not notice. We conceal our sin from ourselves and from others, somehow imagining that this means God does not see it. We deny our sin, somehow dreaming that if we do not think about it God won't either. Every refusal to come clean and acknowledge our sin is an attempt (even if we deny this too) to deceive God."<sup>1</sup>
- B. We should notice that Ahijah's blindness was no disability at all for God's prophet. Physical sight was not necessary – God knows all, sees all.
8. Jeroboam is deceptive and manipulative. He thought he could fool God into helping him. He wasn't interested in honoring God or worshipping God. He only wanted to use God.
- A. How typical for sinful men to seek God only when they are in some kind of distress. They are interested in His gifts but not His glory. Most often, they take his goodness and then go away without repentance. Or as God speaks to Jeroboam in **V. 9** – "you have cast Me behind your back ..."
- B. How proper it would have been for Jeroboam to personally go before Ahijah weeping over his sins and crying out for God's mercy. But that wasn't his heart. Instead of bowing before God in submission, he tried to manipulate God with a scheme of deception.
9. Our attention is drawn to Jeroboam's wife.
- A. We don't know her name. She doesn't utter a word in this text. For her, going to Ahijah was an act of desperation. There were no doctors, no hospitals, no modern medicines. She would have been willing to do anything to save the life of her son. She follows the order of Jeroboam, disguises herself and goes to the prophet. Having received the word from the prophet, she goes home to witness the death of her son.

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<sup>1</sup> John Woodhouse, *1 Kings—Power, Politics, and the Hope of the World*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 401.

- B. You can imagine her shock when Ahijah announces upon her arrival, “Come on in, wife of Jeroboam.” A person may be able to fool men but we are all unmasked before God.
10. In the midst of this display of God’s fiery judgment upon sin an idolatry we also find a contrasting display of His gracious mercy. The child of Jeroboam was most likely a young man. **Verse 13** informs us that of all the house of Jeroboam, this young man had displayed piety.
- I. The mystery of God’s grace
- A. The young man had never had an example of righteousness set before him
1. Never had he seen his father worshipping God. Never had Jeroboam told him of God’s greatness or of the importance of keeping His statutes.
  2. His life had been surrounded by high places for false worship, of false priests offering false sacrifices on false altars.
  3. Yet, in all of this the child remained true to God. While the rest of Israel was delighting in the golden calves, this young man maintained a dislike of them. He fit his name well – Abijah = Yahweh is my Father  
He was the only one in the entire house of Jeroboam that was pleasing to the LORD.
  4. We see examples of young people brought up in pagan homes, and yet God saves them and they live a life of piety.
- B. This can only be described as an act of God grace.
1. Noah lived in a time of absolute wickedness. He was surrounded by every form of sin and perversion. They would have been plagued by materialism and the lust to satisfy every debased pleasure. Violence would have been the norm. The human heart continually invents new ways to sin.  
**Genesis 6:5 NAU** - "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."  
    - a. In the midst of this wickedness one man kept himself pure. Noah remained separate from the perversions of his culture. He led his wife and taught his children according to God’s righteous ways.  
**Genesis 6:9 NAU** - "Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God."
    - b. Only one thing can describe this distinction in Noah  
**Genesis 6:8 NAU** - "But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD."
    - c. He didn’t find favor *because* he was righteous. He was righteous because he had found God’s favor.
    - d. At least Noah had the benefit of godly teachers and a godly upbringing. When Noah was born six of the godly line of Seth were still living - Enosh, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Methuselah, and Lamech  
Noah’s brothers did not follow the path of righteousness, but Noah did.
  2. While Noah may have had the benefit of a Godly upbringing, we do not have this confidence for Jeroboam’s son. Yet, he found favor in the sight of God.
  3. In the mystery of God’s electing grace Abijah found favor in the sight of God.

II. If he found favor in God's sight why did he die?

- A. God's purposes are always right, and can never be stopped
1. God had declared that the house of Jeroboam would be cut off. Judgment had come. Sometimes, God's people are caught up in the midst of God's judgment upon the wicked.
  2. It is also true that God's people suffer as the result of living in a fallen world. Christians go through hurricanes, tornados, floods, fires, etc.
  3. It is also true that we all will die. But how we die is of great importance. We should also pray that we will finish well. Finishing well is of greater importance than finishing long.
- B. Sometimes, death itself can be a blessing
1. It is sometimes an act of God's mercy to remove His people from this sinful world. Sometimes death or sickness can be an act of God's mercy.
  2. If Jeroboam's son would have ascended to the throne would he have maintained his integrity? Only God knows. But he died while bearing the testimony, "something good was found toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam."
  3. We also need to see the sickness of this young man as one more act of mercy towards Jeroboam. The sickness of Jeroboam's son was a final opportunity for Jeroboam to repent. But once again, he squandered God's mercy.
- C. This young man was honored in death
1. Of the rest of Jeroboam's house we read:  
**1 Kings 14:11 NAU** - "Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city the dogs will eat. And he who dies in the field the birds of the heavens will eat; for the LORD has spoken *it*."
  2. But of this young man we read:  
**1 Kings 14:13 NAU** - "All Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he alone of Jeroboam's *family* will come to the grave"  
**1 Kings 14:18 NAU** - "All Israel buried him and mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through His servant Ahijah the prophet."
  3. Most important, having been honored by God in life and death, we have the expectation that he is enjoying everlasting life.
    - a. We need to look at this from an eternal perspective  
We are all going to die. But what then?  
**Hebrews 9:27 NAU** - "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment,"
    - b. All in the house of Jeroboam not only died miserably, all will take their place in hell, all but Abijah. Abijah was the one person in Jeroboam's family who was ready to die.
    - c. Life is short and death is certain, but how we spend our life is of great importance.

Conclusion:

1. Jeroboam was a powerful man. He was the King of Israel. He may have thought himself justified in his idolatry. He was merely strengthening his reign. But he was a fool. To turn our back on God is the most foolish of all human action.
2. We aren't told why Abijah was seen as good in God's eyes. We do know this. It was by God's grace. He was a child of faith.  
**Hebrews 11:6 NAU** - "And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."
3. We need to never forget, God rules this world. And we need to remember His Word will stand. As I stated before, this is one of the themes of the Books of Kings. The phrase "Word of the Lord" is used 33 times.
  - A. We find the controlling phrase in **Verse 18**. Abijah was a child of faith by God's doing.  
**1 Kings 14:18 NAU** - "All Israel buried him and mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through His servant Ahijah the prophet."
  - B. It was by God's grace Abijah was saved, but this in no way diminished his responsibility before God. We must all submit to the Word of the Lord.