

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
July 12, 2016

1 Samuel 20:1–21:15. David in Exile (chapters 20-22).

1 Peter 1:1–12. The eternal perspective.

Psalms 121:1–122:9. The pilgrims’ song.

COMMENTS:

1 Samuel 20:1–21:15. In all literature, David and Jonathan stand out as examples of devoted friends. Jonathan had the more difficult situation because he wanted to be loyal to his father while at the same time being a loyal friend of to the next king of Israel. Conflict of loyalties, especially in the family, is one of the most painful difficulties we face in the life of faith (Matt. 10:34–39), but Christ calls for supreme devotion to Him and His will for our lives. Notice David’s exile as a fugitive from his own land and people: **1 Samuel 20:1** *Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and went and said to Jonathan, “What have I done? What is my iniquity, and what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?”* David hadn’t disobeyed any royal commands, incited any rebellion against the throne, or broken God’s law, yet Saul was bent on destroying him. David knew that Saul was an envious man who wanted to keep the throne for himself and hand it on to his descendants, but David had faith that the Lord would remove Saul from the scene in His good time and in His own way (**1 Sam. 26:7–11**). David dearly loved Jonathan and didn’t want to hurt him by criticizing his father, but now it was a matter of life or death. Jonathan’s response indicates his naivety about his father’s plans. No doubt, with Saul knowing David’s and Jonathan’s relationship, he kept his son in the dark about his ill intents for David. Note the horrible state of Saul’s soul as per **1 Sam. 20:30-34**. When hateful feelings are in the heart, it doesn’t take much for angry words to come out of the mouth (Matt. 12:34–35). Saul had probably been brooding over how David had insulted him by refusing to attend the feast, and the longer he brooded, the more the fire raged within. But instead of attacking David, King Saul attacked his own son! Had the Lord not intervened back in Ramah, Saul would have killed David in the very presence of the Prophet Samuel (1 Sam. 19:22–24), and now he reviled his own son while eating the holy feast! In **1 Samuel 21** we see David as an exile, vacillating between faith (as per his actions in the tabernacle in visiting the place that he so loved, as per Psa. 27:4-6, and where he would find refuge and help among the like-minded believers, the priests) and fear when he thought about Saul (**1 Sam. 21:12**). For the most part, David maintained an attitude of reverence for Saul even when Saul was in the wrong and persecuting him. One of the greatest things we can do for ourselves is to not let unfair authority destroy spiritual virtue that the Lord has cultivated in our lives. We live in a very unfair and unrighteous world. Let us not let the evil world conform us to its evil as did King Saul. God’s plan for us is to be overcomers. This means that God’s will for us is *progressive experiential sanctification*, which means that God’s plan for our lives is for us to have more power over sin and its corrupting influences this week than last week *so we can love the True, Good, and Beautiful* instead of being drawn to the ugly and perverted. Quo Vadis?

1 Peter 1:1–12. Peter encouraged his readers by reminding them that the new birth gave them a living hope in an imperishable future inheritance. The inheritance is sure because believers are shielded by the power of God till it is ready to be revealed. Consequently, Christians may rejoice even when they face trials, since trials will demonstrate that their faith is genuine and thus bring greater glory to Christ. This new birth's hope is based not only on a future inheritance and present blessings, but also on the written Word of God. This future inheritance (κληρονομίαν) is the same word used in the Septuagint to refer to Israel's promised possession of the land (cf., Num. 26:54, 56; 34:2; Josh. 11:23); it was her possession, granted to her as a gift from God. A Christian's inheritance cannot be destroyed by hostile forces, and it will not spoil like overripened fruit or fade in color. Peter used three words, each beginning with the same letter and ending with the same syllable, to describe in a cumulative fashion this inheritance's permanence: can never perish (*aphtharton*), spoil (*amianton*), or fade (*amaranton*). This inheritance is as indestructible as God's Word (cf., 1 Peter 1:23, where Peter again used *aphtharton*). Each Christian's inheritance of eternal life is kept in heaven or "kept watch on" by God so its ultimate possession is secure (cf., Gal. 5:5). **1:5:** Not only is the inheritance guarded, but heirs who have been born into that inheritance are shielded by God's power. **1:6-9:** the joy refers to the truths mentioned in **1:3-5**. Peter stressed that a Christian's joy is independent of his circumstances. James used the same two Greek words (*poikilois peirasmois*, trans. here "all kinds of trials"). The trials themselves are seen as occasions for joy (James 1:2). Though trials may cause temporary grief, they cannot diminish that deep, abiding joy which is rooted in one's living hope in Christ Jesus. The trials of life (trials of evil-suffering do not *directly* from God, though He permits them!) always give us the opportunity to actualize virtue, even the virtue of growing faith by works (James 2:22) as we have studied in our last Bible class. Even stress handled the right way can deepen and strength faith, or as James says, "perfect faith," (2:22). As far as Peter's treatise on the testing of faith, the context must be kept in mind: this faith is not just about God taking care of temporal situations; rather, this faith is about faith in the eternal perspective; in other words, living in the reality of the next life—the hope of future inheritance that Peter has in mind and explicitly mentions in verses **1:3-4**. While, it is certainly legitimate to trust God concerning the temporal issues of life, to do so without a stronger and more persuasive faith in the next life is, frankly speaking, neither authentic nor unadulterated Christianity. The very foundation of Christianity is faith, hope, and love, which all deal with the reality of God and being with Him forever. Let us not cheapen and water down Christianity by making it just about God solving this or that temporal problem. This certainly is not the issue for the Petrine believers. While there is, no doubt, the existence of liminal anxiety about what these believers were facing regarding persecution by the State, the most dominant issue in the Christian life must be preparing oneself to be with the Lord. We are to prepare ourselves daily to meet our Maker, which just is the eternal perspective.

Psalm 121:1–122:9. Psalm 121 is what is known as antiphonal psalm that the pilgrims sang as they journeyed to Jerusalem to celebrate a feast. The leader of the company opened with verses 1–2, which are in the first person, and different people or groups answered him with verses 3–4 and so on, which are in the second person. The theme is God’s protection over His people; the word “keeps” (watches over) is used six times. Safety is something about which the pilgrims would be especially concerned as they journeyed on the roads through the hill country. A pilgrim could stumble and hurt himself, or someone might suffer sunstroke. There was, also, always the possibility of robbers swooping down on them. But the message of the psalm applies to God’s pilgrims today and gives us the assurances we need as we journey in this life. Note the believers’ personal consciousness of God’s care: (1) Help from God as creator of Heaven and earth (1-2); (2) God’s care is continuous (3-4); (3) God is our keeper; (4) God’s care is all around us (7-8). **Psalm 122** is a Pilgrim Psalm. This one focuses on Jerusalem (2, 3, 6) and the house of God (1, 9). In this psalm we see David’s love for the Lord, the House of God, and the people of God, thus demonstrating three aspects of a healthy spiritual life.

Romans 11:36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Pastor Don