

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

November 17, 2016

2 Kings 1:1–2:5. The insanity of pride.

Mark 13:24–14:21. Evincing love for Christ.

Proverbs 6:1–5. Financial dangers.

COMMENTS.

2 Kings 1:1–2:5. Second Kings continues the account of Ahaziah begun in the previous three verses. Two difficulties befall Ahaziah. First, Moab rebels against Israel, an issue that will resurface later. Second, Ahaziah injures himself in a domestic accident. Because of the injuries he incurs, he sends messengers to Baal-Zebub of Ekron to ask if he will recover; rather, than the God of Israel. This Philistine god’s name means “lord of the flies.” It is the Lord, however, who is in charge of all things, including healing and death. This point was repeatedly made in 1 Kings 17–22. Thus, God instructs Elijah to confront one last king, this time with the message that the Lord reigns and that the monarch will die. Elijah meets the messengers headed for Ekron and shares God’s word of judgment. When Ahaziah’s messengers report to him, the king knows his parents’ old enemy has condemned him, just as he had done to his father. How will this new monarch respond? Rather than repenting, Ahaziah sends a squad of fifty and its captain to detain Elijah (**1:9-12**). The king seems to think he can control and intimidate this prophet, but he is mistaken. Jezebel made Elijah run once, but he refuses to run now. Instead, he calls fire down from heaven that consumes the first two groups sent to take him. This ability to get fire once again marks Elijah as “a man of God,” a true possessor and proclaimer of God’s word. **Chapter 2** provides a transition from the ministry of Elijah to the Elisha. Elijah will close with his ascent to Heaven, but his successor, Elisha, picked up his mantle and would guide Israel to victories over their enemies, the Moabites, and Arameans. The point is made that God is the Lord of all nations who shapes their destinies.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Pride causes people to act irrationally, especially with respect to God’s plan. Moreover, the more one digs in with pride and refuses to accept God’s truth, the more self-deception a person perpetrates on himself. In fact, God even helps the person by handing him over to his own debased desires: Romans 1:28 *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting.* In concurrence, God is always actualizing our potentials for good and evil according to our 1st and 2nd order wills. Consider Ahaziah: the announcement that he would die should have moved Ahaziah to repent of his sins and seek the Lord, but instead, he tried to lay hands on the prophet, which is reminiscent of King Herod’s seizure of John the Baptist. Ahaziah knew that Elijah was a formidable foe, and so he sent a captain with 50 soldiers to bring him to the place. Perhaps Ahaziah thought he could kill the prophet and thereby nullify the prophecy. Perhaps he thought he could get Elijah to change his prophecy. However, Elijah took his orders from the King of kings and not from earthly kings, especially a king who was an idolater and the son of murderers. We must make sure that we are more concerned with walking with the Lord *by proper knowledge and proper love* than what people think of us. If we choose to live for ourselves or others, we will miss the

greatest privilege of all, namely, daily life in a second-person relationship with Jesus Christ, the Christ-centered life. After all, Jesus Christ is the revelation of the effulgence of the glory of God (Heb. 1:1-3). To walk in God *by proper knowledge and proper love* is to walk in appreciation of the beauty of Christ and all that He has done, is doing, and will be doing. To walk with the Lord is to see the beauty of life as such. However, to walk with the votaries of modernism is to live in constant angst, unfulfilled satisfaction, and an insanity begotten by willful pride.

Mark 13:24–14:21. The reading of **13:24–31** describes events in the Tribulation, the events surrounding the coming of Christ. In **14:1–21**, the focus shifts to the theme of the approaching death of Jesus Christ.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Mary’s anointing of the Lord must not be confused with a similar event recorded in Luke 7:36–50. The unnamed woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee was a converted harlot who expressed her love to Christ because of His gracious forgiveness of her many sins. In **Mark 14:3** we have a different Mary in the house of Simon the (healed) leper. However, she was like the unnamed Mary in that she loved the Lord. This Mary showed her love to Christ because He was going to the cross to die for her. She prepared His body for burial as she anointed His head (**14:3**) and His feet (John 12:3). She showed her love for Jesus while He was still alive. It was an expensive offering that she gave to the Lord. Spikenard was imported from India, and a whole jar would have cost the equivalent of a common worker’s annual income. Mary gave lavishly and lovingly. She was not ashamed to show her love for Christ openly. There were three consequences to her act of worship. First, the house was filled with the beautiful fragrance of the ointment. There is always a “spiritual fragrance” in that home where Jesus Christ is loved and worshiped. Second, the disciples, led by Judas, criticized Mary for wasting her money! It sounded so pious for Judas to talk about the poor when in reality he wanted the money for himself. It is interesting that the word translated “waste” in Mark 14:4 is translated “perdition” in John 17:12 and applied to Judas! Judas criticized Mary for “wasting money,” but he wasted his entire life! Third, Jesus commended Mary and accepted her gracious gift. He knew the heart of Judas and understood why the other disciples followed his bad example. He also knew Mary’s heart and quickly defended her. No matter what others may say about our worship and service, the most important thing is that we please the Lord. The fact that others misunderstand and criticize us should not keep us from showing our love to Christ. Our concern should be His approval alone. When Mary gave her best at the feet of Jesus, she started a “wave of blessing” that has been going on ever since. She was a blessing to Jesus as she shared her love, and she was a blessing to her home as the fragrance spread. Were it not for Mary, her village, Bethany, would probably have been forgotten. The account of her deed was a blessing to the early church that heard about it and, because of the records in three of the Gospels, Mary has been a blessing to the whole world—and still is! The Lord’s prediction has certainly been fulfilled. Mary gave her best in faith and love; Judas gave his worst in unbelief and hatred. Only by walking in the Lord *by proper knowledge and proper love* do we ever really get it. And when we do not get it, we are always the worst for it. We can have an amplitude of angst by chasing the world or we can enjoy an

amplitude of love cultivated on a daily basis *by proper knowledge and love* in the Christ-centered life. *Quo Vadis?*

Proverbs 6:1–5. Proverbs 6 describes the enemies that can destroy a person financially, physically, morally, and spiritually. The first five verses urge the believer not to become too entangled with financial debt that can easily lead to ruin. This was especially true of the time of Proverbs because at that time failure to pay debt often led to the seizure of assets and being sold into slavery.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Every Christian must guard his heart against anything that could become a hindrance to the development of his 2nd person *daily* relationship with Jesus Christ. Binding oneself to certain financial obligations can certainly do that. The “shine” of the new large home and new cars will quickly lose their luster if one has to work so much that there is no time to study the Word of God or reflect on the Lord and the meaning of life. This is not a wholesale condemnation of owning large estates. It is simply a biblical warning that debt is a form of slavery that can cause a person never to have time for the Lord, family, friend, or church—for the enjoyment of life as such. Mammon is a ruthless master that can quickly drain the spiritual life out of the most robust spiritual life. The Bible does not condemn wealth. However, it does condemn putting money ahead of God, the spiritual life, and those in need: 1 Timothy 6:6 *Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13 I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, 14 that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, 15 which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen. 17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, 19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.* To value materialism over people, especially God's people, evinces a soul deprived of capacity for life as such due to preference for thirty pieces of silver and being a votary of modernity's Mammon. To value Christ and the things of God is to walk with God *by proper knowledge and proper love*, which then enables the believer to live a supervenient life flooded with the light of God's grace and love.

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

Pastor Don