

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
September 19, 2016**

Habakkuk 1:1–2:5. Divine discipline administered by the proud Babylonians.

Acts 17:1–34. The metaphysics of creation: All things exist in and by God.

Job 25:1–6. Bildad’s third speech.

COMMENTS.

Habakkuk 1:1–2:5. From the first verse we can see that Habakkuk was perplexed. Wickedness and violence throughout society seemed to go unchecked. Would there be no end to the rising tide of sin, crime, and evil? Habakkuk took his complaint to God. ‘Why don’t You do something?’ This is reminiscent of our study in Job 24 where Job pointed out how rampant crime seems to go unnoticed by God. God answered, ‘I am doing something. Judah will be punished by Babylon.’ This caused the prophet more confusion. ‘But why would You use those wicked Babylonian barbarians to judge Judah, your people?’ (1:6-17) This is like an American Christian asking why God would allow some nation that was more wicked than the United States, like a Muslim country, to be used by God to discipline the United States. Why would God use a Muslim to kill a Christian given that the Christian is the one who is a child of God? In 2:2-5 God responds by highlighting the evil Babylonian empire and by promising its destruction. This will be ultimately fulfilled at the close of the Tribulation with the fall of “Babylon the Great” (Rev. 17-18).

By knowledge and by love. As we walk with, before, and after the Lord in a second-personal relationship we need to guard ourselves against pride. Note the contrast between pride and faith in Habakkuk 2:4 *“Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.”* “Not upright” (לאִישָׁרָה) portrays a soul that is crooked or twisted. A crooked or twisted soul delights in the things that God abhors. A crooked or perverse soul constantly lives by evil desires, passionate longings (2 Pet. 1:4). We have a higher nature (immaterial intellect) and a lower nature (physical desires). The more control the higher nature has over the lower nature the more human we are and the more capacity we have to live in the metaphysical realm of God rather than the sensed realm of our animal natures. Habakkuk 2:5 reveals that pride makes people restless; they are never satisfied. That is why they are given over to wine. They are constantly seeking some new sense experience to thrill them or some new achievement to make them feel important in the world. Pride is totally oriented to this world and away from God. Faith, on the other hand, is always about God. God is front and center. Faith is a lifestyle that is just the opposite of being “puffed up” and depending on our own resources. Habakkuk knew the difficult times were coming to the people of Judah, and their only resource was to trust God’s Word and rest in His will. Those who live with the Lord by knowledge and love are always characterized by faith, and its fruits of hope in and love of God.

Acts 17:1–34. Acts 17:1-9 describe events at Thessalonica, 17:10-15 at Berea, and 17:16-34 at Athens. Compare the events described in Thessalonica with what we discovered in 1 Thessalonians in our last Bible class. In our next Bible class, we will cover 1 Thessalonians 2. In spite of the persecution in Acts, the Thessalonians kept on boldly proclaiming the gospel (1

Thess. 1:7-10). At Berea, it is said of the Bereans that they were even of more “noble character” than the Thessalonians because of how they examined the Scriptures—note the proper/unmediated knowledge of the Word of God (17:11). At Athens, Paul quotes, approvingly, the metaphysical statement from Epimenides, “For in Him we live, and move, and have our being” (17:28).

By proper knowledge and love. Except for God’s self-disclosure as to His nature in Exodus 3:14 as BE/ESSE, the metaphysical statement in Acts 17:28 is one of the most explicit statements in Scripture about the nature of created reality as such. To “get this” is to get rid of all humanistic and spatial views of God. God is Pure Act and as such gives all things their acts of existence. To understand that in Him we live, move, and exist on an instant by instant continuous basis is to break free from deism and modern false views of God in evangelicalism and many Bible churches, and be opened up to a whole new way of seeing God and His efficient causality in all things, just like the Bible explicitly teaches in Romans 1:20. To realize that no created essence in itself has the power of existence and is utterly contingent upon God for existence enables one to live in the wonder of creation and its Author. Consider the power of this proper knowledge in how it transformed Job from a complainer to a worshipper—simply by looking at God’s involvement in all of creation. It is most unfortunate that most Christians have no clue about the true nature of their God as *Esse*, it is no wonder there are so many problems as God seems so far away from many of God’s children. I am afraid that the pagan Epimenides understood God in some ways better than some Christians—at least in reference to the immanence of God.

Job 25:1–6. Bildad begins a third discourse in which he returned to the idea of God’s holiness against human lowliness. His very short speech appears to have been cut off. Job likely interrupted him since he did not have anything new to offer.

By proper knowledge and love. The answer to Bildad’s question in verse 4, “How then can a man be righteous before God? is “he can’t.” We are all sinners and deserve eternal condemnation. No man can be righteous before God by his own ability. Saul of Tarsus tried it and when he realized he could never be righteous by his own power, he trusted in Christ for salvation. When we walk with the Lord with the proper knowledge that our righteousness comes only in Christ, Christ becomes the center of our lives in all that we do—the Christ-centered life: Galatians 2:19 *"For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. 20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. 21 "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."* As we live in more proper knowledge and love of the Lord, we become increasingly Christ-centered as He becomes the center and circumference of our daily lives. Knowledge in itself does motivate contemplation. It is love that motivates one to contemplate the riches we have in Christ. The more we love Christ, the more we will contemplate Him, His love, and His righteousness bestowed upon us.

Life in the Lord by proper knowledge and by proper love.

Pastor Don