

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
July 29, 2016

2 Samuel 20:1–21:22. The reestablishment of David’s authority.

2 Peter 3:14–18. Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalms 146:1–10. The transcendence and immanency of God.

COMMENTS:

2 Samuel 20:1–21:22. In this section we see David’s new struggles. One can discern at least four different conflicts that David had to deal with after Absalom’s rebellion had been crushed: **(1) The tribal conflict with northern tribes of Israel, 20:1-26.** The conflict between Judah and Israel had deep roots, just like the political conflicts that divide many nations today. All it takes to light the fires of conflict is a speech from a would-be leader, and Sheba was that leader. **(2) David’s personal conflict with his commanders, Amasa, Abishai, and Joab, 20:4-13.** Once more, we see the promised divine discipline by the sword in David’s family in that Amasa was David’s cousin. There was no reason why Amasa should be killed. True, he had joined forces with Absalom, but David had declared a general amnesty that included Joab, who had killed Absalom. Joab left Amasa lying in a pool of blood on the highway, a sight that brought the marching army to a halt. **(3) Ethnic conflict (21:1-14).** In this section we have the virtual elimination of the house of Saul with the execution of seven of his sons as recompense for Saul’s earlier transgressions in slaughtering Gibeonites. **(4) National conflict with the Philistines (21:15-22).** The Philistines were Israel’s most foreboding foreign threat during David’s lifetime. They had been the primary focus of Israel’s military efforts since the days of Samson, and individuals who helped Israel defeat them were lionized. The four Israelite heroes mentioned in this section were particularly noteworthy because they defeated four “of the descendants of the Rapha,” a reference to the gigantic Rephaites. The point in this section is to note the qualities and achievements of others who were like David as giant killers.

2 Peter 3:14–18. Note the command to *grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* (αὐξάνετε δὲ ἐν χάριτι καὶ γνώσει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), **3:18.** Rather than thinking of this in *general* terms such as commands to continue taking in Bible doctrine, using 1 John 1:9, and applying Bible doctrine daily, let us consider the *specific* context of the previous verse: **2 Peter 3:17** *You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked,* which is directly connected with this command in **2 Peter 3:18** *but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.* The “but” is δὲ and shows that the two verses are inextricably connected. Let us note a few things that this growth in grace and knowledge includes. The translated word “beware” (φυλάσσεσθε) means to “*be constantly guarding yourself.*” Peter’s readers knew the truth, but he warned them that knowledge alone was not sufficient protection. They had to be on their guard; they had to be alert. It is easy for people who have a knowledge of doctrine to grow overconfident and to forget the warning, “*Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall*” (1 Cor. 10:12). What specific danger did Peter see? That believers could be “*led away together with the error of the wicked*” (literal translation). We are to live in the sphere of the truth, not error (2 John 1–2). The word “wicked” (**2 Peter 3:17**) means “the lawless” (τῶν

ἀθέσιμον). They promised these believers freedom (2 Peter 2:19), but that freedom turns out to be lawlessness. True Christians cannot fall from salvation and be lost, but they can fall from their own “steadfastness.” What was this steadfastness? Being “*established in the present truth*” (2 Peter 1:12). The stability of the Christian comes from his faith in the Word of God, his knowledge of that Word, and his ability to use that Word in the practical decisions of life *for himself*. How can we as believers maintain our steadfastness and avoid being among the “unstable souls” who are easily beguiled and led astray? By growing spiritually. “*We are to constantly grow*” We should not grow “in spurts,” but in constant development. And we must grow “*in grace*.” This has to do with Christian character traits, the very things Peter wrote about in 2 Peter 1:2–7. We are all saved by grace (Eph. 2:8–9), but grace does not end there! We must also be strengthened by grace (2 Tim. 2:1–4). God’s grace can enable us to endure suffering (2 Cor. 12:7–10). Our God is “*the God of all grace*” (1 Peter 5:10), who “*giveth grace unto the humble*” (James 4:6). As we study His Word, we learn about the various aspects of grace that are available to us as children of God. We are stewards of “*the manifold grace of God*” (1 Peter 4:10). There is grace for every situation and every challenge of life. “*But by the grace of God I am what I am*” wrote Paul (1 Cor. 15:10), and that should be our testimony as well. Growing in grace often includes experiencing trials and even suffering from this broken, cursed world. The lessons learn in the “school of grace” may seem costly, but they are worth it. To grow in grace means to become more like the Lord Jesus Christ, from whom we receive all the grace that we need (John 1:16). We are not only to grow in grace, we are to grow in “*knowledge*.” How easy it is to grow in knowledge but not in grace and love! All of us know far more doctrine than we really live. However, knowledge without grace is a terrible weapon, and grace without knowledge can be very shallow. But when we combine grace and knowledge, we have a marvelous power for building our lives. But note that we are challenged to grow, not just in knowledge of the Bible, as good as that is, but “*in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*.” It is one thing to ‘know the Bible,’ and quite another thing to know the Son of God, the central theme of the Bible. The better we know Christ through the Word, the more we grow in grace; the more we grow in grace, the better we understand the Word of God. In sum, the believer must constantly be guarding himself, lest he be led away into error; he also must be constantly growing in grace and knowledge. This requires diligence! It demands discipline and priorities. Nobody automatically drifts into spiritual growth and stability, but anybody can drift out of dedication and growth. “*For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it*” (Heb. 2:1). In closing, I would add that it is always easier to look for quick fixes than real understanding, just as it is always easier to tell a lie or falsehood or a distorted truth than the Whole Truth, the Total Truth.

Psalm 146:1–10. Praise for the greatness and the grace of God is the subject of this psalm as well as of Psalm 145 and others. Here the psalmist vowed to praise God all his life because the One who made the heavens and the earth is faithful and righteous to the oppressed of the earth. Note the blending of the power and transcendence of God—His Power over all things and His concern for the hungry and oppressed.

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

Pastor Don