

“A Missed Opportunity”
1 Kings 16:1-5
(Preached at Trinity, May 9, 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. In Chapter 14 we were briefly introduced to Jeroboam's son, Nadab before the author turns to the situation in the Southern Kingdom.
1 Kings 14:19-20 NAU - "Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he made war and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ²⁰ The time that Jeroboam reigned was twenty-two years; and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his place."
2. After the death of King Asa we pick back up with the reign of Nadab. We shouldn't be surprised to read that he was just like his father.
1 Kings 15:26 NAU - "He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father and in his sin which he made Israel sin."
 - A. Like father like son often bears truth, particularly as it regards reverence towards God. This was certainly true of the kings of Israel.
 - B. We read similarly in the Second Commandment. Surely, the sins of fathers have a lasting impact upon their families.
Exodus. 20:5 NAS - "I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,"
 - C. Of the kings of the northern kingdom not a single one was faithful to God. None were good. All rebelled against the worship of God. All walked in the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat.
3. Nadab's reign only lasted two years. He may have had little knowledge of God's word against his father. God pronounced the complete destruction of the house of Jeroboam.
1 Kings 14:14-15 NAU - "Moreover, the LORD will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who will cut off the house of Jeroboam this day and from now on. ¹⁵ "For the LORD will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water; and He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the *Euphrates* River, because they have made their Asherim, provoking the LORD to anger."

4. Nadab would be replaced by Baasha. We were introduced to Baasha in **Verse 16** and his war with Asa, King of Judah.
1 Kings 15:16 NAU - "Now there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days."
 In **Verses 25-28** we are told *how* he came to be king. Baasha was of the tribe of Issachar which means he didn't have claim to the throne. But that didn't stop his wicked ambitions.
 While Nadab was preoccupied with a military campaign against the city of Gibbethon, Baasha planned a conspiracy against him. This would be the first of many conspiracies against the kings of the Northern Kingdom.
 Baasha assassinated Nadab and seized the throne. As soon as he gained the throne, he launched a bloody massacre of any rivals to the throne.
5. Baasha's treachery accomplished God's judgment against the house of Jeroboam.
1 Kings 15:29-30 NAU - "It came about as soon as he was king, he struck down all the household of Jeroboam. He did not leave to Jeroboam any persons alive, until he had destroyed them, according to the word of the LORD, which He spoke by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite, ³⁰ and because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, because of his provocation with which he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger."
6. Baasha was a wicked tyrant who seized the throne for his own self-serving ends, yet we read that it was "according to the Word of the Lord."
 This doesn't mean that Baasha was acting out of obedience to the Word of the Lord. He had no idea he was serving God, nor did he care. But the Word of the Lord was being accomplished.
7. Baasha's well-planned conspiracy was successful. Nadab was executed and Baasha immediately seized the throne. It was in his heart. He lusted after the throne and murder was a part of his plan to get it.
 And then, having seized the throne he presumed that others would try to capture it just like he did. So, he executed all who might lay claim to the throne.
8. It was a bloody coup, but again, God ordained it. Although his actions were wicked and displayed a wicked heart, his actions fulfilled the Divine purpose of God.
 Baasha was working the sovereign purpose of God according to the Word of God. He had no idea he was serving God. His heart was not inclined towards serving God. But he worked God's purpose none the less.
9. Even though his actions carried out the purposes of God, his wickedness brought him under the just condemnation of God.
 God sends forth His prophet to announce judgment upon the house of Baasha:
1 Kings 16:1-4 NAU - "Now the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying, ² "Inasmuch as I exalted you from the dust and made you leader over My people Israel, and you have walked in the way of Jeroboam and have made My people Israel sin, provoking Me to anger with their sins, ³ behold, I will consume Baasha and his house, and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. ⁴ "Anyone of Baasha who dies in the city the dogs will eat, and anyone of his who dies in the field the birds of the heavens will eat."
10. This prophetic pronouncement of God's judgment is followed by the announcement of Baasha's death in **Verses 5-6**.
 The prophetic judgment was again affirmed in **Verse 7** through the prophet Jehu.

11. And indeed, the heirs of Baasha died under the hand of God's judgment. Baasha was succeeded by his son Elah. His reign lasted two years. While in a drunken stupor he was struck down by his servant Zimri who reigned in his place. Zimri's reign only lasted seven days but that was long enough for him to accomplish God's judgment upon the house of Baasha. As soon as Zimri became king he struck down the house of Baasha, bringing total destruction. According to the Word of God, not a single soul remained.
- 1 Kings 16:11-13 NAU** - "It came about when he became king, as soon as he sat on his throne, that he killed all the household of Baasha; he did not leave a single male, neither of his relatives nor of his friends. ¹² Thus Zimri destroyed all the household of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which He spoke against Baasha through Jehu the prophet, ¹³ for all the sins of Baasha and the sins of Elah his son, which they sinned and which they made Israel sin, provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their idols."
12. Zimri died by suicide, and this too was by the hand of God because of his wicked sins. He was followed by King Omri who would reign for twelve years.
13. Once again, we see the devastation left behind by sin. God's righteous judgment must prevail. His holiness must be vindicated. But we are living in a very unique period. We are living in an age of mercy where it is possible to repent and turn from our wicked ways.
- I ask the question. What if Baasha had repented and turned to God in holiness? Is it possible that God would have turned His wrath away?

