

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
August 31, 2016

Isaiah 65:1–66:24. The Millennium and Eternal State.

Luke 24:13–53. Location of the intermediate Heaven.

Job 14:11–22. Job is losing hope.

COMMENTS:

Isaiah 65:1–66:24. These two chapters are a response to the prayers of the faithful Jews recorded in Isaiah 63-64. Let's note God's response: The Lord said that though He had constantly been presenting His love to Israel, they had rejected Him which made judgment necessary (**65:1–7**). However, in that judgment, a remnant will be preserved (**65:8–12**). Note how the consequences of righteous living differ from those of wicked living (**65:13–16**). The Lord points to a glorious kingdom in which peace and righteousness will flourish (**65:17–25**). **Chapter 66** is a fitting climax to this Book as it describes the Millennium (**66:1-21**) and the eternal state (**66:22-24**), the time toward which history has been looking, which was promised to Abraham over a thousand years hence. Note Israel's eternal distinct identity in the eternal state of the new heavens and earth as Israel is depicted as enduring as the new heavens and the new earth. All mankind (i.e., people from all nations) will worship the LORD, bowing down before Him. As Isaiah had frequently written, these righteous ones will contrast greatly with those who rebelled against the LORD. They will suffer eternal torment (Mark 9:48). The way in which the majestic Book of Isaiah concludes points to the need for unrepentant people to turn to the Lord, the only God, the Holy One of Israel. The idea that sermons should always end on a happy note for God's people, even for those who are spiritually apathetic or apostate, is manifestly false. Let us never be guilty of viewing the grace of God as an excuse for sin and lukewarmness. Consider Paul's warning to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 16:22 or Jesus' attitude to the Laodecian believers (Rev. 3:14-22). As far as the latter, reflect on the fact that Jesus Christ is the most loving, gracious, patient Being who has ever or will ever exist. Yet, He told the Laodecian lukewarm *Christians* that they made Him want to vomit. *Quo Vadis?*

Luke 24:13–53. Among other things, we see Jesus taken up into Heaven (**Luke 24:51**). As we have studied, Heaven is right above us or next to us in another dimension. It is not some place outside of our solar system far far away. Moreover, Jesus and those with Him in Heaven look down upon the Earth and can see what is going on as illustrated in Revelation 6:9-11. Moreover, the deceased believers are in interim bodies and wear clothes as noted in the aforementioned passage. Other passages that indicated that Jesus and deceased believers are right above or next to the Earth and are well aware of what is happening on earth include Rev. 2-3 (Christ watching His churches); Heb. 12:1; Rev. 19:1-5, 11-14; Luke 15:10; 1 Sam. 28:16-19; Luke 16:22-31). In Acts 7:55, Jesus is standing, not flying, a point which indicates the physical nature of the present New Jerusalem, which is currently in the intermediate Heaven in another dimension right above or next to the Earth, and which in the future will come down upon the Earth (Rev. 22:1-3)—it “comes down,” it is not created and it is above us.

Job 14:11–22. In **14:13**, Job asked God to give Himself a reminder to bring him back from Sheol, the realm of the dead. Job was probably not thinking of resurrection, but of a brief return to earth, so God could vindicate him before his accusers. Job reminded the Lord that he was the work of God’s hands (**14:15**), an argument he had used before. It seemed to Job that, instead of caring for His creature, God was doing nothing but keeping a record of his sins. What hope could Job have as long as God was investigating him and building a case against him? Instead of cleansing Job’s sins, God was covering them and would not even tell Job what they were! “*You destroy the hope of man,*” Job complained (**14:19**), and he used two illustrations to make his point. Man seems like a sturdy mountain, but the water gradually erodes the rock, and it eventually crumbles. Or an earthquake might suddenly move the rocks from one place to another and change the mountain. Death may come gradually or suddenly, but it will come; and man will go to a world where he knows nothing about what his family is doing—of course, this is what Job is thinking *in a depressed state of doubt* and should not be taken in an absolute way, which would be a direct contradiction of many passages listed in the above section on Heaven. Job longed for that release from sorrow and pain. When people are experiencing intense grief and pain, it is easy for them to feel that the future is hopeless and that God has forsaken them. The American psychiatrist Karl Menninger called hope “the major weapon against the suicide impulse.” Hopeless people feel that life is not worth living since they have nothing to look forward to but suffering and failure. They conclude that it is better for them to die than to live and be a burden to themselves and to others. The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche called hope “the worst of all evils, because it prolongs the torments of man.” But an individual who believes in Jesus Christ shares in a “living hope” that grows more wonderful every day (1 Peter 1:3ff). Dead hopes fade away because they have no roots, but our “living hope” gets better because it is rooted in the living Christ and His Living Word. The assurance of resurrection and life in glory with Christ is a strong motivation for us to keep going even when the going is tough (1 Cor. 15:58). When a believer says a situation is hopeless, he is slamming the door in the face of God. Job had not yet slammed the door, but he was getting close to doing it; and his friends were not helping him at all. “*Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit*” (Rom. 15:13).

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

Pastor Don