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A Purpose for All Things

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY monthly (interim) schedule

*** 1st Tuesday of the month ***

TUESDAY, 1ST OF DECEMBER

12 NOON in 123 CAP

Capitol Commission (interim) Bible Studies are held the *first* Tuesday of each month at 12 Noon, in accord with the Public Service Commission devotional at 9:55am. The *monthly* Bible study is nonpartisan and non-denominational. The current Bible study is the conclusion of our exposition of chapters 1—11 from the book of Romans. You can find chapters 12—16 of Romans archived at <http://www.capitolcom.org/georgia/studies/2012>.

We will be studying the book of First Kings during the 2016 legislative session, which will begin on Tuesday, 12 January, and will continue *every week* on the same day of the week. *Two times are available for Bible study:* (1) a legislative Bible study from 9:00-9:30am in 417 CAP; and, (2) an open-to-all Bible study from 12:00-12:45pm in 123 CAP (*where we have ministry donors provide lunch*).

I pray that this study will be edifying to you. I labor to serve you and to be a resource for prayer and counsel. Please accept my study in the Word of God, as evidence of my desire to serve you.

— Dr. Ron J. Bigalke, Georgia State Minister, Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission (interim) Bible Study *is* Tuesday, 1 December 2015

Romans 11 – “A Purpose for All Things”

Apologetics is the formal defense of the Christian faith. The term is derived from the legal system of ancient Greece. The accused had the right to offer a reply (*apologia*) to charges against oneself. The biblical usage of the term is found in First Peter.

First Peter 3:15 – *but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense [apologian/ἀπολογία] to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;*

How does one prove the reliability of the Holy Bible? The story is often told that Frederick the Great of Prussia asked one of his chaplains, “Give me in a word conclusive proof of the claims you

make for Christianity.” The chaplain replied, “The Jews, your majesty.” The agnostic king responded only with silence.

He was too well informed in history not to feel the force of the reply. Even with the crude, distorted, prejudiced notions that have prevailed in Christendom concerning Israel, the proof is one that cannot be set aside; and it grows in strength as one attains to correcter [*sic*] views of the glories of Israelitish history. As in biblical times, so now. Israel never ceases [Willis Judson Beecher, *The Prophets and the Promise* (New York: Crowell, 1905) 415]. . . .

How does one explain the existence and presence of the nation of Israel? Abram heeded God’s call and moved from Mesopotamia to Canaan in 2100 BC. God made a covenant with Abram that would constitute the beginning of the nation of Israel. The nation has experienced much throughout the centuries. No other nation – extant at the time of Israel’s founding – has endured what she has survived. Many of the nations that coexisted with ancient Israel have disappeared, yet she has endured, even amidst tremendous difficulties. In just the past century, one-third of the Jewish people were murdered during the Holocaust in Nazi Germany, yet the nation was reestablished, in 1948, in her homeland. Only by understanding the power and promises of God, which controls the course of history and sustains the presence of the nation, can one explain the existence of Israel throughout 4,000 years of history.

God alone ordains the future, thus only He can fulfill prophetic promises. Through the prophet Jeremiah, the Lord God declared, “If this fixed order [of the moon and the stars] departs from before Me . . . then the offspring of Israel also will cease from being a nation before Me forever” (Jer 31:35-36). The existence and presence of Israel throughout four thousand years of history is one of the greatest testimonies that the Word of God, the Bible, is reliable.

The promises of God assure that Israel’s future is as predictable as her past is known and present is observable. Truly, eschatology (the doctrine of last things) should be understood as governing and pervading the entire message of the Bible. “From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving, and therefore also revolutionizing and transforming the present” [Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993) 16].

THE BASIS FOR BELONGING

(*Rom 11:1-10*) Chapters 9 and 10 of Romans have addressed the problem of failure to trust Christ by explaining two dimensions: the divine (God’s sovereignty, ch. 9) and the human (individual responsibility, ch. 10). In light of those who heard the proclamation of truth (cf. Isa 6:10; Jer 5:21) – yet did not heed the truth when it was proclaimed – it would seem that God is finished with them.

Romans 11 indicates “God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew” (v. 2). The greatest moment in Israel’s history is still to come, which has bearing upon present faith in God, as the Lord has given specific promises to his church. Romans 11 divides easily into two sections, each beginning with the phrase, “I say then” (vv. 1, 11).



Capitol Commission (interim) Bible Study

1st Tuesdays (monthly) @ 12 Noon - 12:45 pm, 123 CAP
lunch provided from sponsorship by Coastal Bible Fellowship (EFCA), Rincon



Enhancing Trust

Scripture refers to an encounter that Elijah had with God (1 Kgs 19:10-18), in which the Lord told the prophet that even though it seemed the entire nation had accepted idol worship, God preserved a “remnant” for Himself and they remained faithful to Him (vv. 2-5). God had his remnant then, even though it was a time of resolute unbelief. Similarly, though there may be a seeming minority of those who have trusted Christ as the present time, God’s “remnant” of faithful believers proves the Lord’s faithfulness to his promises.

