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What Is Important?

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

*monthly (interim) schedule
first Tuesday of the month*

TUESDAY, 7 JUNE 2016

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.** We are continuing our Bible study (chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse) in the book of First Kings, which we began with the 2016 General Assembly.

I pray that this study will be edifying to you. My sole intent in this ministry 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 (interim) Bible Study *is* Tuesday, 7 June 2016

First Kings 15:25—16:34 – “What Is Important?”

Bill Clinton’s first presidential campaign was based upon the premise that the voter’s primary concern was the economy. Clinton’s strategist James Carville famously posted a large sign in the campaign’s “war room” which read “It’s the economy, stupid!” Carville’s intent was to remind Clinton and all those working for him to keep the focus upon the condition of the economy. Snowclones of the phrase are continually repeated in American political culture.

Throughout the 2016 presidential elections, one of the most important issues that will demand priority attention is the same as in 1992: the economy. Whatever campaign issues may emerge, one can be fairly certain that the need to see the economy make a turnaround and thus restore Americans to prosperity will be a primary topic. Addressing the economy is certainly relevant, yet there is danger in reducing a campaign to prosperity alone because that would be promoting what is important as if it were primary.

GENUINE AND PROFICIENT LEADERSHIP MUST ADDRESS MORE THAN MONEY.

Genuine and proficient leadership must address more than money. Some of the kings that God judged and repudiated were deemed abject failures, even though they presided over prosperous times. The writer of 1 Kings makes it evident that faithfulness to God and his Word is what constitutes primary significance rather than merely being successful (cf. 1 Kgs 3:6, 14; 14:7-8; 15:3, 11).

LEADERS ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR OWN MORAL AND SPIRITUAL INTEGRITY. . . .

Leaders are accountable for their own moral and spiritual integrity, which is evident through undivided loyalty to God and his Word (cf. 1 Tim 4:16; 2 Tim 2:15). Responsible leaders will not compromise in their faithfulness, or attempt to alter the Word of God, nor subvert the biblical standards. Repentance and reformation is the only hope whenever loyalty to God is compromised. Without an entire life of repentance and continual transformation (cf. Rom 12:1-2), a nation will quickly reap the consequences of the sin that it has sown because God will not be mocked (cf. Gal 6:7).

1 Timothy 4:16 – Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

2 Timothy 2:15 – Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY

(1 Kgs 15:25—16:22) The writer of 1 Kings paused the account of Judah (the southern kingdom) for the purpose of returning to people and events in Israel (the northern kingdom). Almost to the end of 1 Kings (cf. 22:41), the North will receive primary emphasis. The early years of Israel’s history were not only characterized by war with Judah, but also involved local dissension and revolts.

God’s prophet told Jeroboam that his dynasty would not endure (14:10-16). Baasha would be the instrument of that judgment, yet sadly, he repeated the sins of Jeroboam (15:25-32). One wonders if he imagined himself impervious to God’s justice. Was it pride in his own accomplishments as God’s agent that caused Baasha to become complacent with his own life?

The fulfillment of God’s prophetic Word is again noted (v. 29), which is a consistent theme throughout 1 Kings. Israel’s kings had every opportunity to exhort the nation to return to God, yet they squandered those prospects; thus the Lord repeatedly commissioned prophets who did. As had occurred with Jeroboam, God’s prophet announced that Baasha’s dynasty would not endure (15:33—16:7). Baasha’s achievements were not important, in view of the fact that he provoked God to anger with his sin (16:2). The proverbial “mills of God” grind slowly indeed, yet divine retribution is certain.

Capitol Commission (interim) Bible Study

Tuesday (7th of June) from 12 Noon - 12:45pm, 123 CAP

lunch provided from ministry partnership by Capitol Commission donors



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Baasha was God's agent, whom the Lord distinguished from obscurity to become a leader in Israel; however, his continuance of Jeroboam's sins provoked God to anger. Consequently, there would not be a dynasty of Baasha, and his family would receive disgrace and dishonor (16:4; cf. Deut 28:26; 1 Kgs 14:11; 2 Kgs 9:9-10, 30-37; Jer 7:33; 16:4; 34:20). Whenever the people were led into sin by the kings or priests, God sent faithful prophets to warn and exhort them so they would return to the true worship of the Lord. Jehu was one such prophet who was not afraid to deliver God's message to Baasha. *Are we likewise willing to be courageous to speak against evil, or do we seek our identity with the contrary (cf. Acts 4:13)?*

INDEED, THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH OF ALL BIBLICAL THEOLOGY IS THE REALITY OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY.

