

“God’s Unfailing Word”
1 Kings 15:25 - 16:6
(Preached at Trinity, May 2, 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 we’ve seen, the writer of 1 Kings moves quickly through the kings of Israel and Judah, moving back and forth in a synchronized fashion.
 - A. After spending two chapters on Jeroboam and his wickedness, his death is recorded in 14:20 and his son Nadab reigned in his place.
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."
 - B. Then there is a great pause in recording the events of the Northern Kingdom and the author shifts his attention to the Southern Kingdom and gives us a summary of Rehoboam’s reign. We are told that he too reigned in wickedness. His death is recorded and his son, Abijah followed him as king. He too walked in the sins of his father and his reign was characterized by wickedness. But then, by a wondrous act of God’s mercy, Abijah is replaced by his son Asa. We read of Asa in **V. 11**, “Asa did what was right in the sight of the LORD, like David his father.”
 - C. The account of Asa is brief, although it lasted 41 years.
With the death of Asa, he is succeeded by his son, Jehoshaphat. Under the reigns of Asa and Jehoshaphat Judah enjoyed years of stability.
2. Now the author takes us back to the events of the Northern Kingdom and we learn that while the Southern Kingdom may have enjoyed stability, the Northern Kingdom was experiencing great turmoil with one king after another falling to the brutality of his successor.
The author will now maintain a lengthy focus on the history Northern Kingdom. For the remainder of 1 Kings, with the exception of Jehoshaphat, our focus will be entirely upon the Northern Kingdom.
3. We begin with the reign of King Nadab.
1 Kings 15:25 NAU - "Now Nadab the son of Jeroboam became king over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years."
 - A. We aren’t surprised to read of the life and reign of Nadab.
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."
This will be the consistent description of Israel’s kings – each did evil in the sight of God.

- B. Nadab's reign only lasted two years. He may have had little knowledge of God's word against his father.
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. We were introduced to Baasha in **Verse 16** and his war with Asa.
1 Kings 15:16 NAU - "Now there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days."
- A. Now 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.
 Nadab had gone to war with the city of Gibbethon, formerly a possession of the Tribe of Dan, but now under the control of the Philistines. It's noteworthy that with the continued transgressions of Israel they are no longer able to hold or regain what had been given to their ancestors.
- B. While Nadab was preoccupied with the siege upon Gibbethon, Baasha had planned a conspiracy against him. This would be the first of many conspiracies against the kings of the Northern Kingdom. We aren't told of Baasha's motives, whether some personal revenge against Nadab, or retaliation against something done by Jeroboam, or simply out of bloodthirsty ambition.
- C. 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. This was in accordance with the Word of God and resulted in the slaughter of all of 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."
5. 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 it means that the Word of the Lord was being accomplished.
6. Once again we need to consider the all-encompassing sovereignty of God over all things. Once again, we find that what man does with evil intent, God has ordained for good. We've seen this over and over as God carries out His Divine purpose. Most recently, we observed it with Rehoboam and Jeroboam.
7. Tonight, I want to again set this before you. It is so vitally important for us to understand that there is nothing in this world that happens that God has not determined. This includes every action of man.

- I. God's Providence works out in a daily drama in countless ways
- A. God has ordained every event in history.
1. God's ordering of every event in history is called His decree. Before the world began He foreordained whatever comes to pass.
LBC – 3:1 *Of God's Decree* – “God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass . . .”
 2. God working out His decree in time is called Providence. Providence is God's governing of all things.
LBC – 5:1 *Of Divine Providence* – “God the good Creator of all things, in his infinite power and wisdom doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, to the end for the which they were created, according unto his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will . . .”
- B. From our perspective it all seems so normal
1. Each day unfolds for billions of people across the face of the earth
 2. We all make countless daily decisions. We consider the circumstance, weigh our options, and make our decision.
 3. For most, the decision is measured by how it works to their advantage, even if it demands manipulation of the circumstance in sinful ways.
 4. Even the sinful acts of men are working out the sovereign purpose of God
- C. This is highly troubling for many - two questions are frequently asked:
1. If God has ordained all things from the beginning to the end, including the sinful acts of men, how can we then say that God is not the author of sin?
 2. If God has ordained all things from the beginning to the end, including the sinful acts of men, how can He then hold men accountable for their actions?
- D. The mystery is that God orders all things to the last detail in such a way as to allow man freedom of volition.
1. We don't perceive any external force. We do what we desire to do. No compulsion is laid upon men to coerce them to action.
 2. God's sovereign decree does not take away man's liberty
Loraine Boettner – “Adam acted as freely as if there had been no decree, and yet as infallibly as if there had been no liberty”
 3. In other words, from our perspective we do what we desire to do. Our actions are often sinful and our sinful actions are consistent with God's decree and yet the sin is our own. God is not the author of sin. God ordains the action and judges the sin.
LBC – 3:1 *Of God's Decree* – “God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature . . .”

