

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
July 15, 2016**

1 Samuel 26:1–27:12. David spares Saul again.

1 Peter 2:1–12. God’s people!

Psalms 128:1–129:8. Persecuted? Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil by the good.

COMMENTS:

1 Samuel 26:1–27:12. In **chapter 26** of this reading, we see David’s virtue of prudence (the virtue that keeps all of the other virtues in balance; prudence keeps one calm and collected instead of going to extremes, which we are all apt to do in reaction to unfairness). The Lord must have instructed David to go to Saul’s camp that night, because He sent a deep sleep upon Saul and his men. Saul and Abner, who was Saul’s captain (14:10) and cousin (50), were sleeping at the heart of the camp, surrounded by the wagons and the trench. Because of the supernatural sleep sent by the Lord, David and his nephew Abishai were able to penetrate to where Saul and Abner lay. This is the first mention of Abishai in Scripture. As usual, Saul’s spear was at hand, the symbol of his office and his authority (26:7, 11; 22:6; 18:10; 19:9; 20:33). Abishai was sure that it was God’s will that he kill Saul and put an end to his selfish rule and his relentless persecution of Israel’s true king, but David stopped him. David had settled this matter in the cave (24:1–6) and there was no need to consider it again. He had also seen what the Lord did to Nabal. David was sure that Saul’s life would end at the right time and in the right way, either by natural death or by a judgment from God, and then the throne would be his. When Abishai looked at Saul, he saw an enemy, but David looked at him and saw “the Lord’s anointed.” Instead of taking Saul’s life, David took his spear and water jug, just so he could prove to Saul a second time that he didn’t have designs on the king’s life. David didn’t let Abishai take the spear lest he be tempted to use it. It would have been easy to argue that David had been wrong in the cave and that God was giving him a second chance to kill Saul, but David’s decision was based on principle and not circumstances. David knew that it was wrong to lay hands on God’s anointed, even though the king wasn’t serving as God wanted him to serve. David might not have been able to respect the man, but he did respect the office and the God who gave that office to Saul. Throughout this incident David is calm, deliberate, and in perfect command of his passions (emotions), demonstrating the virtue of prudence and self-control. However, in **chapter 27** we see how the pressure begins to cause David to waver in his faith in God’s providence. David had been a fugitive for about seven years when he decided to flee to Gath, but the idea of leaving Israel had probably already been in his mind (26:19). David had every reason to stay in the land and continue to trust God for protection and provision. After all, he was the anointed king of Israel and knew that eventually God would give him the throne. Abigail assured him of this (25:27–31), and even Saul admitted that David would ultimately triumph (26:25). Saul didn’t keep one of his promises to leave David alone, and the constant flattery of the liars in his inner circle encouraged the king to keep on pursuing David. Living the life of a wilderness exile with his life daily in the balance was starting to depress David, and now he had two wives and 600 men to care for. In about three years, David’s exile would end and he would be ruling the people of Judah in Hebron, but he had no way of knowing this. It takes both faith and patience to receive what God has promised (Heb. 6:12), and David seemed to be wavering in both of these

essentials. He needed the faith and courage expressed in Psalm 27:1–3, but before we criticize him too severely, let's recall the time when we've done the same thing.

1 Peter 2:1–12. God's Word has life, gives life, and nourishes life. We should have appetites for the Word just like hungry and healthy newborn babes! We should want the pure Word, unadulterated, because this alone can help us grow spiritually. When Christians have no appetite for God's Word, and long to be "fed" religious entertainment, they demonstrate that they do not have a healthy spiritual life. A healthy believer starts with the milk and then moves onto strong meat, the more difficult things of the Word of God (1 Cor. 3:1–4; Heb. 5:11–14). The Word of God is also compared to bread (Matt. 4:4) and honey (Ps. 119:103). Sometimes children have no appetite because they have destroyed their appetites by partaking of sin and evil.. Peter warned his readers to "**lay aside**" certain wrong attitudes of heart that would hinder their appetite and spiritual growth. "Malice" means wickedness in general. "Guile" is craftiness, using devious words and actions to get what we want. Of course, if we are guilty of malice and guile, we will try to hide it; and this produces "hypocrisies." Often the cause of ill will is envy, and one result of envy is evil speaking, conversation that tears the other person down. If these attitudes and actions are in our lives, we will lose our appetite for the pure word of God. If we stop feeding on the Word, we stop growing, and we stop enjoying ("**tasting**") the grace that we find in the Lord. When Christians are growing in the Word, they are peacemakers, not troublemakers, and they promote encouragement and unity in the local church. After all, we are all 'stones in the same building (**1 Per. 2:4-8**). Peter wrote this letter to believers living in five different provinces, yet he said that they all belonged to *one* "**spiritual house.**" There is a unity of God's people that transcends all local and individual assemblies and fellowships. We belong to each other because we belong to Christ. Peter also says that all believers are **royal priests (1 Pet. 2:9)**. He also says that we are all citizens of the same **nation (1 Pet. 2:9-10)**. There are at least four pictures in this section that emphasizes our unity as believers: We belong to one family of God and share the same divine nature. We are living stones in one building and priests serving in one temple. We are citizens of the same heavenly homeland. Unity does not eliminate diversity. Not all children in a family are alike, nor are all the stones in a building identical. In fact, it is diversity that gives beauty and richness to a family or building. However, in light of eternity and the Lord, we have far more in common than we do in differences.

Psalm 128:1–129:8. The depictions in **Psalm 128** indicate that this psalm may have been used in a wedding ceremony. Note the prayers for the son, long life, and a life of prosperity. The vine represents not only the wife's fruitfulness but also her cheerfulness and beauty. **Psalm 129** recounts the sufferings of Israel. Israel had suffered mightily under the Egyptians, Philistines, Assyrians, Babylonians, and others; but it had survived. Israel was surrounded by enemy peoples who constantly hated theme. The psalmist speaks for the nation and states that, no matter how severe the persecution, nothing can destroy the people of Israel. Likewise, Christians can expect many enemies and much persecution: "*Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*" (2 Tim. 3:12). The psalm gives three instructions that we should follow when we find ourselves suffering for the Lord: (1) accept it (**Psa. 129:1-2**), (2) benefit from it (**Psa. 129:3-4**), and (3) commit it to the Lord (**Psa. 129:5-8**). We should never return evil for evil under any circumstance for to do so is to be overcome by evil (**Rom. 12:17-21**). To be overcome by evil is to lose love for the good, true, and beautiful. Evil always destroys virtue and with it

capacity for life. Let us not let the evil politics of our day distract us from our advance on the Glory Road.

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

Pastor Don