

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

April 13, 2016

- ✓ Deuteronomy 26:1-27:26 – Proper response to God’s grace.
- ✓ 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1– Separate from the unclean.
- ✓ Psalm 40:1-17— Thanks to God for deliverance.

### COMMENTARY:

**Deuteronomy 26:1-27:26.** In 26:4-11 we have a narrative of what God has done for His people. God delivered them from Egypt and brought them to “a land flowing with milk and honey.” They were to remember and “rejoice in all the good things the Lord your God has given you and your household.” Cultivating a grateful attitude to the Lord is indispensable to having the proper perspective. We are to *rejoice* in all things God has given us. He has given us a life and sustains our being every instant. We have a future ahead of us beyond our wildest dreams. As I noted in last evening’s Bible class, before one can really develop a full understanding of any doctrine, one needs to think about it a great deal, one needs to meditate on it. This means that we are think a great deal about the next life that awaits us with the Lord in order to richly and personally develop the eternal perspective. As I also pointed out, no one can truly live the Christian way of life apart from the eternal perspective. We must, moreover, remind ourselves that all that we have is from His hands. We earn or deserve nothing. It really is a monstrous thing for believers who have been given so much to live a life of ingratitude for most of each day. Again, we are products of His grace. As a matter of fact, we did not even have the power to believe in Jesus Christ. While it is common in evangelicalism today to teach that any person can have positive volition and believe in Jesus Christ, the idea that an unbeliever can have a positive will that has the power to believe is false and heretical. The heresy is called Pelagianism. No unbeliever has the power in and of himself to seek God as his highest good. We all by nature start out with suppressing God and do not have the inherent power to go from spiritual death to spiritual life by any act of our will. A proper understanding of the will is that instead of two categories for the unbeliever: one positive and one negative, there are three possible states of the soul: positive, negative, and quiescence. Quiescence is the state of ceasing resistance to the common grace of God, which calls all men. To illustrate the three states of volition, consider the example of the will of a small child who is at the doctor’s office and is about to get a shot. A negative volition would be refusal of the shot. A positive volition would be eager acceptance or willingness to get the shot. A quiescent volition would neither resist or present the arm for the shot, but simply stop resisting and let the doctor give the shot. When the unbeliever stops suppressing God, he simply stops resisting God, which is not a work so it avoids the Pelagian heresy, which teaches that an unbeliever has the power to seek the true God apart from God’s grace. We are believers only because there was a time in our lives that we stopped suppressing the knowledge of God, which God used to get us the gospel and enabled us to believe through the Holy Spirit. It is understanding the role of the quiescent will that enables one to satisfy all of those passages which teach that man is responsible as well as all of those passages which teach that no one comes to the Father apart from His drawing. Both are true and the solution is found in the metaphysics of the will and intellect in the context of *all of Scripture!*

**2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1.** In this section Paul covers the importance of not being yoked together with unbelievers. The doctrine of separation is extremely important, especially in the times in which we live when our entire society has taken on an evil cast like never before in our country. Of course, separation does *not* mean that one should avoid all contact with fellow American pagans—such a view is absurd, see 1 Cor. 5:9-10. However, to become intimate with someone whose lifestyle is in direct contradiction to the Lord is to put yourself into a very vulnerable position of opening up your soul to those sympathies, which could lead to an undermining of your very faith. Moreover, in 6:17 Paul makes it very clear that enjoying God’s presence requires personal holiness. One cannot enjoy, let alone grow and thrive in a personal relationship with the Lord and live in the evil that is so common among unbelievers. It is personal purity that enables one to love God and be received by Him and grow in His matchless grace.

**Psalms 40:1-17.** In this psalm David begins with great thanksgiving about his deliverance by the Lord. God saved him and put him “on a rock,” and this prompted a new song of rejoicing. As I have mentioned in the last couple of Bible classes, God does not send difficulties only to deliver us—like a Boy Scout who pushes a lady in traffic only to run in to save her. The difficulties come from this evil, broken world, from which God stands ready to deliver us with His own goodness. In our next Bible class we will look at John Hick’s soul making theodicy and examine passages in the New Testament where believers are rejoicing *in* the difficulties (not because of them). They are rejoicing in spite of the difficulties. Moreover, every positive quality, every spiritual virtue, that is expressed or developed in such times can also be found in the New Testament without any suffering. Positive qualities, spiritual virtue, is by the Holy Spirit—period! Let us not confuse experiences where we might gain some good in the natural realm from suffering with true spiritual virtue, which comes only through the Holy Spirit—*And the Holy Spirit does not need to bring evil suffering in our lives to make us better.* About the only category where suffering is any good at all is when it is for divine discipline. But even then, the results are usually shortlived, until there is another crisis. Unless the focus is regularly on the eternal perspective, there really is no proper Christian perspective—and life will be defined by the details of life instead of the goodness of God as such. As we have noted, it really is not about the why and hows as much as about the Who, as Job discovered.

**Romans 11:36** For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.

Pastor Don