

## “Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

**March 16, 2016**

- ✓ Numbers 17:1-18:32 – The budding of Aaron’s Rod (17). Duties of the priests (18).
- ✓ 1 Cor. 1:1-31 – Divisions in the church and the need to glory only in the Lord.
- ✓ Psalm 18:1-12 – Evil suffering.

### REFLECTIONS:

**Numbers 17:1-18:32.** The context and issues in these two chapters are related to the rebellion in chapter 16: Aaron is vindicated (17) and responsibilities of the priests are outlined (18). Observe in 18:7, *“Therefore you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything at the altar and behind the veil; and you shall serve. I give your priesthood to you as a gift for service.”* We live in the Church Age, the age in

which all Christians are priests with the “gift for service.” Serving others for Christ is not be viewed as a burden. It is an honor and mark of God’s grace in our lives that we can reach out with the love of Christ to others, especially fellow believers. The universal priesthood of all believers means that we are to offer up spiritual sacrifices to the Lord: *1 Peter 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* Moreover, as priests we have the privilege of going directly to God through Jesus



Christ, our High Priest (Heb. 4:14-16). This priesthood is not something that we earn or deserve or even grow into. Rather, the minute one believes in Jesus Christ, he is added to the body of Christ and is thereby part of God’s holy priesthood. The priesthood of the Roman Church is violation of the principle that no other priesthood on Earth has the right to forbid any Christian to go directly to God through Christ. We Christians are part of God’s royal priesthood, which comes with enormous privileges and divine enablement to serve Him and to reach out to others as we first give ourselves to the Lord: *Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

**1 Corinthians 1:1-31.** The divisions among the Corinthians were ripping the local church apart (1:10-11). Note the self-centered ‘I am right’ cliques (1:12-15).

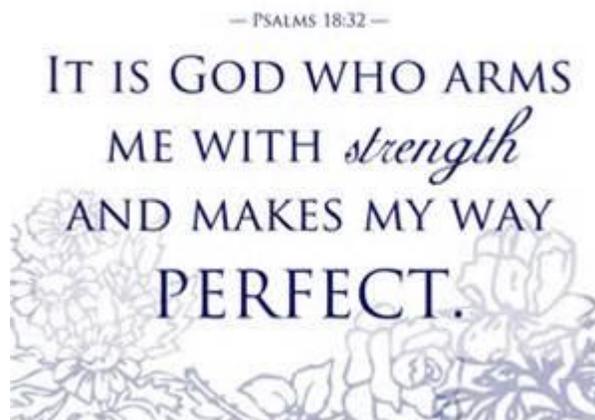
Division and disruption of a local church is one of the worst evils any believer can be part of. Note the arrogance in their attitudes as they follow different teachers. Observe Paul’s question: “Is Christ divided?” Consider the various problems throughout the Book: factions, incest, tensions between the strong and weak, indifference to the poor at the Lord’s Supper, boasting about spiritual gifts, and criticism of the Apostle Paul. Let us redouble our efforts in the spirit of the last verse in this section, “*He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.*” If

everyone is focused on the Lord and the Whole Truth, unity naturally follows. It is when we take fragments of truth (“I am of Paul, “I am of Apollos,” etc.) and try to make them the whole picture that skews our perspective and all too often breeds contempt for those who do not share one’s narrow vision. How do you feel when people do not agree with you? Do you get angry with them? Or do you take the time to really listen to what they are saying?



**Psalm 18:1-12.** In this psalm David thanks the Lord for a great deliverance. The word “love” (*racham*) in the first verse is not the usual word for love (*'ahab*). *Racham* emphasizes a fervent, passionate love for and devotion to the Lord above all things. In this psalm we see the problem of evil facing David. An important distinction needs to be made between evil suffering that does *not* come from the Lord and suffering that is a result of direct divine punishment. The former is related to unrighteousness and does not come

from the Lord while the latter is righteous judgment directly from the Lord. In other words, not all suffering is evil. In this Psalm, David is experiencing evil suffering in that as an innocent or “righteous” (18:20-23) person, he was being persecuted by Saul. Unlike the common view that God brings evil suffering into the life to make us better, God is not the Author of evil suffering. The source of evil suffering in this context is Saul’s free will, which is part of a broken and fallen world. It is not like God made Saul persecute (act evil toward) David so that David would run into the arms of the Lord. This would be like an evil boy scout who pushes a little old lady into traffic only to rescue her at the last moment and be her hero. Or it would be like God making a man rape and torture a child so that the child and her parents would trust and love Him more. How obscene. Yet, this is the logical conclusion of many well-meaning Christian views on God and suffering when they claim that God brings evil suffering into lives for a greater good.



In, by, with, through, and for *Esse*,

Pastor Don