

## Day 12 of “Through the Bible in 2016 with Pastor Don”

**Jan. 12, 2016**

- Genesis 21:22-23:20 – The testing of Abraham.
- Matthew 15 – Opposition to Jesus by the Religious Leaders.
- Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 - Reverence, humility, and contentment before the Wholly Other.

### **Reflections:**

1. Genesis 21:22-23:20. Note Abraham’s test from God. It is important to make a distinction between a temptation and a test. A temptation appeals to the worst side of a person. A test appeals to the best side of a person. God is not tempting Abraham. He is testing Him to further mature him. What a wonderful example of prompt, unquestioning obedience to the bare Word of God. There is no true obedience without faith. And faith is all about accepting the full authority of God. All testing is designed to mature us. While there are many different ideas of what maturity is, maturity, in the end, is always about being a better person, a mature Christian. Are you satisfied with your knowledge of God? Are you satisfied with how you love others? Are you satisfied with your spiritual life? No healthy believer is ever satisfied with where he is. Maturity, becoming a better person, more Christ-like, is not about packing in more and more doctrine, and then going around and seeing everything as a test designed by Satan to destroy your edification complex of the soul. How selfish! How ungodly! Enough said about that, for now!
2. Matthew 15. After the religious leaders attacked Jesus, He noted how they were destroying the Word of God with their traditions, “Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men,” so that their entire spiritual life and worship can be summed up with “These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.” Anytime the Word of God is tampered with or changed, one ends up teaching doctrines that really are the doctrines of men rather than God. I used to be part of a movement that regularly changed the Word of God with “corrected translations” which reflection modern false philosophical concepts rather than the Word of God. This practice is inexcusable and leads to many problems whereby an entire human spiritual system of power is constructed that is foreign to the real meaning in the Text even if it uses biblical nomenclature.

3. Ecclesiastes 5:1-7. “For God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore, let your words be few (5:2).” Solomon stops to consider God’s place in the heavens and our place on the earth. He acknowledges that there is a great gulf of understanding between who God is and who we think He is. This realization should affect our lives before Him by eliciting reverence, humility, and contentment. When the passage speaks of God in Heaven and man on Earth, it is not referring to God being spatial, as if He is just in any one place. He is omnipresent. This is just a way to illustrate the transcendence of God. Moreover, God really is the Wholly Other. He is not like us, though we are like Him in some respects. He is far above us in every respect and not just in degree, He is immortal by nature (Esse) and dwells “in unapproachable light” (1 Tim. 6:16). The fact that transcendent God became immanent in the incarnation is unique to Christianity as is His marvelous, matchless grace.

In ‘Ehyeh,

Pastor Don