

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
July 21, 2016**

2 Samuel 7:1–8:18. David and God, as best friends, make promises to each other.

1 Peter 4:12–19. If we suffer, it should be for righteousness.

Psalms 137:1–9. Recalling the past blessings after divine discipline.

COMMENTS:

2 Samuel 7:1–8:18. In our last Bible class, I noted that true friendship is always a two-way street with each person desiring the good of the other for the sake of the other, not for self. A true friend is always looking out for the best *for his friend*, regardless of how it might adversely affect himself. I also noted how this principle applies to the beauty of being friends with God. We can see the beauty of the friendship between David and His Lord in **chapter 7** in this reading. In **7:1-3**, David, the man after God’s own heart, desires to build a Temple for the Lord. That David wanted to build a house for the Lord doesn’t surprise us, because David was a man after God’s own heart and longed to honor the Lord in every possible way. What an honor to be called a man after God’s own heart by God Himself: Acts 13:22 "*And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'*" To be a man after God’s own heart is to love the Lord. As I noted in our last Bible class, a chief characteristic of love is delight. While the intellect is involved in specifying the object of love, it is the will that loves. For example, in loving God, the intellect thinks about God, but the will finds delight in the content that the intellect provides. When we love someone or something there is always delight in the will as we consider the goodness of the object. While we cannot love what we do not know (intellect), love far outstrips knowledge in intensity and motivation towards what we perceive as a good. As I have pointed out many times of late, our loves drive our entire lives more than our intellects, as our intellects often *find reasons* to justify the goods our wills seek. We need to recognize this danger in our lives, namely, that we are more driven by our wills seeking goods than our rationality. This is most evident when we sin, which are always acts of irrationality motivated by a will that sees some good in an evil or sinful act. But let us get back to David: During his years of exile, David had vowed to the Lord that he would build Him a temple, and his bringing the Ark to Jerusalem was surely the first step toward fulfilling that vow. Now it troubled David that he was living in a comfortable stone house with cedar paneling while God’s throne was in a tent, and he shared his burden with Nathan. At first Nathan the prophet encourages him, but then the Lord reveals to Nathan that David will not be allowed to construct the temple. David’s job was to fight battles and to make Israel’s borders secure. According to 1 Chronicles 22:8, the fact that David was a man of war who had shed much blood was one reason why he could not build the temple. His son Solomon would be “a man of peace and rest” (1 Chron. 22:9) and he would be the one to build the temple. Though disappointed, David is permitted to know the plans of the temple and he expends great effort to gather materials for the building (1 Chron. 22:14; 29:1–8). In a very real sense, the temple belonged to David almost as much as to Solomon. In further response to David’s request, the Lord reveals through Nathan that he will continue to bless David and the entire nation (**7:8–17**). God promises to make David’s name great, just as he has promised to do for Abraham, His other friend (Gen. 12:2;

James 2:23). Note the extent of the promise that the Lord makes to David: He announces that He will build a house for David. David is the first king in a dynasty that will last forever. Unlike the judges or Saul before him, David's family will continue to rule for generations. The son who will immediately succeed him (Solomon) will build the Lord's temple, and his kingdom will be powerful and secure. In addition to all this, God promises to maintain a special father-son relationship with each king, assuring him of his counsel and empowering. As the Lord's "son," however, the king has to obey his commands faithfully. If the king sins, God will punish him, but *He will not take the throne away from David's family* (1 Kings 11:34). Eventually a King, Jesus Christ, would arise who would reign "with justice and righteousness" (Isa. 9:7) and the Spirit of the Lord would rest on him in a powerful way (Isa. 11:2). Many of the later prophecies about the Messiah draw upon this great promise to David as they prefigure the coming Ruler. Amazed at what he has heard from Nathan, David enters the tent he has set up for the ark and worships the Lord (**7:18–29**). As he prays he addresses the Lord seven times as the "*Sovereign Lord*," a title that stresses God's control over the nations and his covenant relationship with Israel. It is a title frequently used in prayer. David marvels that God has made such promises to him and his family, for after all, why did he deserve such honor? Unlike Saul, who became proud in his role as king, David is not impressed with his own importance. Note David's humility, solemnity, and faith in response to the Lord's magnificent, eternal promises to the House of David. The battles described in **chapter 8** may have taken place over a period of years. Almost all of the nations adjacent to Israel's borders fought against David, perhaps in an attempt to keep him from becoming too powerful. But by defeating them, David became the head of a large and influential kingdom (**8:1–6**). As a result of his military success, David receives a large amount of plunder and tribute payments from surrounding nations (**8:7–14**). Bronze, silver, and gold begin to pile up in Jerusalem. Even friendly neighbors such as Tou, king of Hamath, send gifts of precious metal to David. In recognition of the Lord's blessing upon his rule, David dedicates many of these articles to the Lord, and later on they will be used in the construction of the temple. David's victory over the Edomites gives him control of the rich copper mines south of the Dead Sea, adding further to his wealth. Unlike many of the later kings, David's rule is characterized by justice and righteousness, and this is part of the reason for his success (**8:15–18**).

