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# The Point of No Return

## CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

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

**rescheduled, in lieu of Labor Day, for  
THURSDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 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. *For the month of September only, the Capitol Commission Bible Study will be Thursday, 8 September, in lieu of Labor Day.* 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*  
**Thursday, 8 September 2016**

**First Kings 21:1—22:53 – “The Point of No Return”**

“The Point of No Return” is a song from *The Phantom of the Opera*. The singers include the musical’s title character, the Phantom, and his love interest, Christine Daaé. The song is part of the Phantom’s opera, *Don Juan Triumphant*, thus it is an opera within an opera. The title character, Don Juan, is a womanizer, and his wayward behavior has condemned him to perdition. The Phantom forces the opera company to stage his work, and expects Christine to perform in it, which does occur as an elaborate plan to capture the Phantom by using Christine to lure him to the performance.

The song focuses upon the Phantom’s seduction of Christine, eventually pleading with her (“All I Ask of You”) to be with him instead of her fiancé Viscount Raoul de Chagny. Christine responds by removing the Phantom’s mask, thereby exposing his horribly deformed face. “The Point of No Return” is titled to reflect the Phantom’s belief that he and Christine have a love for each other, and thus neither of them can rescind their affections. The characters

sing, “The bridge is crossed, so stand and watch it burn.”

### CHOICES HAVE CONSEQUENCES...

Just as Don Juan chose a life of debauchee (which the Phantom climactically remarks spitefully, and probably sarcastically, that he is the same type of man as him), and was committed to a course of actions from which there was no return, so also did King Ahab embark upon a negative lifestyle. The difference for Ahab is that God’s grace allowed the possibility to reverse his actions. For instance, God commissioned Elijah and other prophets to proclaim the opportunity for repentance.

*2 Peter 3:9 – The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*

Ahab, unfortunately, refused to benefit from God’s grace. The final chapters of 1 Kings contain distinct episodes to demonstrate Ahab’s disregard for God’s will. In each scenario, God forthrightly revealed what actions were required from Ahab, yet in each situation Ahab deliberately violated God’s instructions. Choices have consequences, and the latter becomes inevitable when repentance is lacking (cf. 2 Pet 3:9). The message is unambiguous: humanity is accountable to a holy God, who will certainly hold all responsible.

### NO ESCAPING ACCOUNTABILITY

(*1 Kgs 21:1-29*) First Kings 21 depicts how Ahab defied God through his selfish desire for material possessions. In spite of his tremendous wealth, Ahab coveted the vineyard of an Israelite called Naboth. Naboth refused to sell the inheritance of his fathers, which would have been a violation of God’s laws regarding the land (v. 3). Naboth’s words were a rebuke to King Ahab for disregarding the Mosaic Law (cf. Lev 25:23; Numb 36:7).

Ahab pressured Naboth to contravene the law, yet he refused. The king believed that people would do anything if they were compensated with enough money or given what they desire. The last of the Ten Commandments states, “You shall not covet” (Exod 20:17). When the king chose to ignore God’s command, he also disobeyed several of the other nine mandates. Ahab and Jezebel had “other gods” whom they served, and thus murdered, stole, lied, and plotted in such a manner as to conceal their activities (cf. Ps 32:3-4).

Jezebel intentionally plotted the death of Naboth, and then apprehended the property for her husband. Ahab permitted the queen to violate God’s law and commit murder simply because he desired a specific vegetable garden. The action climaxed with God’s judgment upon Ahab and Jezebel. Elijah immediately appeared, and once again pronounced the sentence of death upon Ahab, which was executed in the next chapter.

**Capitol Commission (interim) Bible Study**

Thursday (8<sup>th</sup> of September) from 12 Noon – 12:45pm, 123 CAP

*lunch provided from ministry partnership by Capitol Commission donors*



Enhancing Trust

Wicked leaders would never be successful in their tactics if it were not for pusillanimous individuals who obey their orders. Jezebel did not reverence God's name or believe in fasting, yet she knew how to take advantage of both to achieve her wicked schemes. An innocent man died yet God witnessed all that occurred. Elijah confronted Ahab with the same judgment that earlier prophets spoke in condemnation against Jeroboam and Baasha (1 Kgs 21:20-24; cf. 14:10-11; 16:3-4).

