

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
October 31, 2016

Daniel 11:1–12:12. Divine reward for faithfulness: Shining with eternal brightness.

2 Thessalonians 3:1–18. The ultimate point of life and the church.

Job 42:10–17. God writes our last chapter of life.

COMMENTS.

Daniel 11:1–12:12. In **chapter 11** the angel gives Daniel more details of the history which has already been enacted in the visions of the beasts. After Alexander’s death, his empire is split between four generals. One of them, Ptolemy, becomes the ruler of Egypt. His descendants are the Ptolemies and they are ‘the kings of the South’. Another general, Seleucus, rules Syria and Babylonia. His descendants are the Seleucids, who are ‘the kings of the North’. As the Seleucids rule from Antioch, they start to take the name Antiochus. Antiochus the Great, for example, gives his daughter in marriage to the reigning Ptolemy in 194 BC. This is described in 11:17 and attracts our attention because the daughter is none other than the famous Cleopatra. The angel’s narrative gives an extraordinary impression of human aggression and intrigue. Antiochus IV Epiphanes appears in 11:21 and his unspeakable treatment of the Jews is again foretold. But his time is limited. Those who are faithful to God should resist him, even if it costs them their lives. In 11:36-45 we see the Antichrist. Some have suggested that his rejection of “the desire of women” (**11:37**) indicates that he has a homosexual orientation. But the phrase “desire of women” probably relates to Haggai 2:7, a title of the Messiah, for it was the desire of Jewish women to give birth to the promised Messiah. Not only will Antichrist reject all religion in general but he will oppose the Jewish religion in particular, especially the hope their Messiah will return and deliver them from their enemies. His god is the god of might and of military power. When the people of the world worship the man of sin, they are actually worshiping Satan, the one who empowers the Antichrist. Like Antiochus centuries before him, Antichrist will reward those who worship him and his manufactured god. In **chapter 12** we have the end-times. As Daniel’s final vision draws to a close, he is told of the end of the world. There will be a period of great distress, but God’s people will be delivered. Those who have died will be raised to life and judged. The righteous will be vindicated. The wicked will be sentenced. There is great hope here that God will put all to rights. There will be life beyond death and glory after suffering as God works His plan, which will culminate with the God-man dying for the sins of the world, being resurrected, and coming back to establish His kingdom for His people.

Life in God by 2nd person proper knowledge and proper love. Note the rewards promised to faithful believers in Daniel 12:3, *Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.* How we have lived and served the Lord will determine the rewards He will give us at the judgment seat of Christ (Rom. 14:9–12; 2 Cor. 5:6–10). Every cup will be full in heaven, but some cups will be larger than others. We will share in the glory of Christ and will shine like the stars in the heavens. There is a special application here to those who have faithfully witnessed during the Tribulation period, when it will be a costly thing to identify with Christ and His people (Matt. 24:14; Rev. 7:9–17). Our Lord

emphasized the truth that faithfulness to Him today will lead to reward and ministry in the future kingdom (Matt. 13:43; 19:27–28; 25:14–30; Luke 19:12–27; Rev. 2:26–27; 5:9–10). During His reign on earth, we will share in whatever work He has for us to do, according to how we have lived for Him and served Him here on earth. Believers who have suffered in their service for Christ will be more than compensated as they share in His glory (Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:7–18). Of course, this service must be done out of love for Christ as the Bible teaches that any sacrifice that is not motivated by love is profitless, and thus will not be rewarded: 1 Corinthians 13:3 *And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.* Every day counts forever, every day is another opportunity to deepen our walk with the Lord by 2nd person proper knowledge and proper love.

2 Thessalonians 3:1–18. Paul asks the Thessalonians to pray for him (3:1-5): Paul values the prayers of his converts—especially that the preaching of the gospel will go well. He also asks for prayer for his own protection. He has been stoned in Lystra and flogged and imprisoned in Philippi. Now he has powerful enemies in Thessalonica and Corinth, especially among the Jews who oppose him. **Paul warns against idleness (3:6-15):** Paul is concerned that some Christians at Thessalonica have given up work. They may be making the excuse that they must concentrate on spreading the gospel, because Christ will soon return. Paul says bluntly that they are idle! Instead of being busy, they are making a nuisance of themselves in other people’s business. No one is more urgent and focused than Paul when it comes to preaching the gospel; yet he and his companions always work—at night if need be—to support themselves. Paul is a leather worker and tentmaker. He is typical of the Jewish rabbis who earn their own living, so that they can teach the law free of charge. Now Paul’s rule is that the Thessalonian Christians should do the same. Anyone who won’t work must be left in no doubt of the church’s disapproval. **Paul’s farewell blessing (3:16-18):** Paul again finishes his letter with a blessing of peace. This is the peace of God himself—peace in the midst of conflict, peace in the face of persecution, peace in the love of God and the hope of eternal life. He writes a final greeting in his own hand (perhaps the rest has been written down by Silas), so that his readers can be sure it’s genuinely from him.

Life in God by 2nd person proper knowledge and proper love. While there are many details regarding our lives and our local family of believers, let us never forget what it is all about. Why does FBC exist? Just to grow in the Word of God so we can handle our problems? No! Are all of the exhortations and challenges from the pulpit just so we can be better Christians? No! Why the countless hours of studying to feed believers at FBC? Do we have a church for the main purpose of fellowshiping with amazing believers in our congregation? No! The main point of life and all of that we do is noted in **2 Thessalonians 3:5, *Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.*** While it is true that as we walk in the light of the Lord’s will through the challenges at work and church, He will bring His light to our lives and direct us into His love. And while it is true that as we seek Him through the teaching of the Word of God, He will grant His grace enlightenment into the things of God. And while we become partakers of His nature as we properly love His children and His local church, the goal of it all is always growing in God by *proper knowledge and proper love.* The believer who rejects fellow believers will be denied that grace enlightenment that alone will bring true, clear, convicting, and infallible knowledge of God on a 2nd person level: 1

John 4:7, *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.* Again, personal love for God is the goal, a love that is impossible apart from His imparting Himself and His grace into our lives to raise our intellects and wills.

Job 42:10–17. By forgiving his friends and praying for them, Job brought back the blessing to his own life (10). We only hurt ourselves when we refuse to forgive others because we walk in darkness rather than with God in His gracious light. Job ended up with twice as much as he had before. He had twenty children, ten with God and ten in his home. (He and his wife were also reunited.) Friends and relatives brought money for a “restoration fund,” which Job must have used for purchasing breeders; and eventually, Job had twice as much livestock as before. He was once again a wealthy man. If the “double” formula also applied to Job’s age, then he must have been seventy when the story began, and God allowed Job to live twice as many years (Job 42:16). To die “old and full of years” with a deep and developed relationship with God is blessedness indeed.

Life in God by 2nd person proper knowledge and proper love. We must not misinterpret this final chapter and conclude that every trial will end with all problems solved, all hard feelings forgiven, and everybody “living happily ever after.” It just doesn’t always happen that way! This chapter assures us that, no matter what happens to us, God always writes the last chapter. Therefore, we don’t have to be afraid. We can trust God to do what is right, no matter how painful our situation might be. There are many people who live long miserable lives and never turn to God with a total attitude of faith in and love to Him. Job did not have to turn to God with *proper knowledge and proper love*. He had plenty of reasons to continue complaining and be miserable. It was only because Job turned to God with love that he became a truly blessed man. We may write much of our lives with our own wills, but it is God who will write our last chapter. Let us redouble our efforts in turning to Him in love in 2nd person in response to His love and wooing of us through *all* of the circumstances of life.

Life in God by proper knowledge and by proper love.

Pastor Don