

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of December 23, 2018

THEME: "Ministry of Our Savior" INCARNATION OF GOD THE SON

SundayRead Luke 2:11-20

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." The birth of the Lord Jesus was very unique for many reasons, unlike the birth of any other human being. The fact that Jesus was a virgin born baby makes Him stand alone. That means that He was given a human nature and physical body, but yet was immune to the condemnation that is on the shoulders of all humans born of man and woman because of the sin of Adam and Eve. Babies from human parents are born with a sin nature and dead spirit as we read in Romans 5:18: ". Another reason that makes the birth of our Savior unique is that it was not His beginning, it was merely the beginning of His humanity with a human body, an incarnation. That incarnation is addressed this way by the apostle in John 1:14: *"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."* That begs the question: who is referred to as the Word who became flesh? The first thirteen verses of that first chapter of the Gospel of John gives some details: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made...that was the True Light...He came unto His own, but His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."* Jesus was born into this world to become a human being so all who would enter into a personal relationship with Him could be in God's family. He is indeed the Savior!

SINLESS SAVIOR

MondayRead Hebrews 4:12-16

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." We have one of the explanations of Jesus for His coming into the world as a human being in Matthew 6:17: *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill."* The law of God firmly states that the penalty for sin is death, death of the body, soul, and spirit. Since man was made in the image of God, man is eternal with an eternal destination. God wants people in heaven for eternity; hell was made as the eternal abode of the devil. God had warned Adam that sin by eating of the forbidden would mean death. The devil duped the earth's first human into sinning meaning that all humans were condemned to eternal death. That is the law of God. The prophets spoke of the coming of a Messiah who would become the King of kings to take the eternal throne of David. Christ is that Messiah who would fulfill the law and the prophets. To fulfill the law means that He would have to be sinless and to die the death of a sinner. We see in today's Bible reading that He did live a sinless life, able to resist all the temptations that human experience. As a sinless human being, His blood was the blood of an innocent Lamb, using the metaphor describing the Old Testament sacrifice acceptable to God for the forgiveness of sin. That law of God's forgiveness is clearly stated in Leviticus 17:11: *"It is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul."* It has to be the blood of a spotless lamb.

THE LAMB OF GOD

TuesdayRead John 1:28-34

"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Throughout the Old Testament we see that the blood of a spotless Lamb was the key to having God's forgiveness. Perhaps the best know of all of the Old Testament examples is what is referred to as the passover lamb. One of the most celebrated of the Jewish feasts is the Passover that brings to mind the miraculous delivery on the Jewish people from their bondage in Egypt. It was on that night that the death angel would hover over Egypt and strike dead the firstborn in every home that did not have the blood of a spotless lamb on the door posts and lintels. God had given that warning in Exodus 12:12-14: *"I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast: and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you a token upon the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be a memorial unto you; and ye shall keep a feast to the Lord throughout your generations."* All those sacrificial lambs

were types of the coming Christ, the eternal Lamb of God. When He sacrificed His blood on Calvary, the law of God was totally satisfied! Never again would a lamb have to be slain. His blood paid it all. He is indeed the Savior of the world!

SAVIOR'S TRIAL

WednesdayRead John 18:33-37

"Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto Him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world." The Jewish people, including those who were His followers, were looking for their Messiah to be the promised King who would bring worldwide dominance to Israel. They had welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem in what has become known as a triumphal entry. It actually is just that although in a different sense from the what the celebrants had in mind. Jesus would actually accomplish the greatest triumph of all with a victory over the ultimate enemy of man: victory over death. But first He would have to die in order to conquer death. It is interesting that in His trial before being sentenced to be crucified that the trial judge referred to Him, as we see in today's Bible reading, as the King of the Jews. Yes, He is the coming King!

RISEN SAVIOR

ThursdayRead Luke 24:1-6

"He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spake unto you when He was in Galilee?" It is with this glorious resurrection that Jesus had accomplished the purpose for which He had come to earth in this appearing. Remember the angel had announced to the shepherds: *"For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior which is Christ the Lord."* That is the news that God wants all people to know, and that is what the angel had made clear on that heavenly visit to the shepherds: *"Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."* Although not recognized by most people to their dismay and eternal destruction, He came to be their Savior to give them victory over death and a pardon from the sentence of eternal condemnation in hell that was prepared for the devil and his angels. Jesus, as the angel reminded those who had come to His tomb to show their respects, had told His followers that He would rise from the dead on the third day. Recall that Jesus had said while dying on the cross: *"It is finished."* He was not talking about the end of His life because He is eternal. What was finished was His earthly mission as the Lamb of God. His resurrection opened the door to the Church Age. The Church Age, in which we are now living will end with the appearing of Christ in the air to take believers to heaven. The earth will then have a seven year tribulation of God's judgment and the rule of the Antichrist. Jesus will then return as the King of kings!

ADVANCED NOTICE

FridayRead Daniel 9:24-25

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon the holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy." God used the prophet Daniel to give an overview of the future of both the whole earth in Daniel 2 and His chosen nation of Israel in chapter nine. The prophecy on the future of the world pointed out that the final worldwide kingdom illustrated by the huge stone that would destroy the image would be an eternal kingdom; and the prophecy on the future of Israel mentioned a period of four hundred ninety years with a gap between the first four hundred eighty three years and the final seven years that would end with the anointing of the Most Holy One. Both of these, the history of the world and the history of Israel end with a powerful eternal kingdom; obviously, this is the kingdom over which Jesus reigns.

COMING KING

SaturdayRead Revelation 19:11-15

"And He had on His vesture and on His thigh written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." In this Bible reading for today, we see the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecies. It is the scene of Christ's return. He had appeared in the air seven years before to take His Church to heaven and the earth had experienced a time of trouble with the rule of the Antichrist and the pouring out of the righteous wrath of a Holy God. The nations of the world had gathered to bring to pass the threats we are hearing even now about their desire to wipe Israel off the face of the earth. When it appears as though that could be imminent, heaven opens up and Jesus with His army comes to earth, and the armies of the nations are instantly defeated by the power of His word. He then is crowned King of kings and Lord of lords!