The kingdom of Israel commenced with many troubles. Each dynasty had an occasion to obey; yet God's prophets reprimanded each leader for lacking faithfulness. Difficult times would persist.

Baasha imitated Jeroboam's evil, thus he would experience the same judgment (cf. 1 Kgs 14:7-11). Baasha's son Elah is similar to Nadab (15:25-31) in that he reigned only two years until someone conspired against him (16:8-10). Elah's reign came to an end while he was "drinking himself drunk" (v. 9), which is obviously a distressing reflection of his capability to govern responsibly (cf. Prov 20:1; 31:4-5; 1 Cor 6:10; Gal 5:19-21). God used Zimri to fulfill "the word of the LORD" (1 Kgs 16:12). Two dynasties have transpired and yet none endured longer than two generations.

If one does not heed what God has revealed, one must reap the negative consequences of those actions (Gal 6:7-8). The reason for this law is that the God of the Bible is not a local or tribal deity: *He is Sovereign over all!* Indeed, the most fundamental truth of all biblical theology is the reality of God's sovereignty. The Bible reveals that God reigns supremely in absolute authority, as the superlative ruler over heaven and earth (cf. the enthronement psalms [nos. 93-100] which affirm God's rule over all the earth).

Zimri was commander of half the Israelite chariots. Similar to Baasha and many of his type nowadays, Zimri believed that being a resolute military man was sufficient justification for his ascent to power. He purged "all the household of Baasha" (16:11-13), just as Baasha "struck down all the household of Jeroboam" (15:28-30). One learns that becoming an official through an illegal, sudden, and violent seizure of power is a risky form of government.

THE NATION HAD TRULY BECOME WHAT THE PROPHET HAD PREDICTED: A REED "SHAKEN IN THE WATER" (14:15).

Zimri had no base of support for his government, so that when news of his *coup d'état* reached the Israelite army at Gibbethon, the response was immediate. "All Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel that day in the camp" (16:16). Zimri possessed royal power for a mere seven days. Omri's first action was

to command his army at Gibbethon to challenge the validity of Zimri's reign by attacking him at Tirzah. Immediately recognizing the superiority of his challenger, Zimri committed suicide (v. 18).

Omri's victory over Zimri did not achieve stability for the nation; rather, Israel divided into two factions: "half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; the *other* half followed Omri" (v. 21). The followers of Omri were more powerful than the part of the nation that was loyal to Tibni (v. 22). Omri consolidated his rule by defeating Tibni. The nation had truly become what the prophet had predicted: a reed "shaken in the water" (14:15).

DIVINE STANDARDS

(1 Kgs 16:23-34) Omri also chose to disobey God, "and acted more wickedly than all who *were* before him" (16:25). One of the worst consequences from Omri's reign is that his son Ahab would succeed him. Ahab married a heathen princess, Jezebel, who was the daughter of the king of Sidon (vv. 29-31). To strengthen this economic alliance with the Phoenicians, who were quickly emerging as leaders in a vast worldwide trading network, Ahab built a temple to Baal, the primary Phoenician deity. Baal was revered as the storm god, and thus his worship was especially seductive for a nation dependent upon rain. Moreover, the rituals appealed to the sordid passion of the people, yet "did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel" (v. 33). In response to the apostasy, God sent two of his greatest prophets: Elijah and Elisha.

Omri was the first to establish a dynasty in Israel. The four Omride kings reigned for a combined total of forty-five years, thus they were kings of notable ability yet they brought Israel to its greatest spiritual crisis. The account exhorts God's people to live with conviction to make a positive impact, which occurs when we evaluate our lives by God's standards, as opposed to superficial perceptions, since God's measure of success is vastly different.

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 local churches, 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 (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* 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 capitol communities. As you do #1 (*send*) and we do #2 (*preach*), we can rejoice together as the Lord accomplishes what only He can produce in someone: #3, #4, and #5.

What an exciting co-mission! Please join us in this ministry!



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NEXT CAPITOL COMMISSION (INTERIM) BIBLE STUDY:
Tuesday, 5th of July @ 12 Noon in 123 CAP
(the 1st Tuesday of each month, during interim)