

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”**  
**May 27, 2016**

- ✓ **1 Chronicles 21:1-22:19.** The world of human metrics.
- ✓ **2 Timothy 2:14-26.** Vessel: fine furnishings in the house of God or a chamber pot (toilet)?
- ✓ **Psalms 86:1-87:7.** Belonging to a community and a people.

**COMMENTS:**

**1 Chronicles 21:1-22:19.** This passage begins with noting that Satan incited David to number the people. However, in 2 Samuel 24:1, the historian revealed that the Lord was angry with His people and used David’s census as an occasion to punish him and them. The truth is that the Lord simply let Satan tempt David to undertake the census, much as He permitted Satan to attack Job (cf. Job 1:12). In His sovereignty, God’s ultimate authority extends even to the workings of Satan. David’s immediate purpose was to assess his military strength (1 Chron. 21:5). This incurred divine displeasure because it suggested that he was relying more on military capabilities than on God’s power. David clearly recognized that *his action was sinful* (21:8). There is no contradiction here when one understands metaphysical realities. As I have noted, God works concurrently in all things according to their natures. David actualized arrogance in his life, which brought vice and its vulnerability to the temptations of Satan. However, God continues to provide efficient causation to all wills, in this case David’s and Satan’s. God simply allowed the formal cause in the wills to function according to the direction of their inclinations. To understand this is to avoid the error of thinking that God arbitrarily motivated David to sin and then punished him and his people for it—such an idea is more befitting of the Devil, the Tempter, rather than God, who never tempts (James 1:13). The problem, the formal cause, was David’s will, which led to thinking of greatness in terms of metrics. We live in a world of metrics. All one has to do is turn on the TV and see the obsession with polls. There is also scorekeeping that takes place among God’s people. When pastors get together, one of the first things they talk about is numbers and when one pastor has more members than another, he feels more successful. In other words, ministries are measured by attendance. But God has His own method of measuring success. David’s will, in this text, decides to go against the Lord by seeking metrics, and thus in his own power or glory, by counting the people of Israel as if it was due to his efforts rather than God’s grace. David should have been counting on God for success rather than looking to his own success. It is when we look to God’s grace and faithfulness that we avoid the evil of forgetting God’s grace: that we are what we are and what we have and what we have done *all* by His grace and efficient power.

**2 Timothy 2:14-26.** Note that after Paul directs Timothy to keep himself from being contaminated by godlessness, which spreads like gangrene (*γάγγραινα*), he illustrates what I covered in Bible class about the nature of concurrence with God as the efficient cause of all things working with second causes, like our wills. Observe the illustration Paul uses in verses 20-21: each believer, as a secondary cause, gets to decide what kind of vessel he becomes through God’s efficient power—in Paul’s household example, one can become a beautiful and precious gold and silver furnishing in God’s house, or one can become a chamber pot, a toilet. It is our wills that determine the kind of furnishing that we become through God’s actualizing power. Quo Vadis?

**Psalm 86:1-87:7.** Because God is good and forgiving, and because He is incomparably able to do great things, David petitions Him to show His strength in the face of opposition from the proud. Observe how David is always focused on God by noting how many times he repeats His name as LORD/Yahweh (Esse) and Lord/Adonai (emphasizing the power and sovereignty of God), 86:3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 15. As far as Psalm 87, I have noted that man is a social being. He is designed to be part of a real community of likeminded people, unlike the Lockean idea of society being nothing more than a social contract. This idea of man being designed to be part of a people and society, rather than a hermit who believes that society is inimical to being good (Rousseau), is especially true of believers. A believer was never designed to live apart from the people of God, note the sense of being part of a people and a society in Psalm 87:6-7.

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

Pastor Don