

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
July 25, 2016**

2 Samuel 14:1–15:37. Absalom’s estrangement (14) and coup (15).

2 Peter 1:16–21. The Word of God is a shining light in our dark world.

Psalms 141:1–142:7. David’s prayer for sanctification (expressing his 2nd order desire).

COMMENTS:

2 Samuel 14:1–15:37. Perhaps the best way to handle this section is to start with an **historical summary**: Since David had responded so well to Nathan’s indirect approach with respect to Bathsheba in 2 Sam. 12:1–7, Joab tries the same method with reference to Absalom (**14:1–11**). Apparently Joab believed that Absalom was next in line for the throne and that David really deep down wanted to be reconciled to his son. Moreover, Joab hoped that by bringing Absalom back home, David could avoid a struggle for the throne among his heir. Of course, the story told by the wise woman is designed to bring about reconciliation between David and Absalom. David rules in the woman’s favor, perhaps due to the fact that she claims to be a widow. Once David promised to spare the guilty son from death, the wise woman of Tekoa cautiously applies the decision he has made to his own situation with Absalom (**14:12–20**). David comes to realize that Joab has sent the woman to him, but he believes that Joab is right about Absalom. Grateful that the king has taken this “advice,” Joab goes to Geshur to bring Absalom home (**14:21–27**). When he arrives in Jerusalem, Absalom is not allowed to see David, an indication that David is still having trouble reconciling with Absalom. Because of his good looks, Absalom soon becomes very popular with the people. As far as Absalom’s thick hair, in the ancient world, kings and warriors were often depicted with long hair as a sign of strength and courage. Note also that he has a daughter named after Tamar. After two years in Jerusalem, Absalom demands to see the king to find out what his status (**14:28–33**). He wants David either to punish him or forgive him and to do so openly. In their face-to-face confrontation David kisses Absalom as a sign that he is forgiven and restored to the royal family. Note there is no indication that Absalom has repented of Amnon’s murder. For four years Absalom develops a strategy to increase his popularity and chances for the throne (**15:1–12**). Pretending to be a champion of justice, Absalom wins the hearts of the people by agreeing with their complaints against the king. Handsome and charming, he personally meets large numbers of people and assures them that he is their friend. All this time David suspects nothing. Absalom was probably close to thirty years old and David about sixty. Very few individuals know about Absalom’s plans, not even the guests he has invited from Jerusalem. From the outset, however, Absalom enjoys the support of key individuals, especially David’s top advisor, Ahithophel. With their help, the coup has a good chance of succeeding. Up to this point in his career David had never suffered a defeat in battle, but now he is forced to flee his beloved Jerusalem (**15:13–23**). David does not want to subject the city to the horrors of war, so he takes his men and heads east toward the Jordan River. If he stays in Jerusalem, David is not sure how much support he will have. Absalom is a popular young prince and his seizing of the throne might have been interpreted as a logical succession to his father’s rule. Since David had been a protector of the priests and since he had brought the ark to Jerusalem, it seemed fitting for the priests and the ark to leave the capital with David. Both Zadok and Abiathar are with him and their presence seems to insure God’s blessing upon David. Yet David knows that the proximity

of the priests and the ark are not necessary, and he feels strongly that the ark should remain in Jerusalem as a sign that God is the true King of Israel. Besides, if Zadok and Abiathar stay in the city they can keep David informed about Absalom's activities (15:24–29). Leaving his trusted companions behind, David continues his sorrowful trek up the Mount of Olives. At the summit he meets Hushai, another of his close advisors, who has heard the news about Absalom (15:30–37). **Spiritual application:** These hard times were part of divine discipline on David for his adultery and murder. However, during these difficult days of divine discipline (that were promised to continue even after the initial and complete divine forgiveness), David recognized that God's loving hand was upon him; and he would have admitted that he deserved every blow. At the same time, He believed that God's gracious hand of power was still at work in his life and that the Lord had not forsaken him as He forsook Saul. Again, the Lord was still working out His perfect will, and never did David rise to greater heights of faith and submission than when he was forced to leave Jerusalem and hide in the wilderness. We have all sinned in many ways and there are times when the consequences of those sins continue to cause us pain long after the evil we have committed and have been forgiven of. It is in these times that we find out what we really think of the Lord. A person who only follows the Lord or "loves" Him for His blessings will become increasingly bitter and evil in such hard times as illustrated with Saul. However, for those who truly love the Lord, the difficulties of life only serve to draw him closer and thus make him a better, more contrite, humble and a loving person. How are we fairing in our difficulties? Are we becoming better and more noble (David) or bitter and more evil (Saul)?

2 Peter 1:16–21. Note in 1:19 that the Word of God is compared to a light that shines in a dark place. The world, our country, is increasingly becoming a dark place—just consider the recent events of police officers being slaughtered on the streets by black racists and our President's nerve (and sympathy for black racists) to inject his "sermonizing" and moralizing about Jim Crow days in the presence of the policemen's widows at the funerals. Moreover, consider how our President in response to Christians being beheaded feels the need to remind us of the atrocities of the Crusades. The problem is not just with our leaders, consider how society increasingly vilifies those who do not accept the aberrancy of gay and transgender standards. Consider how few Christians see the value or need to gather with other believers in local churches, especially during their so important *work week*, on Wednesdays. However, no matter the extent of the darkness in our nation's leadership, in society, and in Christianity, let us take Peter's reminder to heart: *the Word of God is a light that shines in a dark place*. God is light and His Word is light: "*Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*" (Ps. 119:105). When Jesus Christ began His ministry, "*the people which sat in darkness saw great light*" (Matt. 4:16). His coming into this world was the dawning of a new day (Luke 1:78). We Christians are the light of the world (Matt. 5:14–16), and it is our privilege and responsibility to hold forth the Word of life (Phil. 2:14–16). —God's light—so that men might see the way to the True, Good, and Beautiful instead of rummaging through the skank of the relativistic garbage of our age. Note how Peter affirms the truth of the sure Word of God. "*But the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night*" (2 Peter 3:10). Before the day dawns, the "day star" (or morning star) shines brightly as the herald of the dawn. To the church, Jesus Christ is "*the Bright and Morning Star*" (Rev. 22:16). He is also the "*Sun of Righteousness*," who will bring healing to believers but judgment to unbelievers (Mal. 4:1–2). How thankful we ought to be for God's sure and shining Word, and how we ought to heed it and live it in these dark days *regardless of what others are doing or not doing!*

Psalm 141:1–142:7. Note the powerful second-person relationship David has with his Lord in this section as he prays for *divine* sanctification/virtue (141:1-7) and *divine* protection (141:8-142:7). Note David's confidence in the goodness of God in the last verse in this section.

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

Pastor Don