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# Adequately Prepared

## CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

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

**TUESDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2016**

**12 NOON in 123 CAP**

Capitol Commission (interim) Bible Studies are held **the first Tuesday of each month at 12 Noon**, in correlation with the Public Service Commission devotional at 9:55am. **The monthly Bible study is nonpartisan and non-denominational.** Until the start of the legislative session, our Bible study (chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse) will be in the Old Testament book of Joel.

**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, 4 October 2016**

**Joel 1 – “Adequately Prepared”**

Friedrich II of Prussia (or Frederick the Great, 1712-86) once remarked, “All Religions must be tolerated (*Tollerated*), and the Fiscal must have an eye that none of them make unjust encroachment on the other; for in this Country every man must get to Heaven in his own way” (Thomas Carlyle, *History of Friedrich II. of Prussia*, 10 vols. [1858; London: Chapman and Hall, 1873] 4:11). Tolerance, in Friedrich’s perspective, is understandable in view of the religious wars (1560-1715) that ravaged Europe for more than a century subsequent to the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. English historian Edward Gibbon (1737-94) noted the Roman Empire for a similar manner of tolerance. Gibbon wrote, “The various modes of worship, which prevailed in the Roman world, were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosopher as equally false; and by the magistrate, as equally useful” (*The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 6 vols. [Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen, & Haffelfinger, 1875] 1:34).

Not every 18<sup>th</sup> century advocate of religious freedom was as pessimistic as Friedrich or as Gibbon depicted. In the United States, the Continental Congress produced the Constitution and the Bill of

Rights, which did not merely guarantee religious toleration, as characteristic of the European countries. The United States Constitution established a government founded upon legitimate principles that guaranteed religious liberty. To the Americans of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, their belief in an absolute God, who created all humanity equally in his image and whose providence was undeniable in the framing of the Constitution, demanded that religious liberty be extended to people of all faiths.

**IS THERE TRULY A CREATOR WHO MADE YOU IN HIS IMAGE...? DOES THE CREATOR GOD HAVE ANY CONCERN FOR JUSTICE, AND WHAT IMPACT DOES SUCH INTEREST HAVE UPON OUR EARTHLY LIVES?**

An unfortunate (and hazardous) modern thought is the assumption that religious liberty can be protected only by apathy toward religious differences because when such dissimilarities are regarded with significance and solemnity – as corresponding to reality – particularly in determining eternal destinies, then concern develops. An example of such thinking is evident among those who regard Christian evangelism as coercive, which is entirely untrue since authentic biblical conversion can never occur by coercion.

*Hebrews 11:6 – And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.*

The purpose of this Bible study is not to discuss the political and social implications that arise among different faiths cooperating in one society; rather, the intent is to address the more urgent matter as to the question of salvation, and whether any of the various world religions is truthful. In other words, what if certain religious teachings are true and others are false? Is there truly a Creator who made you in his image? Is the Creator a just entity? What demands does He require from you? Will the Creator reward those who diligently seek Him, and will He punish those who do not? Does the Creator God have any concern for justice, and what impact does such interest have upon our earthly lives?

Many dismiss the preceding questions either with antagonism, offensiveness, or politeness, yet – within the Holy Bible – those inquiries are most vital. Questions regarding political policy and procedure, in addition to civil liberties and social tasks, must be asked and answered. Nevertheless, our personal interests are preeminently more relevant in the question of salvation, particularly our own. *Who will God save? Will the Lord save you?* The prophet Joel addresses the necessity of God’s salvation, and in the process answers how to be adequately prepared so you will receive it.

## THE DAY OF THE LORD

The background for Joel’s prophecy is a locust plague. Athaliah (“whom Yahweh has afflicted”) was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. She was the granddaughter of Omri, who was Ahab’s father. Athaliah married Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and introduced pagan worship into the southern kingdom.

**Capitol Commission (interim) Bible Study**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday (4<sup>th</sup> of October) from 12 Noon – 12:45pm, 123 CAP**  
*lunch provided from ministry partnership by Capitol Commission donors*



Enhancing Trust

Through her pernicious influence she led her husband and son, Ahaziah, into crime and idolatry. Ahaziah came to the throne when Jehoram died. Ahaziah “walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly” (2 Chron 22:3). Ahaziah reigned one year and was put to death by Jehu (v. 9), whereupon Athaliah “rose and destroyed all the royal offspring of the house of Judah” (v. 10). From the slaughter, only Joash, the youngest son of Ahaziah escaped, due to his aunt Jehoshabeath rescuing him (vv. 11-12).

