

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

April 16, 2016

- ✓ **Deuteronomy 30:1-31:29.** Blessings of returning to the Lord (30); Joshua, the new leader (31).
- ✓ **2 Corinthians 8:1-7.** Grace giving.
- ✓ **Psalm 44:1-16.** God’s faithfulness and suffering.

COMMENTARY:

Deuteronomy 30:1-31:29. Note the choice the Lord gives His people, of life or death, in 30:11-15. This makes absolutely no sense in Calvinism. Here is God giving His people the free will choice of choosing Him or choosing other gods and with them death. Besides making a mockery of this divine exhortation, Calvinism has a very defective view of the nature of choosing. They believe that a person will always choose his strongest desire and unless God puts a new desire in him, he can only choose sin. Of course, if man always chooses his strongest desire, then how do they account for the fall of Lucifer, Adam, and Eve who were all created with perfect desires. To this the Calvinist will punt to “it is a mystery.” Well, the nature of man really is not a mystery in philosophical realism. In short, man’s free choices do not ultimately lie in his will, but in his judgment, which precedes and informs the will. There is no such thing as an uninformed will, all wills operate under some type of apprehension. It is the apprehension as a function of the intellect that makes the judgment to which the will will use as an efficient cause. In other words, the intellect makes judgments regarding the good and presents them to the will for action. For example, when Adam and Eve sinned it was a judgment between choosing the eternal good of God or choosing the temporal good of the fruit of the tree. All sin comes down to choosing a temporal good—a pleasure, something that will make one happy if only for a short time—rather than choosing God. Since the will can only act when informed by the intellect, it is important to keep the goodness of God in our minds over temporal goods. The same principle holds true regarding various trials of life. Our will will respond to whatever we present to it, which is why we are told to flee temptation. What we think about, or wills will respond to, which is why the Lord repeatedly told the Israelites to keep exposing themselves to the Word of God, note especially Deut. 31:9-13.

2 Corinthians 8:1-7. This section covers giving. Paul shows that Christian giving money to help other Christians in need was itself the result of God's grace; God provided both the resources as well as the alacritous attitude in using them. In verses 2-3 Paul tells the comparatively wealthy Corinthian church about the generosity of the impoverished churches in Macedonia. In spite of all of the vile and deplorable activity in the Corinthian church, note verse 7, which indicates that many continue to thrive in their spiritual love and diligence. Thank God!

Psalms 44:1-16. The first eight verses extol the faithfulness of God as demonstrated by His past dealings with Israel. Memory plays a key role in our lives. When we find ourselves in the throes of the difficulties of life, we need to remember God's faithfulness in the past in giving us the gift of life and sustaining us moment by moment. Note the emphasis on the power and grace of God in verse three, rather than placing strength in man. God is the King in whom "we boast all day long" (44:8). However, the mood changes, beginning in verse 9, when the focus is on the present circumstances. In other words, in spite of past victories, the nation has been subjected to humiliation as the Lord does not go out with them and eventually sells them for next to nothing—which depicts Israel as worthless (12). In regard to suffering, it is important to remember that there are three sources of suffering: (1) For righteousness in the midst of those who persecuted the righteous; (2) for divine discipline as per Heb. 12:5-11; and (3) due to the brokenness of the evil world in which we live (for example, health issues related to age, genes, or environmental factors, and suffering due to the angelic conflict). Note that there is no category for God bringing in unjust/evil suffering in these categories. Let us reject any notion that God brings evil, unjust suffering, into our lives. The above three categories accounts for any and all suffering in this world. Some suffering is simply due to this cursed world, from slight injuries like pricking one's finger on a thorn (Gen. 3:18) to more serious health issues. The only guarantee we have is that God is always there for us.

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

Pastor Don