

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
June 1, 2016

- ✓ **2 Chronicles 1:1-3:17.** Solomon’s wisdom and great start.
- ✓ **Titus 1:1-4.** Peace and the eternal perspective.
- ✓ **Psalms 91:1-16.** Security in God.

COMMENTS:

2 Chronicles 1:1-3:17. In our last few Bible classes, I noted that in all pre-modern history there was an understanding in all societies, pagan or otherwise, of the importance of virtue in rulers and leaders of the people. I pointed out last evening that Francis Bacon sowed the seeds of change by changing man’s end or goal from being virtue oriented (as man’s goal) to a new telos of man as the conqueror of nature, as part of his *Novum Organum*—which was to supersede Aristotle’s *Organum*. I also noted that C.S. Lewis predicted that if this new technological mindset set aside the classical virtues, then man as we understand the species, would no longer exist. This is what Lewis’ *Abolition of Man* is all about. To drive home the importance of virtue in rulers even among the pagans, I have been using characters in the movie *Gladiator* to illustrate the importance of virtue in Marcus Aurelius’s selection of Maximus over Commodus, as well as illustration of the fact that no man can be happy without virtue as per Commodus, who had all of the power but no real happiness. I say all of this to highlight the importance of virtue in rulers that forms the background of 2 Chronicles 1. Note Solomon’s request for wisdom and knowledge. Note Solomon’s and God’s priority of righteousness and integrity over wealth: *At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?"*⁶ *And Solomon said: "You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he **walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You;** You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.*⁷ *"Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.*⁸ *"And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted.*⁹ *"Therefore give to Your servant an **understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil.** For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"*¹⁰ *The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.*¹¹ *Then God said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and **have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice,***¹² *"behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you.*¹³ *"**And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor,** so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days.*¹⁴ *"So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."*¹⁵ *Then Solomon awoke; and indeed it had been a dream. And he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, offered up burnt offerings, offered peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants (1 Kings 3:5-15). Note how radically different our American mindset is today with regard to both political candidates for President. They are both, without a doubt, Machiavellian—it is no longer about virtue; it is about winning at any cost, the means justifies the end. It is all about who can promise*

the most stuff. Of course, the problem is not so much with Clinton or Trump as it is with those who actually think integrity does not matter. Consider the incoherency of trusting someone to govern with integrity who does not have integrity, or trusting someone who one does not consider trustworthy. Indeed, we are living in the characteristics of the last days of the church age (2 Tim. 3:1-5), our culture is steeped in vice. Take a look at those vices in the aforementioned passage and you will find them in abundance in our people, both pagan and Christian Americans, and in the candidates, which explains the attraction and popularity (and unpopularity due to the fact that one cannot totally get away from the universal morality gained through the *synderesis* in every person). Let us not be deceived by these mountebanks.

Titus 1:1-4. Observe the blessings in verse four: *grace and peace*, which occurs regularly in the openings of Paul's letters. It is his wish that Titus enjoy God's unmeritable favor and unshakable peace. As Paul indicates, these blessings are the benefits of membership in God the Father's family and of participation in the salvation accomplished by Christ the Savior. It is impossible to have this peace apart from the eternal perspective, given the corrupted world in which we live. How could one have peace in light of the truths in Romans 8:35-37 (disastrous temporal conditions), let alone be conquerors apart from the eternal perspective? It is a critical error to think that this peace is related to God working out our temporal situations as the highest good. How could Paul have this peace while he was facing decapitation, or Peter when he faced being crucified upside down? To define God's peace in terms of temporal circumstances is to miss the whole point of the Christian life: God, our reason for life and final end. There is no gainsaying the fact that we really do not have much time left here. Let us redouble our efforts in preparing ourselves for Him.

Psalms 91:1-16. This psalm is a beautiful testimony about security in life. Strong assurance of security is offered to any who will take shelter in God. Because the psalmist was convinced that there is security in trusting in the Most High God, he encouraged himself that he would be delivered from the various frightening attacks of the wicked. He knew that the Lord even used His angels to protect him. The psalmist expressed his great confidence in the fact that whoever trusts in the Most High finds security and protection. The titles of God in verse 1 ("Most High" and the "Almighty") are significant, for they stress His power as the sovereign Ruler of the world. However, we must not make the error of thinking that this human deliverance was his highest good. His highest good and life was God Himself, his true "dwelling place" (91:14).

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

Pastor Don