

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

**April 8, 2016**

- ✓ Deuteronomy 12:29-14:29 – Warning against apostasy.
- ✓ 2 Corinthians 4:1-6– God commands light to shine out of darkness.
- ✓ Psalm 36— Seeking God’s goodness in times of evil.

### **REFLECTIONS:**

**Deuteronomy 12:29-14:29.** Notice the extended warnings against heresy. Observe the command for the extirpation of all those things that the Canaanites had used to serve and worship their idol/demon-gods. No matter how beautiful or ornate these rites and the various accoutrements might be, no matter how experientially more gratifying or filled with more excitement they may attain, they were commanded not to use them. In other words, they were not to think that they could honor God by offering sacrifices on mountains and hills, erecting pillars, planting groves, and setting up images; they were not to think that because their “worship” might be filled with pleasurable or exciting sensations that that would please God—just because they would use His name, Yahweh. God makes it clear that He is above all gods and will not be worshipped as other gods are. There are plenty of instances in evangelicalism when worship is all about the experience or emotions/passions. For many, it is all, or mostly, about feeling “God” (as if God as such could be felt by man’s senses—which is absurd, even heretical). There is a proper place for experiences, but when the experiences as feelings become the issue rather than experiences about objective truth about God, then what one worships is his feelings not truths about God. All of the Canaanite deities were filled with all kinds of ecstatic experiences, but their “objective reality” was false/demonic and rightly condemned by God. God did not want the Israelites to have any part of this type of “worship.” The same holds true today. Our worship of God is to be focused on Truth. We are all “wired differently,” and so our experiences of truths of God will vary. This is to be expected. However, God is not interested in our experiences as such as He is in our worship of Truth as such. At least that is what Jesus explicitly taught: John 4:23-24 *“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.”*<sup>24</sup> *“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”* In our next Bible class, in our philosophy of language section in dealing with Quine, I am going to touch more on human experience of the external world as a medium by which we know the external world, and how that knowledge *must* be grounded in Truth, rather than experience grounded in itself or constructs of the mind.

**2 Corinthians 4:1-6.** Note from the start here that Paul refused to use deception or to distort the Word of God. The idea here is of mingling the Word of God with alien ideas. Of course, due to the influence of modernism coupled with anti-intellectualism of contemporary Christianity (e.g., a functional view of Christianity), we have noticed over the past few years just how many foreign ideas about spirituality, the nature of God, creation, and of late evil, have crept into Christianity. Bad ideas that are part of a system have a way of distorting an entire framework regarding God, the spiritual life, and creation that is hard to straighten out. Of late, it is really surprised just how easy it was for us to say that God is testing us when we face some illness, as if He is the author of evil suffering rather than illness related to this corrupt world including our genes, environment, and choices in life. Of course He can intervene in any life that suffers from illness, but He does not bring illness (evil suffering) in order to make us greater believers. That is corruption of the Word of God that is blind to not only to the God of the Bible, but to reality as well. Not only does Paul speak of refusing to mix false concepts with the Word of God, on the positive side he says that we need to strive to make the truth of God's word plain because it has power in and of itself—it does not need to be manipulated to make it more effective. It is imperative that every believer spend time just reading the pure Word of God and reflecting on it daily. It is the Word of God in its purity that will achieve the result for which God sends it forth: *Isaiah 55:10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, <sup>11</sup> So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.* Just as men and women of God in the Old and New Testaments did not need fancy spiritual systems to make the Word of God effective (like problem solving devices and power spheres), neither do we. What we need is God, the God of the Bible, for that is where the power and solution is as manifestly obvious in the case of Job.

**Psalms 36.** In light of our recent studies in evil, these psalms are very timely. In this psalm David ponders the reality of evil in God's world (1-4). Does this look like it comes from God, even as a test? No! It comes from evildoers, those who do not respect God. Recall that a distinction must be made between the evil that God allows and what God can turn it into as per the testing of our faith and the development of our character. However, the source of evil and what we can do about it with God are two different matters. What does come from God? Look at verses 5-9! This is why David prayed to God to protect him from evil and eventually judge the wicked. David solved the problem of evil not by looking for "why," or as God bringing evil to Him to make him a greater believer. He solved the problem by the Who in a second person relationship, which really is the only living relationship that truly exists. He understood that every good and perfect gift is from God and ultimately is God Himself.

All because of Christ,

Pastor Don