

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”**  
**May 17, 2016**

- ✓ **1 Chronicles 4:24-5:26.** God “stirred up” the spirit of Pul.
- ✓ **1 Tim. 4:1-5.** The latter days.
- ✓ **Psalm 78:1-12.** Remember the Lord and move forward in Whole Truth.

**COMMENTS:**

**1 Chronicles 4:24-5:26.** This section takes us from the genealogies of Simeon, Rueben, and God, to the half-tribe of Manasseh. It ends with the wicked state of God’s people in 5:25: *And they were unfaithful to the God of their fathers, and played the harlot after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them.* This brought the heavy hand of divine discipline upon the people of God as per 5:26, *So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, that is, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria. He carried the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh into captivity. He took them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and the river of Gozan to this day.* Notice in verse 26 that God “stirred” (וַיִּצֵר) up the spirit of Tiglath-Pileser, the king of Assyria. The Hebrew word for “stirred” has the idea of applying motion or action. As we noted in yesterday’s Bible class, God is the efficient cause of all “free wills.” God is the one who applies all free wills according to their natures, just like He applies the existence and function of everything that exists according to its nature—be it a bird, turkey, or a slug. The only “say” that man has with regard to his “free will” is choice or direction. No man has a free will in the sense that he can just wish anything in an absolute sense. Every free will seeks what it thinks is good and will bring happiness. There are no exceptions. As I have noted, even when we sin, we do it under the delusion of some goodness or happiness involved in the act, if only temporary. This is undeniable. All goods on this earth are finite and as such they all contain some “good” or “positive” quality (like pleasure or inordinate love of self, the latter of which causes us to strike out at others when “wounded”) and some bad or negative quality. The intellect provides the form/object and the will responds either positively or negatively, but always chooses by highlighting some good aspect that is present to it and discarding negative aspects of it. The point here is that we get to set the direction of our wills in the direction of which “good” we will choose, but it is God who gives existence to the will and actualizes its acts *according to its nature.* This is why you will never find God taking any will in the Bible that is set on true goodness and “stirring” it to evil. Again, we get to provide the formal cause of our wills in determining the kind of objects we seek, but then God does the rest both for good wills as well as evil wills. What we have here with Pul is the kind of divine efficient causation of “handing over” that we see in Romans 1:24-28 (3x). All one has to do is no longer see fit to retain knowledge of God to be *handed over by God* to a depraved mind (1:28). Let us redouble our efforts in keeping the goodness of the Lord before us in 2<sup>nd</sup> person relationship, and not let the “goodness” of the world and the flesh to entice us as per the warning in 1 Jn 2:15-16.

**1 Tim. 4:1-5.** Consider Paul's boldness in his prediction of apostasy in the church in the latter times—a warning also echoed by Jesus (Mark 13:22), and the other apostles (2 Pet. 3:1-18). The Holy Spirit clearly teaches that in the latter days of the church people will abandon the faith and follow after false teaching of deceiving spirits. Defection of the faith here is traced back to demonic activity. The mention of hypocrisy is likely a reference to those who promote Christianity to make money. The fact that they are so blatant about it indicates that their consciences have been destroyed (“conscience seared with a hot iron”). Paul provides two forms of false teachings: forbidding marriage and abstaining from food. Both of these are forms of asceticism, which is but man-made rules in an effort to be “godly.” However, such self-righteous activity has just the opposite effect. The statement in verse 5 about sanctifying food by prayer should not be taken as imparting some kind of cleansing to the food. Rather, the idea is of acknowledging God's gracious provisions and setting it apart as unto Him, the giver of all good things—1 Corinthians 10:31, *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

**Psalm 78:1-12.** After the psalmist implored his generation to keep the Law and not forget God's works and rebel, he recounts the history of their ancestors in the wilderness, who were slain by the Lord's anger, or as a later generation did when Shiloh was plundered before the Lord chose David. The poem is a sad recounting of how their ancestors forgot God's works, but it also recounts how the Lord graciously delivered them. There is only one way a believer can break this cycle of being on again and off again with the Lord: to reject all functional views of God and seek Him in total truth. Then and only then will the believer keep His focus on the Lord instead of the ever changing details of life. It really is not about us! As far as a specific application of the theme in this Psalm, when you find yourself discouraged because of the pressures of life, take time to seriously reflect on how the Lord has provided for you since you were a small child. He is committed to you no matter what! As we noted yesterday, true love is wishing the good of the beloved and wishing closer union with the beloved. The fact that God always loves us unconditionally means that He is always seeking for us to be closer to Him and He is always working for our good. What a deal 😊

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

Pastor Don