

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

Feb. 5, 2016

- Exodus 11-13 – From the death of the firstborn to the Red (Reed) Sea.
- John 2:13-3:25 – From the cleansing of the Temple to Nicodemus and John the Baptizer.
- Song of Solomon 2:1-3 – From the lily to the apple tree.

Reflections:

1. From the nine plagues, the land now lay in ruins. God had demonstrated His mighty power by showing up the impotence of the gods of Egypt. By devastating that powerful nation economically, He struck fear into the hearts of the Egyptians. Even though God had caused the Egyptians to be eager for the removal of the Israelites, Pharaoh retained his arrogant stubbornness. The 10th plague would bring great sorrow to *every* Egyptian family with children. It would also bring about the release of God’s people. As far as the Egyptians, they were all polytheists, worshiping many idols and false gods. They had plenty of opportunities to turn and worship the true God. By rejecting the grace of God, they became objects of His judgment (cf., Rom. 1:18–23). In Exodus 12 we have the blood of animals placed on the doorframes of their houses. The slaying of the animals (instead of the Israelites’ firstborn sons, v. 13) and the sprinkling of blood prefigured the substitutionary death of Christ. He is “our Passover Lamb” (1 Cor. 5:7), “a Lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Peter 1:19; cf. John 1:29). His own sacrifice is the means whereby individual believers escape the horrors of spiritual death. The only reason we are anything, let alone enjoy the privilege of being in the family of God, is because of the grace of God—apart from grace, we are all idolaters geared to the things of this world rather than God and thus fit for divine judgment.



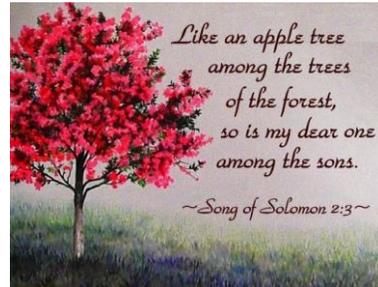
2. John 2:13-3:25. There were two cleansings of the temple, one at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry and one at the end of His public ministry (Matt. 21:12–13; Mark 11:15–16; Luke 19:45–46). The first cleansing caught the people by surprise. The second cleansing, about three years later, was one of the immediate causes of His death (cf. Mark 11:15–18). The setting: Jesus went up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, which was to be a reminder of God’s grace in delivering the Jews from the bondage in Egypt. The “temple courts” refer to a large courtyard, the Court of the Gentiles, surrounding the temple enclosure. The buying and selling of animals in the area was probably rationalized as a convenience for the pilgrims coming into Jerusalem. But abuses developed, and the pilgrim traffic became a major source of income for the city. With money to be made, worship easily became corrupted. The money changers were another convenience for the pilgrims, and a

high percentage was charged for changing coins. When Jesus cleansed the Temple it was an act of purifying the corrupted worship of God's people as predicted in Malachi 3:1–3. Jesus protested the turning of His Father's house into a market. Imagine that, the gathering of God's people with such a focus on money/prosperity. Have times really changed or have we just rearranged the "furniture"? In response to God's



matchless grace and love (John 3:16), how does man generally respond (John 3:19)?

3. Song of Solomon 2:1-3. Here the beloved spoke of herself as a "rose of Sharon," which was a common meadow flower. The "lily" too was a common flower. We can see that in her humility she likened herself to common flowers of the field, yet this is a significant contrast with her earlier self-consciousness (1:5–6). Her improvement probably was because of her lover's praising her (1:9–10, 15). Her lover echoed his beloved's newfound sense of worth by comparing her to a lily and all other women to thorns. He agreed that she was a lily (v. 1) but not just any lily! She was as unique among all others as a single lily would be *among many thorns*. The beloved's reciprocal praise of her lover was also expressed metaphorically. As an apple tree would be a delightful surprise in a forest so Solomon was a delightful and rare "find" among all the other men. He was unique, sweet, and fragrant.



On the Glory Road,

Pastor Don