

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
August 22, 2016

Isaiah 44:1–45:13. Cyrus.

Luke 17:11–18:8. The unjust judge.

Job 10:1–10. ‘Why was I born?’

COMMENTS:

Isaiah 44:1–45:13. God chose Israel and redeemed her, but He also formed her for Himself (44:1–20). In this chapter, Isaiah contrasts God’s forming of Israel (44:1–8) and the Gentiles forming their own gods (44:9–20). “*I have formed thee*” is a special theme in **chapters 43–44** (43:1, 7, 21; 44:2, 24). Because God formed them, chose them, and redeemed them, they had nothing to fear. He will pour water on the land and His Spirit on the people and His people will prosper to the glory of the Lord. The final fulfillment of this will be in the future Kingdom Age when Messiah reigns. **Isaiah 44:9–20** show the folly of idolatry. Those who defend idols and worship them are just like them: blind and ignorant and nothing. God made people in His own image, and now they are making gods in their own image! Part of the tree becomes a god, and the rest of the tree becomes fuel for the fire. The worshiper is “feeding on ashes” and deriving no benefit at all from worship. But God formed Israel (**Isa. 44:21, 24**), forgave His people their sins (44:22), and is glorified in them (44:23). He speaks to His people and is faithful to keep His Word (44:26). May we never take Him for granted and the privileges we have of knowing and worshipping Him. **Isaiah 45** deals with the overthrow of Babylon, and one of the major themes is “I am the Lord, and there is none else” (45:5–6, 14, 18, 21–22; 46:9). Jehovah again reveals Himself as the true and living God in contrast to the dumb and dead idols. Cyrus, God’s instrument is described in **Isa. 45:1–25**. Just as prophets, priests, and kings were anointed for service, so Cyrus was anointed by God to perform his special service for Israel’s sake. In this sense, Cyrus was a “messiah,” an “anointed one.” God called him by name over a century before he was born! Cyrus was the human instrument for the conquest, but it was Jehovah God who gave the victories. Anyone who opposed Cyrus was arguing with God, and that was like the clay commanding the potter or the child ordering the parents (45:9–10). God raised up Cyrus to do His specific will (45:13), and nothing would prevent him from succeeding. God is always in control!

Luke 17:11–18:8. In this section we have a collection of four of Jesus’ sayings. The *first* involves the need to avoid becoming a stumbling block to other believers and causing them to sin (**Luke 17:1–3**). It is better to die prematurely (described as drowning by having a millstone tied to one’s neck) than to be a scandal to God’s “little ones.” The *second* deals with the continual need for believers to forgive fellow believers (**Luke 17:3–4**). When a believer is sinned against by another, he or she is to go and rebuke the offender. Implied, although not stated, is the purpose and manner of the rebuke. Since it seeks the offender’s repentance, the rebuke is understood as being loving and caring rather than judgmental. The *third* saying (**Luke 17:5–6**) involves a request by the disciples for faith. Jesus’ points out that what is needed is not a “quantity” of faith but a “quality” of faith. Even the smallest amount of true faith, a mustard seed’s amount, could do mighty things. The *fourth* and final saying (**Luke 17:7–10**) is a parable, unique to Luke, which illustrates a proper understanding of the believer’s relationship to God.

Believers are like servants who, even when they have done all that was demanded can at best confess that they are unworthy and have only fulfilled their obligations. In **Luke 18:1-8** we have the parable of the unjust judge, which contains a great deal of metaphors—it should not be taken literally. The basic argument of the parable involves an *a fortiori* reasoning that culminates in **18:7-8**. Although the conclusion of the argument is in the form of a question that expects a positive answer, it can be reworded as follows: “If the unjust judge who lacked love yielded to the continuous cries of the widow, who was a stranger, and granted her the vindication she sought (the picture part of the parable), how much more will God, who is just and their loving Father, hear the cries of his chosen ones who cry out to him day and night (the reality part).” Persistent prayer in the form of conversations with the Lord is a vital part of the Christian way of life. It is all about a second-person relationship with the Lord, rather than merely first person, “I,” or third person “He”—as if He is not present with us always.

Job 10:1-10. This section is Job’s direct complaint to God. Job has been complaining to the friends. He will now turn his face upward and address heaven. The idea is ‘Why was I born?’ Job’s argument here is that God made him and gave him life (**10:3, 8-12, 18-19**), but God was not treating him like one of His own creations. After putting time and effort into making Job, God was destroying him! Furthermore, God was judging Job without even telling him what the charges were against him (**10:2**). No wonder Job was weary, bitter, and confused (**10:1**). Job notes that God is not a man that He has to investigate things and fight against time (**10:4-6**). God is eternal and can take all the time He needs, and God is all-knowing and doesn’t have to investigate like a private detective. Job had previously yearned for an umpire (**9:33**), but now he asks for a deliverer (**10:7**) so he can escape judgment. The only thing that can break Job’s misery—and the misery of anyone—is a relationship with God *by knowledge and by love*. It will be a while before Job moves into *understanding and loving* God as such.

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

Pastor Don