

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

December 20, 2016

**Jeremiah 37:1–38:28.** By supra-knowledge of and supra-love in God.

**Romans 9:1–12.** God’s praeter-knowledge, praeter-causation, and praeter-glory.

**Proverbs 23:19–35.** A miserable drunken life that “bites,” or an abundant life that compenetrates.

### COMMENTS.

**Jeremiah 37:1–38:28.** The first ten verses disclose Jeremiah’s message to Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. During the siege of Jerusalem in 588 B.C., the Babylonians temporarily withdrew from the city to fight an army sent out by Egypt, one of Judah’s allies. Jeremiah warned Zedekiah that the city’s relief was only temporary. The Babylonians would push back the Egyptians and then destroy Jerusalem. **Jeremiah 37:11–38:28** cover Jeremiah’s imprisonment. Jeremiah was arrested as a traitor, beaten, and imprisoned for a lengthy period in a dungeon. Zedekiah eventually sent for Jeremiah to see if he had any new word from the Lord. Jeremiah repeated his earlier message of judgment, protested his innocence, and asked the king not to send him back to the dungeon. Zedekiah granted his request and sent him to the courtyard of the guard. While in the courtyard of the guard, Jeremiah continued to proclaim his message of impending judgment. Several royal officials complained to Zedekiah, arguing that Jeremiah should be put to death as a traitor. With the king’s approval, they lowered the prophet into a muddy cistern, where they intended to let him starve. Ebed-Melech, a palace official, objected to the king, who agreed to let Ebed-Melech rescue Jeremiah from the cistern. Zedekiah again met privately with the prophet. The king expressed his fear that the Babylonians would deliver him over to the hostile pro-Babylonian Jewish party. Jeremiah assured the king that if he surrendered to the Babylonians his life would be preserved. At the same time, he warned that resistance would result only in humiliation and ruin. Zedekiah warned Jeremiah to keep their conversation a secret and allowed him to remain in the courtyard of the guard.

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** Jeremiah was a faithful prophet who loved the Lord more than any desire for the approbation of his countrymen, who would torture him as a traitor. Likewise, Christians should always stand up for the principles in the Word of God even if that means disapproval by those on the left or the right in America. We are to live to please God, not man (Col. 1:9-10). Ephesians 5:10 teaches that our entire lives should be one of “*trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.*” This “learning” refers to proper knowledge, and “pleasing (εὐάρεστον) Him” refers to proper love. Moreover, Jeremiah never received vindication in his lifetime. Neither should Christians depend upon human vindication in their lifetime; their vindication must come from God Himself. They will experience this vindication as they *walk with God by proper supra-knowledge and proper supra-love* as outlined in Romans 8:36 as well as Hebrews 11.

**Romans 9:1–12.** The **first five verses** are concerned with Israel’s place. **Verses 6-13** are elucidations on the faithfulness and sovereignty of God. This point Paul makes is that everything that has taken place in redemptive history has been due to God’s sovereign faithfulness to the promise He gave to Abraham and his descendants. With Jesus, Paul could affirm that “salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22). The problem for Paul was, ‘How could Israel, as the recipient of all these blessings, fail to receive and recognize the promised Messiah?’ Paul answered that God elected Abraham, but not all the descendants of Abraham receive His promises (**9:6–13**). The choice of God had nothing to do with their character or worth; it was a matter of God’s purpose being fulfilled in concurrence with man’s free response.

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** In spite of the tremendous blessings given to the Jews (e.g., the Word of God and His covenant to bless them above all others on the Earth), Israel failed miserably. When the Messiah appeared, Israel rejected Him and crucified Him. No one knew this better than Paul because in his early days he had persecuted the church. Does Israel’s failure mean that God’s Word has failed? The answer is, “No! God is faithful no matter what men may do with His Word.” God is always faithful both to bless and to curse according to His Word. Moreover, God is in absolute control; He is sovereign. He gives all things existence every instant. It is important to recognize that everything that exists (except God) has two capital aspects: its existence and essence. They are distinct. Rocks and human beings have the essences of rocks and human beings, but those essences in themselves do not have the power of existence. The power of existence is given continuously to all things (except God). It is in God that we “live, move, and exist/be (καὶ ἐσμέν)” as Christ holds all existence together continuously (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3). What a wonder it is to *walk with God by proper knowledge and proper love*, living in the reality that He gives us existence every instant—we, as existents, really are radically and existentially dependent upon Him in every way. Although space precludes exposition on the distinction between the foreknowledge and foreordination of God, I will have to admit that all of God’s knowledge is causative, at least on a metaphysical level—the idea that something exists apart from God that somehow He, *then*, comes to know cannot be sustained in light of the nature of *Esse*, Subsistent Being.

**Proverbs 23:19–35.** These verses cover sayings fourteen through eighteen of the “Thirty Sayings.”

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** The eighteenth saying (**verses 29-35**) presents the longest and most articulate warning in Proverbs against drunkenness. While there is nothing wrong with drinking alcohol per se, there is everything wrong with drunkenness. Some of the problems outlined in this reading include emotional problems (woe and sorrow), social problems (strife and complaints), physical problems (bruises and bloodshot eyes), and mental problems (imagination, hallucinations, and confusion). The alcoholic madness is punctuated by never ending longing to escape his self-imposed misery by yet another drink: **35** *"They have struck me, but I was not hurt; They have beaten me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake, that I may seek another drink?"* In Scripture, drunkenness epitomizes the life of the pagan, the unsaved: **1 Thessalonians 5:6** *Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. Romans 13:12* *The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.* As a matter of fact, Paul’s prohibition against drunkenness as epitomizing the ways of darkness is based on our Proverb’s passage. Drunkenness is rejected as inappropriate for those who belong to the Lord’s covenant people, be they Old Testament believers or Church Age believers. Of course, the real problem with those who abuse alcohol to escape the mundane is for them to leave the realm of the flatland, and the quickest and most effective way to leave the ordinary is *life with God by proper knowledge and proper love.* Or as Paul puts it, *“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit”* (Eph. 5:18). All men thirst! Christ offers to satisfy the thirst for anyone who will take: *And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost* (Rev. 22:17). Only Christ offer an abundant life that truly comperetrates life as such with meaning and purpose.

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

*Pastor Don*