

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
October 7, 2016

Ezekiel 16:1–63. Jerusalem, the unfaithful wife.

Revelation 6:1–7:8. Saints in heaven watching events on Earth.

Job 34:1–15. Walking in the love of God.

COMMENTS.

Ezekiel 16:1–63. This long chapter contains some of the most vivid language found anywhere in Scripture. It is addressed to the city of Jerusalem but refers to the entire nation. The chapter traces the spiritual history of the Jews from “birth” (God’s call of Abraham) through “marriage” (God’s covenant with the people), and up to their “spiritual prostitution” (idolatry) and the sad consequences that followed (ruin and exile). The Lord used an allegory to illustrate the ingratitude and unfaithfulness of Jerusalem’s citizens. Originally Jerusalem was a Canaanite city, populated by Amorites and Hittites. It was like an unwanted baby, thrown into a field and left to die from exposure. However, the Lord preserved the child’s life. Later, after she had grown into a mature, beautiful young lady, the Lord entered into a marriage covenant with her. He clothed her with beautiful garments, provided her with food, and made her a queen. Her fame spread throughout the nations. Intoxicated by her riches and status, Jerusalem turned to other gods and nations. She built pagan sanctuaries, sacrificed her children to idols, and formed alliances with the surrounding nations. She became worse than a prostitute. Rather than receiving payment from her lovers, she paid them. What a perversion! How gross! The people of Judah were twice the sinners as the people in Samaria, and by comparison, the people of Judah made the citizens of Samaria and Sodom look righteous! What a terrible indictment against God’s chosen people!

Life in God by proper knowledge and by proper love. Is the American church today any less guilty? Christians have been saved to cultivate a loving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and fellow believers of a local church. However, many are not even part of a local church, preferring to give their love to the world. Instead of daily walking with Jesus Christ *by proper knowledge and by proper love*, which manifests itself in looking forward to each new day with the Lord, their minds and hearts look forward to TV in the evening and another day of making money, things going well for them, receiving human approbation, and being entertained by the world, with little to no thought of the Lord Jesus Christ. Instead of enjoying a growing love relationship with the Lord, they, too, often pay for others for love/approbation—and they have a thousand ways to earn the approbation of the world, which is why they so they prize their looks, waist lines, cars, and houses, and flattery with little to no thought of their true Home and the Lover of their souls. Only by walking *by proper knowledge and proper love* can we break free from the curse of the loving the world rather than daily growing and looking forward to what each day the Lord has in store for us.

Revelation 6:1–7:8. Chapter 6: The breaking of the first four seals brings forth four horsemen of different colors (6:1–8). These riders, paralleling the chaos predicted in Mark 13, represent God’s judgments through the upheavals of war (6:2) and its devastating social consequences: violence (6:3–4), famine (6:5–6), pestilence, and death (6:7–8). The fifth seal (6:9–11) is the plea of martyred saints for divine justice upon their oppressors. For now, they are told, they must wait, for the number of the martyred of God’s people is not yet complete. **7:1-8:** The question was raised in 6:17 whether any would be saved in the Tribulation. This is answered in this chapter, and two classes of the saved are mentioned specifically: (1) those who are saved in Israel, (2) those of all nations who, though saved spiritually, are martyred. Four angels were told to withhold judgment on the earth until the servants of God were sealed (**3**). The seal on their foreheads symbolizes protection and ownership and God’s intention to protect the 12 tribes that are mentioned, much as He protected Noah from the Flood, Israel from the plagues of Egypt, and Rahab and her household in Jericho. In **4–8** John heard the names of 12 tribes with 12,000 from each tribe, sealed and thus protected. The 12 tribes are not “lost” as some contend.

Life in God by proper knowledge and by proper love. As we walk with the Lord daily, we will naturally look forward to being with Him in Heaven. We can learn a great deal about the present Heaven from three key verses in this reading, **6:9-11**: when believers die they are relocated in Heaven; they will remember their lives on Earth; they call out so they are able to express themselves; they are aware of events on Earth and ask the Lord to intervene on Earth; they have a deep sense of justice; they are aware of God’s attributes; there is time in Heaven, “how long”; and they have a strong familial connection, “fellow servants and brothers.” The Apostle Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:2-4, “*For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.*” While some take this as a disembodied nakedness, but in light of Rev. 6:9-11 it seems that at death we will be clothed by a heavenly dwelling—some intermediate form with clothes. Disembodied souls do not hear clothes. Many of us only have only a few decades left on this earth, and the clothing that we will wear for all of eternity will reflect our lives here (Rev. 19:8). As I have noted many times, one cannot live the spiritual life without the eternal perspective. I would add that one cannot have the eternal perspective apart from living with the Lord *by proper knowledge and by proper love.*

Job 34:1–15. In Elihu’s second speech, he continues to quote Job, answer his argument, and challenge him to repent. In a large part of this chapter, the substance of Elihu’s speech, concentrates on God’s attributes of justice, mercy, omniscience, and sovereignty. As Elihu’s speech concentrates on God, His immutability, His justice, and His just dealing with offenders, he is making veiled allusions to Job’s guilt. By and large, what Elihu said was good theology, but it does not apply to Job—he should have known that Job was not wicked, an evildoer, or a strong oppressor of the poor. In that regard this fourth friend is little different from the other three who likewise lumped Job with various malefactors who are punished for their crimes on the basis of the inviolable system of divine retribution.

Life in God by proper knowledge and by proper love. Theology (“the science of God”) used to be called “the queen of sciences” because it deals with the most important knowledge we can have, the knowledge of God. Theology is a necessary science, but it is also a difficult science; for it is our attempt to know the Unknowable (Rom. 11:33–36). God has revealed Himself in creation, in providence, in His Word, and supremely in His Son; but our understanding of how God is dealing with others is not as clear. One of the greatest blessings of life in God *by proper knowledge and by proper love* is that we start loving others more as we partake of God’s love. Instead of going around with a negative attitude toward others, we love them with the love of God. Instead of not really connecting with people we run into, we view everyone with eternal significance. Living in the love of God is a most wonderful experience. It is an experience that cannot be communicated by language alone. Language is simply not strong enough to bear the weight of the love of God experienced by the believer. Had Elihu been living in the knowledge and love of God, he would not have been so negative, for Job’s sake and for his own. Elihu was anything but happy, compassionate, or empathic. He was miserable just as we are when we condemn others. One cannot walk with God by knowledge alone, no matter how good or correct the theology is—Love must accompany knowledge else knowledge will be used as a weapon instead of a means of knowing God and goodness. Moreover, when one really contemplates God and gets it, he takes on more of a humble attitude because he is so overwhelmed by what He learns of God and how little he really knows about reality, least of all about what God is doing with other people.

Life in God by proper knowledge and by proper love.

Pastor Don