

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

December 21, 2016

**Jeremiah 39:1–41:18.** The evincement of divine judgement: the fall of Jerusalem.

**Romans 9:13–29.** The amplitude of God’s justice.

**Proverbs 24:1–22.** Fear of the Lord is the beginning and capstone (ראשית) of suprather thought.

**COMMENTS.**

**Jeremiah 39:1–41:18. 39:1-40:6** records the fall of Jerusalem and Jeremiah’s release. After a long siege, Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 586 B.C. Zedekiah ran for his life, but the Babylonians captured him near Jericho and brought him to Nebuchadnezzar. Before the king’s eyes the Babylonians executed his sons and the nobles of Judah. They then put Zedekiah’s eyes out and took him to Babylon. The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and carried most of the population away into exile, leaving only the poor behind. In the midst of this disaster, Jeremiah was not forgotten. By royal order Nebuzaradan, one of Nebuchadnezzar’s high-ranking officials, released Jeremiah from the courtyard of the guard and turned him over to Gedaliah. Details of the prophet’s release follow a brief parenthesis indicating that Ebed-Melech was spared. After his initial release, Jeremiah somehow got mixed in with those being taken into exile. Nebuzaradan freed him and gave him the option to go to Babylon or stay in the land. Jeremiah decided on the latter and returned to Gedaliah, the newly appointed governor.

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** It’s been said by more than one scholar that the one thing we learn from history is that we don’t learn from history. This was certainly true of the destitute Jewish remnant in Judah after the fall of Jerusalem. Instead of seeking the Lord and making a new beginning, the remnant repeated the very sins that had led to the collapse of the nation and the destruction of the city: They wouldn’t listen to the Word; they turned to Egypt for help; and they worshiped idols. The sinful behavior of the people must have broken Jeremiah’s heart, but he stayed with them and tried to get them to obey the Word of the Lord. God had punished the nation, but even this severe punishment didn’t change their hearts. They were still bent on doing evil. However, God took care of Jeremiah whose heart was set on the Lord. Since the Lord had promised that Jeremiah would survive all the opposition and persecution against him, He moved upon Nebuchadnezzar to release the prophet and treat him kindly. In sum, we all seek what we view as good. Because the Jews did not walk with the Lord *by proper knowledge and proper love*, they developed an appetite for evil that they could not break because such an attitude precludes acceptance of God’s grace—except maybe as a means to do more evil (like the Corinthians). And apart from grace, man always falls under the judgment of God. Note God’s attitude to His own wayward people: “*For this city has been to Me a provocation of My anger and My fury from the day that they built it, even to this day; so I will remove it from before My face*” (Jer. 32:31). This is not only true of the Old Testament, it is also true of the New Testament: 1 Corinthians 16:22, *If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!* Blessedness or cursedness is always related to walking with the Lord *by proper knowledge and proper love*. We live a blessed life with Him and a cursed/miserable life without Him.

**Romans 9:13–29.** In this section, God contends that there is no injustice with God. His choices show forth his power so that His name might be proclaimed in all the earth (9:14–17). He had chosen Israel to serve His purposes as Lord over all. Only by faith are people declared righteous before God. Those who attempted to establish their righteousness on any other basis stumbled over the Messiah (9:27–33).

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** The fact that God chose one and not the other seems to indicate that He is unrighteous. “Is there unrighteousness with God?” Paul asked; and then he replied, “God forbid!” It is unthinkable that the holy God should ever commit an unrighteous act. Election is always totally a matter of grace. If God acted only on the basis of righteousness, nobody would ever be saved. Paul quoted Exodus 33:19 to show that God’s mercy and compassion are extended according to God’s will and not man’s will. All of us deserve condemnation—not mercy. The reference in Exodus 33 deals with Israel’s idolatry while Moses was on the mount receiving the Law. The whole nation deserved to be destroyed, yet God killed only 3,000 people—not because they were more wicked or less godly, but purely because of His grace and mercy. Because Pharaoh continued to reject God’s grace, God used Pharaoh to show His glory and power in judgment. Because Moses responded to God’s grace, he was a vessel of mercy. God will be glorified by everyone in one way or another. Everyone will be used of God as His vessel—even among Church Age believers there are vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor: 2 Timothy 2:20 *But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.* They key is to cleanse ourselves from anything that hinders our second person relationship with God and there is no greater purity possible than walking with the Lord in second person proper knowledge and proper love. 2 Timothy 2:21 *Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.*

**Proverbs 24:1–22.** This reading covers sayings 19–30 of the Thirty Sayings of Wise Men in Proverbs. Note the emphasis on the evil of envying the wicked (3x in this section).

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** Fittingly, the 30<sup>th</sup> saying is about fearing the Lord. “Fearing the Lord,” Solomon wrote, is the “beginning” of knowledge. The fear of the LORD occurs about 15 times in Proverbs. “Beginning” is the Hebrew *רֵאשִׁית*, which means “the start.” One cannot gain knowledge of spiritual things if he begins at the wrong point, refusing to fear the Lord, which means to failure to recognize God’s character and respond by revering, trusting, worshiping, obeying, serving, knowing, and loving Him). *רֵאשִׁית* also means the capstone or essence. The essence of true knowledge is fearing God. Apart from God a person is by default ignorant of spiritual things (Rom. 1:22; Eph. 4:18; 1 Peter 1:14). Of course, those who *walk with the Lord by proper knowledge and proper love* avoid both the evil of ignorance of God as well as apathy, disdain, and lack of respect for God.

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