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How Will You Cast the Die?

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY 153rd General Assembly

- **TUESDAY @ 7:30 AM** in 123 CAP
- **TUESDAY @ 9:00 AM** in 417 CAP
- **TUESDAY @ 12 NOON** in 123 CAP

Capitol Commission Bible Studies are held every week on Tuesdays. *Three times are available for Bible study:* (1) an early morning Bible Study from 7:30-8:00am in 123 CAP (during the month of February); (2) a legislative Bible study from 9:00-9:30am in 417 CAP; and, (3) an open-to-all Bible study from 12:00-12:45pm in 123 CAP (*where we have ministry donors provide lunch*). The *weekly* Bible study is nonpartisan and non-denominational. The study for the 2016 General Assembly is the book of First Kings.

I pray that this study will be edifying to you. My sole intent is to serve you, and to be a resource to you for pastoral care, counsel, and prayer. 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 Bible Studies *are* Tuesday, 2 February 2016

I Kings 4 – “How Will You Cast the Die?”

Crossing a small stream in northern Italy became one of the most pivotal events in ancient history (because from that decision the Roman Empire emerged, as did the beginning of modern European culture). Julius Caesar led the Roman army to victories in Britain and Gaul, after which he was named governor of the latter, and amassed a personal fortune, in addition to exhibiting remarkable military skill. Caesar’s popularity with the people was extraordinary, and fearing his ambition, the Roman senate ordered him to resign his command and disband his army.

In January 49 BC, Caesar had a momentous decision to make. Either he could acquiesce to the senate’s command, or he could move southward to confront Pompey, who was entrusted with enforcing the edict against Caesar. The decisive place was the Rubicon River, which was the border between Gaul and Italy. If he crossed the Rubicon with his army, Caesar would thrust the Roman Republic into a bloody civil war. When he rode his horse into the shallow waters of the Rubicon, Caesar uttered the famous phrase

“the die is cast” (Lat. *alea iacta est*), and as his men followed, they altered history forever.

There are certain times in life that oblige us to make decisions that are nothing less than momentous. We are sometimes able to recognize those defining moments, yet more frequently, we discern the magnitude of such choices only in retrospect. Defining moments (or “turning points”) in our lives are those that render apparent our most genuine values; they challenge our dedication and delineate our character. Life is such that we must make choices, and then, ironically, those decisions constitute our being.

Thankfully, defining moments do not occur regularly for an indelible effect remains when they do arise. Turning points in our lives sometimes arise dramatically, such as a wonderful opportunity, a potent temptation, or a personal misfortune. More frequently, such moments occur in times of thoughtful reflection. Sometimes the choices are between good and bad, and other times involve the better and the best.

The most life transforming decisions occur in response to the Word of God, as the Holy Bible reveals the profundity of our being. Rarely do we have the opportunity to select our defining moments, yet we always have the potential to determine our response to those times. First Kings 3 revealed a defining moment in the life of Solomon, and the next chapter portrays significant accomplishments in his life as a result.

CASTING THE DIE HAPHAZARDLY

(I Kgs 4:1-28) As evident from 1 Kings 4, Solomon’s reputation became widespread throughout the Near East. Verses 1-28 tabulate his various acquisitions, which emphasize his tremendous wealth. Verses 29-34 describe Solomon’s “wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind.” Solomon, regrettably, became abusive with his power, wealth, and wisdom, and that negligence toward his tremendous gifting ultimately culminated in his downfall.

In order to gratify his penchant for luxury, Solomon engaged in two procedures that became unpopular with his subjects. The first method was extreme taxation. Solomon “had twelve deputies over all Israel, who provided for the king and his household” (v. 7); in other words, he divided the land into twelve districts, for the sake of taxation, to supply provisions for himself and his royal household. When one reads the daily menu, it is readily apparent how difficult meeting the royal requirements must have been for the people (12:4).

Each district was responsible to make provision to the Jerusalem bureaucracy for one month a year. The districts sometimes heeded the old tribal boundaries, yet some divisions were disregarded. The redistricting was likely intended to redirect loyalties from the tribes to the central government, which had the effect of making Jerusalem the nucleus of the nation (as opposed to the tribes).



