

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
July 4, 2016**

1 Samuel 8:1–9:27. Demand for a King.

James 2:1–13. Rich man, poor man.

Psalms 119:49–64. God, *Esse*, really is all we need!

COMMENTS:

1 Samuel 8:1–9:27. When the elders asked to have a king “like all the nations” (8:5, 20), they were forgetting that Israel’s strength was to be unlike the other nations. The Israelites were God’s covenant people and He was their King. The glory of God dwelt in their midst and the law of God was their wisdom. But the elders were concerned about national security and protection from the enemies around them. The Philistines were still a powerful nation, and the Ammonites were also a threat. Israel had no standing army and no king to lead it. The elders forgot that it was the Lord who was Israel’s King and who gave her army the ability to defeat the enemy. Samuel was a man of spiritual insight and he knew that this demand for a king was evidence of spiritual decay among the leaders. They weren’t rejecting him; they were rejecting God, and this grieved Samuel’s heart as he prayed to the Lord for wisdom. This wasn’t the first time the people had rejected their Lord. At Sinai, their request was “Make us gods!” (Ex. 32:1) and after their humiliating failure at Kadesh Barnea, they said, “Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt” (Num. 14:4). Whenever leadership in a church decays spiritually, that church becomes more like the world and uses the world’s methods and resources to try to do God’s work. The Jewish leaders in Samuel’s day had no faith that God could defeat their enemies and protect His people, so they chose to lean on the arm of flesh. God is never surprised by what His people do, nor is He at a loss to know what He should do. He knew their impatience long before anything existed. They should have waited. There is every evidence in the Pentateuch that Israel would one day have a king. God promised Abraham, Sarah, and Jacob that kings would be among their descendants (Gen. 17:6, 16; 35:11), and Jacob had named Judah as the kingly tribe (49:10). Moses prepared the nation for a king when he spoke to the new generation preparing to enter the Promised Land (Deut. 17:14–20). It wasn’t Israel’s request for a king that was their greatest sin; it was their insisting that God give them a king immediately. The Lord had a king in mind for them, David the son of Jesse, but the time wasn’t ripe for him to appear. So, the Lord gave them their request by appointing Saul to be king, and He used Saul to chasten the nation and prepare them for David, the man of His choice. In divine discipline the Lord often lets us have our own way for a season, “So in my anger I gave you a king, and in my wrath I took him away” (Hosea 13:11). Moreover, Saul, the believer, started out great but then fell into deep spiritual darkness, culminating in suicide, ending his life at his nadir—so much for the worse for the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints (the doctrine that teaches that believers will always get better, persevere, if they are really saved).

James 2:1–13. In developing the theme of being “swift to hear” (see 1:19), James points out that to hear is more than merely listening to the Word. It also involves doing it (1:21–25), yet not simply in the sense of the observance of ceremonial routines but actualizing love and mercy to those in need (1:26–27). Note how the rich believers were dishonoring poor believers in this reading. As he points out, such favoritism is a violation of the command to love one’s neighbor (2:8). He calls it a “royal” law because it was issued by the King, Jesus Christ. It is also royal because it is conduct of a high calling. Note how he shows that the Ten Commandments as a “whole” are still binding on Christians (2:10)—they are all, except the one for the Sabbath keeping, repeated in the New Testament. What’s more is that the Christians are under a higher law that fulfills the Ten Commandments, and Christians will actually be evaluated at the Judgment Seat of Christ by the law of liberty (2:12). Note one of the issues at the Judgment Seat of Jesus Christ: our mercy toward others in life (2:13), which dovetails into what James has been saying about helping the poor and treating every person with dignity, acts of mercy for which we will be held accountable as far as rewards and position in the eternal kingdom. Right now, our present lives, do count forever!

Psalms 119:49–64. Verses 49-56 emphasize memory, God’s and the believers.’ As far as the believer, remembering the name of God (55) brings a richness of other truths about Him. As we have studied in-depth, God’s name as to its full of meaning, *Esse*, the “I AM,” the most dynamic power in the universe. It points to God as existence and as such Him who gives existence to all that is continuously. It also points to His timelessness, He is actively in the eternal present. God’s name speaks not only of His existence and His eternity, but also of His sovereignty, His power, and the dynamic working out of His will in this world. The ancient Jewish people so revered His name that they feared to use it and substituted “Adonai,” lest they sin against their God. In the book of Psalms alone, there are more than one hundred references to the name of the Lord. We are to love His name (Psa. 5:11), sing praises to His name (7:17; 9:2; 18:49), and glorify His name (29:2). It is through His great name that we triumph over our enemies (44:5; 54:1; 118:10–12), so we should always call on His name for help (116:4, 13, 17). To remember His name is to encourage us to trust Him, obey Him, and not be afraid. “*And those who know Your name will put their trust in You, for You, Yahweh (3rd person singular of Ehyeh/Esse), have not forsaken those who seek you*” (9:10). To grasp the name of God is to break all vestiges of deism as well as conduitism and live in the wonder of all that exists, as well as grasp the true nature of the spiritual life, all of which “is” by the sheer power of Existence/Esse/Yahweh. Yes, there really is no such thing as existential inertia. **In verses 57-64**, the emphasis is on the fact that God really is all we need! He is our portion (57-58), Master (59-61), and greatest joy (61-64). Amen to all of that!

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

Pastor Don