

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of April 1, 2018
THEME: "All About Jesus: Our Resurrected Savior"
THE CRUCIFIXION

SundayRead John 19:17-19

"And He beareth His cross went forth into a place called the place of the skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: where they crucified Him, and two others with Him on either side, and Jesus in the middle." The crucifixion of the Lord Jesus may well be, from a human viewpoint, the most unfortunate demonstration of hate the world has ever seen and at the same time is arguably the greatest act of love in the history of the world. The people that called for His crucifixion hated Him because of His rightful claims of Deity and chose Barabbas, a common criminal, to be set free when given a choice by the Roman governor: the epitome of hate! How then could the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus be the greatest demonstration of love ever and that is exactly what it was, in my opinion? It was the ultimate proof of the love of God and the culmination of truth of John 3:16: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* God wanted reconciliation with man so badly that He was obviously willing to sacrifice His Son to accomplish that! Some would say that He could have simply forgiven them and let it go at that by maybe blaming the devil and not holding it against the sinners. That is not what a holy God who is perfectly righteous can do; that would amount to violating His own law which states that the penalty of sin is death. Jesus enabled God to forgive sinners by paying the penalty of sin on their behalf as a substitute for them. By His shedding His blood and dying, even though sinless, God could accept His sacrifice as fulfillment of His law and maintain His holiness and perfect system of justice! He pardons all who confess sin and receive Jesus as Savior! Then Jesus conquered death with a glorious resurrection assuring us of eternal life! Easter Sunday is a great day of celebration!

THE RESURRECTION

Monday Read Matthew 28:1-6

"And the angel answered and said unto the woman, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." Whereas the crucifixion is the epitome of hate and at the same time the epitome of love, the resurrection is the greatest victory in history: the victory over death and the grave. All who have accepted Christ as Savior and are the beneficiaries of God's Divine, eternal pardon can join Paul in what he said in I Corinthians 15:55-57: *"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."* I like one of the things the angel said: *"...just like He said."* Our God is thoughtful enough to tell us ahead of time what His plans are. Jesus had mentioned a few times that He would die and rise from the dead on the third day. But that seemed to go over the head of His people. Otherwise, I think there would have been a huge crowd at the tomb that Sunday morning awaiting this amazing promise to happen. Look, the promises of God in the Bible are true! God is faithful! That is particularly well to remember today when we see things happening that God said would happen at the time when Jesus' coming again is nearing. That's right! In the past 100 years since 1918, things really kicked into gear to set the stage for the return of Christ with the door being opened for the Jews to return to their homeland. And 70 years ago in 1948, they were recognized as an independent nation! Let us be looking up!

THE VISIT

Tuesday Read Mark 16:1-9

"And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the front of the sepulchre?" I might say that the visit to the tomb of Jesus by the women might well be the greatest surprise in all of history: make that the greatest shock! Imagine the women who came to the grave to show their respects only to find that the tomb was empty.

The resurrection account in Mark gives an interesting detail that is worth our notice. It demonstrates how God will help in times when His people think things to be impossible. I like that the women moved ahead without an answer about moving the stone; that is faith! God honored their faith! When they got there the stone had been rolled away! Surprise! And then, the body wasn't there. But Jesus did show up to speak with Mary Magdalene. Yes, God will show up at the exact right time! Worry not!

THE APPEARANCE

Wednesday.....Read John 20:20-29

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." In His goodness, Jesus probably figured that the witness of the women that they had seen Jesus may not be convincing, so Jesus took things into His own hands and showed up at a little get together of His followers. They had met together out of fear, probably figuring that they may well be next in line. The might have concluded that the authorities who had, in their opinion, gotten rid of Jesus, would now come after His followers. Maybe they should get together and discuss what they should do. I can only imagine what they may have been discussing when all of a sudden Jesus appeared in the midst of them. He did not knock, and it appears did not even bother them to go to the trouble of opening the door for them. He simply showed up. Why? To put their minds at ease, and He came at another time all for the benefit of Thomas who was having a hard time being convinced. Lovingly, Jesus did not resent his doubts, but actually went out of His way to convince Thomas. Is our Savior not wonderful? Should not we be the same?

THE ASCENSION

ThursdayRead Acts 1:6-9

"And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight." I think it worth our while to pay close attention to the final words of Jesus before He left to go home to heaven. Just what did He say as final instructions to His people. Well, first He responded to a question: *"Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"* To them, that is why He came! That was the promise to David! Why would He not take the throne now? Hey, don't all of us get ahead of God? Well, Jesus told them, in essence, be patient; that will happen in our Father's perfect timing. Another thing of note is that He told His people, which is us today, that they were to be His witnesses, not only in Jerusalem, but around the whole world. That includes the United States, which did not even exist then; but God knew it would, and He did some amazing things to make that happen. And one other thing, He told them not to leave Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father about which He had told them. I think He was speaking of the fact that the Holy Spirit would come to indwell them and guide them. He then was taken up in the clouds while they watched, another amazing event. They got together and prayed!

MEDIATION

FridayRead I Timothy 2:5-6

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." What is Jesus, our resurrected Savior, doing now? The Holy Spirit has indeed come to earth to indwell the bodies of believers to be the light of their world and to work in and through and with them to show God's love, and to share God's truth with people in a world that is lost in darkness. That is quite a responsibility, and Jesus knows that! He was on this earth and met with a lot of resistance and opposition. He know that the forces of evil and the rulers of darkness are very active. He knows we are in spiritual warfare. Knowing that by having experienced it, Jesus can empathize with all we are experiencing. So what is He doing? He is at the right hand of God interceding for us. We pray for each other as we are working together in resisting the darkness of this world. Jesus know how tough it can be, so He is twenty four seven remembering us right there at the throne in heaven. If you ever get feeling down and defeated, think about that: our Savior is our mediator! That is better than having the best lawyer in the world pleading your case before the Supreme Judge! Our Savior loves us enough that He went to the cross for us and is now interceding for us.

THE CORONATION

Saturday.....Read Revelation 19:11-16

"And on His thigh was written KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." What is next on God's calendar for His Son. God the Son was there at the creation. He came for a time on earth and ended

up on the cross at Calvary and spent a little time in the tomb. He arose from the grave and spent another month or so visiting here and there; and then went back to heaven. As He promised, and what we read so many places in Scriptures, He is going to return! He is going to come back as the Captain of the heavenly army to deliver Israel from the invading armies at Armageddon after the ugliest seven years in human history. Yes, He will take the throne of David in Jerusalem like those people were expecting on Palm Sunday, and then He will be crowned the King of kings and rule for a thousand years. How exciting! But the good news is that Christians will not have to wait for His return to earth. We are told in I Thessalonians 4 that Jesus is going to appear in the air to take the Church home to heaven and spare them from the wrath of God and the rule of the Antichrist. That is the next thing on God's calendar. Listen for the trumpet! We'll be heading home!