

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
June 3, 2016**

- ✓ **2 Chronicles 6:12-8:18.** Solomon’s prayer.
- ✓ **Titus 1:10-16.** False teachers that pastors are to denounce.
- ✓ **Psalm 94:1-23.** God’s judgment.

COMMENTS:

2 Chronicles 6:12-8:18. Solomon’s dedicatory prayer demonstrates the king’s responsibility as the people’s *moral* representative before God. The prayer itself is one of the great theological statements of the Bible. At least two themes deserve attention: (1) the nature of God; and (2) the doctrine of forgiveness in response to penitent prayer. In addition, the prayer shows a striking openness to Gentiles. The first attribute of God Solomon mentions is his covenant faithfulness (6:14–17). Once again, the covenant of love, *chesed*, is tied in with God’s faithfulness. This faithfulness is what makes God unique. Solomon next turns to a paradox which, in varying forms, has troubled many theologians: that between God’s transcendence on the one hand and his interaction with mankind on the other (6:18–21), His immanence. God is so great that He cannot live on earth with men. Solomon prays that God will hear prayers directed toward the temple. He then catalogues those prayers which may be heard (6:22–39). In contrast to the modern aversion to messages warning about sin, note strong warning judgment for sin, for not walking in the ways of the Lord. The foreign wars of Solomon and David made enslavement a reality. Yet no matter how far away such slaves are, they will never get beyond God’s ear, God’s forgiveness, and God’s ability to restore. When natural disasters come, if God’s people repent and pray, God will forgive them. Over and over again, in our readings we have noticed God’s exhortations to walk in His ways. Note what is absent: conduitism. He never tells them they better do x, y, and z so they can be enabled to walk in the ways of God. They are just told to do it. The same can be said in all of the teachings of Jesus Christ. The biblical focus is on doing as one walks with God and develops virtue rather than some magic spiritual formula that produces a power or virtue that is foreign to the inherent nature of the believer. Verses 32–33 present the most striking and unexpected element of Solomon’s prayer: that God should hear the prayers of the foreigner. In the Old Testament, God’s clear intention was to use His chosen people as a means of blessing the Gentiles. However, God’s people did not always understand His purposes. Here Solomon acknowledges that even Gentiles may pray toward God’s temple and be heard. When Israel’s soldiers are involved in international efforts, far from home, God will still hear their prayers from such a distance. Solomon’s prayer even anticipates the most extreme covenant punishment, that of exile from the covenant land. In that extreme event, God’s ear will still be open, a prayer of repentance will still be heard, and God will still forgive. Solomon’s poetic conclusion (6:40–42) reiterates his desire first, that God will hear these prayers and, second, that God will take up residence in his temple. Solomon prays that God will give salvation, joy, and kindness as promised to David in the covenant. What a marvelous prayer! What a great start for King Solomon!

Titus 1:10-16. The reason (“For”) the churches in Crete needed elders who could correct error was that there were many deceivers, who came to the churches, taught their false doctrines, duping some, and bilked the church of money as well. Paul here favorably quotes a pagan prophet, Epimenides (c. 600 BC): “Cretans *are* always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” Certainly Paul does not mean that all believers on the island fit that description (though many of them may have before they came to faith in Christ and began to grow). But all the false teachers do. Titus was to rebuke them sharply and their untoward activity, that they may be sound in the faith. Some of the believers may already have been subverted (v 11). Others were wavering. A sharp rebuke could stop the wavering and even lead to the return of those duped. This and 2:1 are the only NT occurrences of the expression *sound in the faith*. It pictures one who is spiritually healthy as a result of sound teaching by qualified teaching pastors. Paul concludes his warning about the false teachers by condemning their character and conduct. For these men nothing is pure. They are defiled and *unfaithful*. This defilement has damaged their intellects, wills, and passions. They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him. This statement and the words that follow it lead many to conclude that these men were unregenerate. However, their profession here is that they knew God in their experience. Yet their works show they did not know Him in their experience. These men are abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work. *Abominable* refers to someone who is *detestable*, *repugnant*, or *abhorrent*. They are not obedient (*apeitheis*) to God, and thus in regard to *every good work* (Greek word order) they are *disqualified* (*adokimos*). *Adokimos* and its antonym *dokimos* are used elsewhere in the NT of *believers* who are disapproved or approved by God or men (Rom 1:28; 14:18; 16:10; 1 Cor 9:27; 11:19; 2 Cor 10:18; 13:5, 6, 7; 2 Tim 2:15; 3:8; Heb 6:8; Jas 1:12). However, while disobedient *believers* are disapproved, so of course are all *unbelievers*. Thus it is not clear whether these disgusting false teachers were *all* unbelievers or not. However, they were repugnant and were to be opposed lest their influence spread in the church. These descriptions reveal that this activity was enough to make Paul bilious.

Psalm 94:1-23. This Psalm begins with warning about judgment, but ends with consolation from the Lord. Note the very personal nature of the last seven verses. This believer not only has a very healthy respect for God’s righteousness and justice, he also displays a deep trust in the Lord, his Fortress, Rock, and Refuge. One can tell that he is nettled about the unrighteousness of his time. As far as these adjectives used of God, we have noted in our study of the philosophy of language and God-talk, that all language that we use for God is taken from creation. As realists we start with creation. I wonder how someone who thinks that we can know everything about God with Bible-only mentality would explain terms fortress and rock, let alone love and mercy, all of which come from creation and natural revelation? As I have noted, if one could not understand “love” apart from comparing Scripture with Scripture, how did the Israelites understand love since the Bible was not even written at the time they were told to love the Lord with all of their hearts (Dt. 6:5)?

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

Pastor Don