Capitol Commission Bible Studies

Tuesday (2nd of February) @ 7:30am – 8:00am, 123 CAP
Tuesday (2nd of February) @ 9:00am – 9:30am, 417 CAP
Tuesday (2nd of February) @ 12 Noon – 12:45pm, 123 CAP
lunch provided from sponsorship by Congressman Buddy Carter



Enhancing Trust

Forced labor, which is described in 1 Kings 5, was the second procedure that Solomon employed. The king conscripted many of the conquered peoples for his projects, yet he also found it necessary to force many Israelites into his work detail. Obviously, the king's methods were not well received and became two of the causes that led to the division of the kingdom subsequent to his death. Samuel warned the people how a king would behave should they deviate from a theocracy to a monarchy (1 Sam 8:10-18), and Solomon behaved in exact accordance with the forewarning.

Solomon, nevertheless, demonstrated marvelous administrative and economic skillfulness (which certainly was the result of wisdom from God), and how such insight resulted in the wealth described in verses 20-28. Solomon led a nation that was peaceful, productive, and prosperous. His kingdom extended from "the [Euphrates] River . . . and to the border of Egypt" (v. 21). Solomon controlled the land area promised to Abraham (Gen 15:18), and thus was an indication of divine blessing; nevertheless, his control did not fulfill these promises entirely in his day (*for the city of Tiphshab [v. 24] was on the banks of the Euphrates River, and thus did not reside within the geographic borders of Israel, which was no more than an approximate 150 miles in length, from Dan to Beersheba [v. 25]*).

SOLOMON, REGRETTABLY, BECAME ABUSIVE WITH HIS POWER, WEALTH, AND WISDOM, AND THAT NEGLIGENCE TOWARD HIS TREMENDOUS GIFTING ULTIMATELY CULMINATED IN HIS DOWNFALL.

The king "had peace" within the borders of Israel; the districts "brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life" (v. 21). Life was quite good in many ways for the average Israelite. Although verse 20 depicts a prosperous people, they will later be seen as greatly lacking in terms of spirituality.

Peace and prosperity ("abundance") do not always result in individuals with noble character; and, "rejoicing" without responsibility is the most certain means to incur ruin. To live "in safety" is dependence upon God (Deut 12:10) because the Lord alone can provide such hope (Deut 33:12, 28; Ps 4:8; Prov 1:33).

The majority of 1 Kings 4 (vv. 1-28) describe the lavishness of Solomon's lifestyle, in addition to the luxuries of the royal court. During a time in which chariots and horses indicated wealth and military power, Solomon developed resolute weaponry. The most noteworthy phrase is that the deputies' provisions for the king meant nothing was lacking (v. 27). Life in Solomon's kingdom was relatively superior in many aspects because God was faithful to his promises. Nevertheless, there are negligent aspects toward that blessing which resulted in hazards that Solomon would forget (or ignore) the warnings that God gave to kings (Deut 17:17).

CASTING THE DIE WISELY

(1 Kgs 4:29-34) The primary word in the closing verses is "wisdom," which occurs eight times (in one form or another). The varieties of such wisdom are described not as personal achievements; rather, "God gave Solomon wisdom and very great

discernment and breadth of mind" (v. 29). Solomon's wisdom was renowned, yet (unlike his father David, who was known as "a man after God's own heart," 1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22) the king's heart was divided and thus beneath the glittering externals of his kingdom, Solomon introduced certain measures that would result in its ruin.

THE MORE THAT YOU ASCEND POSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY, THE GREATER YOU NEED TO DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER AND DISCIPLINE.

As it is today, wisdom was greatly valued in the ancient world; indeed, it often was celebrated in the form of proverbs, songs, or nature observations. The way of wisdom is not to trust oneself; rather, as any good pilot knows, it is trusting the instrument panel so that one does not "live and learn" but learns and lives. True wisdom understands what the Bible reveals, as evident in the mastery of skill and technique (cf. Exod 35:30—36:2), and in terms of leadership (1 Kgs 3:28; 5:12). Wisdom is skill in living, which is most evident in one who reverences the Lord God (Prov 9:10). The more that you ascend positions of leadership and responsibility, the greater you need to develop your character and discipline.

Jesus Christ is "greater than Solomon" (Matt 12:42), in terms of wisdom (Col 2:3), wealth (Col 1:19; 2:9), and the provisions that He shares with his people (Eph 3:20-21). Jesus never promised an earthly life in which one can be "eating and drinking and rejoicing" (1 Kgs 4:20); yet He does promise to supply every genuine need (Phil 4:10) and He will never forsake those who belong to Him (Matt 28:19-20; Heb 13:5). One day, all those who have trusted in Him for salvation will share his heavenly home and will live with the Lord forever (John 14:1-6).

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

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!