

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”**  
**November 14, 2016**

**1 Kings 19:1–20:25.** The weak side of Elijah and where to get vindication of faith-knowledge.

**Mark 11:1–33.** The Servant Messiah’s condemnatory love.

**Proverbs 4:18–27.** The increasing lighted path vs. the path of darkness.

**COMMENTS.**

**1 Kings 19:1–20:25.** These two chapters cover Elijah and Ahab respectively. In **chapter 19** we see the side of Elijah that is more human, frail, and fallible. In terror of Jezebel he fled to the desert south of Beersheba, not merely outside the boundaries of Israel but beyond the southern border of Judah. There, in the depths of depression and despair, he prayed that he might die. There is no indication that he had planned to travel further than this. The journey which followed was only possible because an angel (or perhaps simply ‘a messenger’) ministered to him. The end of the journey was Mt Horeb, the place where God had commissioned Moses (Ex. 3) and later appeared in smoke, fire and thunder to give Israel the Ten Commandments (Ex. 19–20). On Mt Carmel we saw Elijah the great spiritual leader, saving Israel by his faith and faithfulness. On Mt Horeb, we see him weak, mistaken and in need of God’s rebuke. God’s opening question shows that, although God’s own messenger had enabled Elijah to make the journey, Elijah should not really have been there. Elijah’s answer completely devalued what had happened on Mt Carmel. He ignored God’s victory over Baal as though it had achieved nothing. By implication, he dismissed the people as utterly faithless. He disregarded the faithful Obadiah and the possibility that there might have been many more like him. Perhaps he saw Obadiah’s position in the royal court as a sign of weakness and compromise. Once again, he stated that he was the only prophet of Yahweh left alive (cf. 18:22), thus setting no value on the hundred prophets which he knew had been concealed in caves by Obadiah. Presumably, because they had not stood up to be counted, they were swept aside as hopelessly ineffectual. Elijah, now (ironically) sheltering in his own cave, conveniently overlooked the fact that he had lived in hiding himself for three years and had shown his own weakness by running away. In **chapter 20** first, we meet him as a courageous leader, obeying God’s prophets and winning victories. But at the close of the chapter, his underlying evil and disobedience emerge again. An anonymous prophet announced victory for Ahab, giving specific instructions as to who should lead the troops and start the battle. Victory would be granted so that Ahab “*will know that I am the LORD*” (**20:13**).

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** As Elijah sat under its shade, he did a wise thing—he prayed, but it was not a very biblical prayer. “*I’ve had enough!*” he told the Lord, “*so take my life.*” Then he gave his reason: “*I’m no better than my fathers.*” But God never asked him to be better than anybody else, but only to hear His Word and obey it. All we need to be is what God wants us to be. The combination of emotional burnout, weariness, hunger, and a deep sense of failure, plus lack of faith-knowledge in the Lord, had brought Elijah into a deep depression. But there was also an element of pride involved, and some self-pity, for Elijah was sure that his courageous ministry on Mount Carmel would bring the nation to its knees. Perhaps he was also hoping that Ahab and Jezebel would repent and turn from Baal to Jehovah. His

expectations weren't fulfilled, so he considered himself a failure. But the Lord rarely allows His servants to see all the good they have done because we are to walk *by proper knowledge and proper love* – not by sight! not by temporal vindication! Consider the great believers of the Bible who never saw vindication of their ministries in their lifetime like Paul, Peter, and all of the heroes of the Old Testament listed in Hebrews 11. The truth is that we do not need human vindication of our lives or ministries of what we say or believe or teach. God is our vindication, and He pours His light into our lives as we walk with Him *by proper knowledge and proper love*. Besides, in principle, biblical-faith knowledge cannot be vindicated by the darkness of the world. As we have studied, the confidence of faith comes from God Himself. He directly convinces us of the eternal, invisible ultimate realities unto which we have all be destined.

**Mark 11:1–33.** This reading describes Jesus' ministry in and around Jerusalem: His entry into Jerusalem (**1-11**), His prophetic signs of God's judgment on Israel (**12-26**), and His battles with the Jewish religious leaders (**27-33**).

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** Our Lord's condemning of the tree and cleansing of the temple were both symbolic acts that illustrated the sad spiritual condition of the nation of Israel. In spite of its many privileges and opportunities, Israel was outwardly fruitless (the fig tree) and inwardly corrupt (the corrupt temple). It was unusual for Jesus to act in judgment: John 3:17 *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.* Yet, there comes a time when this is the only thing God can do (John 12:35–41). Christ always offers grace before He judges or disciplines the unbeliever or the believer. He knocks on the door of the believer's life to offer the gift of fellowship in the life to be followed by fellowship and dignity of being rewarded by Him in a place of honor next to Him in the next life: Revelation 3:20 *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.* The denunciations in Mark 11 to the religious leaders are all from love. What would you do if you saw some people in a raft unknowingly headed for an impending deadly waterfall drop? Would you not yell and scream in whatever tone would get their attention before they reached the point of no return? It is because Christ loves so deeply that He is so passionate about those who both accept and reject Him. If He, or any preacher, did not really care about the fate of those who were within earshot, there would be no passion in preaching, exhorting, and challenging people to save their own souls, and be the best they could be by walking in the Lord *by proper knowledge and proper love*.

**Proverbs 4:18–27.** This reading describes the many blessings of wisdom beginning with walking in the light (4:18) to protection from evil (4:27).

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** Note the contrast in the first two verses of this reading: Proverbs 4:18 *But the path of the just is like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.* 19 *The way of the wicked is like darkness; They do not know what makes them stumble.* As one walks with the Lord with proper knowledge and proper love, which is the only way to truly walk more righteously (without being legalistic), God shines more of His light on his path. This light is not extra-revelation. Rather, it is an inner light that enables one to transcendently see the beauty of God, and by sharing the love of God, see the beauty of the gift of life and all that life brings—to rejoice in all things because of 2<sup>nd</sup> person love of Jesus Christ: 1 Peter 1:6 *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.* For example, say someone has offended you, and you have not completely forgiven them. In fact, every time you think of him, you get angry. He hurt you deeply, and you will not have anything to do with him. You continue to harbor bitterness against him. This bitterness brings darkness in your life. You may be able to sublimate it, but this darkness will remain unless you go to the root cause and the only solution—unless with Christ’s love you forgive him completely. When you completely forgive him because of your relationship with God, you are now in a position to share in the life of God and see things in a whole new light with a whole new attitude and appreciate the person as a human being, and in the process experience a new appreciation of God’s love. This transformation takes you out of Proverbs 4:19 and puts you in verse 18. The reason life in God with 2<sup>nd</sup> person *proper knowledge and love* is so powerful is that as one constantly walks in the light of God, these problems are never allowed to fester and corrupt the 1<sup>st</sup> order will because one continually asks God to raise the deficient 1<sup>st</sup> first order will (how we actually think and feel) to the second-order level (how we ought to think and feel). There simply is no end to the blessings we receive in this life and the next when we walk *by proper knowledge and by proper love.* It really is the only way for us to get off the blinders and enable us to live in the sunshine of His marvelous matchless grace and stop being so mean, nasty, and irritable.

*Life in God by second person proper knowledge and by proper love.*

*Pastor Don*