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Truth Demands Action

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

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

TUESDAY, 5 JULY 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, 5 July 2016

First Kings 17:1—18:46 – “Truth Demands Action”

Jim Elliot is a well-known Christian missionary. Nearly three years of jungle ministry, in addition to many hours of planning and praying, led him to a momentous day in 1956. Jim and four companions would be erecting camp in the territory of a dangerous and uncivilized tribe in Ecuador, then known as the Aucas, for the purpose of sharing the gospel of God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Even though the mission was dangerous, Jim knew the Aucas needed to know who Jesus is.

While a student at Wheaton College, in 1948, he wrote a journal entry as follows: “Father, make of me a crisis man. Bring those I contact to decision. Let me not be a milepost on a single road; make me a fork, that men must turn one way or another on facing Christ in me” (Elisabeth Elliot, *Shadow of the Almighty* [1958; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989] 77). Although the initial meetings with the Aucas appeared friendly, the Auca warriors eventually speared to death all five missionaries.

The yearning to make an eternal difference in the lives of others was abundantly answered. The deaths of the five young missionaries inspired generations of Christians. Sixty years later, the sacrifice of the five missionaries who died in an attempt to share the gospel with

the Aucas has resulted in reconciliation and transformation within the tribe. In their deaths, the five missionaries inspired more people to become missionaries who would share the grace of God in Christ Jesus than they ever could have in life. In the present time, the need for devoted followers of God who will dedicate themselves to making an eternal difference in the lives of others is still an urgent task.

... THE REASONS WHY HE DISPLAYED SUCH COURAGE AND CONVICTION FOR THE SAKE OF GOD IS AS RELEVANT AS EVER.

One of the attributes needed to have a positive effect in the lives of others is courage. Witnessing the virtue of courage in others should inspire gratitude for those who make sacrifices for the benefit of people. Courage in terms of spiritual priorities is certainly what characterized the prophet Elijah (cf. Acts 4:13; 2 Tim 1:7).

The prophet Ezekiel ministered for God while the Lord’s people were in exile. When the Lord commissioned Ezekiel to minister as his prophet, God informed the prophet that He was sending him to a hardened, rebellious, and stubborn nation. Ezekiel’s message would not be well received, yet he was to serve as a watchman, whose obligation was to sound the alarm, and not to be responsible for the response to the alarm. At one point in Ezekiel’s ministry, the Lord God lamented, “I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one” (Ezek 22:30).

The moral degradation was so rampant in Jerusalem that none could be identified who adopted a leadership role (cf. 13:5). Ezekiel’s role was to intercede before God as a watchman (cf. Gen 20:7; Jer 37:3; Ezek 33:1-6). Being honest to examine our lives continually for the sake of determining whether we have become callous to our own sin and the offenses of our land is always urgent. Personal concerns are never valid reasons to prevent one from heeding the will of God. Elijah was one who discerned the spiritual need in his nation (and almost entirely by himself), he was bold for the sake of the Lord God. Although the prophet’s world was vastly different than ours, the reasons why he displayed such courage and conviction for the sake of God is as relevant as ever.

Acts 4:13 – Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John . . . they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

Second Timothy 1:7 – For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

TRUST INVOLVES COURAGE

(1 Kgs 17:1-24) God is always able to upraise someone who – by his grace and for his glory – will be able to respond to current demands. Wickedness became rampant in Israel, and thus God responded to the unbridled iniquity with extraordinary methods and an extraordinary person: the prophet Elijah (who is mentioned in Luke 1:17 in relation to John the Baptist’s ministry). The prophet appears in the narrative of 1 Kings 17 with little introduction.

Capitol Commission (interim) Bible Study

1st Tuesday (5th of July) from 12 Noon – 12:45pm, 123 CAP

lunch provided from ministry partnership by Capitol Commission donors



Enhancing Trust

Prophets were God’s spokesmen. The northern kingdom of Israel was more wicked than the southern kingdom of Judah, thus God initiated his judgment with them first. God would often accompany the prophet’s message with signs and wonders, thereby leaving the people with no excuse for their lack of repentance.

