

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
August 12, 2016

Isaiah 25:1–26:21. God’s worldwide judgment.

Luke 9:1–27. The call to discipleship: denial of self.

Job 6:1–13. Job’s agony.

COMMENTS:

Isaiah 25:1–26:21. Chapter 25 begins with a song of praise spoken by the future generation of God’s people who would witness His worldwide judgment and experience His deliverance. They celebrate His conquest of the hostile nations and declare that He had been their faithful protector. Note that in that day the Lord will host a marvelous feast at Jerusalem in celebration of His kingship and how He will eliminate the curse of death from humankind once and for all and remove the disgrace of His covenant people. For the Old Testament Jew, a feast was a picture of the Kingdom Age when Messiah would reign over Israel and all the nations of the world. The food that we eat only sustains life; but at this feast, death itself will be conquered. *“On this mountain He will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces”* (**Isa. 25:7–8**). Moreover, the funeral will turn into a wedding! **Isa. 25:8** was quoted by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:54 and by the Apostle John in Revelation 7:17 and 21:4. In contrast to Jerusalem’s glorious future, the proud cities and peoples of the Gentile world, epitomized here by Moab, would be humiliated. This section closes with another song of praise, in which a future generation of Judeans affirm their trust in the God of Jerusalem, who protects those who place their faith in Him and humiliates the proud oppressor. In **chapter 26** God’s people anticipate His intervention. These verses date to a time prior to the announced judgment and deliverance of the preceding chapters. God’s faithful people lament the evil around them, express their confidence in and devotion to God, and ask for His intervention. In response God assured them that He would restore the nation, using the figure of bodily resurrection to emphasize the miraculous revival His people would experience. There will come a time when God will remove all evil and we will all enjoy life to the fullest.

Luke 9:1–27. Jesus asks the disciples what people are saying about him. They tell him that people are saying that Jesus is a great prophet—perhaps John the Baptist or Elijah come back to life. But then Jesus asks the disciples for their personal opinion: ‘*Who do you say I am?*’ It is Peter who courageously answers, ‘*The Christ of God.*’ ‘*Christ*’ is the Greek word for ‘anointed’. Peter believes that Jesus is God’s anointed king, the Jewish Messiah. The Messiah is the great leader who the Jews hope will come to rescue and rule them. He will be a descendant of King David, and will establish an everlasting kingdom of justice and peace. Some wonderful rewards await his followers! But Jesus quickly explains that He must first suffer and die. The Christ (Jesus prefers to call himself the ‘Son of man’) will be rejected by the Jewish leaders and killed. But on the third day after his death he will be raised to life. All followers of Christ must be prepared to suffer too. Jesus says they must ‘*take up their cross daily!*’—as though they are being led out to be crucified. They must die to all their worldly ambitions, and place their hopes and reputations on a glory that’s to come. Apart from full commitment to Christ, it is impossible for any believer to really enter into the transcendent life with Jesus Christ, a life beyond what one could ask or imagine. While salvation costs nothing, discipleship costs everything, even denial of self, again: Luke 9:23 *Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.* Moreover, it is not until one gives up what he wants for what Christ wants that one truly experiences the transcendent Christian life as Christ comes to live in him in a special way. Consider the implications of this passage for the modern idea that the Christian life is all about getting God to work for us as if God is not great enough to follow for His own sake, and that somehow His value is just tied to how He can make our temporal circumstances better—a spiritual prostitution of sorts, which is what Satan says about Job and everyone else. May it never be the true for any of us. Of course, the only way any believer is going to deny himself *daily* is by seeing God and His desires as greater goods than his own earthly plans and goods. Everything else collapses into some form of legalism. *Quo Vadis?*

Job 6:1–13. While much of what Eliphaz has said is orthodox, he has not touched Job’s problem at all. In fact, not one of his friends identified with what Job was going through physically and emotionally. It was one thing for them to sit where he sat and quite something else for them to feel what he felt. To begin with, they didn’t feel the heaviness of his suffering (**Job 6:1–3**). Nor did his friends understand the bitterness of his suffering (**Job 6:4–7**). Job felt like a target at which God was shooting poisoned arrows, and the poison was making Job’s spirit bitter. Job tried to get them to feel the hopelessness of his situation (**Job 6:8–13**). Prolonged and intense suffering can make a person feel powerless to handle life, and this can lead to hopelessness. If you can’t control some of the elements that make up life, how can you plan for the future? Job asked, “What strength do I have, that I should still hope? What prospects, that I should be patient?” (**Job 6:11**) In other words, ‘What am I waiting for? Life is only getting worse!’ Job’s friends were healthy and comfortable and didn’t know the burden of waking up each morning to another day of suffering. Job’s strength was gone, and he felt useless (**Job 6:12–13**). I cannot imagine anything worse than to get up every day knowing that it will be yet another day of suffering with no hope in sight. Thank God we have God and His grace resources that transcend this fallen, corrupt world.

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

Pastor Don