

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
June 6, 2016

- ✓ **2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14.** Godly King Asa.
- ✓ **Titus 3:1-7.** Virtue: right thinking, right wishing, and right emotions.
- ✓ **Psalm 97:1-98:9.** Virtue and vice and hating evil.

COMMENTS:

2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14. With this section we have the return of a godly king, Asa. Note the classical mindset with regard to the importance of virtue in the ruler of the people in Asa’s character and activity throughout this section. Asa occupied the Davidic throne for 41 years (911-870 B.C.). Not only did he restore spiritual integrity for the worship of God in the theocratic kingdom, he also refortified military posts (14:6-10). Note both the natural and spiritual aspects of God providing peace, as the people made military preparations, but God gave victory through natural means. In other words, note how the Lord gave them victory in response to prayer, but the victory was accomplished on a natural level in warfare (14:11-15). Observe Asa’s reforms in chapter 15. He even removed his own mother Maacah from being queen, who was involved in cultic activity of Asherah pole, a Canaanite fertility symbol. Note the deplorable condition that Israel has sunk into, namely there was no teacher or teaching of the Word of God in the land (15:3). One of the most beautiful and hopeful passages in the Word of God is 15:2, *“The LORD is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you.”* Note Asa’s emphasis on *seeking the Lord* (9x in 3 chapters). This phrase was a summary description of how one was to respond to God. It involved far more than seeking God’s help for a specific problem as often claimed today by believers who mainly think of God in functional terms of taking care of their problems. To be clear, “seeking the Lord” refers to one’s whole duty toward God, it is seeking His will in all things (cf., 14:7; 15:2, 12–13). There is a radical difference between seeking God to solve a problem and seeking Him with one’s whole heart in all things. One is a religion and one is a relationship that involves the sharing of lives on a most intimate level.

Titus 3:1-7. Note the emphasis on virtue with the backdrop or motivation of the marvelous grace of God. Paul has no problem repeating himself, or reminding believers (3:1, “remind them”) of what they already knew and how they used to be as unbelievers. In relation to their former lives as pagans, note the three problem areas: (1) the intellect (“foolish”), (2) the will (“disobedient”), and (3) the emotions (“deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures”). This fits perfectly with what we have been studying about virtue, which is all about right thinking, right wishes, and right emotions. As believers they were no longer to be foolish (contrary to the anti-intellectualism in the churches), disobedient (contrary to independent believers who do their own thing), or ruled by their sense pleasures and emotions (contrary to believers who allow their emotions to determine their decisions and life choices). Note the emphasis on the ministry of the Holy Spirit in verse 5 in regeneration and the fact that we are all saved by grace and never by our works. While we are not saved by works, take a peek at what he says about works in verse 8, which is part of our next reading. The fact that we are not saved by works should never be used as an excuse for neglecting works as part of the sanctification process.

Psalm 97:1-98:9. In the midst of prophecy about the Lord's coming judgment (97:2-9), there is a call for virtue in 97:10-12: *You who love the LORD, hate evil! He preserves the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked.* ¹¹ *Light is sown for the righteous, And gladness for the upright in heart.* ¹² *Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, And give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name.* As we have been studying, virtue is about a state of the soul that is well disposed whereas vice is the state of a soul that is ill (evil) disposed. Only the virtuous person has the right thinking, desires, and emotions that enable him to authentically "hate evil." This is literally impossible for anyone filled with vice because of their appetite for evil as a good. As we have noted, no one seeks evil unless it is view as a good in some way. So, a person of vice could not help loving evil as it appears to him as a good because of bad thinking, bad desires, and bad emotions, all of which have been actualized by evil choices coupled with rejection of God's grace. Only the virtuous person has the capacity to really hate evil and "rejoice in the Lord." This was as true in the Old Testament as it is in the church age with the full ministry of the Holy Spirit.

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

Pastor Don