

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

December 27, 2016

Jeremiah 51:1–64. The multifaceted judgment of God on Babylon and His promise to the exiles.
Romans 13:8–14:12. Supralove, the direct, supra-affective, supracognitive connection with God.
Proverbs 28:1–28. The suprarational eternal perspective that alone can see all things.

COMMENTS.

Jeremiah 51:1–64. This chapter is filled with judgment on Babylon, the very nation God used to discipline the Jews. It outlines God’s vengeance against Babylon (**51:1-14**), His sovereignty over Babylon (**51:15-26**), His summoning of other nations against Babylon (**51:27-33**), His revenge on Babylon (**51:34-44**), His warning to the remnant in Babylon (**51:45-48**), His guarantee of Babylon’s fall (**51:49-53**), and the futility of Babylon’s attempts to resist God’s judgment (**51:54-64**).

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Believers who were exiled in Babylon felt disgraced before the world because of what the Babylonians had done to the Temple in Jerusalem. I am sure that many asked, ‘if the Lord was not strong enough to protect His own house, how could He ever be strong enough to defeat such a world power as Babylon, which had virtually destroyed all of the other nations?’ If these believers left Babylon, they would go home to ruin and disgrace. However, God makes it clear that there was no future for Babylon as He had determined to destroy the city. Its doom was absolutely certain. If these believers remained in Babylon, they would suffer the fate of the city. If they believed God’s Word (faith-knowledge), they would return to their devastated and vulnerable homeland with the divine promise of blessings. It comes down to walking by the suprarational revelation, faith-knowledge. By rational natural revelation, the Jews saw the high walls and huge gates of the city that appeared to be able to repel any enemy—especially in light of the recent destructive power of Babylon over all neighboring nation states. However, as history would show, those very walls and gates would only become “fuel for the flames” when the invaders arrived on the scene (**Jer 51:58**). Another Babylon will rise again in the Tribulation which God will judge, and all the righteous will praise Him for it: Revelation 18:2 *And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! 3 "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." 4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. 5 "For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. 6 "Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. 7 "In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' 8 "Therefore her plagues will come in one day-- death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges*

her. 9 "The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, 10 "standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.' 11 "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: 12 "merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; 13 "and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. 14 "The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. 15 "The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 "and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! 17 'For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance 18 "and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?' 19 "They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.' 20 "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!" In contrast to the lament of the kings and merchants of the Earth, Heaven's inhabitants will rejoice as they look at events from God's point of view. Only by walking with God *by proper knowledge and proper love* can the believer's viewpoint be raised above the temporal perspective, which is requisite to loving God especially during suffering. Failure to live in the eternal perspective always defaults into judging and belittling God in times of temporal suffering and injustice. With the eternal perspective, the believer lives in the reality that there was once a time when things were perfect (life in the Garden of Eden), and there will come an *eternal* time when all things will be perfected and beautiful. Life here is short and can only be seen as beautiful from the eternal perspective. When we are only focused on the here and now, instead of loving God with an eternal perspective, we will tend to judge His goodness based on how things are here and now without realizing that the rest of the story, the most magnificent part that will redress all issues, is yet to come. Life in God *by proper knowledge and proper love* keeps the believer from being susceptible to a host of ubiquitous problems caused by a fatal, narrow, "right-now" viewpoint as if right-now is all there is.

Romans 13:8–14:12. After Paul shows how loving one another is basic to the Christian life (13:8-10), he urges believers to “wake up” to life in Christ and put on the armor of light in all daily struggles (13:11-14). Moreover, Paul shows how Christians are to avoid disunity with fellow believers at all costs (14:1-12).

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. This section mandates love and demonstrates that it is basic to the Christian life. Without biblical love, there is no experiential life in God, no affective connection with God. And only the affective connection with God takes us beyond our cognitive connection with God, the latter of which is always mediated by concepts and inadequate words taken from the human realm. However, there is no authentic affective connection with God wherein one participates in the divine essence (2 Pet. 1:4) apart from His enabling grace and faith-knowledge and love (the affective connection). Our act of love for God takes place in the will (affection), not the mind, even though without the mind the will cannot know to love the object. While we cannot love what we do not know, we do not formally love with our minds. The will is the efficient cause of all love. The command to love God with all of our minds, hearts, and souls is simply a command for the will to summon all of its resources—minds, hearts, souls. It is a command directed to the will. It is by the will and love in the will that we make direct contact with God affectively. Our cognitive relationship with God is required before one can do that, but in itself, cognition is not as direct for it is always mediated by words, which are borrowed from our realm and do not begin to do justice to the majesty of God. All words used of God are but analogous—similar in some ways and dissimilar in others. Love is our most intimate connection with God just as it is with others. We connect most directly by love in the will, a love that is dependent upon cognition but not necessarily limited by its inadequate concepts. Again, our love for God, because of its direct connection, exceeds cognition: Ephesians 3:17, *that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height-- 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.* While there is a transfusion or blending of our cognitive (intellects) and affective (wills) capacities, technically it is our wills, our affective orders, that do the loving even if with other faculties. Finally, it is the health of our wills (good or evil) that determines the direction of our lives than any other single factor in life.

Proverbs 28:1–28. The powerful and wealthy often exploit the poor. Oppressors govern without benefiting the governed (3), know nothing of justice (5), amass fortunes by exorbitant interest (8), and ignore the needs of the poor (27). Lawlessness brings down societies and families (4, 7, 24), and people groan under oppressive rule (12). Governments should establish justice through law. Note the various references to the law in this section

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Although in our secular Dasein it is often believed that one can obtain true wisdom without God, this is manifestly false. Proverbs 28:5, *Evil men do not understand justice, But those who seek the LORD understand all.* True wisdom is the whole truth, total truth perspective and is a monopoly of those who seek the Lord—and seeking the Lord is nothing less the manifestation of actions of a loving will. Certainly, we must have some knowledge about an object before seeking it, and seeking just is an expression of love—for we always seek what we love. To ‘understand all’ refers to suprarational knowledge. It is not so much a divine viewpoint that opposes human viewpoint as it is a divine viewpoint that can even see human viewpoint as such, as rational knowledge that is deficient. Rational knowledge is natural knowledge attainable by natural man and is limited to the natural realm. Suprarational is not anti-rational. Rather, it is rational on a supernatural level; it has the great advantage of borrowing knowledge from God Himself as He revealed in the Word of God about ultimate reality and God’s loftiest plans for His people and the human race. However, as the text says, “evil men do not understand justice”—before one can truly understand justice, he must be just—the same is true of love. The man who walks with God, however, lives a life par excellence without a scintilla of connivance because He progressively takes on the righteous life and character of Jesus Christ.

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

Pastor Don