Joash was reared under the care of Jehoiada the priest for six years. In his seventh year, Joash was publicly declared king, and Athaliah was put to death (23:1-21; 2 Kgs 11:1-21). At approximately this time, a devastating locust plague invaded Judah. God often uses natural disasters to awaken people’s conscience to repentance. The incredible catastrophe was a call for repentance as a harbinger of a greater judgment to come: the Day of the Lord. Embedded in physically vibrant imagery, this time of ultimate calamity, which is still future for humanity today (2 Thess 2:2; 2 Pet 3:10), makes evident the solemnity of God’s judgment against sin.

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**EMBEDDED IN PHYSICALLY VIBRANT IMAGERY, THIS TIME OF ULTIMATE CALAMITY . . . MAKES EVIDENT THE SOLEMNITY OF GOD’S JUDGMENT AGAINST SIN.**

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Joel is the prophet of the Day of the Lord, a concept well known in Old Testament prophetic texts. Several times in his three-chapter prophecy, Joel made reference to “the day” (1:15) or “the day of the LORD” (2:1, 11, 31; 3:14). The term Day of the Lord designates any time period in which God brings judgment upon Israel (and all nations); it is an appropriate concept for the prophets to use in relation with such divine punishment.

The expression “that day” has a broad range of meaning in Scripture, and can designate both calamity and favor. According to the Jewish calendar, a day begins in the evening at sundown, which means that a period of darkness is followed by a time of light. Not only does such chronology reflect the creation account (“there was evening and there was morning,” a day), but also the nature of God’s dealings with Israel (and the world), first in judgment (darkness) and culminating in blessing (light).

### THE SOMBER MESSAGE

(*Joel 1:1-14*) Joel referred to a judgment well-known to the people of his day – a locust plague – as historical background for his prophetic message concerning the Day of the Lord. The message was proclaimed and written to the southern kingdom of Judah who were living in 835 BC, which also means that Joel was a contemporary of the prophet Elisha, who was the prophet Elijah’s successor (2 Kgs 2:15-25). Chapter 1 begins the historic period of Joel’s prophecy, whereas chapters 2—3 contain the prophetic phase.

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**THE PURPOSE OF THE DAY OF THE LORD IS BOTH PURIFICATION AND RESTORATION.**

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Joel 1 prophesies that the locust plague is imminent (a forecast fulfilled in the prophet’s own day). Many classes of people – the elders (older men), the children, the drunkards, and the farmers – were called upon to mourn in response to the locust invasion (vv. 1-12). Four diverse varieties of locusts consumed all land vegetation (v. 4), succeeded by a national draught and famine (vv. 8-12).

Verses 13-14 call for the people to join together in an expression of national repentance. The spiritual leaders are commissioned to take initiative in leading the people to outcry for God’s mercy. In referring to the dreadful locust plague, Joel was able to speak in such a manner that the heart and mind of his listeners would be imprinted with the prophetic message. The purpose of the Day of the Lord is both purification and restoration.

### THE EARNEST PRAYER

(*Joel 1:15-20*) In response to the somber message of the opening verses is the earnest prayer before God, seeking relief from the Lord. The prophet modeled the appropriate response by crying to the Lord God for his help and mercy. Perhaps he humbled himself and trusted in God’s promise to forgive and heal the land (2 Chron 7:14). Certainly, it is not enough merely to express sorrow regarding the consequences of sin (2 Cor 7:9); rather, one must also have inward repentance (Matt 3:8; Luke 17:1-4; Acts 26:20).

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**THE PROPHETIC IMAGERY THAT WE HAVE IN THE BOOK OF JOEL SHOULD AWAKEN US IN REGARDS TO HOW ESSENTIAL IT IS TO LIVE WITH OBEDIENT FAITH IN GOD EVERY MOMENT OF LIFE.**

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Prophetic messages like the kind we have from Joel (or even in the pages of the better-known book of Revelation) often may appear distant from our commonplace existence. Nevertheless, the vivid depictions of the Day of the Lord should arouse our senses from any spiritual stupor. Prophetic texts are important to engage us when tempted to become complacent. The prophetic imagery that we have in the book of Joel should awaken us in regards to how essential it is to live with obedient faith in God every moment of life.

*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 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. This is the foundation for our ministry to you.

The church is instructed to submit and to 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.

