

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
May 6, 2016

- ✓ **Judges 9:22-10:18.** Death of Abimelech.
- ✓ **Philippians 2:19-30.** Epaphroditus.
- ✓ **Psalms 68:1-14.** Celebrating God’s goodness.

COMMENTS:

Judges 9:22-10:18. Chapter nine gives us the violent end of Abimelech’s reign. Note how the tyrant dies. Instead of dying in a valiant showdown with Gaal, he was killed by a woman who dropped a stone on his head! Looks like God intervened to me; at any rate it was God’s time for him to go. In verse 23 we are told that God sent an evil spirit to judge Abimelech. But God is not the author of evil in any way. As we have seen, one needs to understand various modes or causation when action is attributed to God. Of course, on one level all action is attributed to God in that there is nothing apart from His existential causation. God is not evil, but evil powers are subject to His control and He can remove protection from individuals and give permission to evil spirits to inflict evil suffering on man, like we have seen with Job. In Abimelech’s case, unlike Job’s, the evil spirit was an instrument of God judgment similar to what we see in 1 Cor. 5:5. Chapter 10 begins with deliverances under Tola and Jair (1-5) and is followed by deliverance by Jephthah. Look at the gross activity God’s people were involved in in 10:6 and the consequences of discipline by other nations in 10:7-9. This section closes out with the repentance of Israel (10:10-16). Unlike previous “repentances,” this one seems authentic as they confessed their sins and took action to get rid of the foreign gods and return to serving the Lord. It was not like previous repentances when they were simply sorry because of the consequences.

Philippians 2:19-30. A large part of this section deals with Epaphroditus. Apparently, he was an outstanding man. Note Paul description of him in verse 25. Note Epaphroditus’ concern for his friends in Philippi—he longed for all of them (26) as Paul did (1:8). Whatever illness he suffered, it almost killed him. There is absolutely no indication that he was sick because of sin in his life. He was probably sick because of “natural” factors of living in a fallen, cursed world. Paul praised God for restoring him to health and sparing him sorrow upon sorrow. Paul loved and needed Epaphroditus, so his death would have brought Paul additional heaviness. Note that Paul did not indicate that he had the power to heal him, a power that was to be used to confirm the gospel, not to alleviate his own illness or his friends, even though this friend was working himself almost to the point of death for the Lord’s work.

Psalms 68:1-14. Note the goodness of God that is celebrated in these verses. As I covered in Bible class, God did not *directly* test the Israelites in the desert. Quite the contrary, He brought them blessings, like the rain in our passage. The testing was simply the result of a broken world, namely the desert. Moreover, James and 1 Corinthians 10 tell us that the source of their evil temptations was their own lust. It really is amazing how quickly the people of God can think that God is the author of testing and unjust suffering like He is the Big Tempter or Tester 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