

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

April 9, 2016

- ✓ **Deuteronomy 15:1-17:20** – Instructions for a future king.
- ✓ **2 Corinthians 4:7-18** – Suffering and deliverance from this broken world.
- ✓ **Psalm 37:1-22**— Do not envy the wicked who prosper.

REFLECTIONS:

Deuteronomy 15:1-17:20 – In the last section of this reading (17:14-20), we have instructions for a future king. After Moses and Joshua died, the people were to be governed by judges and priests. However, this system did not provide Israel with any semblance of a strong central government. It could only work if the leaders (the judges and the priests) *and* the people were committed to following the Lord. The Book of Judges records the sad failure of the people and the leaders in this system. Moses anticipated that failure by including this law in reference to the future king. There would come a time when Israel would reject her unique position of not having a king and ask for and receive a king. Moses outlines the king’s qualifications (14-15), his behavior (16-17), and his education (18-20). The king was to be chosen by the Lord, which would insure that he was divinely gifted, and he had to be an Israelite, which means he would have been raised from childhood in the traditions and scriptures of Israel. Note that the king was not to build a great military (he was to trust in the special protection for Israel afforded by the Lord), nor amass great wealth for himself, nor multiply for himself many wives. The tragedy is that King Solomon broke all three prohibitions—even though he knew better and received the privilege of have such a godly father like David. Furthermore, Solomon once has a very close relationship with the Lord as evidence by many statements in Proverbs about the need to respect/fear the Lord. No matter how much we know, anyone can fall. We must be ever diligent to keep as our greatest good the Lord lest lesser goods steal our hearts from Him as powerfully illustrated with Lucifer, 1/3 of the angels, Adam, and Eve—who all started out perfect, but fell because they took their eyes off of the Lord and on some temporal good!

2 Corinthians 4:7-18. In this section, Paul speaks great deal about suffering and how he was able to parlay suffering into blessings. He is always looking to the Lord for deliverance. The suffering comes from the world, not from the Lord. The way many Christian talk today, it is as if God brings evil and suffering into their lives to make them better. I am afraid that some talk about God as if He was more like the Devil than God Himself. A distinction needs to be made between why sufferings exist and what God can bring out of them. Evil comes from our broken world that is ruled by Satan and his demons. It is not like suffering comes out of thin air, created ex nihilo by God. Look around and really ponder your suffering and tests and you will see that they come from a broken world filled with broken evil men. God is in control in that He gives all things existence for every instant, but it is still a broken world and He permits evil to play itself out—*again, they do not come from Him!* He tempts no one and is not the source of evil in any way, James 1:13-17. Moreover, if you think you absolutely need suffering to grow spiritually, I would question your understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, cf., Gal. 5:20-22. I am not denying that there are things we can learn in suffering. I am denying that their source and place is greatly misunderstood today. Again, look at your sufferings and see how they are related to this broken world, anything from your health to other trying issues—every single one is part of our broken, chaotic world. Yes, we should ask for God to deliver us from the evil around us; no, we should not talk about Him sending evil our way to make us more patient. To make God the Author of Evil is nothing short of blasphemy against the Lord as the Giver of all good things.

Psalm 37:1-22— In this psalm, David instructs the righteous not to be disturbed over the wicked who reject God. Instead, believers are to keep their eyes on the Lord and trust in Him and not fret about the ungodly who are prosperous. The wheels of divine justice may be slow, but they are guaranteed to keep moving. When believers become envious about the rich and famous because of their wealth, it is usually because wealth really is a greater good in their minds than the relationship they have with the Lord. All spiritual failure, all sin, all evil, boil down to one thing: seeing temporal goods as greater than the good of God Himself. Such was the case, beginning with the Fall of Satan as well as Adam and Eve. *Quo Vadis?*

All because of Christ,

Pastor Don