1 Peter 4:12–19. Peter begins this section by telling his readers how not to respond to trials. Christians are told not to be surprised at the *fiery* trials of life (**12**). As ambassadors of Christ, we live in hostile territory of Satan's *kosmos*. And on top of that we live in a fallen world, and thus subject to its curses, as in cases of many illnesses and health problems that we inherit. Moreover, Peter wants Christians to realize that trials are part of the normal Christian life. But, it is not as if God *directly* sends evil testing to believers. Rather, He permits human free choices to play itself out in a broken, fallen, cursed world and this often results in unjust suffering for the believer, both in health as well as in interactions with others. Note the connection between our sufferings and the suffering that Christ experienced in His life in **4:13** in the phrase "*partake of Christ's sufferings*." As representatives of Jesus on earth, we suffer in His place as the world rejects Him through us (see Acts 9:4–5; 2 Cor. 1:5; Col 1:24). We should rejoice in such suffering because of the accompanying reward and privilege of following Christ. The phrase "*when His glory is revealed*" refers to Jesus' second coming when He will reward His faithful followers (1 Cor. 3:10–15; Col 3:1–4). **4:14:** After noting that being persecuted for Christ's sake is normal and part of what God uses to refine our eternal perspective, Peter writes that persecution is actually a sign of great approval/blessing from God. Jesus said the same thing in the last beatitude and His

explanation that followed (Matt 5:10–12). **4:15:** Not all suffering by Christians is for Christ’s glory, for there is both deserved and undeserved suffering. Christians may suffer justly for sin or unjustly for Christ. The list of causes for deserved suffering moves from the worst (*murder*) to the least (*busybody*). An *evildoer* refers to someone guilty of malicious conduct that is generally wicked though not criminal. A *busybody* gets into everyone else’s business. **4:16:** The proper response to suffering is not to be ashamed but to glorify God—*rather than complain, which most certainly does not glorify God in any way*. **4:17:** The *judgment* does not refer to God’s judgment of the lost world because of how they treat the Church. This is a judgment of believers, called here the *house of God*. The temporal suffering of believers as a result of sin serves as general revelation to the world of the coming judgment it faces from God. **4:18:** Peter quotes Proverbs 11:31 to affirm the certainty of the judgment of the wicked. And if He will not let them get away with anything (“scarcely saved”), the “ungodly” do not have a chance. **4:19:** Peter now applies the truth (*therefore*) to life with a command addressed to those who are suffering righteously. The phrase “*according to the will of God*” looks back on the suffering for being a Christian (13–14). Those who suffer for doing the will of God must commit their souls (their lives) to Him. If God allows His children to suffer as a result of doing good, then all believers can do is trust that He knows why He allows the suffering (Rom 8:28). Like the soldier sent on a mission who trusts his commander not to ask him to die needlessly, though he might die, believers are to trust their faithful Creator never to err in what He permits and asks of them.

Psalms 137:1–9. In sad but beautiful language the exiled psalmist mourned the plight of those who wept in a strange land and could not sing their songs of Zion (**137:1-6**). Then, in contrast to his intense love for Zion we see his hatred for the destroyers of Zion; so he turned to voice imprecations against Edom and Babylon who had destroyed the city of God (**137:7-9**). Sometimes we have to lose things to really appreciate them. Here were the exiled Jews in Babylon, mourning the loss of everything that was important to them, and asking themselves, “Did we really appreciate what the Lord gave us—our land, our city, the temple, our home, our children?” At least this one man made a vow when he was in exile, that he would always remember Jerusalem and make it the highest priority and greatest joy in his life. By “Jerusalem,” of course, he meant the Lord, the temple and its ministry, the city and its people, and the ministry of Israel to the world. Note *also* that before he wrote about God’s judgments on Edom and Babylon (**7–9**), he judged himself for his own carelessness and even asked God to punish him if he failed to keep his vow. As we look back on life and evaluate our life experiences in light of eternity, it is important that we ask God to “So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom” (Psa. 90:12).

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

Pastor Don