

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

December 25, 2016

Jeremiah 49:1–39. Divine judgment on the fermenting nations who reject Him and His Word.

Romans 11:25–12:8. Loving God and living the preternatural life in body, will, and mind.

Proverbs 26:12–28. Lazy people and their skewed perinoetic, dogmatic knowledge.

COMMENTS.

Jeremiah 49:1–39. This reading contains five divine judgments, via Babylon’s Nebuchadnezzar, on various nations around Israel: (1) Ammon (**49:1-6**), the Ammonites were proud of their agricultural prosperity and wealth, but the Lord would bring disaster upon their land. They and their god Molech would go into exile. However, as in the case of Moab, Ammon was promised eventual restoration. (2) Edom (**49:7-22**) is threatened with final destruction. Edom was proud of its wisdom and secure position. Since God’s own people were not immune from punishment, then certainly the Edomites would not be spared. Like Sodom and Gomorrah, Edom would become a prime example of devastation and ruin. (3) Damascus (**49:23-27**) was an important city in Syria. The strong warriors of Damascus would fall in the streets as the city went up in smoke. (4) Kedar and Hazor (**49:28-33**), the Arabian tribes located east of Palestine, would be attacked by Nebuchadnezzar as the Lord’s instrument. (5) Elam (**49:34-39**) was a more distant land, located east of Babylon. God would shatter their military might and scatter its people among the nations.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Note the various reasons God judges these nations: anti-Jewish (“anti-Semitism” is common term, but some of these nations were Semitic just not Jewish), false gods, pride in military power, pride in having a god greater than the true Lord, inhumanity, brutality, arrogant self-confidence, and all kinds of fermenting evil. These nations felt they did not need the God of the Bible! When Nebuchadnezzar arrived on the scene, they learned how foolish they had been. Over and over God warns judgment, so it is easy to turn a deaf ear to it all because of its repetitive nature. However, whole civilizations were wiped out because of their sins and no amount of financial or military power was able to save them. God sees what the nations do, and He rewards them justly. Although God never gave the Law of Moses to any of the nations that Jeremiah addressed, He still held them accountable for the sins they committed against Him and humanity. Because of the witness of creation around them and conscience within them, they were “without excuse” (Rom. 1:17–32) and guilty before God. In recent history, the nations of the world haven’t acted any better than the ones recorded in this reading. Innocent blood is shed legally as millions of babies are aborted in their mother’s wombs. International terrorism, genocide, exploitation of people and material resources, war, crime, the abuse of children, and a host of other sins have stained the hands of nations with blood, including our own. The question is not if God will judge, but when and how. It is obvious that a nation is but a reflection of its people and when the people do not *walk with God by proper knowledge and proper love*, they will walk with the gods of this world, from mammon to a potpourri of gods of lust, which gods propel them to call good evil and evil good (Rom. 1:17-32) because all men without exception seek what they think is their greatest good, their gods.

Romans 11:25–12:8. In spite of Israel’s present alienation from God, God still has a future and purpose for Israel (**11:25-32**). As Paul surveys the mighty panorama of God’s plan—Jew and Gentile, creation, and new creation, all united in Christ—he praises the majesty and mystery of our glorious God. Then, Paul shows how to live the Christian life as living sacrifice (**12:1-2**) and as part of a living, loving, and humble Christian family (**12:3-8**). It is spiritually unhealthy not to be part of a local body of Christ, interacting with fellow believers. There is no lone ranger Christianity in the Bible. It is incumbent upon every believer to find a church where he can receive face-to-face teaching of the Word of God from a total truth, whole truth perspective, and be around believers who demonstrate authentic Christianity by loving each other (John 13:34-35). Church was never designed just for what *one* can get out of it. It is designed to be a place for Christians to encourage one another in the Lord as the Word of God is faithfully and without apology proclaimed, an encouragement that is impossible if one does not take the time to gather with fellow believers who just are Christ’s local church body.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Paul shows us three key qualities of walking *with God by proper knowledge and proper love* in **12:1-2**. *First*, true love for God is more than willing to give Him the body (12:1). Before we trusted Christ, we used our body for sinful pleasures and purposes, but now that we belong to Him, we want to use our body for His glory. The Christian’s body is God’s temple (1 Cor. 6:19–20) because the Spirit of God dwells within him (Rom. 8:9). It is our privilege to glorify Christ in our body and magnify Christ in our body (Phil. 1:20–21). *Second*, true love for God is more than willing to give Him the mind (12:2). The kosmos wants to control our minds, but God wants to transform our minds into His image. God transforms our minds and makes us spiritually minded as we love Him and study His Word. *Third*, true love for God is more than willing to give the will. It is our wills that control our bodies and our minds. It is only when we submit or yield to God’s will through *proper knowledge and proper love* that we affectively connect with the life of God, the place of the unending life-giving river of God’s grace and power for the preternatural life.

Proverbs 26:12–28. Troublesome and difficult people are characterized by dogmatic self-assurance of their *own* “wisdom” (**26:12**), laziness (**26:14-15**), conflict (**26:18-20**), and deceit (**26:25**).

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Verse 16 tells us that “*The lazy man is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly.*” It is easy to be dogmatic and intellectually lazy and just accept “facts” from one’s favorite group whether that group is related to one’s faith (Catholic, Reformed, Baptist, Evangelical) or politics (liberal, conservative, independent). In laziness one just picks up his favorite data from the media or urban myths. However, the believer who walks with God *by proper knowledge and proper love* places an enormous premium on the whole truth, total truth, and cares enough to check out the facts for himself instead of following the rants and raves of the kosmos. Love for the God of Truth instills a dispassionate (not unpassionate, or uninterested) love for Truth as such because such Truth always brings about a closer connection to the God of all Truth. The last thing a believer, who loves the God of Truth, wants to do is to have a view that is contrary to God’s view regarding Him,

the spiritual life, government, one's neighbor, and a host of other issues—which are all too often neglected because of the exaggerations and myths perpetuated by various camps as they react to opposing camps. Of all people, we must be people of truth, not too lazy to check out the facts on any issue and not too lazy to change if need be. Let us not be numbered among those dogmatic lazy people who are too quick to give you their “great wisdom,” a wisdom based on an amalgamation of penchants and popular myths. Our diligence in loving God is to be matched with our diligence of gaining the whole truth, total truth regardless of how we personally feel about any issue. We need to recognize how easy it is to accept something that we like. I certainly been guilty of gravitating to the data I like for most of my life with regard not only to biblical exegesis and the spiritual life but to government and politics. There is nothing like the whole truth, total truth perspective. It brings about so much peace as one leaves the realm of polarization. Total truth always brings about a transcendent blessedness. Skewed perinoetic knowledge is one thing, dianoetic true knowledge is altogether a different realm. It is a lot of work, too much for the lazy to be sure. But the Total Truth, Whole Truth, is always well worth any and all effort. Reality really is true, good, beautiful, and very awe-inspiring (cf., Paul's praise of God in Romans 11:33 even after considering the darkness and rejection of God by His own people).

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

Pastor Don