

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”**  
**September 14, 2016**

**Jonah 1:1–4:11.** Jonah, a pitiful ambassador of the Lord.

**Acts 13:1–12.** Beginning of the first missionary journey.

**Job 22:1–13.** Eliphaz’s third speech.

**COMMENTS:**

**Jonah 1:1–4:11.** The book of Jonah can be divided into four parts: **(1) Jonah disobeys, 1:1-16.** To avoid his divine assignment Jonah tried to get as far away from Nineveh as possible. Nineveh was about five hundred miles to the east, so he headed for Tarshish, probably what is now Spain, the farthest western location he knew, about two thousand miles. But God sent a storm and then a great fish to turn Jonah around. Note how pagan sailors showed more compassion for Jonah than Jonah showed for Nineveh. **(2) Jonah prays, 1:17-2:10.** Jonah, having been thrown overboard, thought his life was over. Suddenly he found himself alive inside a huge fish. The psalm of prayer Jonah uttered was an expression of thanks to God for saving his life. For his own deliverance Jonah was thankful, but Jonah would show a different attitude toward Nineveh’s deliverance. **(3) Jonah preaches, 3:1-10.** Perhaps about a month later, Jonah arrived in the great city of Nineveh. After Jonah preached for only a day rather than the expected three days, the people repented. **(4) Jonah is depressed, 4:1-11.** Jonah despised the Ninevites so much that he would rather die than live, knowing he helped them escape destruction.

**By knowledge and by love.** As we grow daily in the Lord *by knowledge and by love*, so will our desire for others to enjoy the same abundant life of fellowship with our Lord. The richness of fellowship with the Lord that we enjoy by contemplating His love for us (read Galatians 2:20), raises life to a whole new level of blessing. As human beings we all, by nature and without exception, seek love and recognition. The problem is that man is prone to seek it in the wrong places, from people and things of this world rather than the Lord and the coming kingdom. If we ever find ourselves with a mindset of Job, it should be a warning sign to us that we are not really growing in and enjoying God’s love and mercy. If one lives in the joy of the Lord, he will naturally want others to have that joy. Joy is the only appropriate response when God lavishes His grace on the ungodly. However, when the believer becomes self-righteous, he will not only not see love for the Lord as its own reward, and he will not see God’s blessings on others as a good. He will, instead, become disturbed because he really wants God to judge those who do not measure up to his own standards. Jonah is a powerful warning about becoming self-righteous. Self-righteousness destroys personal love for God as it results in lack of desire to be God’s ambassador of grace and love (as illustrated in the disobedience of Jonah), as well as results in divine discipline (the fish which swallowed Jonah), desire to see God’s judgment on those who are not saved, and more concern for temporal things (like a plant) than people who are different. Every believer must be aware that he is an ambassador of Christ and represents Christ in all that he does. Thank God that the true God is not the kind of God that Jonah reflected in his life. How are we reflecting Christ to our fallen world? It really is all about Christ and His will, not ours!

**Acts 13:1–12.** This section can be divided into two parts: **(1) 13:1-3, commissioning for the first missionary journey.** While church leaders were fasting and praying for further leading, the Spirit directed them to send Paul and Barnabas on a mission. The others then “commissioned” Paul and Barnabas to the new ministry, fasting, praying, and laying their hands upon them as an expression of solidarity and support. The Antioch church would be Paul’s sponsor on all three of his missionary journeys. **(2) 13:4-12, conversion of Sergius Paulus.** Barnabas and Paul began their mission on Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean Sea about sixty miles west of Antioch’s port city (Seleucia). Barnabas was a native of Cyprus (4:36). They took John Mark along as their helper. They traveled westward across the width of the island to its capital city of Paphos. There they met Sergius Paulus, the Roman governor of the island. Paulus wanted to know more of Paul’s message, but Paul was hindered by a charlatan named Elymas, who had been profiting from his association with the governor. Paul confronted the magician, who was immediately struck with blindness. His blindness was only temporary, but it served to demonstrate the power of the Lord whom Paul represented. The governor became a believer, the first in a long list of Roman officials to whom Paul would witness.

**By knowledge and by love.** Growth in the Lord by knowledge and by love demands growth in our immaterial capacities. As human beings we live on two levels of capacities or appetites, each one appropriate to its level. We have immaterial desires (God, love, justice) and well as material/sense desires (eat, entertainment, physical pleasure). Our immaterial desires must rule the sense desires not only to live a moral life, it is required to live the supernatural spiritual life. For example, the man or woman who commits adultery is a person whose sensual desires (for illicit sex) have dominated his immaterial desires (to be faithful to and sexually desire only spouse). The domination of sense desires over intellectual or immaterial desires also leads to materialism and naturalism, which destroy a robust faith in God—if it really is all about the material realm, then it really is all about the physical realm, which by necessity excludes immaterial God. All temptations and tests have to do with choosing the intellectual/immaterial realm over the sensed material realm. We see this in the Garden of Eve with the fruit that was pleasing to the senses. We see this in the desert with Jesus who choose the immaterial plan of God over the physical desire to eat by turning stones to bread. And we see in it our passage in “fasting” in **Acts 13:2-3.** Fasting in and of itself has no special value as far as some kind of spiritual power. However, for a person to put the immaterial Lord and His plan over the material as an exercise or a virtue of immaterial power over the material is a good thing. Living by the material senses are deadly to the development of morality, spirituality, and life in the Lord—even if those sensual desires are supposedly for the Lord as evidenced when certain churches push all of those emotional and sensed feelings for the Lord. It may feel good during the service, but when the senses are so emphasized it only sets up believers for orientation to the senses and physical feelings, which always leads to spiritual failure.

**Job 22:1–13.** This is the third cycle of speeches. In cycle one Job’s visitors implied that he was a sinner and appealed to him to repent. In the second foray they insinuated that he was guilty and stressed the terrible fate of the wicked, but voiced no challenge for repentance. In this third verbal battle they attacked him by accusing him of specific sins, for example, “Is not your wickedness great? Are not your sins endless (22:5)? In 22:7-9 Job is accused of lacking mercy and compassion for the poor. The charge is made that Job had turned away the weary, the hungry, the widows, and the orphans, instead of sharing with them out of his rich resources. Since showing hospitality is one of the first laws of the East, Job’s sin was especially heinous.

**By knowledge and by love.** Growing in the Lord by knowledge and by love translates to sharing His great concern for the poor, especially widows and orphans. How can one share in the life of Christ, if he does not share God’s concerns? The prophets scathingly denounced leaders, both political and religious, who oppressed the needy and robbed the poor (Isa. 1:17; Jer. 7:6; 22:1–4; Amos 4:1; 5:11; 8:4–10). Jesus had a special concern for the poor (Luke 4:16–19; Matt. 11:5), and the early church followed His example (Gal. 2:10; James 1:27; 2:1–9; Acts 6:1; 1 Tim. 5:1–16). To become like Christ is to be like Him in His care for the weakest and most needy among us.

*Life in the Lord by proper knowledge and by proper love,*

*Pastor Don*