

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

December 1, 2016

Jeremiah 1:1–2:37. Introduction to Jeremiah and vivid depictions of Jewish apostasy.

Colossians 1:1–14. Paul’s opening prayer.

Proverbs 10:1–32. Those who love God live in the hope of gladness.

COMMENTS.

Jeremiah 1:1–2:37. In **1:4-19** the call and visions of Jeremiah are described. Before Jeremiah’s conception and birth, the Lord had chosen him to be His prophet. When Jeremiah objected that he was too young and inarticulate for the task, the Lord assured him of His protective presence. The prophet’s divinely appointed words would determine the destiny of nations. Through a pun based on a vision, the Lord assured the prophet that the divine message spoken through him would be fulfilled. When Jeremiah identified an almond branch, the Lord punned on its name, announcing that He was “watching” carefully to assure the realization of the prophetic word. Through another vision, that of a boiling pot tilting southward, the Lord revealed that Jeremiah’s message would be one of impending judgment. The boiling pot symbolized foreign armies that would invade the land from the north as instruments of judgments against God’s idolatrous people. The Lord exhorted Jeremiah to declare His word boldly and fearlessly, promising him protection from his hostile audience. In **2:1-37** God accuses His people of being unfaithful. Israel’s history was one of apostasy. Early Israel had faithfully followed the Lord and enjoyed His protection. Later generations turned to idols, forgot the Lord’s mighty deeds, and defiled the land God had graciously given them. Even the priests, civil leaders, and prophets abandoned the Lord. Unlike pagans, who maintained loyalty to their worthless gods, Israel exchanged their glorious God and His blessings for useless idols. Consequently, they suffered humiliation at the hands of foreigners. Still they sought protective alliances with these same nations. The Lord compared rebellious and idolatrous Israel to a prostitute and to a good grapevine turned wild. Their guilt was like an irremovable stain in the sight of God. In their frantic pursuit of false gods, they were like a skittish female camel dashing about or a lusty female donkey pursuing a mate. Idolatry can only result in shame. The people’s idols would prove futile in the coming crisis. Despite their unfaithfulness, the people claimed to be innocent and accused the Lord of treating them unfairly. In response, the Lord pointed to their blatant rebellion and shameless acts of idolatry throughout the land.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Note how gross the people of God can become in the harlotries as they rejected God’s call to walk in the Lord *by proper knowledge and proper love*. When the Lord gave the Israelites His covenant at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19–20), He entered into a loving relationship with them that He compared to marriage. ‘They broke My covenant, though I was a husband to them.’ In the Old Testament, Israel’s idolatry is compared to adultery and even prostitution. At the beginning of this covenant relationship, the Jews were devoted to the Lord but soon their hearts lusted after the gods of the nations around them and they sank into idolatry. Although God had taken them safely through their wilderness journey and given them a wonderful inheritance in Canaan, they abandoned Him for man-made gods. Observe the

various illustrations the Lord uses to depict their apostasy: unfaithful wife (**Jer. 1:1-8**), broken cisterns (**1:9-13**), a plundered slave (**1:14-19**), a stubborn animal (**1:20**), a degenerative vine (**1:21**), a defiled body (**1:22**), and a donkey in heat (**1:23-25**). As the Jews pursued the false gods of the pagan nations, their shoes wore out and their throats became dry. How much better had they drunk the refreshing water from the river of God! The same is true today. Many believers are worn out by the endless frustration of chasing the world for goods that never satisfy. They are like alcoholics who can't get enough and are unable to break the habit. God chastened them many times for their sins, but they refused to change their ways, and then they even blamed God! He brought charges against them (**Jer. 2:9**), but instead of confessing and repenting, they complained and brought charges against Him! None of His discipline seemed to do any good. 'You struck them, but they felt no pain; you crushed them, but they refused correction.' What a high price to pay for being stupid and evil—"it is an evil and bitter thing to forsake the Lord" (**2:19**). The principle of co-determination or concurrence is always operational either for good or evil (cf., Rom. 1:18-32) as God actualizes all that exists according to its nature and direction.

Colossians 1:1-14. After Paul's salutation (**1:1-8**), he offers a prayer for these believers in Colosse (**9-14**). The prayer centered on spiritual blessings, not on physical or material things. He prayed for spiritual insight (**1:9**), genuine obedience (**1:10-11**), and moral excellence (**1:12-14**). The prayer went right to the heart of the false teaching invading the church.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. The prayers in Paul's prison letters are certainly unique. To begin with, he prays for others and not for himself. The requests in his prayers center on spiritual blessings, not on material or physical matters. Of course, it is not wrong to pray about physical or material needs. But spiritual needs are vastly more important. Paul concludes the prayer with focus on Jesus Christ, and four saving accomplishments (delivering, translating, redeeming, and forgiving). Jesus Christ is preeminent! No other person could redeem us, forgive us, transfer us out of Satan's kingdom into God's kingdom, and do it wholly by grace. The phrase, "through His blood," reminds us of the cost of our salvation. Moses and the Israelites only had to shed the blood of a lamb to be delivered from Egypt. But Jesus had to shed His blood to deliver us from sin. Jesus is to be honored, worshipped, and given preeminence just as the Father—"that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent Him" (John 5:23-24). Two characteristics you will always find among those who do decide to honor the Son in the Christ-centered life: peace, satisfaction, and a sense of fulfillment. In other words, those who live in God *by proper knowledge and proper love*, the epitome of which is the Christ-centered life, live in peace and satisfaction because they *daily* obtain their greatest heart's desire: life with God!

Proverbs 10:1–32. In this chapter, we have various proverbs on labor, prosperity, and wealth. Wealth does certain advantages in times of trouble (10:15), but riches wrongfully gained will not protect (10:2). Diligent workers enrich themselves (10:4–5), but lazy people irritate everyone (10:26). Above all, integrity and the Lord’s blessing provide the most certain security (10:16, 22). Also, in this chapter we have several proverbs on the use of the tongue for evil and sophistry. In sum, Wisdom ensures the permanence of the righteous, but the ungodly perish in the storms of life because of their basic dishonesty (10:24–25). In a fallen world, the person who reverences God and lives uprightly will never be removed, and his expectation of prosperity at the end of his life will be justified.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. The believer who *walks with God by proper knowledge and proper love* is characteristically a happy or glad person, precisely so because he actually shares in the life of God. Being rightly related to God brings not only happiness, it provides hope of a better future. Observe Proverbs 10:28, *The hope of the righteous will be gladness, But the expectation of the wicked will perish.* On the other end of the spectrum we see the “wicked” (רָשָׁעִים), whose hopes will perish. The wicked refer to those who do not love the Lord and as a result put their hope in the details of this life. Although it is commonly taught that all Christians love the Lord, this is manifestly false. There are plenty of “wicked” believers who are so because they do not care about the Lord or the Word of God or local assemblies of believers. As a matter of fact, *only* those who love the Lord will receive the “crown of life.” James 1:12, *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.* This passage, moreover, shows that love for God is inextricably tied to how we respond to testing—either move closer to God in humility and be more like Christ, or become meaner and more miserable. Only by life in God *by proper knowledge and proper love* can the believer live in joy and in eager anticipation (hope) for increasing gladness as each day brings us to another day closer to being with the Lord. 1 Corinthians 2:9, *But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and by proper love,

Pastor Don