

**“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”
September 5, 2016**

Hosea 11:1–12:14. The ingratitude and unfaithfulness of Israel vs. the love of the Lord.

Acts 5:1–42. The deceit of Ananias and Sapphira.

Job 16:10–22. Job longs for justice before God.

COMMENTS:

Hosea 11:1–12:14. In **11:1-7** we see the love of the Lord juxtaposed to the ingratitude and unfaithfulness of Israel. Note how the goodness of God is illustrated and Israel’s ungrateful response in obstinacy as they were ‘bent on backsliding’ (**11:7**). However, the Lord’s love for Israel is reiterated, and in the strongest emotional terms (**11:8-9**)—the point of the anthropathism is to drive home the point, as strong as possible, God’s love for His people. Then, in **11:10-11**, we get a glimpse in the future when Israel will return to the Lord. However, in the meantime, Israel’s unfaithfulness is reviewed once again (**11:12-12:2**) to get her to repent. Note her social sins of lying and violence (**12:1-2**). Notice the content of God’s exhortation for her to repent in **12:5-6**. This entails a complete reversal in her dealings and attitudes. The nation was permeated by economic dishonesty (*mirmâh*), oppression (“defraud”), pride (“Ephraim boasts”), and insensitivity to her sin, thinking that her “wealth” would hide her “sin.” The Old Testament frequently spoke against using “scales” that were rigged to weigh out less merchandise than the buyer thought he was getting. God takes a very strong view against any injustice in any nation. It is not like God did not warn His people, He communicated His will to Israel through “the prophets,” but the people had repudiated those messages. They were too arrogant and too filled with greed and vice to care about their Lord. Note the beautiful grace of God in **12:13** and the disgusting response of Israel in **12:14** (“provoked” is in reference to the idolatrous activity of Israel). God had done so much for Israel. He called them out of Egypt, and provided for them every step of the way; He is the Lover who dearly loves His beloved, who is, nonetheless, bent on having sex with every stranger that came along. In spite of all of this, God will someday exalt Israel once again. Israel will always be His people.

Reflection: This side of eternity, it is impossible to fathom God’s love for His people, especially the Church, the Bride of Christ. It is God’s love that motivates Him not to destroy Christians when they get involved in illicit activity and treat Him with ingratitude, instead of developing a love relationship with Him. God’s love, like God Himself, is far above any human level. “For I am God, and not man” (**Hosea 11:9**). We have not only been given the wonderful gift of life, we have been given eternal life with the God of the universe. He is always there, and He is not silent. We love because He first loved us.

Acts 5:1–42. In this section we have the deceit and divine discipline in the form of the sin-unto-death of Ananias and Sapphira (**5:1-11**). The root of their sin was hypocrisy. That was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira: putting on a lovely “front” in order to conceal the shabby sin in their lives, sin that cost them their lives. Ananias means “God is gracious,” but he learned that God is also holy; and Sapphira means “beautiful,” but her heart was ugly with vice. No doubt some people are shocked when they read that God killed two people just because they lied about a business transaction and about their church giving. But when you consider the features connected with this sin, you have to agree that God did the right thing by judging them. To begin with, the sin of Ananias and Sapphira was energized by Satan (**Acts 5:3**); and that is a serious matter. If Satan cannot defeat the church by attacks from the outside, he will get on the inside and go to work (Acts 20:28–31). He knows how to lie to the minds and hearts of church members, even genuine Christians, and get them to follow his orders. We forget that the admonition about the spiritual armor (Eph. 6:10–18) was written to God’s people, not to unbelievers, because it is the Christians who are in danger of being used by Satan to accomplish his evil purposes.

Reflection: Satan is very well aware of the fact that the Christian cannot lose His eternal salvation. However, although he cannot destroy our salvation, he can certainly destroy our love relationship with the Lord by tempting us to live for other things. He can adversely affect our view of and attitude to God. In the case above, it was living for people (approbation lust) that was the fatal flaw in their character. We must make our ambition to please the Lord (2 Cor. 5:9), not man. Love for Christ really is the most important virtue. Living before the Lord and loving Him in a second-person relationship has far more power over sin and temptation than any contrived “spiritual” conduit system. Systems are sterile in comparison to a living and loving second-personal relationship with Christ. For example, it is far easier to sin when we can just use 1 John 1:9 to get back in a *circle*, than it is to sin when one is living before the Lord and understand how ugly and displeasing it *is* to Him. Every time we do sin, we do it because we see it as a good. However, it is never viewed as a good when Christ is real to us and we are living to please Him. As a matter of fact, had Annias and Sapphira been living to please Christ instead of man, they would not have even been tempted or filled with such *ungodly* vice.

Job 16:10–22. After pleading for sympathy (**1-14**), Job pleads for justice (**15-22**). Job recounts how he put on sackcloth, wept in humiliation and contrition, and buried his face in the dust. In spite of the accusations of Eliphaz (**15:4–6**), Job knew he was right before God and that God would hear his prayers (**16:17**). Job was caught on the horns of a dilemma. His suffering was so great that he longed to die, but he didn’t want to die before he could vindicate himself or see God vindicate him. This explains his cry in **16:18**: “*O earth, do not cover my blood, and let my cry have no resting place.*”

Reflection. As I see Job struggling in trying to get through to God through prayer and actions, it reminds me of the wonderful grace resource we have in Christ. Job so longed for a lawyer to plead His case before God. We have one, none other than Jesus Christ. Every Christian has in Christ the God-man Advocate (read 1 John 2:1-2). No matter where we are or what we are doing, Christ makes intercession for us continuously. He

has our back, as they say. And He knows very well what it is like to be a frail and suffering human being (read Heb. 4:14-16). We are so blessed!

Romans 11:36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

Pastor Don