

Day 18 of “Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

Jan. 18, 2016

- Genesis 30–Jacob, Jacob’s daughters, and Laban.
- Matthew 22:23-23:36 – Christ’s apologetics and denunciation of the religious leaders.
- Ecclesiastes 7:6-12 – Testing and Wisdom.

Reflections:

1. Genesis 30. In this chapter we have a myriad of characters who are bent on obtaining favor and selfish gain – often at the expense and exasperation of others. Rachel foolishly demands a son of Jacob and so goes to great lengths at having her handmaid bear a son via Jacob. When she finally obtains a son, she is not joyful (as indicated in verse 8). Leah uses bribery and her own handmaid to gain the attention of her neglectful husband, while Laban and Jacob continue circling, using and manipulating one another. It is important to understand that beneath all of these conflicts between people is the battle of wills with God. When we are bent on our own way with others, we forget who is really in charge. God is the one Who is really in control of all events. Only when God “listens” to Leah or “remembers” Rachel do they bear children (Gen. 30:17, 22-23).
 - Spiritual principle. When we are right with God and we realize how patient He is with our weaknesses, we can be more patient and virtuous with others. The Greatest Commandment sets for the greatest spiritual virtue: Love! **Matthew 22:36** *"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"* ³⁷ *Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."* ³⁸ *"This is the first and great commandment.* ³⁹ *"And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'* ⁴⁰ *"On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*
2. Matthew 22:23-23:36. Christ’s apologetics in responding to the Sadducees and Pharisees; the Greatest Commandment; Christ’s denunciation of the religious leaders.
 - Apologetic principles. We can see the fundamental apologetic principle of establishing common ground with an opponent to establish a foundation upon which to build to higher truths. We see this in the response of the Lord to the Sadducees in Matthew 23:31-32. What is significant about this is that the Sadducees only believed in the first five books of the Old Testament, the Pentateuch, so this is where Christ goes for the scriptural proof. We also see this in Matt. 23:44, in dealing with the Pharisees, where Christ quotes from Psalm 110, which the Pharisees accepted. It is important when dealing with someone who, for whatever reason, does not believe in some truth to take them from where they are to where they need to be. This pertains to unbelievers as well as other believers.

3. Ecclesiastes 7:6-12. The word translated “extortion” (הַעֲצֹקָה) in verse 7 in some translations should be translated “oppression.” The point in verses 7-10 is that adversities as well as blessings can bring various temptations. We are told that hardships can turn anyone into a fool. As believers we are not to react to things—we are not to be like animals. We are to use our minds in understanding God’s plan for our lives. We are all on a journey. God is the Author who writes the script of our lives. The only part that we have control over is our character, which He will use as it fits in His-story. In verses 11-12 we are told that prosperity can be beneficial if one has wisdom.

In ‘Ehyeh,

Pastor Don