

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of July 25, 2010
Theme: "State of Our Nation: The Anti-Christian Era"

Sunday Read II Thessalonians 2:1-10

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he that letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." Paul responded to the questions and concerns that the Thessalonian believers had regarding those who had died and about the promised coming of the Lord. He consoled them with the classic teaching in I Thessalonians 4:13-18 telling us about the appearing of the Lord in the air to take all believers, dead and alive, to be with Him forever. They still were puzzled about the Day of the Lord, a day of the Lord's wrath being poured out upon earth, that would precede the Lord's return as promised in the Old Testament in such passages as Isaiah 13:6-9 and Zephaniah 1:14-16. Would they experience that day of judgment? Had that day already arrived? Apparently there were those who were claiming that they were living in the day of God's wrath. Paul gave them assurance that such teachings were deceptive, and then revealed some of the indications of the times preceding the Lord's return including the rule of Satan on earth. He had explained in his previous letter that believers would be spared these terrible events by the gathering of believers in the air. He did indicate that believers, however, would live to see the *"mystery of iniquity"* at work. He shared that they would experience the spirit of antichrist before the actual coming of the Antichrist, but they would not be around during the Reign of the Antichrist. The reason for the apparent success of those who would reject God and His eternal truth is that there would be *"a falling away,"* or a period of apostasy within the professing church. That period of compromise of professing believers with the world would precede the calling away of the true church. Paul related that this defiance of God and the followers of Christ will be quite evident before the Lord's return, but that it will be restrained until the one who restrains its full blast is removed. I believe that the restraint on sin running its full course is the presence of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the bodies of true believers (I Corinthians 6:19). When believers are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, the presence of the Holy Spirit goes with them, and the door is opened for the coming of the Antichrist.

Monday..... Read I John 4:1-3

"Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is the spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now is already in the world." The apostle John compares and contrasts the Spirit of God with the spirit of antichrist in his letter to believers with a strong emphasis that the telling character trait of true believers is love, the love of God that pours out of the lives of true believers. That divine love is made possible by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, love being one of the fruits of the Spirit. A person acquires those attributes of the Holy Spirit by being born of the Spirit upon confession of Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord. Any who teach anything other than the fact that the Lord Jesus is God manifest in the flesh and took on a human body to shed His blood for the remission of sin is part of the spirit of antichrist. Calling Christ anything other than who He is, and teaching anything other than the eternal truths of His Holy Word is displaying the spirit of antichrist. This we see present in our own nation in our time. When the United States of America entered into its Neo-Christian Age and then into its Post-Christian Age, it set the stage for the period best described as the Anti-Christian Age. By compromising with the world system, the professing church set the stage for the spirit of antichrist to become dominant. The joy of the believer is that these events had to occur before the coming of our Savior to establish His eternal kingdom. That will be a better regime than even the greatest of times in the history of the United States of America. It will be a time of greater prosperity and morality than the world has ever seen. There is no good reason to have troubled minds!

Tuesday Read Psalm 118:8-14

"It is better to trust the Lord than to put confidence in man." Where do people look to improve their lot in life? Many, if not most, in the world look to government, even now in our own nation. Our heritage has been for Americans to fulfill their personal dreams by what they could accomplish with their own lives; and that most likely is still prevalent. There is, however, an ever-increasing number who are looking to government to provide for their welfare; and we have an ever-increasing number of office-holders who are willing to comply with those wishes with more and more government programs. To do

this, the government must increasingly rely on power and force to provide these entitlement services. Since the government relies on taxes for its income; this means rising taxes to support the give-away programs. Consequently, our nation is strapped with a debt like never before. What is the solution? How do we get our selves out of this financial quagmire? Is there any way to deal with this confusion and perplexity? The psalmist tells us: *"It is better to trust the Lord than to put confidence in man."*

Wednesday.....Read Revelation 3:1-6

"I know thy works, that thou hast a name that liveth, and art dead...I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." I believe the letters to seven churches mentioned in chapters two and three of Revelation serve a dual purpose: admonition to believers of that day and in the future and prophetic truths about the future of the church. In that respect, it provides an overview of church history before it happened in much the same way that God gave an overview of Jewish history before it happened to Daniel in that great Old Testament book that served the purpose of admonishing God's people as well as providing them with prophetic truth. In this particular message to the church at Sardis, God called attention to the fact that the church had for all practical purposes the church had lost its living vibrant spirit; that, although it still existed, it was as if it were dead. The people were reminded that Jesus would come on them *"as a thief in the night,"* the same warning that Jesus Himself had taught in Matthew 24:42-44: *"Watch therefore, for ye know not in what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have allowed his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."* The time of the Lord's return will follow a time when the church will for all practical purposes seem dead. Does that not describe a Post-Christian Age?

Thursday.....Read Revelation 3:7-13

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." The message to the church of Philadelphia was a reassuring message: *"Thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name...because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."* Because of their faithfulness, this part of the Christian church will be spared the time of God's judgment on all the earth. This faithful remnant of believers will not have to experience the coming wrath of God. Always, God has had a faithful remnant of believers for His work on earth, a group of believers who would not allow themselves to fall into the trap of compromise with the world-system. There was Noah and his family at the time preceding the Great Flood. There was Joshua and Caleb in reporting back to Moses with the report of people occupying what was to be the Promised Land for the Israelites. There was Daniel and his friends during the Babylonian Captivity. And there will be that faithful body of believers in the days preceding the Great Tribulation at the end of the Age. Let us be among them who can be described as *"keeping His Word."*

Friday.....Read Revelation 3:14-22

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." The Laodicean Church will be remembered as the compromising, apostate church, a church that continued to call itself Christian, but one that had been enamored with the material wealth and prosperity of the day, a church that had become lukewarm in its place in the culture. Obviously, this was a disappointment to God and even sickening. Christ did, however, point out that the individual could still enjoy rich fellowship with Him if they allowed Him into his or her life. Even in the midst of an apostate church, there will be those in fellowship with the Lord Jesus in the defense of the faith. How sad that the church itself could become so worldly that it would place the favor of the world above its allegiance to her Savior! Praise God, however, that those who choose to be loyal to the Lord can have the joy of fellowship with God, and bask in the fruits of the Holy Spirit!

Saturday.....Read Luke 21:20-28

"And when you see these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads: for you redemption draweth nigh." The disciples had asked the Lord Jesus about the signs of His coming to establish His kingdom on earth. They wanted to know when these things should come to pass. Christ gave them a rather lengthy answer and assured them that they did not have to be terrified about the dire

circumstances that would be sure to come to pass. He told them that *“nation would rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, that there would be great earthquakes, and famines, and pestilences...that Jerusalem would be surrounded by enemy armies...that there would be great distress among nations...men’s hearts failing for fear.”* Yes, there would be difficult times, filled with confusion and danger with seeming no way out. But true believers need not be distressed, but filled with hope, because it was the time of their redemption. All these t things would merely be setting the stage for the return of their King! In essence, these troubling circumstances should be a time for Christians to look up and lighten up, for it is time for Jesus to come!