

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

# Winning the Battle

## CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

### 153<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly

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

Capitol Commission Bible Studies are held every week on Tuesdays. *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*). 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

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**Tuesday, 15 March 2016**

### **I Kings 11 – “Winning the Battle”**

Two political examples illustrate the relevancy of the current Bible study for the 2016 General Assembly. As there are two major political parties – Democrat and Republican – an example will be given from both, which occurred in close proximity and involve related issues.

For five years, George Stephanopoulos served as chief advisor to President Bill Clinton, first as his deputy campaign manager and then as a trusted aide in the White House. Stephanopoulos resigned from the Clinton administration, shortly following the President's reelection in 1996. Two years later, he decided to write a political memoir concerning the most “dominant figure” in his life for those five years.

Stephanopoulos wanted his account “to explain how an ambitious and idealistic president of uncertain personal character grew in office. . . .” However, “the plot took a turn” when, in January 1998, the news media reported the Monica Lewinsky affair. Confessing his struggle with the Clinton he loved and the one he

feared, Stephanopoulos remarked, “The battle is all but over, and I'm still mystified by the Clinton paradox: How could a president so intelligent, so compassionate, so public-spirited, and so conscious of his place in history act in such a stupid, selfish, and self-destructive manner?” (*All Too Human* [Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1999] 4).

President Clinton had many political enemies, which both consumed and enraged him. However, it was not his enemies that caused him the most difficulty; rather, it was his own character and choices. President Clinton is not the only leader to struggle with such issues.

Another example is Newt Gingrich who, in 1994, led the Republicans to a comprehensive victory in the House of Representatives. Consequently, he possessed tremendous influence and opportunity. Four years later, Gingrich was forced to resign as Speaker of the House, as the result of significant damage to his reputation. Gingrich's strategies and tactics also resulted in uneasiness among fellow House Republicans.

The worst cause for tension among his own colleagues was widespread rumors concerning Gingrich's infidelity, which proved true, especially considering his strident denunciation of Clinton for having an affair. The poignant and somber reality is that our greatest enemy is most often ourselves, and our most painful moments can be self-inflicted. The primary battle of life is being certain that we recognize our weaknesses, and thus we guard our own hearts with diligence (cf. Prov 4:23).

Solomon is one of the foremost examples of the truth that our greatest threat can be our own self. Solomon's successes occurred more extensively and rapidly than anyone in his generation. When Solomon was experiencing the pinnacle of his reign, his contemporaries certainly imagined that his kingdom would endure for a thousand years, yet the king drifted from God and his self-indulgence keep producing ignominious results, until he recognized the “vanity of vanities” arising from his own actions (Eccl 1:2).

Solomon never encountered an enemy on the battlefield, yet he lost the greatest battle ever: the one with himself. Solomon's choices inflicted enduring anguish upon his kingdom, and ultimately, his legacy was that of suffering for those subsequent to him. By his own actions and qualities, Solomon demonstrates that a gifted intellect is not a substitute for an obedient heart (cf. Eccl. 12:13-14).

*Ecclesiastes 12:13 – The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.*

**You and I are also vulnerable in the exact same manner as King Solomon.** We would be intensely arrogant and foolish to imagine that we are somehow impervious to the influences that culminated in Solomon's downfall. First Kings 1—11 is divinely intended and revealed to compel us to examine whatever potent temptations exist in our own lives, and thus to compel us to depend upon God for our endurance (cf. 1 Cor 10:11-13).



## Capitol Commission Bible Studies

**Tuesday (15<sup>th</sup> of March) @ 9:00am – 9:30am, 417 CAP**

**Tuesday (15<sup>th</sup> of March) @ 12 Noon – 12:45pm, 123 CAP**

*lunch and dessert provided from sponsorship by Georgia EMC*



Enhancing Trust

## WIN BY NOT APOSTATIZING

(1 Kgs 11:1-13) Economic and political alliances – within the international politics of the ancient world – were often confirmed by marriage. Solomon's foreign contacts led him to marry many foreign women, which was an immediately recognizable violation of God's Word (11:1-3; cf. Exod 34:11-16; Deut 7:1-4). By means of God's revelation (his Word), Moses foresaw the consequences of daily interaction with unbelieving nations: God's people would turn from the Lord. Therefore, the people of God were forbidden from marrying those who did not abide by God's covenant. The relevance of this prohibition was supremely evident in the life of Solomon, whose many foreign wives caused his heart to turn from God.

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### HIS ACTIONS WERE ASTUTE POLITICALLY . . . YET IT WAS A DRAMATIC TURN FROM GOD'S DESIRE. . .