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**... THE KING FEARED GOD'S JUDGMENT AS OPPOSED TO BEING BURDENED WITH THE REALITY OF HIS SINS.**

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Elijah was certainly surprised that Ahab displayed signs of repentance, which was likely because the king feared God's judgment as opposed to being burdened with the reality of his sins. God delayed the execution of his sentence upon Ahab, yet the fateful day arrived nevertheless. Ahab committed himself "to do evil," and his master (sin) finally paid the wages (Rom 6:23).

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**THE THEOLOGICAL MESSAGE CONVEYED IS THAT WHEN SOMEONE DISREGARDS GOD'S WILL, HE OR SHE IS UNABLE TO ACT PROPERLY TOWARD OTHERS.**

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Ahab had failed to uphold justice for his own people, which was a vice condemned as inconsistent with kingship throughout the Ancient Near East (cf. Exod 23:6-8; Deut 1:17; 16:18-20). The character flaws of Ahab (covetousness and irresponsibility) were manifested in the brutalization and oppression of his own people. Moreover, he excused his actions because someone else undertook dishonest activities on his behalf. Ahab not only lacked righteousness in God's valuation but also personal integrity. The theological message conveyed is that when someone disregards God's will, he or she is unable to act properly toward others.

## NO ESCAPING GOD'S WORD

(1 Kgs 22:1-53) First Kings 22 chronicles the final incident in the life of Ahab. He secured the aid of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, and made preparations for marching to Syria (vv. 1-4). Jehoshaphat insisted that he and Ahab "inquire first for the word of the LORD" to reveal the outcome of the battle (v. 5). The 400 prophets of Baal who were employed by Jezebel delivered an optimistic message that assured Ahab's success (vv. 6-7, 10-12). Knowing that Ahab's prophets would not speak truthfully, Jehoshaphat insisted – despite Ahab's complaints – that a message be sought from a prophet of Jehovah, and thus Micaiah was summoned (vv. 7-9).

False prophets typically agree in their messages of glory and success. Ahab's messenger attempted to persuade Micaiah to imitate the words of the false prophets, but the Lord's servant refused to acquiesce to political coercion, which would violate God's truth. Micaiah refused to present Ahab with the same false message of the prophets of Baal (vv. 13-14). While it was not easy to be a truthful messenger in Micaiah's time, the prophet was faithful.

Micaiah announced that Israel would be defeated and Ahab would be killed in battle, and indicated that God intentionally caused the prophets to be deceptive for the purpose of enticing Ahab into a battle that would end his life (vv. 17-23). Ahab responded with incense at Micaiah's words and had the prophet cast into prison (vv. 24-28). For the third time, God undeniably announced the king's death sentence, yet Ahab proceeded to disguise himself and venture into battle (v. 30). A random arrow from the enemy struck Ahab "in a joint of the armor," which brought an end to the life of one of Israel's worst kings. Second Kings reveals God's judgment upon the remainder of the family.

Just prior to the end of his life, Ahab encountered a majority of false prophets who spoke what he wanted to hear and one solitary prophet who dared to confront the king. Ahab had the same experience when Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (18:7-46). In both accounts, God spoke through one person. The Lord's methods may be disconcerting to prevailing sensibilities (cf. Job 1:6-12), yet God's sovereign will is accomplished endlessly.

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**... THE LORD'S SERVANT REFUSED TO ACQUIESCE TO POLITICAL COERCION, WHICH WOULD VIOLATE GOD'S TRUTH.**

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Verses 41-50 resume the history of Judah (which was halted in 15:25), with a brief interlude, prior to resuming events with the northern kingdom of Israel in 22:51. The contrast between two kings is evident: Jehoshaphat did "right in the sight of the LORD" (v. 43) and Ahaziah "did evil in the sight of the LORD" (v. 52). What is most important in the life of a king is whether their rule is governed by the standards of God's word because the Lord cannot be restricted or vanquished by human resistance. God's people are responsible to obey what he has revealed. One can discount or resist God's word, yet the Lord can never be defeated or evaded.

*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

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!**

