

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
August 23, 2016

Isaiah 45:14–47:15. The Lord’s assurance of Babylon’s fall.

Luke 18:9–19:10. The rich and religious young ruler.

Job 10:11–22. Job views God as a vicious lion who is hunting him down.

COMMENTS:

Isaiah 45:14–47:15. After describing Millennial blessings to the Gentiles when they will realize that Israel’s God is the only God (**45:14-17**) and God’s power (**45:18-19**), God appeals to the Gentiles to turn from wooden idols to be saved from coming destruction (**45:20-25**). **Chapters 46-47** deal with God’s sovereignty over Babylon. Babylon would be used by God to judge Judah, but she in turn would be destroyed by God. Her gods, mere idols, would not be able to save her from defeat (**chapter 46**), and Babylon would fall in spite of her sorceries and wisdom (**chapter 47**). As far as the destruction of Babylon, note how the proud queen, is now a humbled slave. “I will continue forever—the eternal queen!” she boasted (**47:7**). But in a moment, the judgment for her sins caught up with her; and she became a widow. Neither her idols nor her occult practices (**47:12–14**) were able to warn her or prepare her for her destruction. But God knew that Babylon would fall, because He planned it ages ago! He called Cyrus, who swooped down on Babylon like a bird of prey. Babylon showed no mercy to the Jews, and God judged her accordingly. Pride is the most self-destructive sin, whether it is personal or in a nation/culture. May God deliver us and our nation from pride before we destroy ourselves!

Luke 18:9–19:10. In this section we have the rich young ruler. He may be the only man who came to the feet of Jesus seemingly wanting answers and went away in worse condition than when he came. And yet he had so much in his favor! He was moral and religious, earnest and sincere, and probably would have qualified for membership in the average church. Yet he refused to follow Jesus Christ and instead went his own way in great sorrow. What was wrong with him? In a word: dishonesty. In spite of the fact that he came to the right Person, asked the right question, and received the right answer, he made the wrong decision. Why? Because he was not honest with God or with himself. Therefore, he would not do what he was commanded to do. He was a superficial young man who said one thing but did another. Let us consider three areas in which he was dishonest. **First, his view of Christ (Luke 18:18–19):** The rabbis were called “Master” (Teacher), but it was most unusual for a rabbi to be called “good.” The Jews reserved the word good for God (Psa. 25:8; 34:8; 86:5; 106:1). This explains why our Lord asked the young man what he meant, for if he really believed that Jesus was “good,” then he had to confess that Jesus was God. By asking this question, our Lord was not denying His deity but affirming it. He was testing the young man to see if he really understood what he had just said. His subsequent behavior proved that the young ruler did not believe that Jesus Christ was God. If he really thought he was in the presence of Almighty God, why did he argue politely about the Law, brag about his character, and then refuse to obey the Word? Surely he knew that God sees the heart and knows all things! **Second, his view of sin (Luke 18:20–21):** He also had a superficial view of his own sin. No doubt the young man sincerely tried to keep the Law; in fact, this may have been what brought him to the feet of Jesus. Jesus did not quote the Law to him as a means of salvation, because obedience to the Law does not save us. He held the Law before the young

man as a mirror to reveal his sins (Rom. 3:19–20; Gal. 2:21; 3:21). But the young man looked into the mirror and would not see the stains and blemishes in his life. When Jesus quoted from the second table of the Law, He did not quote the last commandment, “Thou shalt not covet” (Ex. 20:17). Jesus knew the young man’s heart, so instead of preaching to him about covetousness, He asked him to do something that a covetous person would not do. Nobody is saved by giving all his wealth to the poor, but nobody can be saved who does not understand sin as such—why would someone one need salvation if there is no sin to be atoned for? This young man was possessed by the love of money and he would not let go. **Third**, his view of salvation (**Luke 18:22–34**): The young man thought that eternal life came to those who “did something,” which was a typical Jewish conviction (**Luke 18:9–12**). But when Jesus gave him something to do, he refused to obey! He wanted salvation on his terms, not God’s, so he turned and went away in great sorrow. The disciples were shocked when Jesus announced that it was difficult for rich people to be saved. They were Jews and the Jews believed that riches were a mark of God’s blessing. “If rich people can’t be saved,” they reasoned, “what hope is there for the rest of us?” John D. Rockefeller would have agreed with them, for he once said that riches were “a gift from heaven signifying, ‘This is My beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.’ ” It is not possessing riches that keeps people out of heaven, for Abraham, David, and Solomon were wealthy men. It is being possessed by riches and trusting them that makes salvation difficult for the wealthy. Wealth gives people a false sense of success and security, and when people are satisfied with themselves, they feel no need for God. Peter’s comment in **Luke 18:28** suggests that he had a rather commercial view of discipleship: “What then will there be for us?” (Matt. 19:27). Jesus promised all of them (“you” in **Luke 18:29** is plural) blessings in this life and reward in the life to come, but then He balanced His words with another announcement about His impending suffering and death. How could Peter be thinking about personal gain when his Lord was going to Jerusalem to be crucified? The rich young ruler is a warning to people who want a Christian faith for temporal blessings or primarily to solve their problems without a change in their values or upsetting their lifestyle. Jesus does not command every seeking sinner to sell everything and give to the poor, but He does put His finger of conviction on any area in our lives about which we are dishonest. We best recognize those areas and make adjustments rather than excuses—for God’s sake and our own.

Job 10:11–22. Job continues his complaint to God. He depicts God as an ever-present Guard, watching Job’s every move (**14**). He was stalking Job like a lion (**16**) and attacking him with His army (**17**). Job was hemmed in, and there was no way out. So Job’s question seems reasonable: “Why then did You bring me out of the womb?” (**18**). Job’s existence on the earth seemed so purposeless as he begged God to give him a few moments of peace and happiness before his life ended. He could see his life as nothing but misery. ‘Let me alone,’ he *prays*, ‘so that I can have a little comfort before I go to the world of darkness.’ Job could not understand what God was doing. There is no understanding apart from love for God that exceeds all other loves, even self. In fact, the only reason we love ourselves is because we are objects of God’s love. In other words, we love ourselves for His sake. The answer to all sufferings is not *chiefly* understanding! The answer to all problems is love for God, a love that is informed by understanding, but a love, nonetheless, that exceeds knowledge. Job has a “ways to go” before he realizes that love for God is the issue, seeing Him as our greatest good/delight, but he will get there before his life is over. Will we?

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

Pastor Don