

The LandBetween

MINISTRIES

The mission of the LandBetween Ministries is to equip leaders to fulfill Christ's Great Commission of heart-focused discipleship in a broken world.

Newsletter

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The Capital or Captain of Your Heart?

The United States officially declared Jerusalem the capital of Israel on December 6, 2016.

Jerusalem was once again the focus of international media attention on May 14 of this year in 2018, and a dedication ceremony was held for moving the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Strong emotions of joy in Jerusalem contrasted with around 60 protestors being killed, mostly in the Gaza strip, and attempts were made to breach Israel's border. Violence over decisions regarding Jerusalem has taken place for millennia.

The political opinions over Jerusalem and its future are numerous. This article is not about Middle Eastern politics, but rather enduring spiritual principles related to the phenomenon of capitals.

The world's power centers are usually in or near capitals. Capitals are *impersonal* entities, yet often corrupted by people of great wealth and are *not eternal*.

God focuses on desiring that Jesus be our *personal* Master and Savior and Jesus, thankfully, *cannot* be

corrupted by people of any status. In contrast to the world's power centers and capitals that will fade away, as followers of Jesus we serve the King of Heaven, and Heaven will never be corrupted.

In English, the word capital is mostly used to define a city that is the head of government for a nation. Money is a synonym of capital, indicating the prominence and "headship" role it takes in many nations and individuals. (Mt. 6:24).

In biblical Greek the first three words for "capital" are *kappa alpha pi* (*kap*). In Hebrew, the letters have a similar "kap" sound. Thus, the English word, "*cap*" is derived



from ancient roots related to something at the top (e.g. *capstone*), but today most often means a cap that is worn at the top of one's body.

The "Captain" of a ship is the *head person* of the vessel. A synonym for captain is commander. As there is only one "captain" of a ship there

is only one captain (commander) of a person's spirit (Matthew 6:24).

God never called Noah "*Captain Noah*" because that would have been a lie. Noah could not control the ship or the extent of the flood, yet he trusted God with everything before and during the flood.

The Noah's Ark account (Genesis 6-8) provides a picture of God as the loving Sovereign who holds people accountable and responsible. In our "modern" world, too often we don't like the terms, "responsibility" or personal "will." No, the world would rather blame-shift many of their problems on others (family, friends)... including God.

A trend I see in American churches is the idea of, "Sitting back and watching God work," e.g., give your tithe and watch. However, "Sitting back and watching God work" can be a veiled excuse for laziness and ignoring what we ought to do (James 4:17) and the sins we are to stop. (John 8:11).

Noah did not have the attitude of, "Sitting back and watching God work." Noah found favor in God's eyes by following God's commands, even when nobody else on earth outside his family chose to...

...be responsible to obey Yahweh. Maybe you are in a situation where you are the only one at work or in your family that cares about Jesus and the Scriptures. You are not alone. Noah's family, Joseph, Esther, and many others chose to obey in hard times.

Noah took responsibility to do all God commanded (Genesis 6:22), even building a massive 510 foot ship on dry land. I took photos of a replica of the Ark at the "Ark Encounter" in Williamstown, Kentucky earlier this year.

When you think of the lack of power tools and other technological advances we have today, the Ark was an amazing feat of engineering and hard work. All this hard work and engineering was directed by the loving and precise leadership of the omniscient Captain, the Sovereign LORD.

Imagine a 510 foot ship at sea with no engines and no movable rudder. When the great flood came, the eight people on the Ark were completely at the mercy of God's sovereignty and could not control the ship nor where the ship landed. At the same time, Noah's family took responsibility to do the work of caring for each other and the animals.

Likewise, the apostle Paul chose to obey God, but unlike the ark that landed on dry ground, Paul's obedience led him to land in jail, falsely accused; yet, Paul still prayed and sang praises to Jesus (Acts 16:25). Ruth obeyed when "land-

ing" in a new culture with a bitter in-law. Job was faithful to God whether he "landed" in poverty or wealth. Solomon had enormous *capital* (wealth) but he chose to reject the *Captain* by his immoral choices and he landed in misery. He chose to follow the foreign gods (evil spirits) of his wives which led to emptiness. At the end of his life Solomon shared this wisdom, "...that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man." (Ecclesiastes 3:13). Likewise,



we should work hard like Noah, and not see work as a curse, but a gift from the hand of the One who knows best.

Therefore, at the close of 2018, and the dawn of 2019, resolve to embrace the work God gives you every day. You truly can choose to trust God's loving, sovereign hand even when your life's work seems to be floating in waters that are painful and the future seems more dark than light.

The truth is that Christ is, "...in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27) and if your hope is truly in Jesus it does not "drown" because it is founded on the Rock, Christ Jesus.

During some of the most challenging times of my life, the Lord has led me to quote in my mind over and over, "Christ is in you, the hope of glory..." and this hope *eternal* and within is *personal*, because its Source is the *Captain* of hope, not an *impersonal Capital* that can go bankrupt or worse.

Likewise, the presence of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is omnipresent and God's presence is with each one of us, regardless of our ups and downs and the storms we face in our lives.

We live in a world of pessimistic agnostics and atheists, who hate Jesus and consider the Noah's Flood account in the Bible as nothing but a fairy tale. However, the truly educated and enlightened scientists and Bible scholars who have objectively studied the account of Noah's Ark find evidence of a catastrophic flood that covered the whole earth.

There is also evidence in the Bible of how we are to face life. When the waves of life rock our boat we are to be like Paul, who, when his ship wrecked, did not sit back and watch. He grabbed on and rode out the storm. Instead of becoming bitter or angry with God about the hardships from following Jesus, Paul took *responsibility* to love, praise, obey, and give thanks...the best way to sail to Heaven's peaceful, eternal shores.

— by, Joel Francis, Th.M.

Joel Francis, Th.M. has a four-year Master of Theology Degree (Academic—Old Testament) and a Bachelor of Arts in Telecommunications. The LandBetween Ministries is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization founded in 2004.