

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”**  
**October 27, 2016**

**Daniel 4:1–37.** Living like an animal.

**1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11.** The coming of Jesus Christ.

**Job 41:1–9.** The Leviathan and the wickedness of pride.

**COMMENTS.**

**Daniel 4:1–37.** This reading can be divided into three parts. **First**, the king reports his dream to Daniel (**4:1-18**). While lying in his palace, the king had a terrifying dream. When his wise men and diviners were unable to interpret it, he summoned Daniel. In his dream Nebuchadnezzar saw a large fruit tree with beautiful leaves. Animals found shelter in its shade, and birds lodged in its branches. An angelic being then commanded that the tree be cut down and that the stump be bound with iron and bronze. The angel then announced that the man represented by the stump would be overtaken by insanity and would live outdoors like an animal for a specified period. **Second**, Daniel interprets the dream (**4:19-27**). Daniel informed Nebuchadnezzar that the tree represented none other than the king himself. Though great and mighty, the king would be brought low. For a period, he would be plagued by an extreme form of insanity (known as boanthropy or lycanthropy) and would actually behave like an animal. Once he was sufficiently humbled, Nebuchadnezzar would be restored to his throne. **Third**, the dream comes true (**4:28-37**). One year later, Nebuchadnezzar’s dream was fulfilled. As he proudly looked about the great city of Babylon, a voice from heaven announced to him that he was about to be humbled. He began acting like an animal, and his hair and nails grew exceedingly long. Finally, God restored his sanity, causing Nebuchadnezzar to praise Him publicly and warn others of the consequences of pride. The cutting down and trimming of the tree symbolized Nebuchadnezzar’s disgrace and removal from the throne, but the leaving of the stump was a promise that he would one day reign again. The banding of the stump may suggest that he was marked by God and protected by Him until His purposes for him were fulfilled. For seven years (“seven times”) the king would live like a beast, eating grass and feeling the forces of nature against his body.

**Life in God by 2<sup>nd</sup> person proper knowledge and proper love.** The grand lesson God wanted the king to learn—and that we must learn today—is that God alone is sovereign and will not permit mortals to usurp His throne or take credit for His works. We are but creatures, and God is the Creator; we are only subjects, but He is the King of Kings. When men and women refuse to submit themselves to God as creatures made in His image, they descend to the level of animals and worship creation (pets, work, people, materialism), see Rom. 1:23. It’s worth noting that God used animals when He wanted to describe the great empires of history (Dan. 7), and that the last great world dictator is called “the beast” (Rev. 11:7; 13:1ff; 14:9, 11). Men and women are made in the image of God, but when they leave God out of their lives and resist His will, they descend to the level of animals. “Do not be like the horse or like the mule,” warns King David, who was guilty of acting like both (Ps. 32:9). Like the impulsive horse, he rushed into sin when he committed adultery with Bathsheba, and then like the stubborn mule, he delayed confessing his sins (2 Sam. 11–12). When the Lord arrested Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road, He compared the pious rabbi to a stubborn ox when He said, “It is hard

for you to kick against the goads” (Acts 9:5). When we do not live with God *by second person proper knowledge and love* we act like animals as our whole manner of life becomes all about the sense level. You will never see an animal “thinking about” or “worshiping” God. It cannot because it does not have the ability for immaterial thinking. We do, and we develop our higher immaterial natures when we live in God by knowledge and by love. Without true love for God, man will always suppress knowledge of God and with it His sovereignty over his life as he turns to idols of his own making (Rom 1:18-23). The problem is not primarily in knowing God as per Rom 1:19-20, it is responding to His love and goodness. Knowing God is one thing, proper knowledge and love is altogether another. Both unbelievers and carnal believers know God, it is just that they do not love Him in 2<sup>nd</sup> person, a love that always translates to three things: loving a person as a person, a desire to be closer to the person, and a desire for the good of the person. Without personal love, for God and others, love is, at best, love for them as “things” or “tools”—not as persons worthy of the dignity accorded to persons as such.

**1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11.** This reading can be divided into six parts. **First**, we have God’s Truth on life after death (**4:13, 15**). The pagan world in Paul’s day had no hope of life after death. A typical inscription on a grave demonstrates this fact: I was not - I became - I am not - I care not. While some of the philosophers, such as Socrates, sought to prove happiness after death, the pagan world had no word of assurance. Paul solved the problem when he wrote, “For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:15). We Christians need not wonder about death or life after death, for we have a revelation from God in His Word. **Second**, Christ is coming again (**4:14-15**). Paul did not say that the soul went to sleep at death. He made it clear that the soul of the believer went to be with the Lord: “them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him” (1 Thess. 4:14). He cannot bring them when He returns unless they are with Him. It is not the soul that sleeps; it is the body. A definition of death is given in James 2:26—“For as the body without the spirit is dead.” At death, the spirit leaves the body, and the body goes to sleep and no longer functions. The soul goes to be with the Lord, if the person has trusted Jesus Christ. “Absent from the body, and ... present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8). **Third**, the Christian dead will rise (**4:15-16**). When Paul preached the doctrine of the resurrection to the Athenian philosophers, most of them mocked him (Acts 17:32). To the Greeks, being rid of the body was their great hope. Why would any man want to have his body resurrected? Furthermore, how could his body be resurrected, when the elements of the body would decay and become a part of the earth? To them, the doctrine of resurrection was foolish and impossible. The Christian doctrine of resurrection assures us that death is not the end. The grave is not the end. The body goes to sleep, but the soul goes to be with the Lord (Phil. 1:20–24). When the Lord returns, He will bring the soul with Him, will raise the body in glory, and will unite body and soul into one being to share His glory forever. **Fourth**, the Rapture (**4:17**). The word rapture is not used in this section, but that is the literal meaning of “caught up.” The Latin word *rapto* means “to seize, to carry off”; and from it we get our English word “rapture.” First Corinthians 15:52 indicates that this will happen so suddenly that it will be over in the twinkling of an eye. Since the shout, voice, and trumpet apply to God’s people, there is no reason to believe that the unsaved masses will hear them. If they do, they will hear sounds without meanings (see John 12:27–30). Millions of people will vanish instantly, and no doubt there will be chaos and great concern. Except for those who know the Word of God, the world will wonder at what has happened. **Fifth**, the

