

Day 19 of “Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

Jan. 19, 2016

- Genesis 31– Jacob, Rachel, and Laban.
- Matthew 23:37-24:28 – Jesus’ lament over Jerusalem and prophecy of her destruction.
- Ecclesiastes 7:13-21 – Avoid depending on your own righteousness.

Reflections:

1. Genesis 31. Note the deception that runs through the chapter. A question is often asked how could God bless Rachel when she stole Laban’s idols and then lied to him about it (as per 31:31)? However, a closer look indicates that God did *not* bless Rachel either for stealing the idols or for lying about her deed. Simply because Laban did not discover that Rachel was the thief does not mean that God blessed her. On the contrary, it is more reasonable to assume that God did not expose Rachel’s theft in order to protect Jacob. Furthermore, Genesis 35:16-19 reports that Rachel died in delivering her second son, Benjamin. In the intervening passages, between 31:32 and 35:19, very little is said about Rachel for what she did—God allowed her to fall into the background of importance until her painful death.
2. Matthew 23:37-24:28. In this section Jesus Christ predicts the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in 70 A.D., and then prophesizes about the coming Tribulation and the Second Advent when He comes to establish His kingdom on earth. In Matt. 23:37-39 we have our Lord’s anguish over those who have rejected His love and grace. Note that this occurs after His sevenfold woes on the religious leaders for their self-righteous religiosity. Christ really is heartbroken about their rejection of God and His grace. Moreover, as we have studied in Realism, He is the only member of the Triune Godhead who has ever experienced sorrow, human or otherwise. It is unfortunate that most people do not respond to the Total Truth of God. In this context Jesus Christ excoriates them, but like most when they are rebuked, it just makes them more angry. He knew that, but that did not stop Him from telling them the Whole Truth. The bottom line is that the Jews had a false view of God and a false view of the spiritual life. We have discovered that the vast majority of modern Christians also have a false view of God and the spiritual life. This is even true of the doctrinal movement, except in some ways it is worse because it also contains false views of how the original language and exegesis works with reality. Am I equating modern Christianity with the Jews? No! But there are parallels in that both were filled with non-biblical views of God, the spiritual life, and interpreting the Word of God. If modern Christians have false views of God, does it mean that they worship a false god. Absolutely not! One can have false views of God, false views of the use of the original languages of Scripture, false views of the Word of God, false views of the spiritual life (like the 1 Jn 1:9 conduit system), and false views of the purpose of the local church *and still worship and love the Lord*. Just because we misunderstood the nature of God (‘Ehyeh of Exodus 3:14) and the spiritual life does not mean that we worshipped a false god. Again, we were just mixed up due to the anti-intellectualism of modernity. Thank God that He has given us the privilege of understanding Him, creation, the Bible, and the spiritual life more accurately and thereby come to love Him even more deeply and

accurately—which really is what it is all about anyway. In closing, I want to thank all of the believers of FBC for your love for the Whole Truth and the adjustments that we have all had to make to get back to our Christian heritage that existed for the first 1700 years, before modernity hijacked Christianity and created a God in our modern image. Again, unless we understand the God of Exodus 3:14 and have the philosophical wherewithal to see the invisible attributes of God in creation as per Romans 1:20, I can guarantee that we do not understand the essential nature of the God of the Bible. He is not like us. He is radically different. We all, including us doctrinal believers, have been applying human attributes to God and fashioning Him after our image. It is nice to recognize it and have the time to make the adjustments. I have some additional major adjustments coming up in our next Bible class regarding God’s knowledge—it is not like anything you have ever heard—unless you thoroughly understand the classical view of God instantiated in orthodox Christianity. More later.

3. Ecclesiastes 7:13-21. In verse 16, Solomon instructs us not to be “overly righteous.” How can someone be too righteous? Surely one cannot be too just or too loving? Didn’t Christ exhort us to be “perfect” just as our Father in heaven (Matt. 5:48)? Aren’t we commanded to be holy as God is holy (Lev. 11:45)? The solution is in the term “overly” (the meaning, like all meanings of words, is determined by context—not Cratylean exegesis). A person cannot be too righteous, but they can be overly righteous. The Pharisees are a case in point. They were so “righteous” that they were self-righteous. Moreover, “being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted to the righteousness of God” (Rom. 10:3). Note what Solomon says in verse 20! We are all guilty and need God’s grace and truth—the Total Truth. Thank God for His matchless, marvelous grace apart from which we would not stand a snowballs chance in Hell.

In ‘Ehyeh,

Pastor Don