

Day 17 of “Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

Jan. 17, 2016

- Genesis 28-29— Isaac, Jacob, and Esau.
- Matthew 21:23-22:22 – Religious and civil authorities confront Jesus Christ.
- Ecclesiastes 7:1-5 – It is better to be sad and reflect on the brevity of life than party with fools.

Reflections:

1. Genesis 28-29. Isaac passes on the Abrahamic blessings of God to Jacob. From Abraham to Jacob is a great descent, spiritually speaking. Abraham exhibits the victory of spiritual growth, even it was slow, into becoming a friend of God, the ultimate on earth. Jacob, on the other hand, seems to never grow spiritually. He retains his sordid character as demonstrated with his crafty scheming, and selfish ways—always look for a deal that benefits him first and foremost. Jacob flees from home on account of his nobler brother’s fierce wrath at the trick which their scheming mother and he had contrived. It was an ugly, heartless fraud, a crime against a doting father, as against Esau. As he lies down he sees a vision of a ladder. The Hebrew word for ladder (סִלָּס) indicates that what he saw were stairs. Jacob was blessed to see these broad heavenly stairs, which pointed to Christ, who claimed that He was the intermediary between Heaven and Earth that this vision pointed to, see John 1:51. The vision from God was meant to comfort Jacob by letting him know that God was near. However, note Jacob’s horrible attitude after God gave him such magnificent promises: **Genesis 28:20** *Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, ²¹ "so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God.* What a pitiful response!
2. Matthew 21:23-22:22. The priests, elders, Pharisees, and Herodians confront Christ.
3. Ecclesiastes 7:1-5. The reason that Solomon says that it is better to go to a house of mourning, a funeral, than a party is because at the funeral home one is more likely to reflect on the brevity of life and gain wisdom about the meaning of his own life with God. In verse five he extends benefits of sorrow from being rebuked: it is better to be rebuked by a wise man than enjoy the company of fools: **Ecclesiastes 7:5**, *It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools.* One could make the application that gathering with fellow believers and listening to the conviction of the Word of God in a local church is far better for the soul than gathering and singing with *fools* in a bar, even if the later is more fun and makes one feel better, at least for the short term.
 - Principle from philosophical realism: God loves everyone. This love is manifested to every individual in two inextricable ways: working for the good of the beloved and drawing that person to Him. In essence, this really comes down to one principle for nearness to God is everyone’s highest good. So what does that have

to do with Ecclesiastes 7:1-5? Well, God uses sorrow to draw us to Him and so God's plan includes suffering and sorrow because He loves us and desires our good, which is always being closer to Him. A person might have more fun at a party, which may be more fun and enjoyable, but the company of the "fools" will likely lead one away from God and thus become a great evil—the greatest evil in fact. It is in pain and sorrow that we are really in the best position to see and move closer to our greatest good, namely God.

In 'Ehyeh,

Pastor Don