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When the king "was old" (1 Kgs 11:4), his lifetime of lofty living eventually involved him in activities that he did not intend to become engaged (vv. 5-8). His actions were astute politically since the high places would compel the nations to regard their religious capital as Jerusalem, and thus remain loyal to Solomon, yet it was a dramatic turn from God's desire that the nations come to Jerusalem for the purpose of learning his truth (cf. Gen 12:1-3; Isa 2:1-4).

God responded with anger because He appeared to Solomon and commanded him concerning these things (1 Kgs 11:9-10). Therefore, the Lord would give the kingdom to Solomon's servant (vv. 9-11), and only King David's tribe (Judah) would be governed from Jerusalem (vv. 12-13). Through the remnant of Judah, the divine promise of an eternal throne would be fulfilled (cf. 2 Sam 7). God was gracious to Solomon only for the sake of King David (1 Kgs 11:32), yet how long can a family, local church, or nation rely upon the spiritual legacy of their ancestors' obedience and sacrifice?

## WIN BY BEING DISCIPLINED

(1 Kgs 11:14-43) As one would expect, the nations that David conquered and over which Solomon administered control did not easily relinquish their own supremacy. Solomon's adversaries led resistance movements against him (vv. 14-25), and the attribution of their work is to the will of God in both instances (vv. 14, 23). Trouble was also developing in Israel (vv. 26-40), as the northern tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh (the house of Joseph) opposed being ruled by a dynastic line from Judah (especially considering their prominent role in the period of conquest and settlement).

Solomon failed to live in accordance with his tremendous responsibility. He began his legacy well, yet overall he finished it poorly. Solomon certainly enjoyed success in his reign, yet could it be regarded as significant since his time in power began and ended amid popular resistance to his rule. The valiant contrast is the testimony of the Apostle Paul, who because of his dependence upon God's grace could say: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim 4:7).

Four factors are noteworthy when considering the entirety of Solomon's life. *First*, the king did not possess the military prowess of his father David; rather, Solomon's contribution to the nation was resident in his administrative proficiency. As opposed to claiming territory by force, which is what David accomplished, Solomon was able to achieve a significant number of successful political alliances.

*Second*, one of Solomon's weaknesses was that he was too tolerant in his beliefs and behaviors. For instance, his broadminded approach to allow foreign wives into his harem also granted them opportunity to erect their own pagan altars. The consequence of such actions eventually culminated in syncretism (which is the assimilation of differing or opposing doctrines and practices, especially between philosophical or religious systems, which results in an entirely new system in which the fundamental constitution and tenets of each have been altered). Syncretism is always disastrous in terms of the gospel message of God's grace being received through faith in Jesus Christ (because that proclamation is simply conformed to what is already existing within the culture). The syncretism that began during Solomon's reign resulted in an especially problematic situation for subsequent kings.

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### SOLOMON DECEIVED HIMSELF INTO THINKING HE COULD SERVE TWO MASTERS, . . . AND THUS THE KING'S DIVIDED HEART RESULTED IN A DIVIDED MONARCHY. . .

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*Third*, the king was "a double-minded man" (Jas 1:8). Solomon deceived himself into thinking he could serve two masters, and such deception ultimately culminated in progressively worsening situations which became difficult to manage. Solomon's divided allegiance was replicated throughout his kingdom, and thus the king's divided heart resulted in a divided monarchy: the northern kingdom (Israel) and the southern kingdom (Judah).

*Fourth*, the morality of Solomon was considerably subordinate in comparison to his intellect. Solomon was endowed with stupendous logical and rational abilities, yet his ethical standards were not consistent with his wisdom. Sadly, it is possible to be tremendously gifted yet to lack the devotion and discipline that one's position of leadership necessitates.

*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

Capitol Commission state ministers are pastors-missionaries who teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for legislators, lobbyists, and staff members. The Bible studies are hand-distributed to each legislative office, emailed, and made available throughout the Capitol community. Capitol Commission is a ministry of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message, and to help believers mature through verse-by-verse Bible teaching. In the Bible, we see God's love for the world, especially those who have been placed in authority. The divine mandate is the foundation for our ministry to you.

The church is instructed to submit and honor government leaders (Rom 13:1-7), and to pray for their eternal salvation (1 Tim 2:1-4). The desire of Capitol Commission is to witness God transform the hearts and lives of elected officials, lobbyists, and staff members. We apply this mandate to four primary areas of discipleship: (1) *evangelize* those who have not known saving faith in Jesus Christ; (2) *establish* those who desire to grow in their faith and knowledge of Scripture; (3) *equip* those called to spiritual leadership; and, (4) *encourage* churches to participate with us in ministry.

this week's Bible studies sponsored by:



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NEXT CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES:  
Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> of March @ 9:00am in 417 CAP  
and again (with lunch) @ 12 NOON in 123 CAP