

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
August 7, 2016

Isaiah 13:1–14:23. Judgment on Babylon and Assyria.

Luke 5:1–39. Forsaking all for Jesus, our Ultimate Good.

Job 4:1–11. Eliphaz rebukes Job.

COMMENTS:

Isaiah 13:1–14:23. This section covers God’s impending destruction of Babylon. The passage in Isaiah 14:12-15 is controversial in that some believe that the person addressed is the human king of Babylon, while others believe it is a reference to Satan and the entrance of sin into the cosmos by Satan’s fall. Given that the text does not *explicitly* state that these five “I wills” refer to Satan’s fall, I think it is imprudent to build an entire doctrine on the fall of Satan on this passage, even though I do have sympathies toward the view that it is a reference to Satan. For the fall of Satan, it is much safer, biblically speaking, to build the doctrine of Satan’s fall on Ezekiel 28:12-19.

Luke 5:1–39. This section can be divided into three parts: (1) Jesus prepares His disciples for their future ministry (**5:1-11**), (2) Two representative miracles to the Jewish leadership (**5:12-26**), and (3) the legalistic leaders’ rejection the New Covenant ministry of Jesus Christ (**5:27-39**). Notice the response of the disciples in **5:11**: *“they forsook all and followed Him.”* Their response pictures the ideal disposition/will of all who decide to follow Jesus. It is unfortunate that the current state of Christianity is so lukewarm regarding the Lord and Truth as such. In Bible class today, I tried, to the best of my ability, to reprove and convict anyone who might entertain a lukewarm attitude to the Lord or Truth as I read and commented on God’s holy word in Revelation 3:14-22. Only God knows who will “have an ear” to hear His message. After Bible class, at lunch, there was a comment made about how these believers must have once been hot, but had become lukewarm. So true! Like with any believer, other “goods” always provide a temptation to distract the believer from keeping his eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ as his Ultimate Good. We also spoke a bit about “cold” believers. It is my view that the “cold” believers were not believers who were once hot, then lukewarm, and then cold. It is hard to see Christ preferring believers to be totally cold about the Lord, a worse state than mere indifference or lukewarmness. It is best to stay with the water metaphor rather than the degree analogy. Cold water is refreshing; so, cold believers would be refreshing believers, who contrast lukewarm believers, the latter of which are more like ipecac. Notice also in Revelation 3:15 that it is their works that are described in terms of being hot, lukewarm, or cold—not their attitudes. As we have noted many times, our actions not only habitually or instantiate our character, they speak louder and clearer than what we might imagine our spiritual lives to be. Cold works in this context would be refreshing works like offering cool water for spiritually thirsty people or offering the cool and encouraging water to believers who are suffering under the persecution of the world. There is nothing like the refreshing company of fellow believers who are really serious about the spiritual life. The “hot” water would be used for mineral baths and so would *also* convey refreshment. It is also encouraging to see the zeal or passion of believers for the Lord and His truth. This is in *stark* contrast to the discouragement and weariness and sickening feeling one can get from being around discouraging believers who are characterized by being

obsessed with self and their temporal “benes” and “woes,” as if life is only about this temporal realm (a pagan mindset, for sure)—with references, lip-service, to the Lord *only* in terms of Him as means of gaining or keeping earthly goods. It is sickening to the Lord to watch a believer care so little about God as such, and it is also sickening to any believer who is hot or cold—who is zealous and refreshing, who is serious! What a monstrous sight to behold a believer who exchanges Jesus Christ for a god of his own belly (sense appetites, see Philip. 3:19), all by making the goods of this life one’s goal/god. As far as the city of Laodicea, we know from archaeology, from examining the ancient pipes, that the water supply in Laodicea was mineral laden and thus nauseating. So the works or actions of the Laodicean believers are compared to tepid, mineral laden, drinking water—ipeccac. These believers make the Lord sick as they have rejected His value and displaced Him with Mammon goods as indicated in Revelation 3:17, which just is the antithesis of **Luke 5:11**. Do our actions reveal that we are increasingly forsaking more and more earthly values for Christ or do they tell the tale of our journey as one of increasingly forsaking Christ (or attempting to use Him) for earthly treasures? What is more important, the solving of our problems or the Problem Solver? Religion/functionality or relationship? Jesus was very clear about what it means to follow Him. All one has to do is have an ear to hear. *Quo Vadis?*

Job 4:1–11. After hearing of Job’s complaints (chapter 3), Eliphaz, probably the eldest of the three, ‘ventures a word with Job’ with the risk of testing Job’s patience (**4:1-2**). Eliphaz commended Job for having ‘instructed, strengthened, and supported others emotionally and spiritually’ by his words of counsel. But that compliment contained a rebuke, for Eliphaz suggested that Job was unable to take his own medicine. He had advised others to be patient under trial, but now trouble had come to him and he was discouraged. Job had been a great encourager, but he could not encourage himself. However, instead of preaching, Eliphaz should have encouraged Job! Eliphaz asked, “Should not your piety/fear be your confidence, and your blameless ways” (integrity) your hope? (**4:6**) This was a tongue-in-cheek rebuke of Job for his lack of confidence because he was no longer fearing God. Or possibly, it was a reminder that because Job had had reverence for God in the past, he could also trust Him now. In **4:7-9** Eliphaz presented his theory on suffering: the innocent never perish; the upright are not destroyed; but those who plow evil and sow trouble will also harvest trouble, and the wicked perish under God’s anger. Such a theory, however, simply does not fit all the facts. Many times the innocent do suffer (e.g., Luke 13:4–5; John 9:1–3; 1 Peter 2:19–20), and often the wicked seemingly have no problems. This was Job’s point throughout the book; Eliphaz’s view of an airtight doctrine of retribution does not jibe with reality. Eliphaz’s authority for his theory was what he himself had seen in his lifetime: “**as I have observed**” (**4:8**). Inherent in this authority base, however, is a flaw: his observations, though undoubtedly extensive, were not universal. Eliphaz’s point in **4:10-11** about the lions is that just as strong lions deserve to suffer because they bring problems to people, so Job also deserved to suffer. My God deliver us from these kind of believers! Our church family has suffered great loss, and I have not heard any in our family take on an Eliphaz attitude. Thank God!

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

Pastor Don