

Day 26 of “Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

Jan. 26, 2016

- Genesis 41:38-42:28 – Joseph’s rise to power; Joseph and his brothers.
- Hebrews 3:1-5:10 – Warning about spiritual apathy; Jesus the Great High Priest.
- Ecclesiastes 10:1-9 – Wisdom; miscellaneous observations.

Reflections:

1. Genesis 41:38-42:28. In chapter 41 we see the fulfillment of God’s dream to Joseph made long before he was thrown into the pit by his brothers. Of course, his dream included his brothers and we see God moving them into place in order fulfill Joseph’s dream. In 42:28 we see the brothers’ sense of guilt as well as their understanding that God is in control.
2. Hebrews 3:1-5:10. After noting the pernicious evil of spiritual apathy, which is a sign of lack of spiritual virtue, the writer tells us that we all stand naked and exposed to God, who judges the thoughts and intents of our hearts. On our own we do not stand a chance. But, the writer moves on and wants us to know that we have a high priest in Jesus Christ. He is always interceding for us, just as the Old Testament high priests interceded for the people of Israel. Our confidence must be in Him, not in our own “righteousness” and “wisdom.”

- **Pastoral/exegetical/theological/philosophical.** This section spends a great deal of time on faith. But what is faith? It really is *not* a matter of just looking up the word in the original Greek, for there are dozens of different uses of faith in the Bible, and all using the same word (πίστις).¹ So-called exegetical pastors who tell believers that they know exact, univocal meanings *because* of the original are doing a great disservice to the body of God. First, it is manifestly not true that one gets to an univocal meaning of anything merely through the original languages. This alone should be sufficient to stop any pastor from teaching such falsehoods to their congregation. Second, it takes confidence that a believer should have by reading and metaphysically abstracting the meaning from the Text/Bible *by himself*, and places his confidence in a pastor and his “translation.” Third, it leads to building reality on words rather than using words to attain the metaphysics of reality and meaning that God placed *in the Text*. This, then, results in “corrected translations,” which are all too often rife with false and anti-biblical modern philosophical concepts, like Cratyleanism and conduitism, which the believer takes as the Word of God from the pastor. So, in the end, the believer ends up trusting someone’s erroneous “corrected translation,” and thus following a man and not trusting his own Bible or ability to read or understand it for himself. What

¹ I have attached an example of how “faith” (πίστις) is used in the Word of God from a trusted Greek lexicon. Note that the word is anything but univocal. Who decides which definition to use? Does one really want to just follow the lexicographer’s definitions? If you knew their philosophical positions, you would be very wary. Thank God that the meaning is defined by the context in the Word of God. Just like in real estate it is all about location, location, location.

a twisted and dangerous mess. What the pastor needs to do is to teach metaphysical realism to the people of God so they can abstract the meaning from God's Holy Word *by and for themselves*. By teaching the people of God metaphysics, they will learn to start with universal definitions of metaphysical entities, like faith, and then see how the context uses that concept. What the pastor needs to do is to teach more about the metaphysics of God to help believers leave our modern world of neo-theism, neo-spirituality, and neo-Christianity. Apart from a robust view of the metaphysics of I AM (*Esse* of Exod. 3:14) and the spiritual life, the believer will have very little intellectual support for his faith and treat faith in a liberal Kierkegaardian, anti-intellectual fashion, namely just "trust." The classical position is that true faith always seeks understanding; it is never blind. Blind faith, on the other hand, is all about a will that is empty of true understanding. True faith engages both the will and the mind; pseudo-faith is all about attaining some comfort by an act of the will. We are to love and trust God with all of our hearts, souls, and *minds*. This is not to be confused with trusting propositions and systems, or packing in more and more information that somehow is going to transform believers by osmosis or by conduitism. The believer who seeks the whole truth is far more interested in truth than temporary comfort, the latter of which may come simply by exercising a faith without understanding. *However, all faith in the Bible is an exercise of both the will and the intellect.* Faith was never designed to shut down the mind so one could have a moment of *pure irrational faith* for the "benefit" of some *temporal peace*. Faith is about trusting God, not just about trusting true propositions about God. As we have noted, faith takes place in second person relationship. There is no true faith in God through first or third person activity. It really is about the relationship with God, not a relationship with propositions and spiritual formulas. It really is about knowing, loving, and trusting God personally in a second person relationship, a relationship that cannot be understood by mere word studies.

3. Ecclesiastes 10:1-9. Note the value of wisdom in the first few verses.

In 'Ehyeh,

Pastor Don