**LOGICALLY, IF SALVATION IS BY GRACE . . . THEN WORKS
CANNOT ACHIEVE OR EARN IT.**

The basis for belonging to God’s remnant is the Lord’s gracious choice. Scripture emphasizes yet again that there are not two ways of salvation, one of works for Jews and one of grace for Gentiles. Consequently, the principle of chapter 9 is applied here in Romans 11. Those who are true believers are regarded as belonging to the remnant because God elects them (i.e. chooses them by grace), whereas those who are not part of the remnant are blinded and hardened (vv. 7-10). Any salvation by works is entirely incompatible with the nature of God’s grace. Logically, if salvation is by grace, which the Bible does reveal, then works cannot achieve or earn it.

Titus 2:11; 3:4-5 – For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men. . . . But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy. . . .

THE BASIS FOR GLORIFYING

(Rom 11:11-36) Scripture now reveals that ultimately God’s grace will result not only in the salvation of a remnant; rather, an entire nation – “all Israel” – will be saved. God’s greatest blessings are yet to be realized because they await the future. God’s intention in temporarily hardening is not abandonment; rather, it is to provide an opportunity for those unlikely to be saved to become recipients of his tremendous grace and mercy.

Romans 11 ends with a question as to whether some stumbled “so as to fall.” The answer is adamant: “No.” God can use disobedience to accomplish his purposes in history for both Jews and Gentiles. Nevertheless, a word of encouragement (vv. 12-16) and caution (vv. 17-32) is necessary.

The encouraging note is that God can use the unbelief of some as a means of providing blessing for others. Nevertheless, the salvation of the Gentiles is not the end of God’s plan for Israel. Scripture uses an *a fortiori* argument (i.e. from the lesser to the greater). If certain failure brought reconciliation to the world, then restoration will bring even superior blessing. God will use the nation of Israel in a manner greater than ever in history.

The cautionary note is regarding God’s working in history to determine the destiny of nations. Gentile and Jewish believers must be welcoming to each other because neither is superior to the other in the perspective of God. The Lord has provided salvation to

whosoever will believe (10:13). God’s kindness must never lead one to conclude that he or she has merited the Lord’s treatment; it is his compassion that leads one to become a member of his family, and that consideration warrants continual obedience (11:22). Both the Gentiles and the Jews “were disobedient to God” and thus only by his mercy would either be accepted (vv. 30-32). Faith is not an action to be rewarded; it is a response to God’s work in Christ.

God’s plan for his creation is beyond comprehension; none can penetrate “the depth of the riches” of his “wisdom and knowledge” (v. 33). Nobody can truly comprehend the mind of God, thus none can be his counselor (vv. 34-35). Though we may not understand all God’s wisdom and knowledge, we can know that whatever God accomplishes for his people, He does so not because He owes anything to anyone; rather, He acts solely in accord with his grace.

Our present understanding of God’s wisdom and knowledge is comparable to gazing “in a mirror dimly” (1 Cor 13:12). What remains for God to reveal is more marvelous than can be imagined (Eph 3:20). Even now, we are to be mindful regarding the glory to come, and live concerning the permanent (2 Cor 4:17).

God grants life to everything, in addition to sustaining and determining the purpose for all things (v. 36). He is worthy to be glorified forever. The ultimate result of all Bible study is worship, and the effect of that worship is service to God. The believer can respond, “To God be the glory, great things He has done!”

Thank you for allowing Capitol Commission the nobility to provide Bible studies to you. If you have any questions, please talk with us, or contact by email or phone.

About Capitol Commission

The mission of Capitol Commission is to accomplish the Great Commission in the capitol arena. Scripture calls the church to pray for the salvation of our leaders, resulting in them having knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:1-4). As churches are faithful in prayer and proclaiming the gospel of God’s grace, our society and government *will be impacted*. Capitol Commission, in partnership with the church, is committed to making disciples of Jesus Christ and promoting the biblical mandate to pray for those in authority in the Capitol communities throughout the United States and the world.

Romans 10-14-15 affirms, “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent. . . ?” Please notice the reverse progression. If we desire anyone, including our government leaders, to (5) *call* upon the Lord and to seek Him and his Word for life decisions, they must prior to that (4) *believe* in Him, which means they must previously have (3) *heard* the Word of God, which means prior to that someone needs to (2) *preach* to them, which requires that others have first (1) *sent* someone to preach.

Capitol Commission is committed to the second part: *preaching* (proclaiming) the good news of salvation. Of course, that cannot occur without someone doing the first part: *sending*. All funding and prayer for this work comes from people who want the light of the gospel of God’s grace brought into our State Capitol. As you do #1 and we do #2, we can rejoice together as the Lord accomplishes in the Capitol what only He can produce in someone: #3, #4, and #5. What an exciting co-mission! Please join us in this ministry!

Bible study luncheon sponsored by:


Coastal
Bible Fellowship
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NEXT CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES:
TUESDAY, 12 JANUARY @ 9:00am in 417-CAP
and again (with lunch) @ 12 NOON in 123-CAP