

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
October 1, 2016

Ezekiel 1:1–3:15. Ezekiel’s vision and commission.

Revelation 1:1–20. John’s vision of the glorious Christ.

Job 32:1–10. Elihu begins his long speech.

COMMENTS.

Ezekiel 1:1–3:15. This section of Scripture records Ezekiel’s call. First, we have Ezekiel’s vision of God’s glory in **1:1-28**. In sum, the vision signifies God’s transcendence above his creation. He is indescribably glorious. He is everywhere present and active—all-seeing, all-knowing. Suddenly Ezekiel begins to understand the exile of God’s people in a new, altogether different, perspective. God is not absent. God is not powerless. God is overwhelmingly here and now. Following this, we have Ezekiel’s commission (**2:1-3:15**). God tells Ezekiel that he is sending him as a messenger to his own people, his fellow exiles. There will be no barriers of race or language, but they will still refuse to listen to him. They are a rebellious people—worse than the heathen. Ezekiel will need to be tough and resolute. God will make Ezekiel’s forehead ‘harder than flint’ (**3:9**). God gives Ezekiel a scroll, covered on the front and back with messages of woe (**2:10**). For several years his only words will be warnings of the destruction of Jerusalem. The young prophet is to eat the scroll: taking in these messages and making them his own. He finds it ‘as sweet as honey.’ John has a similar experience in his vision (Rev. 10:10). The messages may be bitter, but obedience is always sweet when one loves the Lord.

By proper knowledge and by proper love. In our walk with God *by proper knowledge and proper love* we will undoubtedly cross paths with or have a ministry to those who reject God and the things of God. This was the situation Ezekiel was facing. Whether it’s trying led the family in the lord, teaching a Sunday School class, shepherding a church, or evangelizing our neighbors, we have to accept people as they are in love before we can attempt lead them to what God wants them to be. God gave Ezekiel four important commandments to obey: (1) stand and listen to the Lord (**2:1-2**), (2) go and speak the Word of God even when people are living in rebellion against God (**2:3-5**), (3) do not be afraid (**2:6-7**), and (4) feed on the Word of God (**2:8-3:3**). Ezekiel was sent to his own disobedience people. There is so much in contemporary Christianity today that is so unworthy of the name of Christ. We must not let that get us down. Our job is to walk with, in, and before the Lord in second personal relationship *by proper knowledge and by proper love* and when we do that we can be loving and faithful stewards of His grace. Our focus must be on the Lord, not on people’s negative volition to the Lord.

Revelation 1:1–20. John has a vision of Jesus ‘like a son of man’. This had been Daniel’s vision—a human being who fully represents the human race, appearing in clouds and great glory, to be given God’s power and authority to reign over all things (Dan. 7:13). John’s vision has far more detail than Daniel’s. The Son of man has the same white hair as God, the Ancient of Days. His eyes blaze with the fire of holiness; his feet glow with the strength of bronze. His voice has the multi-levelled sound of rushing water and his mouth speaks truth with power and precision. This is Jesus Christ as the disciples glimpsed him on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark 9:2–3). John is in exile, perhaps sentenced to hard labor in the mines of Patmos. His body may be in prison, but his spirit is free. The glorious Christ stands among seven golden lampstands. These are His churches, which give His light to the world. He also holds in His right hand seven stars. These are the angels which care for each local church. The face of the glorious Christ is like the sun—the source and appearance of all brilliance.

By proper knowledge and by proper love. John’s vision is of Christ as the living God and Lord of the church. In the world, the churches are like lampstands. Jesus gave the same picture to his disciples. They are not to hide truth, like putting a light under a bowl. They are to lift it high, where it can give light to everyone (Matthew 5:14–16). The believer who lives in the Lord *by proper and proper knowledge* understands the importance of being part of a local body of believers and the importance of being a positive contribution to his church. The believer’s love and respect for the teaching of the Word of God and fellow believers is simply a result of him sharing in the life of Christ, which sharing creates this desire for Christ’s Word and a local body of believers. He honors the church because Jesus Christ honors the church. When he comes to church it is to receive the teaching of Christ’s Word, communion, and to love and support fellow believers in a way that is distinctive from any other organization. Walking with the Lord *by proper knowledge and proper love* always includes a healthy, love, respect, and support for the gathering of fellow believers in the Lord. He considers it a privilege, a grace opportunity provided by His Savior.

Job 32:1–10. In this reading, Elihu surfaces to resume preaching to Job. This time his speech will take up six chapters (32-37). He says he had waited patiently before speaking, and he gave two reasons. For one thing, he was younger than Job and the three friends; and youth must respect age and experience (32:4, 6–7). It would have been a terrible breach of etiquette had Elihu interrupted his elders. His second reason was because he wanted to hear the complete debate and have all the arguments before him. The fact that Elihu quoted from their speeches indicates that he had listened closely and remembered what each man said (32:12). Like many “young theologians,” Elihu had a bit of youthful conceit in his speeches (“Hear what I know!”—32:6, 10, 17; 33:1–3); but for the most part, he was a sincere young man who really thought he could help Job find answers to his questions. However, note how angry Elihu is: four times in these verses we are told that Elihu was angry (32:1-3, 5). He was angry at the three friends for not refuting Job, and he was angry at Job for justifying himself rather than God. He tells Job that he should listen to him because his wisdom is inspired of God (Job 32:8–10). Boy was he mistaken.

By proper knowledge and by proper love. Age should bring us more wisdom of God and with it more wisdom about the gift of life, the nature of reality, and the meaning of life. The older we get the wiser we should be about ultimate and eternal realities. However, this can only be guaranteed when the believer lives a life of walking in the Lord *by proper knowledge and proper love*. Only by walking in the light as He is in the Light (1 John 1:7) do we see more clearly and more deeply about the meaning and point of life. Given that we were primarily created to know and love God how could it be otherwise?

Life in God by proper knowledge and by proper love.

Pastor Don