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The First Capitol Sermon

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

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

TUESDAY, 6 JUNE 2017

12 NOON in 123 CAP

Capitol Commission (interim) Bible Studies are held the **first Tuesday of each month at 12 Noon**, in accordance with the Public Service Commission devotional at 9:55am. **Due to the Fourth of July being on the first Tuesday, and only for the month of July, the Capitol Commission Bible Study will be held on the third Tuesday: 18 July 2017.** The *monthly* Bible study is nonpartisan and non-denominational. The current Bible study is the continuation of an exposition in the first part of the book of Acts (chs. 1–12). You can find archives of past Bible studies (beginning with 2010) at <http://www.capitolcom.org/georgia/studies>.

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, 6 June 2017

Acts 2 – “The First Capitol Sermon”

What is your favorite symphony? Typical lists of the absolute best symphonies include history’s greatest classical composers, such as Beethoven, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich, Mozart, and Sibelius. *The Guardian* reported that the world’s greatest conductors voted Beethoven’s Symphony No. 3 (*Sinfonia Eroica*, “Heroic Symphony”) as the greatest symphony of all time. The “Heroic Symphony” was dedicated to Napoleon and celebrates the various revolutionary movements that occurred in many parts of Europe and the Americas.

Second on the list was Beethoven again, with his Ninth Symphony (“the Choral”). Mozart’s longest and final symphony that he composed, Symphony No. 41 (the “Jupiter Symphony”), was number three. Gustav Mahler occupied the next two slots with his Ninth Symphony and Second Symphony (the “Resurrection Symphony”) respectively. What is surprising is that Beethoven’s best known compositions in classical music, and one of the most

frequently played symphonies, the Fifth Symphony, was absent from the top 10, being ranked in 11th place. Beethoven’s Symphony No. 5 is easily recognized by its distinctive four-note “short-short-short-long” motif: duh-duh-duh-duuuuh.

Could you hum or whistle the first movement with its four-note motif? While it is impossible (even ridiculous) to convey the profound effect and magnificence of Beethoven through a simple hum or whistle, it is nevertheless amazing how the human mind can translate the various instruments into a recognizable form by someone who is familiar with the work.

How does this introduction relate to the study of the Bible? Consider how ridiculous it is to communicate the eternal truths of Scripture, which is God’s holy and inspired Word to humanity. Attempting to communicate God’s Word to anyone would be hopeless, except for one important person: the Holy Spirit, who indwells the believer, and teaches through him or her. He also indwells those who are listening to the teaching of the Bible (or brings conviction to the person who has not have believed the truth of the gospel message).

Individuals whom the Holy Spirit enlightens welcome God’s truth (1 Cor 2:10-11). The means by which God provides the knowledge of his thoughts is by the Holy Spirit, who is the only one who completely understands the mind of God. The thoughts of God would be impossible to know without the working of the Holy Spirit for it was his task to supervise the writing of the Scriptures.

The Bible is a record of the thoughts of God, and those who study it are able to know all the things that God has “freely given” (2:12). The Holy Spirit can transform someone’s meager whistling melodies into the symphony of God’s revelation, which others can understand. Acts 2 presents an assembly of believers who knew the truths concerning Jesus yet they lacked the power to proclaim those realities to their city and the world. They waited patiently for the Holy Spirit to make their witness possible by creating not just a peculiar sounding note or two but a symphony in them.

SYMBOLS AND RESPONSES

(*Acts 1:1-13*) There is an evident sequence of events between Jesus’ ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit. Luke 2 records the fulfillment of the Lord’s promise given in the previous chapter (1:8): the Holy Spirit would come to empower the believers to be Jesus’ witnesses both to Israel and the world. The Holy Spirit did not come because the believers prayed; rather, the event occurred because “the day of Pentecost had come” (2:1), which was the time allotted for the birth of the church. Luke 2 records the birth of the Lord’s physical body, and Acts 2 reveals the birth of his spiritual body.

The coming of the Holy Spirit was signified by physical phenomena: “a noise like a violent rushing wind” and what seemed to be tongues of fire (vv. 2-4). The tongues of fire were the sign of the power that was theirs because of the Holy Spirit’s coming. The Holy Spirit also indwelt the believers, which empowered them for

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1st Tuesday (6th of June) from 12 Noon – 12:45pm, 123 CAP

(next interim Bible study: 18th of July)



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witness. The tongues speaking resulted from the reception and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The ability to speak in the native languages of a diversity of foreigners was for practical reasons (vv. 5-11). Even today, the message of God's Word elicits similar responses: some people respond with curiosity (and, ultimately, with faith), while others are arrogant and derisive (vv. 12-13).

PROPHECY AND RESPONSES

(Acts 1:14-36) The Holy Spirit also gave Peter insight, granting him the ability to prove from Old Testament prophecy that Jesus is the Christ. Peter's first words were directed to those who suggested the disciples were drunk (v. 13). People who are shocked by God's work in his world may want to learn more, while others attempt to rationalize what they have seen and/or heard. Indwelt with the Holy Spirit and unsullied from the Pentecost experience, Peter responded with pure courage (vv. 14-16).

