

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”**  
**October 24, 2016**

**Ezekiel 47:1–48:35.** “The Lord is here.”

**1 Thessalonians 1:1–10.** Faith, hope, and love—power of and transformation by God.

**Job 39:24–40:2.** Fault finding in God?

**COMMENTS.**

**Ezekiel 47:1–48:35.** This reading can be divided into two parts: (1) *The River Flowing from the Temple* (47:1–12). Ezekiel envisioned a river flowing from the temple toward the east. The river became increasingly deeper as it flowed through the desert on its way to the Dead Sea. Its fresh water was filled with fish, and fishermen lined its shores with nets. Also lining the river’s banks were nourishing fruit trees, the leaves of which possessed healing properties. This life-giving river flowing from God’s throne symbolized the restoration of divine blessing which the land would experience. (2) *Boundaries and Land Allotments* (47:13–48:35). The Book of Ezekiel concludes with a detailed description of the land’s future boundaries and allotted portions. The holy city, constructed as a perfect square in the middle of the land, would have twelve gates (three on each of its four walls) named after the tribes of Israel. The city would be named “Yahweh-Shammah,” meaning the Lord is there.

**Life in God by 2<sup>nd</sup> person personal knowledge and personal love.** This reading contains many details about the millennium. For example, during the 1,000-year reign of Christ there will be twenty celebrations of the year of Jubilee (every 50 years). However, the most important thing about the new city will be the presence of the Lord among His united people (Ezek. 35:10). The new name will be “Jehovah Shammah—the Lord is there.” This is one of seven compound names of Jehovah found in the Old Testament: Jehovah Jireh—“the Lord will provide” (Gen. 22:13–14); Jehovah Rapha—“the Lord who heals” (Ex. 15:26); Jehovah Shalom—“the Lord our peace” (Jud. 6:24); Jehovah Tsidkenu—“the Lord our righteousness” (Jer. 23:6); Jehovah Shammah—“the Lord is present” (Ezek. 48:35); Jehovah Nissi—“the Lord our banner” (Ex. 17:8–15); and Jehovah Ra’ah—“the Lord our shepherd” (Ps. 23:1). As one grows *in proper knowledge and love of the Lord*, the realities in these names become more of our reality as they heightened our identity and closeness with Him. We are always drawn to what we view as our greatest good. The goodness in the various names are all related to our relationship with Him *by knowledge and by love*. Only by loving Him do we even care to think about these wonderful aspects of God available to anyone who will turn to Him wholeheartedly.

**1 Thessalonians 1:1–10.** While no church is perfect, some churches are closer to others. The church at Thessalonica was in the category of one of the true great churches. Paul gave thanks for the church and the way it responded to the Word of God (1:5) and the ministry of the Holy Spirit repeatedly. They were a people who were enthusiastic about the Lord and the spiritual life because the supernatural power from the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and love transformed them.

**Life in God by 2<sup>nd</sup> person proper knowledge and proper love.** There is no changed life without the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and love, which Paul celebrates throughout his epistles. By comparing 1:3 to 1:9-10 we see how these virtues work in the lives of these believers: as (1) the work of faith caused them to turn to God from idols, (2) the labor of love moved them to serve the living and true God, and (3) the patience of hope inspired them to wait for His Son from Heaven. These virtues cannot be obtained by some formula, biblical or otherwise. Moreover, they are not gained by packing in more Bible doctrine—this certainly could not have been the case with the Thessalonians for they did not even have a Bible and had only become believers recently. This faith, hope, and love was a result of the infusion of God’s grace and them participating in the life of God. It can only be maintained by walking with the Lord by 2<sup>nd</sup> person proper knowledge and love. Only faith will turn us to God away from the world, only hope will give us the eternal perspective, and only love will properly motivate us to serve God with alacrity regardless of the circumstances of life.

**Job 39:24–40:2.** Beginning in chapter 40, God uses language that reflected Job’s desire to take God to court and argue his case. “Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it” (Job 40:2). God presented His case; now He gave Job opportunity to present his case. But Job has no case to present! His first words were, ‘Behold, I am vile!’ which means, ‘I am insignificant and unworthy. I have no right to debate with God.’

**Life in God by 2<sup>nd</sup> person proper knowledge and proper love.** When Job said “Behold, I am vile!” he means, ‘I am insignificant and unworthy. I have no right to debate with God.’ Job had told his friends to cover their mouths (21:5), and others had covered their mouths when Job appeared (29:9); but now Job had to put his hand over his mouth lest he say something he shouldn’t say (Prov. 30:32; Rom. 3:19). Until we are silenced before God, He can’t do for us what needs to be done. As long as we defend ourselves and argue with God, He can’t work for us and in us to accomplish His plan through us. But Job was not quite broken and at the place of sincere repentance. He was silent but not yet submissive; so, God continued His address. We are a hardheaded people. Until and unless we turn to God *in proper knowledge and love* we will continue to fight with Him because we want our way instead of His way. His way is always giving Him our bodies, minds, and wills (Rom. 12:1-2)—but, again, this cannot be done apart from loving Him more than all else. We always give ourselves to what we love, whether it is to the world or the Lord. *Quo Vadis?*

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

*Pastor Don*