

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

November 27, 2016

2 Kings 18:13–19:37. The Angel of the Lord executes 185,000 Assyrians.

Ephesians 2:1–3:21. Paul’s magnificent fourfold prayer.

Proverbs 8:19–26. Wisdom and light or bitterness and darkness.

COMMENTS.

2 Kings 18:13–19:37. This reading contains the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib of Assyria and destruction of 185,000 Assyrians by the Angel of the Lord in response to Hezekiah’s prayer: (1) Sennacherib’s campaigns (**18:13-16**), Sennacherib’s threat (**18:17-37**), the Lord’s promise (**19:1-7**), the Lord’s diversion (**19:8-13**), Hezekiah’s prayer (**19:14-19**), the Lord’s answer (**19:20-34**), Sennacherib’s departure after the Angel of the Lord executed 185,000 of his soldiers (**19:35-36**), and Sennacherib’s death (**19:37**).

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. Note what King Hezekiah did when he received the blasphemous letter from the king of Assyria. It is the same thing that we must do when we are attacked. As pastor-teacher, I have suffered from my share of attacks from those who really are not interested in Truth as such. Often, they just want me to give them a god who will help them in their earthly pursuits rather than the God of the Bible who demands the believer’s full allegiance. Hezekiah did what I and you must do when we are attacked: look beyond these earthly “thrones” to the throne of God and leave the matter with Him. Let Him work out the details for His glory. That is what Hezekiah did. He went before the Lord in *second person love and knowledge*, in prayer, and laid out the situation before Him. Because Hezekiah loved the Lord more than his own “throne,” his capital concern was that the God of Israel be glorified before the nations of the Earth. Sennacherib had blasphemed the Lord, and Hezekiah asked God to act on behalf of Judah so that His name would be honored. Some people rush into the Lord’s presence whenever they face a problem, but the Lord never hears their voices at any other time. This wasn’t true of King Hezekiah. He was a man who at all times sought the blessing of the Lord on His people. He sought to know the Word of God and the will of God, and this gave him power in prayer. Hezekiah’s faith was rewarded, and his prayer was answered. In one night, God’s Angel killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers and that put an end to the siege of Jerusalem. It was a humiliating defeat for the Assyrians, but the event brought great glory to the Lord and honor to Hezekiah. God, then, honored Hezekiah who put the Lord in first place in his life, “*and the Lord was with him; wherever he went he prospered*” (2 Kings 18:7). Of course, true and lasting prosperity is always in the soul as one walks with God *by proper knowledge and proper love*. We Church Age believers have even greater opportunities to move into greater proper knowledge and greater proper love because of the revelation of the New Testament scriptures and the incarnation of the Angel of the Lord.

Ephesians 2:1–3:21. Outline: Saved by grace (2:1-10), reconciliation (2:11-18), the new community of God's people (2:19-22), the divine mystery (3:1-13), and believers are to be united in loving Christ (3:14-21).

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. The greatest intimacy between a believer and the Lord is in a 2nd person relationship, and the most intimate connection with the Lord in 2nd person relationship is in prayer. We have Paul's 2nd person connection with God in Ephesians in 3:16-19. Wow! Consider the wealth of this prayer! There are four requests in Paul's prayer, but they must not be looked on as isolated, individual petitions. These four requests are more like four parts to a telescope. One request leads into the next one, and so on. He prays that the inner man might have spiritual strength, which will, in turn, lead to a deeper experience with Christ. This deeper experience will enable them to "apprehend" (get hold of) God's great love, which will result in their being "filled unto all the fullness of God." So, then, Paul is praying for strength, depth, apprehension, and fullness. This prayer is not about quick fixes to temporal problems year after year, ad nauseam. What we need is a deeper life in God that enables us to grasp this true wealth in God. Life in God *by proper knowledge and proper love* really does resolve all issues in life. The believer who lives a life of loving God, like the quadriplegic Joni Eareckson Tada, understands this so well.

Proverbs 8:19–26. Wisdom's scope of expertise is broadened from her present ability to enrich individuals to her past involvement in creation. Wisdom existed before ("before" occurs five times in this context) the creation of the world and therefore was present when ("when" occurs seven times) God created the universe. Of course, this is figurative language used to personify the wisdom of God. Wisdom really does not exist as a separate entity, and it does not refer to the Second Person of the Trinity.

Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love. The obvious lesson in this reading is that the power and splendor of God, *Esse-ens* (existence/essence), seen all around us in creation, are evidence of what God's wisdom can do. The same God who worked in the "old creation" also wants to work in our lives with His wisdom in the "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10; 4:24; Col. 3:10). The Lord Jesus Christ, who holds the universe together and causes it to fulfill His will, not only gives us and every atom in us existence every instant. He can hold our lives together psychologically and accomplish His purposes for His glory. We Church Age believers have the marvelous opportunity to live the Christ-centered life, which brings a flood of God's light of wisdom to our lives and prevents us from being sucked into the darkness of kosmos-diabolicus. As I pointed out in our last Bible class, the local church is to be the vast resource for wisdom for the Church Age believer. The local church was created by Jesus Christ for fellow believers, fellow sharers of the life of Christ, to come together to learn the whole truth perspective (which is the characteristic of true wisdom) from someone dedicated to truth as such, without compromise. The local church is also designed for the various members of the Body of Christ, who all come from different backgrounds, to come together and support one another in the faith. We are all to love and support one another as we all partake of the grace of Christ together. There never will be an adequate replacement in the Church Age for the local church. It is to be the place where believers can come together to get the

total truth and be supported by fellow believers. Of course, this is not very appealing to one who lives for self or his career. He cares neither for truth as such or fellow believers. Often all one has to do is listen to him as he complains because things are not going *his way* and even laughs at other believers and the Faith. The dumbest and most arrogant thing any believer can do is to neglect or ignore a local church that provides a storehouse of wisdom concerning a vast array of issues in life—God, Christ, the spiritual life, language, man, government, truth, existence, the existent, and life itself. To pick a church primarily because it is convenient (don't have to drive too far Sunday morning) and makes temporal life better (prosperity gospel to help one get more out of the world) is already to betray that one has already lost his love for truth (let alone wisdom, which demands that one be willing to sell everything to possess as noted earlier in Proverbs) as such and has sold his soul and life to American pragmatism and Mammonism—and he has denied the call of the Lord to give his life to the Lord at a fundamental level. There is no such thing as a truly robust Christian life as such as long as one's philosophy is one of pragmatism. To value of pragmatism over Truth is to value stuff over God—such a life is precluded from a thriving and growing relationship with God by *second person proper knowledge and proper love*. By rejecting the wisdom that God provides, the believer rejects God's light for darkness, which by rationalization he calls good. John 3:19 *And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.* Philippians 3:18 *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame-- who set their mind on earthly things.* Isaiah 5:20 *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!* What you will never find among those who seek and find wisdom: darkness and bitterness.

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

Pastor Don