

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

March 7 2016

- ✓ Numbers 7:1-47– The offerings of the leaders of the people of God.
- ✓ John 14:1-31 – Jesus, the Way to the Father.
- ✓ Psalm 8:1-9 – The Lord’s Majesty and Creation.

COMMENTARY:

Numbers 7:1-47. The repetitiveness of the offerings provides a continuous reminder of the support of the worship center (tabernacle), the worship leadership (priesthood), the worship process (sacrifice), and the worshiped God (‘*Ehyeh*,

who gives graciously to His special creation). While the system and sacrifices were rather elaborate and to be done with meticulous effort, the point was for the people of God to come together as a community of faith focused on the God of grace. This elaborate system bears the marks of divine inspiration especially when compared to

Numbers 7:11 **The Lord said to Moses: The shall present their offerings, one leader each day, for the dedication of the alter.**
Numbers 7:12 - 88 list the leader that presents each day along with their offerings. The offerings are all the same.

So each day, for twelve days in a row, a leader presents to the temple:

Offering and Grain Sacrifice	Burnt Offering	Sin Offering	Sacrifice of Well-being
 flour mixed with oil 1 silver plate weighing 130 shekels*	 1 young bull	 1 male goat	 2 oxen
 flour mixed with oil 1 silver basin weighing 70 shekels*	 1 ram		 5 rams
 incense 1 golden dish weighing 10 shekels*	 1 male lamb one-year-old		 5 male goats
			 5 male lambs one-year-old

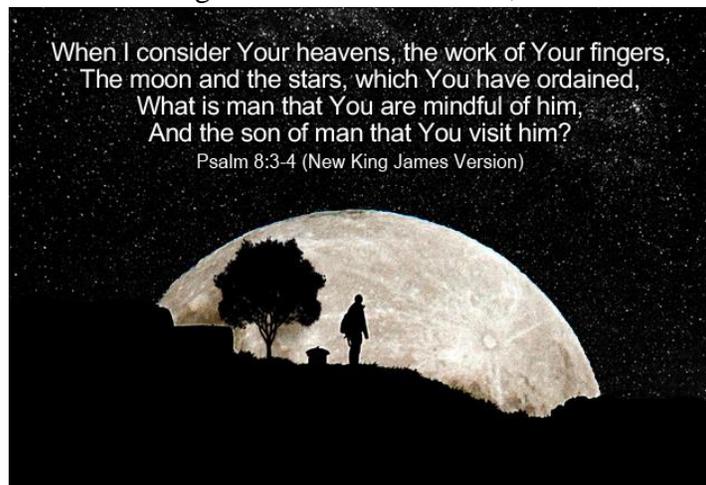
* No one is really sure how much a shekel actually is, but www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/history/weightsandmeasures.html says it may be 70 grams +/- 1 gram

other tribes all over the world who were killing and eating their own in their animistic and totemic savage religious systems. When the illiterate savage tribes of the American Indians and the African witchdoctors were casting spells and murdering the servants of the tribal leaders when the leaders died so they could accompany and serve them in the next life, the Israelites were reading and contemplating these rather detailed structured laws and high moral principles. When other tribes around the world were involved with voodoo and head hunting to get the power of the victims, the people of God were gathered around the Lord in celebration and structure. As far as the Israelites coming together as a people of God, this is a universal principle for all ages. In application we must remember that while FBC offers many wonderful things to learn about God, man, love, and the spiritual life, there is so much more to local family of God. We do not come *just* to learn. As a community of faith, we are to encourage one another as we all travel God’s exciting paths for our lives. We live in a dark and broken world and the darker it gets, the more conflict we can expect from the unbelieving children of this age as their sinful and evil standards strike against the believers who are committed to God, truth, goodness, and virtue. As Christ put it, ‘if they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you for a servant is not greater than his master.’ America is no longer predominantly Christian, which explains the rapid increase in evil as well as the coming storm on our nation and the world. Let us renew our efforts in the Lord, His Word, and our family of believers so we can be shining lights in a dark and mad world. Moreover, let us renew our efforts to learn about and love God and avoid getting distracted by the political buffoonery of our age.

John 14:1-31. It is understandable that the disciples were completely bewildered and perplexed considering all that Jesus said up to this point: He was going to die and go away, one of the Twelve would betray Him, Peter would deny Him three times, Satan was at work against all of them, and that all of the disciples would fall away. What difficult messages! Note what Jesus tells them to lift up their hearts: ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled, trust in God; trust also in Me.’ Like everything else in the Christian life, all virtue, even trust in God, only functions properly by knowledge and by love. We cannot properly trust God in the face of troubles apart from knowledge and love. He assures them He will come back in 14:3-4. Anticipation of the Lord’s return is also impossible apart from a love that seeks Him over all else. Love really is the root, hinge, and fruit of all virtue, just as we have been studying in 1 Cor. 13.



Psalms 8:1-9. In this psalm, David marveled that the glorious Lord of Heaven, whose name is majestic, should graciously use people in the earth’s dominion. This section of Scripture considers the dignity of man as God’s representative on Earth—without noting the Fall’s consequences of chaos and rebellion. As per our last Bible class, we live in a broken world and the idea that all pain and suffering in this world has as its purpose greater good *in this life* is false. In short, such a notion is never found in the Bible. While some of our suffering is due to



discipline and correction as per Hebrews 12, some of our suffering is simply the result of living in a dark and broken world filled with thorns and thistles. So why does God allow the fawn to burn to death in a forest fire? Simply put: because God loves and upholds all laws as *Esse*. To posit some greater good *in this life* is a mistake that leads to many problems. The reason really is as simple as God upholding the physical laws. I think it is a mistake to try to find some specific good purpose *in this life* for every thorn that pricks us in this world. While we can certainly glean lessons about our fallen world and be motivated to look for a new world of redemption, we should not think of God specifically bringing evil or pain into our lives so He can get a greater good *in this life*. If I have a flat tire, it is not necessarily true that God designed that flat tire to get some good for me in this life. If I stub my toe and it hurts for three hours, my pain has more to do with natural laws in our fallen world than the goal of getting a greater good for me in this life. I am not denying that God may intervene at times in divine providence, as per examples in the Bible, when maybe my stubbed toe kept me from doing certain actions that God did not want—like go for a run when a rabid dog is in the neighborhood. What I am denying is the idea that

every single bit of pain and suffering is designed for a greater good in this life. God does not need to make me go through the suffering of a stubbed toe to get the good of me not running at that time. There are a thousand other ways He could have kept me from running without needing to put pain in my life. God does not need evil and suffering to get to any good. The Bible does not teach that God *needs* evil and suffering in creation to get greater goods. He does not need for the fawn to die in pain in the forest to get to a greater good for us or the fawn just like He does not need for certain wild primates to beat each other's brains out and eat each other's faces to get some greater good in this world. While God has a broad goal in allowing this fallen world with all of its brutality to play out, it is a grave apologetic and biblical mistake to think that God needs pain, suffering, and savagery to get greater goods to His creatures. Some of our suffering is just from living in a broken world as promised by the Word of God in Genesis 3:17-18. In other words, if someone is diagnosed with cancer perhaps it has more to do with their genes and lifestyle than God giving cancer to someone to "give" them some greater good. Of course, the believer has the advantage of bringing good out of the bad genes with the grace of God and cultivate great anticipation for a New World that one day will be set right by the King of Glory.

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

Pastor Don