

Ron J. Bigalke, Ph.D.
P.O. Box 244, Rincon, GA 31326-0244
(912) 659-4212
ron.bigalke@capitolcom.org

Managing Victory

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

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

TUESDAY, 2 AUGUST 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

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Tuesday, 2 August 2016

First Kings 19:1—20:43 – “Managing Victory”

Depression is not uncommon among those who are followers of God. Sometimes discouragement results through no fault of oneself, as it can arise due to physical exhaustion and a weakening of emotional stamina. Grave distresses or disturbances in life may create feelings of anxiety or entrapment. Confession may not even be pertinent if the depression is not the outcome of sin.

Sometimes depression *is* the direct result of sin. Failing to trust God or failure to believe the promises of Scripture will always result in discouragement. If sin is the problem, then one is compelled to confess that failing, and repent from such actions and attitudes.

Fits of depression come over the most of us. Usually cheerful as we may be, we must at intervals be cast down. . . . Knowing by most painful experience what deep depression of spirit means, being visited therewith at seasons by no means few or far between. . . . [C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (New York: Sheldon & Company, 1875) 249].

Charles Spurgeon is a tremendous individual in church history. The pastor of London’s Metropolitan Tabernacles is the most widely read preacher beyond those in Scripture. He is known as “the prince

of preachers.” Evidence of God’s blessing is abundant in his life, yet Spurgeon also struggled with profound times of depression.

ANYONE WHO INVESTS IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS IS GOING TO EXPERIENCE DISAPPOINTMENT.

Spurgeon endured many life challenges. He suffered poor health (such as rheumatic gout), and his wife, Susannah, was a semi-invalid for long periods of time. London newspapers depicted Spurgeon as a charlatan and ruthlessly criticized him because he was not a seminary-educated minister nor was he ordained. Spurgeon experienced the grasp of “Giant Despair” (the character in *Pilgrim’s Progress*), and his dungeon at “Doubting Castle.” Despite these hardships, Spurgeon confessed, “I have never lost my calm faith in God, but at times I have been so depressed that the cable has been strained to the utmost” (Steve Miller, *C. H. Spurgeon on Spiritual Leadership* [Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003] 50).

Matthew 28:19 – Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Anyone who invests in the lives of others is going to experience disappointment. People make promises they do not keep. Others start well yet finish poorly. Some ask for help and refuse the counsel that will improve their lives. Helping people is challenging work, especially when our hopes for them conflict with their sinfulness. Exhaustion is a very real possibility for anyone who desires to help or who leads people. One component of Spurgeon’s depression was exhaustion from numerous activities to help people.

Jesus commissioned his followers to be actively involved in helping others. When the Lord assigned this “Great Commission” (Matt 28:18-20), it became an undertaking to invest in the lives of others. People do not always respond as they should or as one desires, thus preparing for such challenges is essential.

Sometimes we might imagine that the exemplary individuals of the Bible were less than human, and perhaps exempt from the challenges and frailties that ordinary people experience. Certainly, one cannot deny the uniqueness of the prophet Elijah, yet he “was a man with a nature like ours” (Jas 5:17). The reality that the prophet was not some type of superhero is evident in the events subsequent to the tremendous victory at Mount Carmel (1 Kgs 18:20-46).

James 5:17 – Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

VICTORY AND THE UNEXPECTED

(*1 Kgs 19:1-21*) First Kings 19 does not begin with a spiritual reformation of the nation. Queen Jezebel issued a death threat against Elijah (v. 2); in response, the prophet fled to another country where he contemplated resigning his prophetic ministry and even became so depressed that he wanted to die (vv. 3-8). God, however,

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1st Tuesday (2nd of August) from 12 Noon – 12:45pm, 123 CAP

lunch provided from ministry partnership by One Savior Church, Guyton, GA



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graciously restored Elijah to service, and enabled him to persevere.

God demonstrated his sovereignty against the false prophets of Baal, and allowed Elijah to be involved in that impressive encounter. Apparently, the prophet imagined that the victory was decisive, which is evident in that Elijah headed for Ahab's home territory (18:45). The fact that he remained in Jezreel for only two verses of 1 Kings 19 proves the extent to which he misjudged.