- I. We'll see a unique event in the life of Ahab
- A. We are about to be introduced to Ahab later in this chapter
1. What we know about him is he excelled in wickedness.
1 Kings 16:30 NAU - "Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD more than all who were before him."
 2. To make matters worse, he married a woman who was even more wicked than he
 3. The author is careful to let us know that Ahab was under God's just judgment.
1 Kings 16:33 NAU - "Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him."
- B. But we will find in **Chapter 21** an act of repentance by Ahab
1. God announces His judgment and condemnation through the prophet Elijah. God promised utter destruction of the house of Ahab.
1 Kings 21:20-22 NAU - "Ahab said to Elijah, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" And he answered, "I have found *you*, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the LORD. ²¹ "Behold, I will bring evil upon you, and will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every male, both bond and free in Israel; ²² and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked *Me* to anger, and *because* you have made Israel sin."

2. We are told that this prophetic word included a comparison to a previous king who also came under God's judgment
1 Kings 21:22 NAU - "and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah."
3. But, unlike Jeroboam and Baasha, Ahab was stirred and humbled himself in repentance. Seeing his repentance, God turned his wrath away – or at least postponed it.
1 Kings 21:27-29 NAU - "It came about when Ahab heard these words, that he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and fasted, and he lay in sackcloth and went about despondently. ²⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ²⁹ "Do you see how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days, *but* I will bring the evil upon his house in his son's days."

II. We need to observed this tragic loss of an opportunity to repent.

A. Ahab was judged to be more wicked than Baasha

1 Kings 16:33 NAU - "Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him."

1. And yet, when he repented God turned away His judgment.
2. This is God's mercy put on display. God speaks through His prophet Ezekiel:
Ezekiel 18:21-23 NAU - "But if the wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed and observes all My statutes and practices justice and righteousness, he shall surely live; he shall not die. ²² "All his transgressions which he has committed will not be remembered against him; because of his righteousness which he has practiced, he will live. ²³ "Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked," declares the Lord GOD, "rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?"
3. God sent Jehu the prophet to warn Baasha. God's warnings are to be seen as great acts of kindness. God is not compelled to speak warnings before He sends judgment, and yet in the Bible gives sends His warnings over and over. This warning to Baasha is stern, but it is also an opportunity. Dale Ralph Davis wrote: "Was this not, for all its severity, Baasha's opportunity? Had he realized it, he teetered on the abyss of blessing."¹
4. Blessing indeed!
 - a. God's warning through Jehu was not merely for the purpose of information. Yes, it was a revelation of judgment. The same is true today. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven. The judgment of God is upon us. But this revelation is a warning to repent. God sends His preachers as His heralds of warning.

¹ Dale Ralph Davis, *1 Kings: The Wisdom and the Folly*, Focus on the Bible Commentary (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2002), 181.

- b. We aren't told at what point in Baasha's 14 year reign God sent Jehu. The text displays it as the separator between **Verse 15:33** and **Verse 16:5**, or the separator between his inauguration and his epitaph. What the text is clear on is Jehu's prophecy came while Baasha was still alive. While there is life, there is hope.
 - c. If Baasha had listened to the prophet Jehu and humbled himself in sorrow and repentance he would have found the mercy of God. We find here a tragic loss of an opportunity to repent.
- B. This lost opportunity is repeated thousands of times each day.
- 1. Multitudes die and enter eternity without hope, without mercy, without any opportunity to repent.
 - 2. Many will cry out while making excuses but they will not find mercy
Matthew 7:22-23 NAU - "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³ "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness."
 - 3. There is mercy to be found in Christ for all who turn from their sin.
1 Peter 1:3 NAU - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,"
 - 4. To squander this great opportunity to receive the gracious mercy of God in Jesus Christ is the greatest tragedy of life.

Conclusion:

- 1. This sad squandering of God's blessings happens with billions of souls. Notice how Jehu reminds Baasha of God's rich blessings upon his life. Proud Baasha would have thought his reign was of his own doing. All that we are is from God. It was God who put Baasha on the throne.
Verse 2 – "I exalted you from the dust and made you leader over My people Israel." Baasha reigned for 24 years. These were years that he enjoyed the common graces of God, but he squandered them all. Most importantly, he denied God His rightful worship and would not turn from his wicked ways.
- 2. God sent His preacher to Baasha to preach a powerful sermon of judgment. Did Baasha hear the warning? He did not.
- 3. This is the problem of lost humanity. God's wrath is kindled. Paul says it is already revealed from heaven. God doesn't have to delay His judgment. He doesn't have to send forth His preachers to sound the warning. God is merciful. Most will not heed the warning. There is no greater missed opportunity.