

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of February 25, 2018

**THEME: "Warnings by the Apostles"
PERILOUS TIMES**

Sunday Read II Timothy 3:1-9

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." The apostle Paul alluded to the last days in the Church Age, and he gives to us a detailed description of the characteristics of that time. It is interesting that everyone of them is true of our own American culture, and is evident in the lives of so many. It may be worth noting just a few that are quite obvious in our changing society. One very damaging one to the traditional way of life in America is the disrespect for authority anywhere from the home to the community where there is an open display of hate for law enforcement people. When Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, used the terms *"without natural affection,"* is it possible that this was speaking of mothers having their babies in the womb being murdered? Is there any greater natural affection than a mother for her baby? Maybe in speaking of *"without natural affection,"* he was anticipating the general acceptance of the unnatural relationships of homosexual people which certainly goes against nature. One very obvious description of the day in which we are living in both domestic affairs as well as international affairs is *"trucebreaking."* We have seen the breakup of many marriages where people in their exchange of vows promised to be involved in a lifelong relationship. Peace treaties among nations have turned out to be anything but binding, but rather seem like a strategy to buy time to do evil things such as building nuclear arms. When we see stadiums filled to witness games and shows while church attendance seems to be diminishing is an obvious fulfillment of the prophesy that people would become *"lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."* A final one of special notice is a knowledge explosion devoid of God's truth mentioned as *"ever learning, but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth."* They are the God-given descriptions of the world preceding the return of our Savior. Be ready! Look up! The time is drawing near!

PRIDE

Monday Read Galatians 6:1-10

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness: considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." It is important for all believers to want to grow strong spiritually and become increasingly Christlike! As a matter of fact, that is the very reason that Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come to dwell within the bodies of all believers. By yielding to the indwelling Holy Spirit, the believer is empowered to live pure lives in a sin-corrupted world. To pursue spiritual growth is the admonition given by Peter in closing out his letters in II Peter 3:18: *"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."* Now there is a potential danger in becoming increasingly knowledgeable in the Word of God that we are given in I Corinthians 8:1: *"Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."* Our increased knowledge should equip us to live our lives in a more Christlike manner and put in a better position to fight the good fight of faith, not for bragging rights. The truly spiritually mature Christians are the most humble of people: that humility is powerful! A true test is in today's Bible reading: restoring a fallen brother is the goal of a truly spiritually strong person, minimizing the damage and getting back into the service of the king. There is no place for pride in serving our Savior. Humility is a major part of the makeup of a strong Christian. Meekness is strength; it enables a person to stay calm in the heat of battle; it is a key to victory to honor our Christ!

MENTAL DISCIPLINE

Tuesday Read Philippians 2:5-6

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." In this Biblical instruction, Christians are warned not to become proud and self-exalting. The best example of humility was our Savior, the Lord Jesus. The King of kings was above all a servant, always placing the needs of others as a high priority while living in what many today would call poverty. Just becoming a man was the epitome of humility, and then to allow the authorities to put Him on a cross in a

humiliating crucifixion was the lowest possible point He could reach. But He did it for me, and for you, and for all people because His shed blood satisfied God's law on our behalf. What a Savior!

HUMAN PHILOSOPHIES

Wednesday.....Read Colossians 2:6-8

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." There has always been a desire of people to explain the meaning of life apart from Divine revelation, from what we call ancient times even until today. The cause for that is that these philosophers refuse to allow themselves to believe what God, our Creator, has told us. Why anyone would think himself to be smarter than God is beyond me! In so doing, the people that do that have a tendency to belittle those who put their faith in the Holy Scriptures. I guess that makes them feel better; but what a shame if they do not allow themselves eventually to place their faith in God, because their unbelief will mean eternal damnation. I can't imagine how they will try to explain their unbelief to God at the final judgment. Some of the most famous philosophers were those who lived in ancient Greece. I love when Paul confronted them in the passage in Acts 17 when he noticed the inscription they had on an altar: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." To me, that is proof that they realized there was indeed a higher, more knowledgeable power than themselves, but they could not "reduce" themselves to believing the true and living God. Well, Paul shared with them Biblical truth, then, like those today, it was up to them. There is no true, reliable understanding apart from God's Divine revelation. All will some day realize that!

MENTAL DARKNESS

Thursday Read Ephesians 4:17-20

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind. Having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Is there anything worse than being alienated from God? I can't imagine! But that is the plight of all those who rest on human logic alone and discount Biblical truth, allowing their minds to remain in darkness. Just as he had done with the people in the church at Colosse, Paul did the same with believers in Ephesus. Remaining blind to God's truth is by far the worst mistake any human can make. It is particularly true in our own nation which was founded on the rock of Scripture by people who held Biblical truth in the highest of esteem, whether it be in the halls of government or in institutions of learning. I realize that one of the myths of the devil being spread in modern times is that many of these founders were deists: that God didn't get involved in earthly matters. That shows an ignorance of history, or at least a failure to read their speeches and writings. Just a look at some of our national monuments would disprove such a conclusion. But, what can you expect of blind minds?

MATERIAL WEALTH

Friday Read I Timothy 6:6-12

"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and with many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and gathered themselves together with many sorrows." Just as Jesus had warned about the pursuit of material wealth, so the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to do the same throughout his letters, as well as the apostle James in chapter five of his letter: *"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl! For your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are cankered: and the rust of them shall be a witness against you..."* So much evil in the world can be attributed to the quest for material wealth. That does not mean wealth in and of itself is wrong, but the *"love of money is the root of evil."* Praise God for those whom God can trust with material wealth, and who use it to further His work on our earth for His glory! But so often, gaining wealth causes some to make it their pursuit in life, which can be bad!

TRUE WEALTH

Saturday..... Read Hebrews 11:23-27

"Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of reward." Moses had it right! He had an open door to the riches of the all the wealth in Egypt, but he turned his back on it to serve the Most High God. Had he followed the worldly

course of materialism, we would not be reading about him today. He chose to follow the true and living God! He knew what real worth was! True wealth is that of which Paul advised young Timothy in I Timothy 6:6-8: *"Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us therewith be content."* That was the same theme he mentioned to the church at Philippi with these words in Philipians 4:11: *"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."* Our joy is in serving Christ, and the eternal reward is great!