

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

December 26, 2016

**Jeremiah 50:1–46.** God’s refracted judgment falls on prideful Babylon.

**Romans 12:9–13:7.** Supranatural love of Christ for our enemies.

**Proverbs 27:1–27.** Suprarational wisdom of God and living in the Real (TGB).

### COMMENTS.

**Jeremiah 50:1–46.** After the Lord used Babylon to punish many nations, He turns to judge this mighty empire as well. In this chapter and the next, Babylon’s downfall is described in detail. A mighty nation “from the north” would capture Babylon. The Medo-Persians conquered the Babylonian empire in 539 B.C. The Babylonians’ idol-gods, the chief of which was Marduk, would be unable to rescue the city. Babylon’s demise would be good news for God’s people. He had sent them into exile for their sins, but now they would be able to leave Babylon, return to Jerusalem, and enjoy a renewed covenantal relationship with God. Babylon’s and Israel’s relative positions would be reversed. Like the Assyrians before them, Babylon had mistreated and oppressed God’s people. Now the time of reckoning had come. The Lord would overthrow Babylon and regather His scattered people to their land. He would restore Israel’s blessings and forgive their sins.

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** After the Babylonians were used of God to discipline the Jews, God tells them He would now judge them for their pride (**50:31-32**) and because they made the Jews suffer unnecessarily (**50:33**). God’s judgment on Babylon, “the land of idols,” is compared to the overthrown of Sodom and Gomorrah (**50:40**). Pride is fatal on an individual or a national level. Once a person or people become prideful, it is just a matter of time when the fall occurs. Proverbs 16:18, *Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling*. Every single fall in the Bible is due to pride. There are no great believers in the Bible who possessed pride (at least during their periods of greatness). It is better to be poor in live in humility than to be rich and prideful (Prov. 16:19). Of course, there are plenty who are poor who are very prideful. The rich, talented, smart, and gifted do not have a monopoly on pride—even if they have more occasions to think more highly of themselves than they ought (Rom. 12:3). What is certain is that it is impossible to have pride while one is walking with God *by proper knowledge and proper love*. There is nothing like life with God to orient us to the fact that we are what we are by the grace of God, that in and of ourselves we have absolutely nothing to be proud of. Proper knowledge of God translates into understanding that every instant that we exist we are given existence by God. We are utterly contingent upon God: Acts 17:28, *for in Him we live and move and be/exist*. By proper love we are enamored with and drawn to the greatness of God rather than being preoccupied with ourselves. Reflect on the wonderful words of Mary, the mother of the humanity of the God-man, in a state of poverty and humility as she exalts the Lord in the Magnificat: Luke 1:46, *And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. 48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. 49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His*

*name. 50 And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation. 51 He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52 He has put down the mighty from their thrones, And exalted the lowly. 53 He has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich He has sent away empty. 54 He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of His mercy, 55 As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever."* Only in genuine humility does the believer have room for the Lord in his soul to exalt Him instead of self. It is the pride of self-reliance and self-sufficiency that keeps one from walking with God *by proper knowledge and proper love*. Pride shuts out the grace of God, that grace that brings us life, power, perspective, and love as we partake of the nature of God—which could never be separated from the grace of God. Let us always be mindful that God always fights the proud and gives grace to the humble. James 4:6 *But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."*

**Romans 12:9–13:7.** In **12:9-21** Paul provides a beautiful description of suprahuman love that is only possible by participation in the life of God *by proper knowledge and proper love*, 2 Pet. 1:4. In **13:1-7**, he shows that the Christian must respect secular government. Government has God's authority to punish evil, promote good, and collect taxes for its maintenance.

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** In **12:17-21**, Paul is explicit that the Christian is not to repay evil for evil. Of course, this can only be done with the supralove that comes from participating in the life of God. Our first natural inclination is to fight back. However, we are called to live on a much higher level and return good for evil. How many of our enemies do we pray for and seek their good, a good which is always in God? To love our enemies as Christ commanded is to live above the natural realm: to live in supralove that is both suprarational (based on Scripture) and suprahuman (based on participation in the nature of God). Reflect on Matthew 5:44-48 *"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 "And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? 48 "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.* The Christian standard is nothing less than God Himself. As I taught last evening, the most beautiful thing that ever graced this planet was Christ, and we all have the supra-privilege of Christ being formed in us—where His character, His sentiments, His viewpoint are stamped on our inner being (Gal. 4:19). Who but Christians can really show Christ's love to a dark and lost world?

**Proverbs 27:1–27.** We must not assume (boast about) what the future holds (27:1). It is better to be praised by someone else than to praise ourselves (27:2). Sometimes true love may be hidden in a rebuke just as hatred may be hidden in a kiss (27:5–6). There is no love where there is no fidelity to one's wife and friends (27:8, 10–11). True friends can improve each other's character, but nagging only irritates (27:15–17). Doing today's work well gives satisfaction in the present and provides for the future (27:23-27),

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** Verses 5-6 provide advice in dealing with true friends as well as enemies who only pretend to love us: Proverbs 27:5, *Open rebuke is better Than love carefully concealed.* 6 *Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.* If a person's love is genuine, he will not fear to tell his friend about a serious fault or correct him. Rebuking is to be preferred to hidden/withdrawn love. In other words, correcting a person's fault is an evidence of love, but failing to correct him shows one's love is withdrawn as one is really not seeking the best for the beloved. However, an enemy may seem to be a friend by his many kisses, and a true friend may seem to be an enemy by the wounds/hurts he inflicts. Yet, ironically, the rebukes may actually be more genuine expressions of love and friendship. Of course, when one really loves someone, the correction will also be in love and therefore done in the proper way, lovingly. Of course, this does not mean that one sits in judgment over someone he loves to correct every peccadillo. However, if someone you love asks your view, you would never lie to him. In sum, our love is not to be hypocritical. Moreover, we are to always to abhor evil even if our friend is doing it. We are to always cling to what is good (TGB): Romans 12:9, *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.* As we walk with God by *proper knowledge and proper love*, God's grants us suprawisdom that excludes hypocrisy: James 3:17, *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.* The reason there is no hypocrisy as one walks with God by *proper knowledge and proper love* is due to the fact that in such a relationship the believer increasingly resonates with the Real (TGB), and as one grows in appreciation of the Real, one loses any appetite for the fake or phony, even if it would make someone feel better.

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

*Pastor Don*