

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”**  
**July 26, 2016**

**2 Samuel 16:1–17:29.** Absalom’s solidification of power (16) and persecution of David (17).

**2 Peter 2:1–11.** False teachers: their future and character.

**Psalm 143:1–12.** Living according to our prayer life.

**COMMENTS:**

**2 Samuel 16:1–17:29. Overview:** This section is about the struggle between father and son, David and Absalom. Absalom is able to solidify his power, and David is forced to flee Jerusalem. The question throughout this section is ‘Which one of them would get support for Saul’s family?’ Let us note a couple of characters. Note how Ziba, Saul’s servant and manager of Mephibosheth’s estate, maliciously defames Mephibosheth to better himself. Note Shimei’s curses and how he taunted David with the observation that since he was “a man of blood” God was now avenging the death of Saul and his family by driving David from power. This was untrue, of course, for David had not raised his hand against Saul, whom he regarded as the anointed of the Lord, but had taken every measure to deal graciously with Saul’s survivors. Shimei’s real complaint, as is evident from his own admission, was that David sat on the throne of Saul as indicated by ‘Saul, in whose place you have reigned.’ **Spiritual application:** Note David’s attitude in face of all of this hostility during this very turbulent time: “*here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him*” (15:26). Although evil-suffering as such does not come directly from God and not absolutely necessary for spiritual growth, *it always provides opportunity to orient us to the eternal perspective*, the place of true strength, as we noted in our last Bible class in Hebrews 11:36-38: *Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented-- 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.* The salient issue in all of our temporal adversities is always the eternal perspective as the Lord demonstrated in the Beatitudes and throughout the New Testament (cf., Matt. 5:2-12; Col 3:1-3; Heb. 11). But what about David and these sufferings? What did they do for him? First, it should be noted, in contrast to the common myth that sufferings always make a believer better if he trusts God, sufferings in and of themselves do not make a believer better, even if he is trusting the Lord—trusting the Lord does not in and of itself translate to an obedient heart, living for God, let alone a spiritually virtuous life. As a matter of fact, most believers in the Bible (cf., Exodus generation, and King Saul) increase in the vice of bitterness and decrease in love and delight for the Lord and His plan for their lives during difficult times. One cannot complain and carp and at the same time see the Lord and the gift of life the precious gifts that they are. But what about David? As I mentioned above, note his attitude in **2 Sam. 15:26:** “*here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him.*” Unless and until we stop trying to run the “show” and controlling our circumstances, we can never find peace let alone be able to parlay hardships into blessings. What is more is that it actually takes more than simply turning it over to the Lord—even though that may provide some temporal peace. It takes nothing less than loving God first and foremost; that is to say as one greatest good. For if one just trusts the Lord to gain some peace, then peace can be viewed at the greatest good, not God—and the person will find themselves in the same mess when another crisis takes place. Meanwhile the evil mindset of

making other things a greater good than God remains. In short, God can never be the means to some greater good even if that good is our health or peace. God is the end and everything else is but the means to stay alive to fulfill His plan. It was *precisely* because David loved the Lord for His own sake, truly a man after God's own heart, that he was blessed in and through these trials. It is no accident that Jesus cited many of the psalms that came from the heart of David. Moreover, it was in these sufferings that David became more like Christ not only in virtue but in experiences: He was rejected by his own people and betrayed by his own familiar friend. He gave up everything for the sake of the people and would have surrendered his own life to save his rebellious son who deserved to die. Like Jesus, David crossed the Kidron and went up Mount Olivet. He was falsely accused and shamefully treated, and yet he submitted to the sovereign will of God. David had lost his throne, but Yahweh was still on the throne and would keep His promises with His servant. Faithful to His covenant, the Lord remembered David and all the hardships that he endured (Psa. 132:1) just as He remembers all of His people. Who are we that God would so love and pursue us? What amazing grace!

**2 Peter 2:1–11.** This section deals with warnings about false teachers. It is noteworthy that even the unsaved in this section are included in Christ's atonement as they are spoken of as those who *deny the Lord that bought them* (2:1). Note how sense appetites are the motivation for those who follow false teachers (2:2). Note in **verse 3** that bait that is used to lure believers into false doctrine: *covetousness*. After Peter notes the judgment on unbelievers and deliverance for believers (2:4-9), he notes the character of false teachers in **2:10-11**, namely, sexual immorality and rejection of authority. It is no accident that rejection of authority and sexual immorality often go hand in hand as one motivates the other.

**Psalms 143:1–12.** At the beginning of this psalm, the psalmist remarks, "*O Yahweh, hear my prayer; listen to my supplications. In your faithfulness answer me*" (143:1). He then adds, "*And do not enter into judgment with your servant, because no one alive is righteous before you*" (143:2). The psalmist's prayers are well spoken, but are they honest? The psalmist goes on, "*Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; your Spirit is good. Lead me onto level ground*" (143:10). This verse demonstrates that he is not spouting rhetoric; he is living in reality. We're often tempted to "convince" God to see things our way. Instead, we should be determined to see things His way. God is not a judge in a courtroom drama. Furthermore, His Son has already paid the price for our sins. The only requirement on our part is to enter into a relationship with Him. We cannot justify our actions, for it is only by God's goodness that we are able to do good, and it's only out of disobedience and ungratefulness that we act poorly (bad thinking, bad desires, and bad affections/passions). We need to change our perceptions so that our *conversations with God* become holistic. We should not just ask; we must act. We should not just speak; we must listen. We should not just petition; we must enter into an honest relationship with God. At the end of our prayers we often say "amen," which means "I believe it," which points to the fact that the end of the prayer really is the beginning of a life that is going to live according to the prayer, a prayer that exalts God and takes delight in Him and the gift of life.

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

*Pastor Don*