

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
July 16, 2016

1 Samuel 28:1–29:11. The Witch of Endor.

1 Peter 2:13–17. Living before the world and submission to government.

Psalms 130:1–131:3. Confession (130) and the humility of David (131).

COMMENTS:

1 Samuel 28:1–29:11. In **chapter 28** we have the incident of the Witch of Endor. The setting is that the Philistines threatened war in the Jezreel Valley. Out of fear Saul sought a word from the Lord. Ironically, Saul, who despised the Lord’s will (1 Sam. 14:18–19; 15:26), could not discover it now that he desperately wanted it for just for his own ends. As we have noted in our study of the metaphysics of love/knowledge, the will and intellect, there are 4 (sometimes 5) stages in all human love: apprehension, intention, means, and action. Each stage includes an end (a good for the will) and means to that good. The great evil of Saul is that God became the means instead of the end/goal of life; God was not his greatest good. When God refused to answer Saul, he sought answers from a witch. By deceiving the witch at Endor, Saul convinced her to bring Samuel from the dead. Much to her surprise the appearance was a genuine one, and by it she discovered Saul’s true identity. God intervened in an unprecedented way and actually sent Samuel to prophesy Saul’s judgment. Samuel condemned Saul to death because he “*did not obey the LORD.*” So great was Saul’s despondency that he could not continue. In **chapter 29** God spares David by providentially working it out that David would be exempted from fighting against Israel’s forces. God used the discontent of the Philistines to spare David from fighting against his own people and jeopardizing, in their eyes, his place as the Lord’s anointed. The events of this chapter must be viewed as the providential supply of an alibi, excusing David from any involvement in the death of king Saul. This chapter answers any who might have accused David of conspiring with the Philistines to bring about the downfall of the Saulide dynasty. The events indicate that David could not and did not assist the Philistines in armed hostilities against the Israelites or their king. In fact, on the day of Saul’s death David and his men were a hundred miles away killing Amalekites, fulfilling the command that Saul had neglected (1 Sam. 15:18–19; Exod. 17:15–16; Deut. 25:17–19).

1 Peter 2:13–17. The central section of Peter’s letter (**1 Peter 2:11–3:12**) emphasizes submission in the life of a believer. This is certainly not a popular topic in this day of lawlessness and the quest for “personal fulfillment,” but it is an important one. Peter applied the theme of submission to the life of a believer as a citizen (1 Peter 2:11–17), a worker (1 Peter 2:18–25), a marriage partner (1 Peter 3:1–7), and a member of the Christian assembly (1 Peter 3:8–12). Submission does not mean slavery or subjugation but simply the recognition of God’s authority in our lives, “*for the sake of the Lord*” (**2:13**). God has established the home, human government, and the local church, and He has the right to tell us how these institutions should be run. If we submit honestly to authority “*for the Lord’s sake,*” then we will show honor to all who deserve it. We may not agree with their politics or their practices, but we must respect their position (see Rom. 13). We will also “love the brotherhood,” meaning, of course, the people of God in the church. This is a recurring theme in this letter (1 Peter 1:22; 3:8; 4:8; 5:14). One way we show love to the brethren is by submitting to the authority of the “powers that be,” for we are bound

together with one another in our Christian witness. “Fear God” and “honor the king” go together, since “the powers that be are ordained of God” (Rom. 13:1); and at that time evil Nero was reigning. There really is no freedom without some type of authority, a fact which escapes the shouts of radical protesters who call for the dismantling of the police. Usurpation of authority always ends up destroying true freedom. Recall Satan’s offer to our first parents of freedom without authority, but they ended up losing both freedom and authority. Any time we set ourselves up as our own authority for our own freedom, we eventually will lose both, sooner or later.

Psalm 130:1–131:3. The sixth of the seven Penitential Psalms, **Psalm 130** emphasizes what God does for helpless people who cry out to Him for mercy. Perhaps the Jewish pilgrims used this psalm to confess their sins and seek God’s forgiveness and blessing as they made their way to the sanctuary. (See Heb. 10:19–25 for the kind of preparation believers today need when they approach the Lord.) No matter what our need, when we call upon the Lord in faith, He hears us and makes the changes needed in our lives. Of course, this confession should not be confused with conduit confession, which is more of a ritual than a real relationship with God. Virtue confession is far more profound because it is more real. Note David in **Psalm 131**; if anyone in Israel had reasons to be proud, it was David. The eighth son of a common citizen, he began as a humble shepherd and yet became Israel’s greatest king. A courageous soldier, a gifted general and tactician, and a sincere man of God, it was David who defeated Israel’s enemies, expanded her boundaries, and amassed the wealth that Solomon used to build the temple. He wrote nearly half of the psalms, and though (like all of us) he was guilty of disobeying the Lord, he was always repentant (as a man after God’s heart, his repentance was one of virtue, not rote or mechanical or conduit confession) and sought God’s merciful forgiveness. It was for David’s sake that the Lord kept the light burning in Jerusalem during the years of Judah’s decay, and it was from David’s line that Jesus Christ came into this world. Except for a lapses into selfishness and sin (seeing evil as a good like Bathsheba, and a good as an evil, like Uriah her beloved husband), David walked with the Lord in a humble spirit. In this brief psalm, he tells us the essentials of a life that glorifies God and accomplishes His work on earth.

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

Pastor Don