

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
August 24, 2016

Isaiah 48:1–49:26. Disobedient Israel and the Obedient Servant.

Luke 19:11–48. The unfaithful believer is called “wicked” by Jesus Christ.

Job 11:1–12. Zophar’s insulting attacks on Job.

COMMENTS:

Isaiah 48:1–49:26. In **chapter 48**, we see that the Jews had become comfortable and complacent in their captivity and did not want to leave. They had houses, gardens, and families; and it would not be easy for them to pack up and go to the Holy Land. But that was where they belonged and where God had a work for them to do. God told them that they were hypocritical in using His name and identifying with His city but not obeying His will (**Isa. 48:1–2**). They were stubborn (**48:4**) and were not excited about the new things God was doing for them. Had they obeyed the Lord in the first place, they would have experienced peace and not war (**48:18–19**), but it was not too late. He had put them into the furnace to refine them and prepare them for their future work (**48:10**). “*Go forth from Babylon; flee from the Chaldeans!*” was God’s command (**48:20**). God would go before them and prepare the way, and they had nothing to fear. One would think that the Jews would have been eager to leave their “prison” and return to their land to see God do new and great things for them. They had grown accustomed to the security of bondage and had forgotten the challenges of freedom. The church today can easily grow complacent with its comfort and affluence. God may have to put us into the furnace to remind us that we are here to be servants and not consumers or spectators. Are we using our freedom to enslave ourselves into more and more worldly stuff? or are we using our freedom as opportunities to thrive and grow in the Lord *by knowledge and by love*? **Chapter 49** introduces Jesus Christ as God’s “Servant.” There are at least three points that can be gleaned in this chapter: (1) The Messiah’s ministry to the Gentiles (**49:1-6**); (2) God’s promise to the Servant (**49:7**), and (3) Israel’s restoration in the Millennium, the age of “God’s favor” and “day of salvation” (**49:8-12**).

Luke 19:11–48. Those who are evaluated in **19:15** are believers (“servants”), not unbelievers. Believers who are faithful will receive praise from the Lord “*Well, done, good servant*” (**19:17**). Note the attitude of the unfaithful believer in verse **19:21** and the Lord’s judgement on him as “wicked,” **19:22**. Every believer who has not been faithful will actually hear the Lord call him “wicked” with respect to what he did with his life. The characterization of this servant as “wicked” refers to his unfaithful handling of the “*mina*” entrusted to him and not to his nature as unregenerate or unsaved. He qualifies as a servant evaluated along with the others—clearly a believer. The master afterwards deals with unbelievers described as “enemies” rather than servants (**19:27**). In **19:26** Jesus reveals a general principle undergirding His future judgment of believers. In the case of the first and second servants—“*everyone who has*”—refers to the initial investment plus the earnings. In the case of the unfaithful servant “*what he does not have*” refers to the potential gain he could have accrued. Further, in his case “*what he has*” refers to the initial amount he mistakenly thought he could retain despite his irresponsible handling of it. Faithful believers obey because they love and trust their Master and want to please him. The unfaithful servant is characterized as disobedience because he “*fears*” the Lord, which indicates lack of a thriving relationship with God *by knowledge and by love*.

Job 11:1–12. After listening to Eliphaz and Bildad accuse Job, Zophar should have had enough sense and compassion to take a new approach. Instead, Zophar insists that Job is guilty (**Job 11:1–4**). Like Bildad, Zophar opened his address by, in effect, calling Job a ‘windbag.’ Not only that Zophar, he said that Job was full of lies and mockery (**Job 11:3**). What Job said about God was not true and could only be compared to the idle chatter of people who speak without thinking. And what Job said about himself was an outright lie, for he was not pure before God. In maintaining his integrity, Job gave the impression that he was sinless, which, of course, was not true. Zophar, then, asserts that Job is ignorant of God (**Job 11:5–12**). Zophar’s request in **verse 5** was answered when God appeared (Job 38:1); but it was Zophar and his two friends who were later rebuked by God, and not Job! Job was commended by the Lord for telling the truth. Beware of asking God to tell others what they need to know, unless you are willing for Him to show you what you need to know. Zophar wanted Job to grasp the height, depth, breadth, and length of God’s divine wisdom (**Job 11:8–9**). In saying this, Zophar was hinting that he himself already knew the vast dimensions of God’s wisdom and could teach Job if he would listen. It’s too bad Zophar didn’t know the vast dimensions of God’s love (Eph. 3:17–19) and share some of that love with Job. When Zophar said that the secrets of God’s wisdom were “double” (**Job 11:6**), what did he mean? “The double” (כְּפִלְיָם) points to the fact that God’s wisdom is full and complete, or that God has twice as much wisdom as Job thinks He has. The idea is that “true wisdom has two sides” (**Job 11:6**, NIV). There is the small side that we see and the huge side that only God can see. Since God knows everything, He knows all about Job and could punish him more than He has. The flippant way in which Job’s friends were speaking about his situation shows they lacked understanding. The two questions in **verse 7** expect a negative answer. Nobody can “fathom the mysteries of God” or “probe the limits of the Almighty.” Of course, Job never claimed to know everything about God; but what he did know encouraged him to hold fast to his integrity and not give up. God is not accountable to us. He can arrest and imprison anybody He chooses, convene the court and pronounce the sentence; and nobody can say a word in protest (**Job 11:10**). God knows who is wise and who is foolish, who is pure and who is sinful. Since God has passed judgment on Job, Job must be guilty. Zophar closed this accusation by quoting a proverb (**Job 11:12**), which is properly translated in the NASB: “*And an idiot will become intelligent when the foal of a wild donkey is born a man.*” Thanks a lot, Zophar, for your “wise” insulting words to Job while he was in the depths of sorrow. God save us from Zophar-like “friends.”

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

Pastor Don