II. These truths are on display in the text before us tonight

A. Baasha killed Nadab by the Word of the Lord

1 Kings 15:29 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"

1. It isn't saying merely that God predicted what would happen. It is saying that God determined it. God's Word is a declaration of His revealed will and purpose.
Isaiah 55:9-11 NAU - "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰ "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; ¹¹ So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding *in the matter* for which I sent it."
2. Baasha had this plan worked out in his mind for a long time
Notice in **Verse 27** – "Then Baasha the son of Ahijah of the house of Issachar conspired against him" – We aren't given any details but it was a well-planned conspiracy. And it was successful. Nadab was executed and Baasha immediately seized the throne.
 - a. It was in his heart. He lusted after the throne and murder was a part of his plan to get it.
 - b. 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.
 - c. It was a bloody coup, but God ordained it
Although his actions were wicked and displayed a wicked heart, his actions fulfilled the Divine purpose of God.
3. God's purpose was fulfilled, and His holiness remained untainted.
Man's wickedness will never thwart God's Kingdom. Instead, God uses even the wickedness of men's hearts as He does His holy will.
4. God's Word stands, sovereign, unassailable, and absolute.
1 Peter 1:23-25 NAS - "for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and abiding word of God. ²⁴ For, "All flesh is like grass, And all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, And the flower falls off, ²⁵ But the word of the Lord abides forever." And this is the word which was preached to you."

B. How is it that God could decree the actions of Baasha and not be the author of Baasha's sin?

1. If God ordained and determined Baasha's actions how could God then hold Baasha accountable for his actions
2. This is because the sinfulness of the action came from the wickedness of Baasha's heart. God had a good and righteous design on Baasha's sinful actions. God's perfect justice prevailed and His holiness was vindicated.

C. We've seen this over and over

1. Joseph's brothers sold him into captivity and presumed he had died. They were motivated by envy, greed, and hatred.
Joseph declared that their sinful actions fulfilled the righteous purpose of God. They had no idea they were working out the purpose of God.
Genesis 50:20 NAU - "As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive."
2. God raised up the Assyrians to destroy Israel. Assyria was motivated by their lust for power and wealth. Their cruelty in war was the natural course of their wicked heart. And yet they were an instrument in the sovereign hand of God. They had no idea they were working out the purpose of God. God judged their sinful deeds.
Isaiah 10:5-7 NAU - "Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger And the staff in whose hands is My indignation, ⁶ I send it against a godless nation And commission it against the people of My fury To capture booty and to seize plunder, And to trample them down like mud in the streets. ⁷ Yet it does not so intend, Nor does it plan so in its heart, But rather it is its purpose to destroy And to cut off many nations."
3. And, of course, Judas Iscariot and Pontius Pilate, and the Jewish religious leaders carried out God's sovereign purpose in the crucifixion of Christ. They were instruments in God carrying out His redemptive purpose. Yet, they had no interest in accomplishing the sovereign purpose of God.
Acts 4:26-28 NAU - "The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the Lord, and against His Christ.' ²⁷ "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur."
 - a. Judas Iscariot was a greedy opportunist and betrayed Christ. He acted in a manner consistent with his sinful heart. His sin was his own—and yet, he perfectly fulfilled God's Divine purpose. It is interesting how often we see in Scripture God using the sinful greed of men in accomplishing God's righteous purpose.
The point is, the death of Jesus was according to Divine plan, but Judas was not forced to betray Christ. Jesus described it well:
Mark 14:21 NAS - "For the Son of Man *is to go, just as it is written of Him*; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! *It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.*"
 - b. The religious leaders were governed by their lust for power and their envy of Christ. Their sin was their own, and yet they perfectly accomplished God's Divine purpose.
 - c. Pontius Pilate was a man-pleaser lacking the moral fortitude to release a guiltless man. His sin was his own and yet, he perfectly fulfilled God's Divine purpose.

- d. Each of these men fulfilled their role in the drama of the crucifixion, but from their perspective, they were doing precisely what they wanted to do.
- D. Baasha was working the sovereign purpose of God according to the Word of God.
1. 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.
 2. God rules over the wills of men – He continually rules and overrules our wills
Proverbs 19:21 NAU - "Many plans are in a man's heart, But the counsel of the LORD will stand."
 3. Many have this mistaken notion that it would not be right for God to impose His will upon our wills
The truth is God moves men according to His good pleasure – God has *always* imposed His will upon our will.

Conclusion:

1. God ordains all things. He is working out His purpose. This gives us great comfort as we consider His eternal redemptive purpose. He is saving His own. Not a single one will be lost. God uses even the sinful actions of men in bringing to pass His purpose.
2. It also gives us comfort as we face evil in this life. It will not prevail against us. Wicked Nadab was replaced by wicked Baasha. Little else changed. This cycle will continue until the end of the age. But God is firmly in control.
3. In our current political drama it might seem that evil is out of control. But God is firmly in control. The wicked rule doing their wicked deeds but the purpose of the Lord will stand.
4. God raised up Baasha to bring judgment upon the house of Jeroboam, and then judged Baasha for his own wickedness.
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."