

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”  
September 22, 2016**

**Haggai 1:1–2:23.** Hope purifies.

**Acts 20:1–38.** Highest motive: serving Christ.

**Job 28:1–11.** Job seeks God’s wisdom.

**COMMENTS.**

**Haggai 1:1–2:23.** This reading can be divided into three parts. **First**, there is the exhortation to rebuild the Temple (**1:1-15**). The Jews had been suffering from divine discipline for their selfish neglect to rebuild the Temple, which was in shambles, while they were busy with building projects on their own homes (**1:9-11**). It is not hard to see why this is a favorite passage for modern pastors and deacons to push for bigger buildings. However, this equating the Lord’s Temple for the Jews with church buildings is illicit. The Lord assures the Jews that He will be with them, and they quickly responded with obedience (**1:12-2:5**). **Second**, there is prophecy about the future glory of the Temple (**2:6-9**). The people’s unfavorable comparison of the restored temple with Solomon’s temple (**2:3**) was counteracted by God’s assurance of ultimate success of a future glory in the millennial temple. This proclamation about coming glory was given to encourage present success. God assures the Jews that future Temple will be filled with glory far greater than all previous temples, and will be adorned by the wealth of nations (**2:7-9**). **Third**, God gives Haggai prophecy of the Messiah Jesus Christ (**2:20-23**). Haggai ends this book by noting that The temple will be rebuilt and filled with the glory of the Lord. The final Son of David will rule the earth in peace and righteousness. Therefore, God’s people are to be faithful and hopeful for the present task to which He has called them.

**By proper knowledge and by proper love.** Just as the Jews were told to be faithful to the task in light of the future Temple and the final Son of David, we Christians are also commanded to live in light of eternity. Apart from the eternal perspective, it is impossible to live a life with God *by knowledge and by love*. Love is all about desiring to be with the Object of Love in perfect bliss. This is not only what faith (belief in supernatural revelation of the Bible concerning our ultimate destiny) is all about, it is the essence of Hope. Faith, hope, and love are required for a robust and thriving relationship with God. However, apart from the eternal perspective and anticipation to be with Christ, how could there be hope, given that that just is what hope is all about. Apart from this Hope, fueled by proper knowledge and proper love, the believer ends up corrupted by the kosmos-diabolicus, which eventually culminates in spiritual adultery (James 4:4), which is precisely why Scripture connects love for God with a hope that purifies us from Satan’s evil kosmos: 1 John 3:1 *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 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.*

**Acts 20:1–38. Summary:** Paul leaves Ephesus and travels to Macedonia to visit the churches in Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea (20:1–6). He is collecting money to help the church in Jerusalem, and gathering a team to make the journey with him. Paul and his companions stay a week in Troas. Their last night is a Sunday, and the believers meet in an upstairs room for a fellowship meal (20:7–12). Paul’s sermon and the discussion which follows run late into the night. A boy called Eutychus is sitting on the window sill. Overcome by the long talk and the stuffy room, he falls fast asleep and topples backwards to his death. It is a terrible tragedy, but Paul throws himself on the young man and puts his arms around him, bringing him back to life. They return upstairs to share the Lord’s Supper and talk on until dawn—what a long Bible class! Paul wants to go to Jerusalem for Pentecost, but he is already late. Luke tells us how the ship from Troas calls at various ports and harbors as it works around the coast to Miletus. Paul chooses to make part of the journey overland—perhaps to get time to himself. Like Jesus, Paul is setting his face towards Jerusalem. He knows that suffering awaits him there, and possibly death. Paul has no time to visit Ephesus. Instead he asks the Ephesian elders to come thirty miles to see him while his ship is at Miletus (20:13–38). Paul knows that this is the last time he will see this group of pastors. He opens his heart to them as he says goodbye. He reminds them how eagerly he taught them—both Jews and Gentiles, in public and private, day and night. He never took money from them as he earned his own living and provided for his colleagues. And his message has always been the same—faith in Jesus Christ. Now Paul is going to Jerusalem. The prophets in the churches have given many warnings of danger ahead. This doesn’t worry him, as long as he can complete the work Christ is giving him to do. The Ephesian elders must expect trials of their own. They must act as shepherds to the people in their care, tending and protecting their flock. There will be attacks from false teachers (“savage wolves”) both outside and within the church. Paul commends them to the Lord and the word of His grace: Acts 20:32 *“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”*