DO YOU VALUE THE FACT THAT THE SERMONS AND SPEECHES IN ACTS ARE INSPIRED BY GOD?

Peter's quotation of Joel 2:28-32 is an example of a literal prophecy that demanded an application by those on Pentecost. The passage in Joel refers to an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days, yet within the Acts 2 passage (vv. 17-21), there is one point of similarity with the literal prophecy (viz. the outpouring of the Spirit in an unusual manifestation). The birth of the church is preparation for the end of the age, culminating in Jesus' return. Peter spoke as the Holy Spirit gave utterance (vv. 4, 14), so that as the Spirit guided him it was to convey precisely what God desired to communicate (cf. Matt 10:19-20; Mark 13:11; Luke 12:11-12; 21:14-15).

Note the purpose for miracles: to accredit Jesus Christ (Acts 2:22; cf. 2 Cor 12:12; Heb 2:4). All miracles were initiated for God's purposes, and are not to be sought for any other. Be assured that God continues to act providentially in the lives of his people.

Jesus' crucifixion was not the outcome of a human scheme; rather, it was the fulfillment of God's purposes (Acts 2:22). God's foreknowledge did not excuse those who crucified Jesus for they are regarded as "godless," yet they were not the only ones responsible for Jesus' death (cf. Matt 27:22; Luke 23:18). God restored Jesus to life proving He is "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Knowing the Lord's "predetermined plan and foreknowledge" involves liability on the part of all people (cf. vv. 22-36). The doctrine of predestination and human responsibility are never to be separated. Action must be demanded when all the facts are presented (v. 40).

Do you value the fact that the sermons and speeches in Acts are inspired by God? When communicating the truth of God's Word, the Lord Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would grant believers the ability to speak the appropriate words ("how" you are to speak, Matt 10:19; Luke 12:11), to say precisely "what you are to say" (Matt 10:19, Mark 13:11, Luke 12:11), the appropriate manner to speak ("utterance and wisdom," Luke 21:15), and the perfect time to speak ("in that hour," Mark 13:11).

PROMISE AND RESPONSES

(Acts 1:37-47) The combination of God's Word, the Holy Bible, and the working of the Holy Spirit through the Lord's servant results in the intended effect: faith and repentance (vv. 37-39). Repentance and faith are necessary commands of God in genuine conversion (Matt 3:1-8; 9:13; Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3; 24:47; Acts 5:31; 17:30; 26:20; 2 Pet 3:9). Some biblical texts demand repentance (Acts 2:38); others stress the necessity of faith (16:31); and some texts reveal that conversion comprises both faith and repentance (20:21).

Faith and repentance are not synonymous, but form a consistent relationship that cannot be separated in the application and appropriation of salvation by grace. Genuine repentance always involves faith, and genuine faith always involves repentance. Both are necessary components of conversion. Water baptism (2:38) is the conscious identification with Jesus on the part of those who have trusted in Him – by God's grace through faith – for salvation.

John 16:7-8 – "But I [Jesus] tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;

Note the type of devotion that characterizes God's people (v. 42). *First*, believers are devoted to biblical teaching for the purpose of knowing what and why they believe. *Secondly*, there is "fellowship" among God's people, meaning a friendly partnership in contrast to individualism. *Thirdly*, only fellowships of believers who covet gracious partnership are able to engage in "the breaking of bread" (the commemoration of Christ's death and resurrection). *Finally*, true believers are devoted "to prayer."

DO YOU HAVE A DAILY EXPERIENCE WITH THE LORD?

The Holy Spirit used the witness of the church to bring conviction, just as Jesus promised He would (John 16:7-11). The same Holy Spirit assisted the believers in their fellowship (Acts 2:40-47). New believers quickly outnumbered the original group, yet they were "day by day continuing with one mind," and God added "to their number day by day those who were being saved" (vv. 46-47). Do you have a daily experience with the Lord?

Thank you for allowing Capitol Commission the nobility in providing Bible studies to you. If we can serve you in any manner, please talk with us, or contact by email or phone.

About Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission's mission is to provide a pastoral presence in the capitol communities of our nation. In these communities, we purpose to reach every person with the gospel of Jesus Christ, to disciple them, and prepare them for a lifetime of ministry in whatever arena God chooses to place them. Our mandate is to see the hearts and lives of elected officials, their staffs, and lobbyists – the entire capitol community – transformed with the Word of God. Capitol Commission, Inc is a charitable and religious nonprofit corporation operating exclusively for charitable and religious purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



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NEXT CAPITOL COMMISSION (INTERIM) BIBLE STUDY:
Tuesday, 18th of July @ 12 Noon in 123 CAP
(the 1st Tuesday of each month, during interim)