

“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
September 24, 2016

Zechariah 3:1–5:11. Visions 4-7 given to Zechariah.

Acts 21:27–22:21. Testimony of Paul, a sincere Jewish blasphemer turned Christian saint.

Job 29:1–12. Job looks back at his life’s joys in the good old days when God was his Friend.

COMMENTS.

Zechariah 3:1–5:11. Summary of visions 4-7: **#4—clean garments for the High Priest:** Zechariah sees Joshua, the high priest (**3:1–10**). He is standing, grimy and guilty, before God. Satan, whose name means ‘accuser’, is about to present the case for the prosecution, but God interrupts. God declares that he has rescued Joshua from the fires of judgment and is now restoring him as high priest. He forgives Joshua’s sin and commands that he be dressed in clean and splendid robes. God tells Joshua that he and his fellow priests are signs of the Messiah, who is the great priest-king to come. The Messiah is ‘the branch’ of King David’s family tree. He is like a jewel that shines in every direction, with seven eyes which see everywhere. Through His Messiah, God will achieve a perfect cleansing of His people, to bring in an age of human dignity, social harmony and universal peace. The name ‘Joshua’ is the Hebrew for ‘Jesus’ and means ‘God Rescues’. **#5—The gold lampstand and the two olive trees:** Zechariah is woken up to see a gold lampstand with seven lights on it (**4:1–14**). The lampstand is a symbol of God’s people, holding high His light to the world. There was a lampstand in the tabernacle in the days of Moses, and there were ten lampstands in the temple of Solomon. In the rebuilt temple of Zechariah’s day there will be only one. Zechariah sees that the lampstand is fueled by oil from two olive trees, one on each side. God is supplying power without the help of either priest or manufacturer. Zechariah is to encourage Zerubbabel to complete the rebuilding of the temple which he began several years ago, and to do so with God’s help. The two trees are symbols of Joshua and Zerubbabel, priest and king. They are ‘the two who are anointed’. Together they are a sign of the Messiah (the Anointed One) whom God will one day introduce as his supreme priest-king. **#6—The flying scroll:** Zechariah sees God’s missile—his powerful word, like a huge flying scroll (**5:1–4**). This is God’s notice, served on every thief and liar. It has power to lodge in the house of an offender and completely destroy it. **#7—The woman in a basket:** Zechariah sees a woman being kept in a large basket (**5:5–11**). She is wickedness. The prophet watches as she is airlifted off to Babylon. So evil is to be expelled from Israel, and sent where all rebels against God belong. Babylon is called Shinar in Genesis 11. It is where the people so proudly erected the tower of Babel. Wickedness is honored there, and they will build the woman a house.

By proper knowledge and proper love. In Zechariah 4:6, it is written, “*So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.*” The word “might” refers to military might, what people can do together, but the remnant had no army. “Power” refers to the strength of the individual, but Zerubbabel’s strength was no doubt waning. “Don’t be discouraged!” was the prophet’s message. ‘The Spirit of God will enable us to do what an army could never do.’ There are three ways we can attempt to do the work of God: we can trust our own strength and wisdom; we can borrow the resources of the world; or we

can depend on the power of God. The first two approaches may appear to succeed, but they'll fail in the end. Only work done through the power of the Spirit is sufficient for the spiritual life and all that God has for us to do. As we have studied, the emphasis is not on 1 John 1:9 to be powered up (Holy Spirit is not even mentioned in that context or many other contexts that speaking of power and blessing from the Lord). While confession of sin is important, in fact, it is critical for the vibrant spiritual life, it should never be viewed in a conduit manner, to do so is to inject Baconian modern philosophy (modern view of power and control) in God's Word and to miss the proper emphasis of walking in the light to fellowship with God, 1 John 1:7. The Bible plainly teaches that active fellowship is all about 1 John 1:7, not 1:9. The believer's focus is to be walking in the light of the Lord *by knowledge and by love* rather than functionally (legalistically) going the motions of confession. The former is a life of freedom and abundance, the latter is a life of focusing on sin, confessed or unconfessed, and is similar to being under the Law rather than living with God in 2nd person relationship. Walking with God *by proper knowledge and love* in a second person relationship is what cultivates a personal relationship with God, not being in a confessed up to be in circle for conduit spiritual power. The issue is not whether a believer should confess his sin or not. He must to have a healthy spiritual life. The issue is the aim at forgiveness: to get powered up? or to return to the Lord in 2nd person relationship?

Acts 21:27–22:21. This reading can be divided into three parts: (1) The riot in the Temple area (21:27-36), (2) Paul's request to address the crowd (21:37-40), and (3) Paul's speech before the Temple mob.

By proper knowledge and proper love. In **22:6-11**, we see the importance of proper knowledge, accurate/correspondence knowledge, rather than subjective knowledge based on how one feels or what coheres to one's beliefs: "*Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me. 7 "And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' 8 "So I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.' 9 "And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me. 10 "So I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do.' 11 "And since I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus.* Saul was very sincere as a follower of Judaism in persecuting Christians and believing that Jesus Christ was a false Messiah, and that Christians needed to be wiped out. Moreover, he had plenty of reasons at his disposal to justify rejection of Jesus as the Messiah: his fellow Jews, his legalistic background, and the fact that Jesus did not set up the Kingdom as prophesied in the Old Testament. He also believed himself to be a faithful and committed servant of Yahweh of the Old Testament. However, his knowledge was not accurate, it did not correspond to reality. So, regardless of all of his sincere efforts, he was in fact a blasphemer: 1 Timothy 1:13, *although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.* Defective knowledge always leads to defective love, in fact, in Saul's case defective knowledge led to hatred of Christ and His followers. In order, to

have a growing and thriving relationship with God it must be by correspondence truth with a corresponding love. We must be ever diligent to make the appropriate adjustments to reality and the reason we were created: to love God *by knowledge and love*.

Job 29:1–12. In this reading, Job remembers his former glory, especially when he was respected and loved by all. Note how He longs for the good old days (29:2) when he enjoyed a robust relationship with God and with others (29:3-12).

By proper knowledge and by proper love. When Job looked back at his glorious days, he recalled his relationship with God in Job 29:4 *As I was in the prime of my days, When the friendship of God was over my tent.* The term “friendship” refers to friendly council. It points to a time when Job and God were friends and exchanged discourse. The light of God was upon Job, and God’s presence was with him and his children. Note the emphasis of the Almighty in every area all of his life in 29:2-5. However, those were the good old days, and now Job erroneously believes that God has forsaken him. There was a time when he could say ‘the Almighty was with him’ when his children were around, but this was no longer the case so thought Job. It is important for every believer to continue to advance *by proper knowledge and proper love* even if our children are no longer around and we do not enjoy the robust health and circumstances that we once did. Like Abraham, we are to continue through thick and thin, through all of the changing circumstances of life, to grow in the Lord *by knowledge and by love*. Only with such an attitude will we not fall into despair of thinking that our best days are behind us and are worst days are impending. By growing in the Lord *by knowledge and by love*, our days only become richer as we move closer to Him, the Immanent and Transcendent One.

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

Pastor Don