

## Day 21 of “Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

### Jan. 21, 2016

- Genesis 34:1-35:15– Shechem’s rape of Dinah.
- Matthew 25:14-26:13 – From the parable of the talents to the anointing at Bethany.
- Ecclesiastes 8:1-9 – Wisdom and politics.

### Reflections:

1. Genesis 34:1-35:15. Recall that God called the Israelites to be a separate/holy people and not to intermingle with the Canaanites. This was all to insure the integrity of their spiritual lives and the line of the promised Messiah. Dinah’s one step toward social interaction with the Canaanites in verse one, “went out to visit the daughters of the land,” would cause an avalanche of trouble found in the rest of the chapter. While the Canaanites were to be destroyed because of their wicked and evil influences, the deceitful covenant that Simeon and Levi made with them resulted in them being excluded from Jacob’s blessings (Gen. 49:5-7). The bottom line in chapter 34 is that God called Israel to be a separate nation, and we can see Satan working behind the scenes in an attempt to get the Israelites to intermarry with the Canaanites and thus destroy their identity both as a race and as a people of God. The principle of separation also applies to church age believers when it comes to social situations. Many believers have destroyed their own spiritual lives by the negative influences of unbelievers. Good friends are wonderful to have, but there is always vulnerability that comes with close friends in that we open up our souls to them in a way that we do not with others. We need to be very careful when good friends are also very bad influences on our spiritual lives. This applies to both unbelievers and believers—read 2 Tim. 2:20, 21; 2 John 9-11; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Heb. 13:13-15. Of course, separation is *not* to be viewed in some legalistic manner. True biblical separation involves most importantly what one separates *unto*, not just what one separates *from*. This is the lesson for Israel and us: separation is more about what we separate *unto* than *from*—like separating time *unto* daily Bible study and prayer than Facebook and postings. Unfortunately, in our age, many Christians have so separated themselves unto the world and the things of the world, that they no longer even belong or have separated themselves unto a local church and the people of God. If all Christians were like them, there would not even be local churches, local gatherings of believers who come together and benefit from interacting with fellow saints. It is evil for a believer to disregard the command to gather with fellow believers, Heb. 10:24-25.
2. Matthew 25:14-26:13. In this section Jesus uses parables to illustrate judgment and rewards. The bottom line is that everyone will have to give an account of his life. May we all strive to hear the words in **Matthew 25:21**, *“His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’* Contrary to the idea that Heaven is some ethereal place or retirement center, Scripture tells us that Heaven will be a place of activity, *work!* *Work* is not a dirty word. There was work before Adam and Eve fell into sin, God

continues to work in creation, and there will be work on the New Earth that is united with Heaven. Our occupations are going to be directly related to how we lived our lives here. What kind of work will we do on the New Earth? The passage above says that faithful believers will be rulers. However, there are a host of activities that redeemed and glorified humanity will do on the New Earth: build cabinets, tend sheep, design new clothes, write songs, and ride horses. Yes, we are headed to a New Earth, a very physical place for our very physical resurrection bodies. We are human, after all.

- Apologetics. **Problem:** critics, usually atheists, often make the charge that Christ's statement: "but Me you do not have always" with you (Matt. 26:11) is contradicted Matthew 28:20 where Jesus said "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." **Solution:** What a silly charge! Obviously, in the first passage Jesus is speaking of His *physical* presence (He would not be with them between His ascension and second coming) whereas in the second passage He is speaking of His *spiritual* presence with them as they preached the Word of God.

3. Ecclesiastes 8:1-9. The background for this section is the absolute authority of the king and the value of wisdom in enabling one to avert his wrath. He points out that it is the wise man who can sum up the situation properly and act accordingly. Even though we do not have a king with absolute authority in the same sense as we find in the ancient near east, there is certainly much to be said for having wisdom regarding dealing with those who have temporal authority over us. It is very easy to get distracted with just how evil many of our "rulers" are. It is easy because as the people of God we hate all of the corruption, all of the lies and pandering, that have reach epidemic proportions. A wise person is one who makes God the issue in life and does not get distracted by the temporal affairs. On a positive note, let us be thankful that we still have the freedom to daily study the Word of God, pursue wisdom, grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord, meet with fellow believers, and live our lives as unto the Lord without fear or intimidation from our rulers, who eventually will destroy themselves by their own corruption ("one man rules over another to his own hurt," 8:9). Christ always emphasized the coming kingdom over local politics; let us not let the earthly kingdom cause us to forget our calling. In other words, don't let politics become a stumbling block to your spiritual life. Concern for your life with God and the family of God is far more important than the latest lie from the latest wicked ruler in government. The wise person understands how to interpret these issues (8:1). The wise man focuses on the One who really is in control of all things, temporal or otherwise.

In 'Ehyeh,

Pastor Don