

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
May 12, 2016

- ✓ **Ruth 1:1-2:23.** Your God shall be my God.
- ✓ **1 Tim. 1:1-11.** Love vs. false doctrine.
- ✓ **Psalm 73:1-10.** Envious of the prosperity of the wicked?

COMMENTS:

Ruth 1:1-2:23. The events of Ruth took place in the evil times of the Judges. It opens up with a family in Bethlehem being forced to move to a foreign land because of a famine. This famine was likely a result of God’s acting in judgment on His people. This book is all about the providence of God working to meet needs. As we have studied, when believers find themselves in difficult times, they should not automatically think that God brings evil into their lives to test them. The testing is just the interplay between our choices and circumstances of our broken world. It really is not all about “us.” However, no matter how awful the circumstances in which we find ourselves in, God is always there to redeem us and use the evil around us for His and our own good. To get this point is to gain humility as well as prudence. During the period of the Judges worship of the Canaanite god Baal was common among the Israelites—as is the worship of Mammon today in our country among God’s people. The Israelites, at this point, believed that Baal was the owner of the land and to control its fertility. Baal’s female counterpart was Ashtoreth. Sexual intercourse between these two gods was believed to regulate the fertility of the earth and its creatures. God had commanded the Israelites to purge the land of the Canaanites and their idols. Failure of the Israelites to do so left them open to the temptation to look to idols rather than God for agricultural blessing. So, the Israelites were following Baal for financial profit as well as for the sexual practices that went along with the worship of Baal for pleasure—the life of many Israelites had been reduced to finances and illicit sex (pleasure). They had truly forgotten the very meaning of life, God Himself. During this time a man from Bethlehem decided to take his family to Moab, about 50 miles east on the other side of the Dead Sea. He intended to live there for a short time. However, this was not a prudent move. He died and his sons married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. Then Naomi’s sons died. It is hard to imagine the grief she must have suffered at the loss of her husband and two children. Upon hearing that the famine had ended, she decided to return to Bethlehem and thought it would be best if her daughters would stay in Moab, probably due to the slim prospects of remarriage in Israel. But Ruth insisted on going with her due to her strong desire to be identified with Naomi, her God, and her people. Ruth is putting the Lord before prospects of marriage. We can see Ruth’s love and trust in the God of Israel in 2:12. Note how God works it out for Ruth to meet Boaz, the man of her dreams. What a beautiful beginning to a most beautiful love story all arranged by the Lord Himself!

1 Tim. 1:1-11. The bulk of this section deals with false teachers spreading false doctrines, “fables.” There are a great many fables and myths in contemporary Christianity, but one thing they all have in common is “getting God to work for you.” The means and goals in controlling God and His “dispenser” of blessings vary, but the goal is the same: God becomes a genie to solve all of the problems of life, problems which, for the most part, exist because of preoccupation with Mammon and self and people—as if God, by giving more stuff and making people like you more, is going so solve the root problem, namely the evil of putting other things before God! Note verse 5 and the emphasis on ‘love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith.’ False teaching can always be traced back to failure to love God first and foremost. Anytime things become more important than God, like finances, work, people, the believer is a sucker for all kinds of conduit systems to elicit God’s help. In such a case God really is not loved for who and what He is. Until and unless the believer changes his goals, he is doomed to life of frantic search for happiness all the while God is right beside him to fulfill his innermost desires. In verses 9-11 Paul shows the purpose of the Law. This is a good read for those who believe the myth that Law has nothing to do with promoting morality in society.

Psalms 73:1-10. In this psalm, Asaph is confused at the prosperity of the wicked. He actually admits that he was envious of the prosperity of the wicked and this caused him to almost stumble (2-3). I have heard the same kind of sentiments from baby believers like ‘It is not fair that I follow the Lord and have little to show for it as I continue to have struggles with finances, health, and getting people to like me, while Hollywood idols who mock God look fabulous, are talented, and have droves of money and followers and all of the free sex they desire.’ Of course, what is such a believer revealing about what he really loves or what is really important to him in life?

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

Pastor Don