eternal reunion: Christians forever with the Lord (4:17-18). **Sixth**, the warning to avoid ignorance, as illustrated by sleep-walking through life.

**Life in God by second person proper knowledge and proper love.** You and I shall meet the Lord in the air, in person, when He comes for us. The Greek word translated “meet” carries the idea of meeting a royal person or an important person. We walk with Christ by faith here on earth, but in the air we shall “see Him as He is” and become like Him (1 John 3:1–2). What a meeting that will be! It will be a glorious meeting, because we shall have glorified bodies. When He was here on earth, Jesus prayed that we might one day see His glory and share in it (John 17:22–24). The suffering that we endure today will be transformed into glory when He returns (Rom. 8:17–19; 2 Cor. 4:17–18). It will be an everlasting meeting, for we shall be “forever with the Lord.” This was His promise: “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:3). The goal of redemption is not just to rescue us from judgment, but to relate us to Christ. The crucial feature of these truths is that we do not have the power to believe these truths. God the Holy Spirit must raise up our intellects and wills; and He only does this as we walk with the Lord by *second person proper knowledge and love*. If we turn our affections to the world rather than the Lord, we suppress the ministry of the Holy Spirit, which results in loss of our love for the Lord (1 John 2:15–16; Matt. 6:24) and with it a living confidence in these realities. Those who do not have a vibrant, robust faith and anticipation in being with the Lord have already turned from the Lord’s goodness to some lesser goods in this life. It is impossible to have a living reality about being with Him if one does not care much about Him in his daily life. We all have the privilege of setting the direction of our loves and with that the quality and direction of our lives. The Bible teaches that anticipation of being with Christ has a purifying effect on our lives: 1 John 3:2, *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

**Job 41:1–9.** The leviathan (chap. 41). The word “leviathan” is the transliteration of a Hebrew word (לִוְיָתָן), the root of which means “to twist, to writhe.” People used the word to describe the “sea monsters” that were supposed to inhabit the Mediterranean. The Jews used the word to describe their enemies (Isa. 27:1), especially Egypt (Ps. 74:13–14). Revelation 12:9 refers to Satan as “that old serpent.” In mythology, the leviathan was a many-headed monster that ruled the waters and feared no man. The discussion of the leviathan is longer than God’s comments on any of the other animals. This beast has been variously interpreted as the seven-headed sea monster Lotan of Ugaritic mythology, the whale, the dolphin, a marine dinosaur that survived the Flood, and, most common, the giant crocodile of the Jordan River (not the Egyptian crocodile). Man’s attempt to capture this animal and the detailed description of the monster’s anatomy suggest that it was an actual creature. Some see the behemoth and leviathan as dinosaurs, but that would put them only a few hundred years of the Flood. Most think that the leviathan fits the description of a crocodile: e.g., its back (13, 15–17, 23), teeth (14), chest and undersides (24, 30), and its churning of the waters (31–32). Others see it as some kind of dragon.

**Life in God by 2<sup>nd</sup> person proper knowledge and proper love.** Regardless of one's views on the Leviathan, the Lord is essentially asking Job 'can you capture and tame these great creatures? If so, then you may display the power and wisdom to judge the world justly.' God hates the sin of pride and will, sooner or later, will break the pride of every person—in this life or the next. The worst thing about pride is that it undermines any ability to have a 2<sup>nd</sup> person love relationship with God. In pride, we forget that we have been given the gift of life by God. In pride, we think little of walking with the Lord daily. In pride, we gripe and complain because things do not go our way. In pride, we are blind to the beauty of life and life with God. In pride, life never seems fair. In pride, we are our own worst enemies as we attempt to be masters of our own fate. Again, sooner or later God will break all pride. All will get it someday. However, there really is only one efficient way to break the sin and evil of pride, a beautiful way: 2<sup>nd</sup> person knowledge and love of God. What a marvelous way to break the evil and ignorance of making ourselves gods determined to have things our way. What a beautiful way to discover the marvelous gift of life and life with God: loving Him. What's more is that we have His promise that if we do humble ourselves, *He will draw near to us* (James 4:8). God loves us and desires to be intimately involved in our lives. It is pride that discards God's marvelous love and plan for our lives. It is pride that totally undermines any ability to walk with God *by knowledge and by love*. What true good can anyone expect in life if he continues to undermine his relationship with God with pride?

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

*Pastor Don*