First Kings 17 begins with Elijah entering the presence of King Ahab with both haste and vigor, and announcing a drought upon the land. The judgment was particularly appropriate because Ahab, and his wife Jezebel, were responsible for introducing Baal worship to the land. Among other things, Baal was regarded as the god of fertility, and regarded as enabling the earth to produce crops and for women to become pregnant. The drought was a direct challenge to the alleged ability of the pagan deity, as it proved God’s power. The physical drought typified the spiritual drought from the idolatry.

... SOMETIMES GOD PROVIDES FOR THE NEEDS OF HIS PEOPLE THROUGH UNEXPECTED AND UNUSUAL MEANS.

In response to the prediction of drought, Elijah was compelled to flee to the wilderness and hide himself by the brook Cherith, where God would provide for his needs (vv. 2-4). Cherith was as far from Samaria as possible (cf. 16:32). Elijah’s experience was meaningful because it allowed him to be empathetic with those affected by the drought. The drought victims would also be dependent upon God in their time of need, and Elijah would be better equipped for ministry to them as a result of his own incident. Elijah learned that sometimes God provides for the needs of his people through unexpected and unusual means.

“It happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land” (17:7), and Elijah was thus compelled to journey elsewhere to eat and drink. God sent the prophet to Zarephath, “which belongs to Sidon,” where he would meet a widow (v. 9). The widow only had enough food to provide for herself and her son one more time (v. 12), yet she obeyed the prophet and also gave him food.

PROVISIONS MAY NO LONGER BE AVAILABLE YET GOD NEVER FAILS HIS PEOPLE. BE CERTAIN TO TRUST THE PROVIDER AND NOT THE PROVISION.

God provided abundantly for the widow’s needs because she prioritized the word of “the LORD God of Israel” (vv. 14-16). The episode is noteworthy for several reasons. *First*, the widow resided in the area (Sidon) where Baal worship was most dominant. Jezebel was “the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians” (16:31), and it was from this locale that she emerged and from whence she introduced the pagan worship of Baal into Israel. The incident proves the omnipotence of God to provide for his own, even in enemy occupied territory.

Second, the confrontation of Baal worship demonstrated to Elijah the magnitude of God’s provision. When the initial source of supply was no longer (because the brook became dry, 17:7), God

provided another means of provision. *Third*, the circumstances made Elijah entirely dependent upon the Lord each and every day.

First Kings 17 concludes with the faith of the woman being all the more rewarded. Her child had “no breath left in him” (vv. 17-24), yet because she ministered to Elijah, the prophet had the opportunity of ministering to her. Elijah stretched himself over the child, called to the Lord God, and the Lord answered the prayer of Elijah by restoring the child to life. When we live by faith, God supplies our needs, and provides opportunities for receiving his blessing. Provisions may no longer be available yet God never fails his people. Be certain to trust the Provider and not the provision.

TRUST INVOLVES CONVICTION

(1 Kgs 18:1-46) First Kings 18 begins with the drought ending. Even though Ahab’s capital city had suffered greatly, the king did not repent. More than suffering is needed to humble the pride of a godless ruler – the Word of God must be heard and heeded. Ahab and Jezebel attempted to silence God’s Word by killing the Lord’s prophets. Ahab sent his trusted servant Obadiah to find provisions for his animals, even to the neglect of his people. When a nation’s leaders have their priorities confused, the nation will suffer greatly.

Ahab wanted to kill Elijah (v. 10), yet God protected his servant. Although the king regarded Elijah as an enemy (21:20), Ahab was his own worst enemy. Obadiah is to be commended for protecting a remnant of the true prophets of God, even though that was not the ultimate solution. Israel needed to make a decision to worship either Baal or the God of Israel (cf. Josh 24:14-21).

Obadiah is a depiction of a true believer who was afraid to make his convictions known, which is in direct contrast to Elijah, who rebuked the people (1 Kgs 18:21) and demonstrated reliance upon the Lord (vv. 36-37). Elijah honored God, and the Lord honored him. Hesitating between opinions may be theoretically respectable and even politically correct, yet it is spiritually unfeasible and intellectually flawed because truth demands action.

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!

