

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of March 25, 2018

**THEME: "God's Promises to Israel"
THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY**

Sunday Read Mark 11:1-10

"And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna, Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord." I think it to be fitting to discuss God's promises to Israel on Palm Sunday because the Jewish people that led Jesus into Jerusalem that day were showing that they really took seriously the covenant that God made to King David centuries before. They demonstrated that they really believed that Jesus was the heir of David who was the prophesied Messiah and the eternal King. For that they should be highly commended. They so much wanted Jesus to take the throne in Jerusalem and bring the world under His rule. The only problem was that they were mistaken in their timing. God first had to replace the Old Covenant with the New Covenant that was prophesied. A lot of other things about the Messiah were prophesied, not the least of which was the mention of His crucifixion in Daniel 9:26: *"The Messiah would be cut off."* Jesus Himself told of the fact that He would be put to death and rise again the third day such as the time when He had announced that He would be building His Church in Matthew 16:18-21: *"I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it...From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."* It appears these comments about His dying didn't really sink in because they thought this entry into Jerusalem was to crown Jesus King!

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

Monday Read Genesis 12:1-3

"I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great: and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." God's promises to Israel begins with this covenant God made with Abraham. It would be in the line of Abraham that God would send a Redeemer to save man from eternal death as a result of sin. This would be the beginning of the nation of Israel, which even today is a focal point of world events. That nation called of God to be the one through which He would bring blessing to all the world is also the target of those opposed to God, along with her allies, which seems now to be reduced to one nation, the United States. Israel would be the nation into which Jesus would be born; the nation in which He would take the throne to rule the world in His second coming. It is interesting that our President at the time of their seeking UN approval to be recognized as an independent country back in 1948 was influenced by this portion of God's Word in declaring the support of the United States in backing their independence. It was President Truman's sense that to do so would incur God's blessing on our nation for so doing. What a joy that so many of our leaders in days past sought to honor God!

THE MOSAIC COVENANT

Tuesday Read Exodus 3:15-17

"And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." God made this covenant to Moses at the time that the Israelites had fallen into slavery in Egypt. God's chosen people of that day were subjected to hostile treatment, and God called out Moses to lead them to a promised land. Although skeptical at first because of his feelings of personal inadequacy, Moses finally agreed to do as God had planned. His faith in God's promise served him well. As we look back, we now see that the flight of the Israelites from Egypt through the Red Sea by a miraculous work of God and their journey through the wilderness is one of the most amazing events in all history. It was on that journey that God took Moses to the mount where He gave him the Ten Commandments. That list of commandments became the foundation for the laws of human government, most noticeably of which for us is the law on which our founders relied in coming up with our own Constitution. Even today, the Ten Commandments are posted above the chair

of the Chief Justice of our Supreme Court. It had been posted here there and everywhere in our nation until this move toward secularism during which time we have fallen away from the God in whom our founders placed their trust. Sad!

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

Wednesday Read II Samuel 7:16-18

"And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever." Through the prophet Nathan, God revealed to David that his throne in Jerusalem would be eternal. God promised David that his seed would be the eternal King to rule all the earth. The Jewish people held on to that promise, and eventually some saw Jesus to be the fulfillment of that promise and they were exactly right. Palm Sunday is a day we remember their celebration of that anticipation. Jesus was worthy, but their timing was off. Before the fulfillment of this Davidic covenant, God would first bring to pass a new covenant first to include Gentiles.

THE NEW COVENANT

Thursday Read Jeremiah 31:31-33

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." Here we see that the prophet was advising the nation of Israel that God would enter into a new covenant to replace the Old Covenant after the Old Covenant had accomplished its intended purpose. What was the purpose of the Old Covenant? The Old Covenant showed that humans cannot live up to God's law, but would fall short because it demands perfection. God is holy in all His ways! Anything short of that mars His fellowship with people. Being a loving God with a love that defies description, God wants reconciliation with all people. When Jesus said in John 3:16, that *"God so loved the world"* He was speaking of the people in the world. Consider what the apostle wrote in II Peter 3:9: *"The Lord is not slow concerning His promise...not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance."* All means everyone. The Old Covenant, which required total obedience, proved man could not live up to his end of the bargain, so God came up with a New Covenant, which required only His faithfulness. He had to, however, fulfill the law, or He would no longer be perfect. Sin had consequences and demanded punishment, which was death. Jesus would fulfill the law, so the new covenant would be based on the righteousness of Christ, who paid the penalty of sin for all people, the Savior of the world. The New Covenant requires only faith in Christ to be made right with God!

THE LAST SUPPER

Friday Read Matthew 26:26-30

"This is the blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Jesus used this Passover Feast as the occasion to inaugurate the New Covenant, the fulfillment of the Jeremiah prophecy. That which we call our Communion Service had its beginning right here. The emphasis was on the death of our Savior which was necessary for God to issue a Divine pardon to sinners; that covers the entire human race. Jesus was about to go to the cross, and His sacrifice would be the total fulfillment of God's law. The penalty of sin is death, the plight of all mankind. That death is the death of the soul, or an eternal death, total darkness forever in the hell prepared for the devil and his angels, as Jesus made clear in Matthew 25:41. Having been born of a virgin and spared the sin nature passed on to children at birth causing all people born of humans to have a dead spirit. Jesus went on to live a sinless life making His death a substitute for all sinners. The command Jesus gave at the Last Supper was that His followers should do this on a regular basis in remembrance of Him. Partaking of the unleavened bread is a reminder of the broken body suffered by our Savior, and the juice of the fruit of the vine symbolizes His shed blood, the payment for our sins. He became sin for us so we could be set free from the penalty by faith in Him. I think there is nothing more solemn than remembering our Savior at Communion.

THE MEDIATOR

Saturday Read Hebrews 12:22-24

"And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than Abel." The lesson we learn in today's Bible reading is that His blood was the final sacrifice for sin. Throughout the Old Testament, the priests were called upon to

sacrifice unblemished lambs to have God's forgiveness. Under the New Covenant, that is no longer necessary. As a matter of fact, the sacrifice of a Lamb to enter into worship with a Holy God began with the earth's first family. Remember that Abel's sacrifice of a lamb was acceptable worship; whereas, the offering of Cain was unacceptable. That all changed with the death of Christ! The blood of Jesus is the all-sufficient sacrifice! All those sacrifices during the days of the Old Covenant simply pointed toward the ultimate sacrificial Lamb, the Lord Jesus Himself, our Mediator!