The narrative of 1 Kings has given indications that the true leader of the opposing forces was not King Ahab. Queen Jezebel would not be as easily intimidated as her husband, and she proved her commitment to Baal was as resolute as Elijah's fidelity to the Lord God. Elijah quickly realized that winning a battle does not necessarily guarantee victory in the overall war, which is a realization that compelled him to retreat – both mentally and physically – as he perceived that his victory would become defeat. Elijah would be led to another mountain (Horeb) not to challenge Baal; rather, God, would confront Elijah's partial acceptance and understanding of his divine power and presence (vv. 9-21).

ELIJAH QUICKLY REALIZED THAT WINNING A BATTLE DOES NOT NECESSARILY GUARANTEE VICTORY IN THE OVERALL WAR. . .

For the moment, Elijah's joy was depleted as his life became rapidly deflated because he was more focused upon his physical senses than trusting the Lord God (cf. Mark 5:36; 2 Cor 5:7). Elijah believed the queen's words and disbelieved God's word; he even forgot how God provided for him during three and a half years. Fear conquered faith, and Elijah "arose and ran for his life" (1 Kgs 19:3).

BE CAUTIOUS WHEN YOU IMAGINE YOURSELF AS EXCLUSIVELY FAITHFUL. . .

Elijah became self-oriented as opposed to being focused upon the Lord God (cf. Mark 8:34-38; John 12:23-28). Note the evident progression: "your life" (1 Kgs 19:2); "his life" (v. 3); and, "my life" (v. 4). God would have certainly demonstrated his omnipotence if the prophet said, "take my life" as an act of devotion to the Lord; however, those words were spoken with despair and pride. Be cautious when you imagine yourself as exclusively faithful (v. 10). Indeed, the Lord had 7,000 faithful people (v. 18), and Elijah would meet a young man who he would anoint as his successor (vv. 19-21).

VICTORY AND INGRATITUDE

(1 Kgs 20:1-43) Ahab already declared himself an enemy of the Lord's prophet, and then directly manifested his attitude toward God by twice asserting his desires as more important than the Lord's principles and purposes. In the first instance, Ahab spared an irreligious king whom God graciously defeated for him (vv. 31-43), which was to ignore the Lord's command to engage in war.

The more common and correct description for "war" in the Old Testament is "Yahweh war," which is vastly different than "holy

war" (*jihad*) in general. For instance, God (Yahweh) initiated the process, as necessitated by the nature of his relationship with Israel as his elect (chosen) nation.

In Yahweh war, the true and living God demonstrated his glory and power against spiritual darkness and wickedness, and against those realms that transcend the earthly and human (Gen 3:15; Exod 15:1, 4-5; Job 1:6-12; 2:2-6). God is holy and, therefore, his people must be holy. One of the primary means to protect that holiness in the Old Testament was through Yahweh war, yet it must be stated immediately that *Yahweh war was unique historically, and is not applied to the church age*. Therefore, either Christian or any other "holy war" is unjustifiable by Scripture and must be condemned. Yahweh war will not be initiated again until the end of the age when God returns to earth in power and glory to establish his everlasting kingdom (and He will accomplish victory that time without any chosen people or individuals; cf. Matt 25; Rev 19:15).

The second instance in which Ahab defied the Lord God was by entering into a treaty with the ungodly king, Ben-Hadad (1 Kgs 20:34). King Saul made the same mistake with the Amalekites (1 Sam 15:8-9), and both Saul and Ahab lost their kingdoms due to their disobedience. When one believes the battle has ceased and thus is not cautious, a greater endangerment and experience may result in the most overwhelming defeat.

God provided abundant proof that He is omnipotent (1 Kgs 20:28), and thus one is to recognize that the Lord's blessings are not automatic. Sadly, not even God's remarkable display of his power brought conviction to King Ahab. Abiding success is always determined by godliness and faithfulness. When discouraged and feeling overwhelmed, the means for recovery is a revived and more profound astuteness into God's will and purposes.

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!**

Bible study luncheon sponsored by:

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NEXT CAPITOL COMMISSION (INTERIM) BIBLE STUDY:
Thursday, 8th of September @ 12 Noon in 123 CAP
(normally the 1st Tuesday of each month, rescheduled for Labor Day)