

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

December 9, 2016

**Jeremiah 16:1–17:27.** More Divine Warnings and Exhortations

**Romans 1:18–2:11.** God’s wrath revealed on idolaters as well as moralists.

**Proverbs 16:1–11.** Divine and human sovereignty.

### COMMENTS.

**Jeremiah 16:1–17:27.** There are at least four parts to this reading. *First*, Jeremiah’s restrictions foreshadow divine judgment (**16:1-17:4**). The Lord placed several restrictions on Jeremiah that foreshadowed the effects of the coming judgment. Jeremiah was not to take a wife in order to show the devastating effects of judgment upon the nation’s families. Many would be left without children and spouses. The prophet was forbidden to attend a funeral, for after the coming disaster people would not even have the opportunity to mourn the dead. Neither was he to attend a feast, for judgment would bring a cessation of joyous celebrations throughout the land. *Second*, the Lord contrasts the fates of the wicked and righteous (**17:5-11**) to show that those who trust in human strength while rejecting the Lord were doomed to experience extreme discomfort and eventual death. But those trusting the Lord would flourish, even in times of crisis. Though people can be exceedingly deceptive, God is capable of piercing their minds and motives and dealing with them in a just manner. *Third*, Jeremiah prays (**17:12-18**). He appeals to the all-knowing and just God. He asserts his faithfulness to his commission and asked that he be vindicated before his persecutors. *Fourth*, the Lord offered His people the opportunity to exhibit a repentant attitude by observing the Sabbath (**17:19-27**). He exhorted the whole nation, including its king, to demonstrate their loyalty to Him by observing His requirements concerning the Sabbath Day. If they kept it holy by refraining from work, the Lord would bless them and accept their offerings. However, if they rejected this test of obedience, the threatened calamity would come in full force. Of course, moderns, including many contemporary Christians, find the whole idea of God’s judgment on a nation somewhat risible.

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** God had given the Sabbath to the Israelites as a special token of their relationship with Him (see Ex. 16:29; 20:8–11; 31:13–17). It was to be a day of rest for the people, their farm animals, and the land. The people, however, repeatedly disregarded the Law and treated the Sabbath as any other day. Their sin was evidence that their hearts were devoted to material gain, to mammon, and not walking with God *by proper knowledge and proper love*. A mechanical, legalistic obedience to the Sabbath law wasn’t what God wanted, but obedience that came from their hearts because they loved Him. If this were the case, then they would obey His Law, and God could then bless the people, their kings, and their city. If they continued to disobey the Law and desecrate the Sabbath, however, God would have to punish them by destroying their city and their temple. Jeremiah faithfully and courageously delivered his sermons to the people; he lifted his supplications to the Lord; he poured out his grief over the sins of the nation; and yet the people only hardened their hearts and stubbornly resisted God’s truth. In an age of unconcern and indecision, Jeremiah was burdened and decisive, and God honored him. Humanly speaking, his ministry was a failure, but from the divine perspective, he was an outstanding success.

We need more Christian men and women of Jeremiah's caliber in the church and our nation today. There's a price to pay, but there's also a crown to win.

**Romans 1:18–2:11.** God's wrath is revealed in **1:18-32**. Even though God had given clear and convincing revelation of His existence and power in the world through creation, men and women had nevertheless become idolatrous and polytheistic with resulting moral degradations. Paul claimed that God gave them up to their dishonorable lusts (**1:24**), passions (**1:26**), conduct (**1:28**), and all kinds of evil. The refusal to acknowledge and glorify God results in a downward path: worthless thinking, moral insensitivity, and religious stupidity. In **2:1-11** the focus shifts to the fact that God's judgment is even for the moralist. Obviously, some Gentiles had high ethical standards and moral life-styles. They were not characterized by the blanket judgment expressed in **1:18–32**. They would be the first to condemn widespread idolatry and corruption among those around them. But Paul insisted that God's judgment applied to them as well. They were responsible because they too were guilty of the same kinds of things. This divine judgment is based on conscience (**2:1–16**).

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** Man knows that God exists; this is clear. But man did not want to know God or honor Him as God. Instead of being thankful for all that God had given him, man refused to thank God or give Him the glory He deserves. Man was willing to use God's gifts, but he was not willing to worship and praise God for His gifts. The result was an empty mind and a darkened heart. Man the worshiper became man the idolater. Having held down God's truth and refusing to acknowledge God's glory, man was left without a god; and man is so constituted that he must worship something. If he does not worship the true God, he will worship a false god, even if he has to manufacture it himself! This fact about man accounts for his propensity to idolatry. Man exchanged the glory of the true God for substitute gods that he himself made. He exchanged glory for shame, incorruption for corruption, truth for lies. Note that first on the list of false gods is man. This fulfilled Satan's purpose when he told Eve, "Ye shall be as God!" (Gen. 3:5) "Glory to man in the highest!" Satan encouraged man to say. Instead of man being made in God's image, man made gods in his own image—and then descended so low as to worship birds, beasts, and bugs! From idolatry to immorality is just one short step. If man is his own god, then he can do whatever he pleases and fulfill his desires without fear of judgment. Only by *walking in the beauty of God*, can the believer have rightly ordered thinking and rightly ordered desires instead of the corruption we find in this reading and in the emporium of modern viewpoints which are blind to the glory of God throughout creation.

**Proverbs 16:1–11.** This reading highlights divine and human sovereignty. Like nowhere else in Proverbs, God appears nine times in versus **1–11**; the king five times in versus **10–15**. Observe how the king’s “sovereignty” (from a human vantage point) is set in the context of God’s activity in the world. The interweaving of the two in verses 10-11 helps prevent their being held apart.

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** Although it is easy to think of evil men in authority in government being apart from God’s causal existential activity, especially in our age of deistic “metaphysics,” as Bible believers we must accept the testimony of Scripture on God’s providence over all: Romans 13:1 *Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.* 2 *Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.* Moreover, it is by life in God by proper knowledge and proper love that enables us to see and appreciate all of life, even in times of evil rulers. For by proper knowledge and love, we live in the reality that God is in control and nothing happens apart from His loving permission. By walking in the beauty of God, we can even see the beauty of God’s sovereignty working His glory in and through evil rulers. Only believers who walk with God by proper knowledge and proper love can enjoy the view because of the borrowed Higher Lights.

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

*Pastor Don*