

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

November 24, 2016

2 Kings 13:1–14:29. Returning to God, but why?

Galatians 4:1–31. Sharing in the love of Christ.

Proverbs 7:21–27. The destruction of illicit sex.

COMMENTS.

2 Kings 13:1–14:29. Now the focus moves from Judah to Israel. In **13:1-25** the focus is on Jehoahaz and Jehoash. Jehoahaz succeeded his father, Jehu, but led Israel to worship the Asherah pole, a representation of the Canaanite fertility goddess. The Lord used the Arameans to reduce Israel’s army. Jehoahaz’s son Jehoash ruled for sixteen years and was remembered for his oppression of King Amaziah of Judah (**14:1–14**). During his reign, Elisha was dying from an illness, and Jehoash came to his bedside and wept. Elisha instructed him to strike the floor with his arrow. After he struck the floor three times, Elisha predicted that the Lord would give him three victories over the Arameans. The Lord granted those victories over the Aramean king, Ben-Hadad, who succeeded his father Hazael. God honored both the life and death of the great prophet Elisha. A dead man was brought back to life when his body was placed in the tomb with Elisha’s bones. In **14:1-29** Amaziah pleased the Lord during his reign as his father Joash had done. He executed his father’s assassins and defeated the rebellious Edomites. His arrogance, however, brought him defeat by Jehoash of Israel. Jehoash broke down the walls of Jerusalem, raided the temple treasuries, and took hostages. Ironically, like his father’s, Amaziah’s rule ended by a conspiracy of assassins in Lachish.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Jehoahaz would rather worship the golden calves than the living God, but when he found himself in trouble, he turned to the Lord for help. God, then, delivered him and promised him blessings (**13:5**). Did the promised blessings of God change the king? No! for he didn’t remove the idols from the land (**13:6**) nor did he encourage the people to return to the Lord. He only turned to the Lord because of selfish reasons—he did not turn to the Lord *with proper knowledge and proper love*. He only “turned to the Lord” for his own hide. How many times have Christians when faced with a crisis, for instance, finding themselves in a hospital, say “If God heals me and gets me out of here, I am going to give myself to the Lord.” And God healed them and allow them to go home, but they quickly went back to the old ways of living for this world as evidenced by not having anything to do with gathering with fellow believers in a local church? As we have noted at FBC, love for God is never a brute act, it is inextricably connected to how we think on a number of issues. Right thinking and right desires are required to love the Lord, and right thinking/desires must be cultivated over time. Obviously, Jehoahaz only saw God as a good because He was viewed as a means to other goods, namely, idols. Only by loving God first and foremost for Himself can the believer escape the evil of being a user of God rather than a lover of God. We are not *uti* God, we are to love Him—loving God is its own reward, and yet for those who do love Him He promises a life beyond dreams (1 Cor. 2:9). In sum, it is one thing to return to the Lord by seeing Him as the greatest good. It is altogether different to return to Him for protection for other goods.

Galatians 4:1–31. From slaves to children (4:1-11); what happened to the Galatians? (4:12-20); the example of Ishmael and Isaac (4:21-31).

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Paul knows that something has gone seriously wrong with the Galatians. He remembers their love and devotion to Jesus Christ and their care for him when he was ill—perhaps with an illness affecting his eyesight. They would have given their eyes to him in those days! But now they seem to have lost all their love, joy and commitment. As one walks with the Lord *by proper knowledge and by proper love* one shares in the life of Christ and that sharing produces a love and concern for others, especially other believers. One characteristic of walking in the Lord and partaking of His love for his own, is that one finds himself thinking of fellow believers through the day and naturally praying for them—and thus living out the blessedness of loving fellow believers with the love of Christ (John 13:34; 15:12).

Proverbs 7:21–27. This section closes out the father’s closing exhortation to young men about the dangers of adultery. Failure to resist the seductress will result in the young man to be led like a dumb animal to slaughter.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. By going into the temptresses house against the counsel of God, the young man willfully rejected the command to love God first and foremost *and* moved into putting the Lord to the test. If instead of tempting the Lord, the youth had looked up to the Lord and remembered His Word, looked within and kept his heart focused on God’s truth (25), and looked ahead to see the terrible consequences of his sin (26–27), he would have turned around and fled from the harlot’s clutches. So, there are two sins: one in rejecting love for God and the other in tempting God by willfully rejecting His Word regarding illicit sex. Society today not only smiles at sexual sin, it actually approves it and encourages it. Perversions the very mention of which would have shocked people fifty years ago are openly discussed today and are even made the subject of novels, movies, and TV dramas. What Paul saw in his day and described in Romans 1:18–32 is now apparent in our own day, but people resent it if you call these practices “sin.” After all, “Everybody’s doing it.” The only way to escape the powerful evil influences of our time is life with God *by proper knowledge and proper love*. By living for the Lord not only do we save our own spiritual life, we are able to offer light, salt, and hope *par excellence* to our decaying and dying American culture.

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

Pastor Don