

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
July 27, 2016**

2 Samuel 18:1–33. Absalom’s death and David’s mourning.

2 Peter 2:12–22. More on false teachers.

Psalms 144:1–15. God’s past, present, and future deliverance.

COMMENTS:

2 Samuel 18:1–33. In the **first eighteen verses** we have the circumstances around Absalom’s death. Many men died (“great slaughter”) in the battle between Absalom’s men and David’s men (**18:7**). David’s men were able to show their superior experience, while Absalom’s troops knew little about the terrain and suffered heavily as a result (**18:8**). It became clear that there was not going to be peace until either Absalom or David was dead. Joab ensured that Absalom’s life was ended, and with his death the battle and the war ended too (**18:15–16**). Joab saw matters more clearly than David, who found it impossible to view his son as an enemy. In **18:19–33** we have the recording of the news of Absalom’s death. The choice of a messenger to the king depended on the content of the news. But was the news good or bad? Ahimaaz was confident that the news was good, but Joab knew that David was more interested in Absalom’s welfare than in the outcome of the battle. So Joab chose a foreign soldier to bring David the bad news of Absalom’s death. Note David’s final ironic words in **18:33**: if he had simply remained in Jerusalem he would have died instead of Absalom! David’s deep grief proves how real was God’s punishment, foretold by Nathan (**2 Sam. 12:10**). Of course, in this punishment it is not as if God caused Absalom to revolt and persecute David. God simply used the formal causes (Absalom’s free will) to fulfill His plan. God provides the existential and efficient cause of all that is along with their natural properties. To posit that God caused David’s son to become his enemy is to ascribe activity normally ascribed to Satan. It is Satan who possesses people, deceives people, and attempts to get them to do things that they naturally would be opposed to. God simply used Absalom’s nollition (refusal to do good) for His purpose in human history, namely divine discipline on David. Note David’s tears that reveal the broken heart of a loving father. Although many criticize David for caring more for his son than his own troops, I think it is best to withhold judgment here. It would be better to sympathize as far as we can, than to sit in judgment upon a case which many of us have never experienced. David wept when he heard about the death of Jonathan and Saul (**1:11–12**), the murder of Abner (**3:32**), and the murder of Amnon (**13:33–36**), so why shouldn’t he weep over the death of his beloved son Absalom? Once again, we see the heart of God revealed in the heart of David, for Christ died for us when we were sinners and living as the enemies of God (Rom. 5:7–10). David would have died for Absalom: *O my son Absalom-- my son Absalom-- if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!* (**18:33**), and Jesus did die for us!

2 Peter 2:12–22. This section deals with false teachers who are unbelievers (**2:12–17**) as well as their Christian victims (**2:18–22**). Beginning with **2:18**, Peter turns to describe the Christian victims of the false teachers he has been talking about in **2:1–17**. These victims are people who have actually escaped from those who live in error. They are Christians who have made a break from the corrupt lifestyles around them. But when they listen to the voice of these teachers of error, if they succumb to that teaching, they are dragged back into the moral corruption of the

unregenerate world. Verse **20** indicates that the Christians who were duped were not new believers for they had experienced growth in “the knowledge of Jesus Christ.” Peter notes that when believers fall for false teaching their latter state is often worse than their beginning state. This last idea, of course, does not suggest that such people (duped believers) end in Hell. On the contrary, it refers instead to the actual conduct of such people; since conduct is precisely what is being discussed. When anyone escapes an immoral lifestyle through the knowledge of the Lord, and then if he abandons the holiness he has found, he will often sink more deeply than ever into the pollutions of the world. Although the Bible always affirms that salvation is absolutely free and can never be lost, it never treats a Christian’s defection from God’s path lightly. For a godly saved person to abandon the Lord’s righteous standards is to court His righteous wrath and to invite tragic personal disaster. Note how a Christian’s return to the filth of sin that he once rejected is described in the most disgusting depictions (**2:22**).

Psalm 144:1–15. After thanking God for glorious deliverances in past battles, and marveling that God took note of perishing people, King David prayed for divine intervention in combat. He expressed confidence that because the Lord gives victory, the nation would experience peace and prosperity once again. Note that the goal in this victory is for security for all of the people (**144:12-14**). In this psalm David speaks about past deliverances (**144:1-4**), the need for present deliverance (**144:5-11**), and future prosperity made possible by military victory (**144:12-15**).

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

Pastor Don