**By proper knowledge and love. In 20:19,** we see Paul’s motive in life “serving the Lord.” He was not interested in making money (Acts 20:33) or in enjoying an easy life (Acts 20:34–35), for he was the bondservant of Jesus Christ: Acts 20:24, *“But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.”* As we walk with, before, and after the Lord in a second-personal relationship governed by *knowledge and love*, we will find ourselves increasingly engaging in activities specifically to please the Lord. Instead of being governed by our feelings, we will find ourselves doing things specifically for Christ rather than what seems right (mere obligation). It is too easy to do things because they make us feel better or because it is the responsible thing to do. Some even believe that unless one feels right about something, then to do it would be hypocrisy. For example, unless I feel like it I should not study the Bible (or attend church), as if “feeling right” is a determiner of motives. I love to study the Word of God and I love to write commentary on the Word of God. However, sometimes I am absolutely exhausted and (especially when I get far behind in other obligations) *I do not feel like it!* Am I supposed to say since I do not feel like it that I should not put my all into the studies because I would be doing it with the wrong motives?—as if my motive was determined by my feelings. Instead of my feelings being the determiner of my motive, I am to always asking myself what would please

Christ. Would it please Christ for me to write these commentaries (even if very few really read or appreciated them)? That is all I need to know: will it please Christ. Love for Christ and pleasing Him is far more important than how I feel. Instead of asking what we feel like doing, we should ask what would please Christ? What can we do to serve Christ? These questions not only refer to the local church, the family of God, the Word of God, but everything in life when one lives *by proper knowledge and proper love*. Love, not personal emotional feelings, is the greatest and purest motive. It is one thing to ask what should I do? another to live in the presence of God in a second-personal relationship “serving the Lord” regardless of our “feelings/sensations.”

**Job 28:1–11.** In this section, Job speaks about finding wisdom. He notes that one cannot mine wisdom (**Job 28:1–11**). Job takes us deep into the earth where brave men are mining gold, iron, copper, and precious stones. Precious metals and precious stones are often used in Scripture as symbols of wisdom. Once one has found them, he must “refine” them in the furnace and “mint” them for practical use. Job describes how men work hard and face great danger to find material wealth. They tunnel through hard rock and risk their lives to get rich. Why will men and women not put that much effort into gaining God’s wisdom? The Word of God is like a deep mine, filled with precious treasures; but the believer must put forth effort to discover its riches. It takes careful reading and study, prayer, meditation, and obedience to mine the treasures of the Word of God; and the Holy Spirit of God is willing to assist us (concurrence). Why are we so negligent when this great wealth lies so near at hand? Though man can dig deep into the earth and find great wealth, though he can go places where birds and beasts would not dare to go, though he can even find the hidden sources of the great rivers, man cannot find God’s wisdom by mere human efforts. It takes more than courage and native intelligence; it demands humility and divine illumination.

**By proper knowledge and proper love.** While one can gain great information and even knowledge by human efforts, there is no true wisdom apart from a robust spiritual life. Where there is no respect for God there is no wisdom: Job 28:28, *And to man He said, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, And to depart from evil is understanding;’* Psalm 111:10 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever; Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction; Proverbs 9:10 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.* Given that many, especially many of the younger generation, have little to no respect for God, it is no wonder that there is so much lack of wisdom (insanity and irrationality!) in our country as evidenced by the deterioration of America—highlighted by recent riots in Ferguson and Charlotte! On a personal basis, walking with the Lord *by knowledge and by love* cultivates true respect for God. It is one thing to be tempted to sin and use knowledge of grace as an excuse to indulge. However, when one walks with the Lord in a personal love relationship, there is a whole new level of personal respect for God that enables one to overcome temptations and gain wisdom—by proper knowledge and proper love the believer comes to respect God in all things, which Job would come to understand (wisdom) in due time.

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

*Pastor Don*