

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
July 31, 2016

2 Samuel 23:1–24:25. David’s greatness and pride.

Jude 1:17–25. Final exhortations.

Psalms 148:1–150:6. Praise the Lord.

COMMENTS:

2 Samuel 23:1–24:25. In the **first seven verses** of this section we get insights into the life of David. David never ceased to marvel that God would call him to become the king of Israel, to lead God’s people, fight God’s battles, and even write God’s Word. Moreover, it was through David’s descendants that God would bring the Messiah into the world. From the human perspective, David was a “nobody,” a shepherd, the youngest of eight sons in an ordinary Jewish family; nevertheless, God selected him and made him Israel’s greatest king. David didn’t promote himself to achieve greatness; it was the Lord who chose him and elevated him to the throne. It took the Lord thirty years to develop virtue in David, first with the sheep in the pastures, then with Saul in the army camp, and finally with his own fighting men in the Judean wilderness. However, behind it all was the principle that God empowers those whom He calls. David used a beautiful metaphor to picture the work of the leader: rain and sunshine that together produce useful fruit instead of painful thorns (**23:4–7**). David exemplified this principle in his own life, for when he came to the throne it meant the dawning of a new day for the nation of Israel. In **23:5**, David again used the image of fruit: “*Will he not bring to fruition my salvation and grant me my every desire?*” David’s desire was that God would fulfill His promise and send the Messiah, who would be born from David’s descendants. Empowered by the Lord, David had been able for the most part to rule in righteousness, bringing peace and prosperity to the whole nation. His rule was a foretaste of the unending reign of his son, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, a rule marked by perfect justice and righteousness. As his own life comes to an end, David rejoices that God has made with him “an everlasting covenant” (**23:5**), assuring his descendants of continuing rule. According to **23:6–7** and Psalm 110, this would ultimately mean the destruction of wicked men when Christ places his enemies under his feet. **Chapter 24** covers David’s sin of pride as well as his repentance. In Samuel **24:1** we are told that God incited David to number the people, while 1 Chronicles 21:1 names Satan as the culprit. Both are true: God permitted Satan to tempt David. When David confessed his sins of adultery and murder, David said, “I have sinned”; but when he confessed his sin of numbering the people, he said, “I have sinned *greatly*.” Most of us would consider his sins relating to Bathsheba far worse than the sin of numbering the people, and far more foolish, but David saw the enormity of what he had done. David’s sins with Bathsheba took the lives of four of David’s sons (the baby, Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah) plus the life of Uriah; but after the census, God sent a plague that took the lives of seventy thousand people. The Lord must have agreed with David that he had indeed sinned greatly. David’s sin with Bathsheba was a sin of the flesh, a yielding to lust after an afternoon of laziness, but the census was a sin of the spirit, a conscious and willful act of rebellion against God. It was motivated by pride, and pride is number one on the list of the sins that God hates (Prov. 6:16–17)

Jude 1:17–25. Jude sums up his warnings to these believers in this section. He wants them to remember the words spoken by the apostles (17). The apostles are those men commissioned by the Lord and given authority to establish the church. Thus Jude wants his readers to remember what the apostles said (God’s Word). When we forget God’s Word, we become vulnerable to false teachers, false doctrines, and sinful behavior. God protects His loved ones (beloved) when they know, believe, and obey His Word. Note the characteristics of the ungodly in verses **18-19**. In **verses 20-21** we are told to keep ourselves in the love of God. The safest place to avoid all spiritual harm is in the love of God, and as we have been noting, this is more about the activity of the will/appetite rather than the intellect. Jude lists three important areas to keep oneself in the love of God. First, believers must build themselves up in the faith. Second, they must “pray in the Holy Spirit,” according to the will of God (Rom. 8:26–27). Third, they are to look forward to the mercy of the Lord. In **24–25** Jude concludes his letter by praising God who is able to keep believers from falling. “*Falling*” in light of verses 22 and 23 pertains to those who are taken in by the false teachers, not necessarily to the point of losing salvation, since they can be recovered (“snatched from the fire”). If the believer follows the advice of verses **20–21**, God can prevent such falling. In a sort of doxological summary, Jude points out that believers should acknowledge four things about God: 1) glory—moral excellence; 2) majesty—awesomeness; power—3) sovereign ability; and 4) authority—supremacy over all creation.

Psalms 148:1–150:6. The word “praise” is used thirteen times in these fourteen verses. The psalm begins in the highest heavens and ends with the little nation of Israel. In **148:1-6** we have the heavens praising the Lord; **148:7-13** portrays the earth praising the Lord, and in **148:14** the people of Israel praise the Lord. **Psalms 150** continues the theme of worshipping God. Worship is to be intelligent, fervent, joyful, and out of sense of great appreciation for His grace. Over the past few classes I have been noting that it is not the intellect that draws us to the Lord, but the will for God. While this emphasis may be a bit unsettling at first, we will see how this opens up a whole new world as we orient to the goodness of God (by the rational will) instead of intellect running the show. In our next Bible class, we will begin our journey of the will for the goodness of God, a truth that gives so much joy and meaning to life. It really is all about the rational will properly oriented to God as the greatest good.

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

Pastor Don