

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
June 11, 2016

- ✓ **2 Chronicles 26:1-28:27.** Uzziah reigns in Judah and falls into pride.
- ✓ **1 John 2:1-6.** The sacrifice of Christ for the whole world.
- ✓ **Psalms 103:15-22.** Only we can offer our own thankfulness to the Lord.

COMMENTS:

2 Chronicles 26:1-28:27. Western modern culture is obsessed with success in life rather than success at life as such. Society continues to place successful people on pedestals even if they are morally degenerate. “What does that matter?” they say. “But she is beautiful . . . she has a wonderful voice” are the usual retorts. My question is what is the point of being successful in life if one is not successful at life, the latter always requiring virtue, the perfecting of human nature in goodness. Christians certainly aren’t immune to this trend, as is demonstrated by celebrity-pastors who promise all kinds of blessings from God if believers will shell out the money to their ministries. The church needs to resist all efforts to become like the world. Uzziah’s story demonstrates the danger of success among the people of God. Most of the kings of Judah prior to Uzziah—who was appointed king at the age of 16—failed God and His people. They achieved success in their own eyes, but biblical history paints them as men who were spiritually weak (= vice) and sought their own gain at the sacrifice of others. Success achieved through force may look like strength, but it’s actually weakness. The distinction of great leaders is their ability to rise *alongside* those they lead, not *over* them. At the beginning of his reign, Uzziah showed every sign of becoming a great leader: “And he did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh, according to all that Amaziah his father had done. And he began to seek God in the days of Zechariah who was teaching in visions of God. And whenever he sought Yahweh God made him have true success” (26:4–5). Uzziah rose with his people, and he was willing to be taught by those he respected. But then King Uzziah became proud: “But on account of his strength his heart grew proud unto destruction. And he acted unfaithfully against Yahweh his God” (26:16). Uzziah went so far as to place himself in the role of the priests; as a result, God afflicted him with leprosy. Instead of following God’s will as he always had, Uzziah let success—and the desire for ultimate authority—become his guide (26:16–21). As I have noted, on a metaphysical level all human actions are done from the principle of love, either love for the good or love for the evil. “Love” drives everything, including all of our emotions. For example, pride is inordinate love for self, despair is because one fails at getting what one loves, joy come from attaining what one loves, peace is from resting in what one loves, hope is looking forward to what one loves. The first affection and movement of all human wills is love. The only question is if it is licit love or illicit love, love for proper good or love for some evil. The path from loving (being attracted to) the good to loving the evil is a short one. When that happens whether one says it or not, he has just called evil good and good evil in his will, his rational appetite, regardless of what knowledge is in the intellect.

1 John 2:1-6. The apostle wants to make sure believers do not misunderstand him. He just told them that every believer sins (1:8); but he does not want them to think he is excusing and downplaying sin. So, in verse 1 of this chapter he tells them that these things are written so that they may not sin. However, though sin is to be vigorously shunned, it can and does occur in the lives of believers. So John adds, ‘And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ.’ As our Advocate, Jesus does not plead with God to keep us “saved.” The many promises made in John’s Gospel that guarantee the security of the believer stand against such an idea. Since Jesus’ promises are true and the believer is eternally secure, there is no need for the Son to plead with the Father not to cast sinning believers away into Hell. As their Advocate, Jesus intercedes for believers in prayer to the Father that their “faith should not fail (cf. Luke 22:31–33). Though “the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” (Rom 11:29), the faith that appropriates those gifts is nevertheless subject to failure (cf., 2 Tim 2:18). Christ intercedes for believers so that this will not happen. In verse 2 of our reading, Jesus is also the propitiation for our sins. He can intercede for believers before God because He has personally made satisfaction to God for our sins. No matter what one’s sin may be, Christ has made satisfaction for it. Indeed, as a propitiation for sin, this propitiation covers the sins of all humanity (the whole world). The argument that if Christ paid for all human sin, then all would be saved is a fallacy. The removal of sin as a barrier to God’s saving grace does not automatically bring regeneration and eternal life. The sinner remains dead and “alienated from the life of God” (Eph 4:18). Jesus Christ’s work is available for all, for the whole world (Jn 1:29), but each person must accept it for it to become efficacious for him personally.

Psalm 103:15-22. David calls on the whole of creation, in heaven and on earth, to praise the Lord. Both angels and humans alike owe their continuous existence to God. We do owe Him our very beings. Daily praise and thanksgiving should fill the daily prayers of believers as they enter into and fellowship with the life of God in their 2nd person relationship with God. In 2nd person fellowship, the believer shares in the life of God and God shares in the life of the believer on a very personal level. Even almighty God Himself cannot have fellowship with a believer unilaterally if the believer does not freely share his life with Him. It is not God who builds walls between the relationship. We do! What kind of walls? walls of apathy, self-will, pride, worldly-mindedness, ingratitude, etc. Think about it: no other person can offer *our* praise and *our* thanksgiving for *our* receiving His marvelous grace in giving *us* the gift of life and the gift of eternal life on such a personal level.

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

Pastor Don