

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

April 11, 2016

- ✓ Deuteronomy 21:1-22:30 – Various laws.
- ✓ 2 Corinthians 5:11-21 – Knowing Christ.
- ✓ Psalm 38:1-22— Suffering for sin and seeking hope in the Lord.

COMMENTARY:

Deuteronomy 21:1-22:30. This section is filled with difficult passages that atheists love to exploit in their love of bashing and beating up on God by depicting Him as a moral monster. Let us take 22:28-29: *"If a man finds a young woman who is a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he takes her and lies with her, and they are found out,"*²⁹ *"then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife because he has humbled her; he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days.* Critics of God love to focus on verses 28-29: the rape victim is being treated like she is her father's property. She has been violated, and the rapist gets off by paying a bridal fee. No concern is shown for the girl at all. In fact, she is apparently forced to marry the man who raped her! Are these charges warranted? To understand verses 28-29 we must understand the related passage of Exod. 22:16-17: *If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride-price for her to be his wife.*¹⁷ *"If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride-price of virgins.* Both passages are variations on the same theme. Even if there is some pressure from the man, the young woman is complicit; though initially pressured/seduced, she does not act against her will. The text says *"they are found out"* (28), not *"he is found out."* Both are culpable. As a matter of fact, this pressure/seduction could not be called forcible rape. Though the woman gave in, the man here would bear the brunt of the responsibility. As far as the bride-price, it would have been more difficult for her to find a husband since she had been sexually involved with another before marriage. The bride-price would be a kind of economic security for her future which was now in jeopardy. Moreover, the man guilty of statutory rape *seduced* the unengaged woman—he was not some dark-alley malefactor that the young girl was trying to fight off or from whom she tried to run away. In sum, this passage is far from being demeaning to women. There are two courses of action: (1) if the father *and daughter* agree to it, the *seducer* must marry the woman and provide for her all of her life, without the possibility of divorce. The girl is not required to marry the *seducer*; (2) the girl's father (the legal point person) has the right to refuse any such permanent arrangement and he had the authority to demand payment from the seducer (since she was sexually compromised and marriage to another would be difficult). However, the girl had to agree with this arrangement, and she is not required to marry the seducer. Instead of lack of concern for women, we actually see that her well-being is actually the underlying theme of this legislation.

2 Corinthians 5:11-21. In verse 16 Paul speaks of no longer knowing Christ according to the flesh. There was a time when Paul only knew about Christ from a human perspective. And he had opposed Christ and Christians because he had regarded Christ from a worldly point of view—according to the flesh. He had information about Jesus, but this was not the same as believing in Him and enjoying a second person relationship with Him. Mere information about Jesus cannot transform a person from self-centeredness to selflessness (2 Cor. 5:15). Only conversion and a living relationship could effect that, as it had done for Paul (Acts 9:1–20). This transformation is marked by complete identification with Christ rather than the world or anything else. This is living life as a new creation. Christ totally changed the way Paul viewed everything in life. This is what Christ does for our whole way of thinking when He becomes the center of our lives as such. The Christ-centered life really is nothing short of a supernatural life.

Psalms 38:1-22. David is suffering because of sin in his life. We see the suffering in two forms: loss of good health and enemies who persecuted him. His suffering was so awful that even his friends and family avoided him (11). Note David's focus: the Lord. Note his hope: the Lord (15)! As we have been studying in our present series, the main issue is not so much the whys but the Who. God, not us, is the issue—not our so-called maturity. God and His grace must always be front and center. He is the only one who can redeem us out of difficulties and only by grace.

In, with, for, and unto Him,

Pastor Don