

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
June 9, 2016

- ✓ **2 Chronicles 21:1-23:21.** Evil Jehoram and the permissive will of God.
- ✓ **1 John 1:1-4.** Fellowship: the old model (1995) and the new “model” (2016).
- ✓ **Psalms 102:1-28.** Suffering and future hope for Jerusalem.

COMMENTS:

2 Chronicles 21:1-23:21. *“When Jehoram ascended to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself and murdered all his brothers with the sword, and even some of the princes of Israel. ... And he did evil in the sight of Yahweh. But Yahweh was not willing to destroy the house of David on account of the covenant that he had made with David and since he had promised to give a lamp to him and to his descendants forever”* (21:4, 6–7). Biblical stories like this teach us not only about God’s actions, but also about His decisions *not* to act in certain ways. It must have been difficult for those suffering under Jehoram’s ruthless reign to understand why God would allow him to stay in power over them, His people. Yet God knew there was something even larger at stake: long-term, righteous reign over His people—and salvation itself. The people’s suffering could not outweigh the importance of preserving the line of David, which held the hope of God’s people. Salvation comes through David’s line, as Jesus, the great Savior of the world, is David’s heir (Matt 1:1). When it comes to tragedies in our lives, like the death of loved ones, too many believers are too quick to attribute all kinds of reasons for God allowing “untimely” deaths. However, unless God reveals the reason in Scripture, it is best to refrain, especially refrain from saying things like “God took him or her so I would get serious about the plan of God.” In the first place, God did not kill them anymore than he “murdered all” of those in verse four of this chapter. Second, in this instance God does give us access to His reason. However, unless God tells us directly or we have direct access to the mind of God, we really do not know why, and so we need to be careful not to *project* motives or reasons to God from our finite perspective. God does not cause evil suffering, but there are moments when He allows it. One guarantee that we do have is that He always stands by to turn cursing to blessing, but He cannot do it unilaterally. We must turn to Him as our greatest good, which is just another way of saying we are to turn to Him in 2nd person love.

1 John 1:1-4. This verse fills me with wonderful memories of when I began my ministry at FBC in 1995. 1 John chapter 1 was where I started an extended series on fellowship with God as the foundation of the spiritual life. While I certainly erred by teaching the conduit model of fellowship and the spiritual life, the emphasis as far as fellowship was right on the mark. Life really is about fellowshiping with the Lord. While our understanding of the “mechanics” have certainly changed, this issue remains the fundamental issue of the spiritual life. The fundamental difference is that in the old way the believer was in a *fellowship state* whereas the new and more developed biblical view is one of actively *fellowshipping with God* in a second person relationship. The former has major flaws that tends to collapse into a form of religion where the believer is always trying maintain some state so the Holy Spirit can work through him like electricity through a conduit. The new method offers a much richer relationship with a focus on developing a *personal love* relationship with the Lord. As we noted in our last Bible class in 1 Cor. 13:1-4: all of the mechanics and spiritual formulas in the world that are designed to move

believers *into love* fail because anything that is not done out of personal love to start with is absolutely worthless. Think of all of the wasted time spent on spiritual systems in all of the denominations that are designed to move the believer into a personal love relationship with the Lord, and how Paul says *anything* that is not done out of love is useless. We do not do x, y, z, so we can love the Lord. We start with love, it is the root, hinge, and fruit of all spiritual virtue as noted throughout 1 Cor. 13 and Eph. 3:16-19 (“grounded in love”). Another way to illustrate the difference between the old conduit model and the new model is that in the old system one had to master all of these spiritual systems to overcome such mental attitude sins such as bitterness, vindictiveness, animosity, jealousy, etc. Life was pretty much about overcoming sin, as well as confessing those sins as per 1 John 1:9 when one failed. However, consider the beauty and efficacy in the new model by noting two passages. First, 1 John 2:10: *He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him*, which teaches how to eliminate the problem in the first place. You are not going to have problems with bitterness, vindictiveness, etc., with someone you really love (a love which cannot be reduced to some relaxed mental attitude)—as the passage says there is “no cause for stumbling.” Second, note the power of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things*. Think of all of the spiritual conduit systems designed to produce all of these virtues. I can think of at least six systems that have been devised to accomplish all of what Paul says that true love itself sufficiently produces. Couple this with the fact that Paul just finished saying that without love anything that one does is worthless. As for me, I think I will save myself a lot of “stumbling” as well as wear and tear of all of these systems that do not work. The key balance is an active life in the Lord *by knowledge and by love*, which means by the perfect balance of the intellect and will around the Good under the power of the Holy Spirit. I would much rather live by love and have “no cause for stumbling” (1 John 2:10) than to spend my life stumbling and thus constantly confessing (1 John 1:9). Is it not better to not stumble in the first place? This is just one of the many benefits of living and growing in the Lord in Total Truth, Whole Truth, instead of fragmented partial-truth perspectives that are filled with errors from modern philosophy, like conduitism.

Psalm 102:1-28. The writer of this psalm is depressed. He is likely suffering among God’s people due to divine judgment on Jerusalem. However, note how he turns his attention from his own personal suffering to confidence in the Lord to rebuild Jerusalem, and how all of God’s people will praise Him. He is absolutely confident that in the end God and His people will be vindicated before the ungodly world. Sounds like the eternal perspective to me.

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

Pastor Don