

**DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of January 27, 2019**

**THEME: "His Appearing"**

**THE TIMES AND SEASONS**

**Sunday ..... Read I Thessalonians 5:1-11**

*"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night."* We know from what we read in this passage in I Thessalonians that God has a calendar where He has a list of important events. He had alerted the Jewish people through the prophet Jeremiah to details about their time in captivity to the very year, and then to the timing of the coming of the Messiah through the prophet Daniel. He mentioned that the Messiah would be "cut off" in 483 years after they were given the green light to return to Jerusalem. In today's Bible reading, Jesus makes reference to His return that will begin the "day of the Lord." He did not reveal the exact date although the prophet Daniel stated that there would be 7 years after the gap in revealed times was complete. We now know that the gap is the Church Age that will end with the appearing of Christ in the air as detailed in I Thessalonians 4:13-18. God has not revealed the date of that return although Jesus in Acts 1:7 indicated that is on God's calendar: *"And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power."* God has given the signs of the end times ushering in the return of Christ to take the throne of David in Jerusalem, but without giving specific dates. Jesus also told us to be ready and waiting at all times for His return in Matthew 24:44: *"Therefore be ye ready: for in such hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."* Yes, God has the date set in heaven! Let us be ready!

**SAVIOR'S STATEMENT**

**Monday ..... Read John 14:1-6**

*"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."* While speaking with His disciples, Jesus gave them some shocking news: He told them that He would be leaving them. This was very troubling to them in that they had pretty much left all to follow Him and now they hear He is leaving! Obviously that led to a lot of questions. Peter's initial response was this in John 13:36-38: *"Lord, where are you going? Why cannot I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."* Jesus went on to give His disciple the big picture, the long range goal. He had used the three years of His public ministry to train them for what He would have them to do, namely the building of the Church of which He had previously spoken recorded in Matthew 16:18: *"I will build my church."* Jesus was now going to leave that business into the hands of His apostles and then as time went on to all who would follow Him as their Lord. In the meantime, while His followers were doing all they could to build the Church, he would be in heaven preparing a place for His people. I might add that He would be watching from His position in heaven and actually interceding with our Heavenly Father on our behalf. I know that from Hebrews 7:25: *"He ever liveth to make intercession for them."* After mentioning that He would be leaving and why He was leaving, He made a wonderful promise: *"I will come again, and receive you unto myself."* When? We do not know when, but we know He is coming! We do know from Biblical instruction that before returning to earth to take the throne of David in Jerusalem, He will appear in the air to prevent His true Church from living on earth under the rule of the Antichrist and suffering the wrath of God's judgment on earth. Seven years after receiving His followers into His Father's house, He will bring us all back to earth.

**SAVIOR'S PLACE**

**Tuesday ..... Read Romans 8:28-34**

*"It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God making intercession for us."* Although Jesus left earth and entrusted His followers to finish the task of building His Church, He is keeping His eye on the progress. Not only is He watching, He is constantly interceding with our Heavenly Father on our behalf. For what is Jesus asking on our behalf? Well, I think, the answer is in John 17, which records His intercessory prayer while He was still on earth. The first thing He asked God to do for His people was to keep them unified: *"That they may be one."* He went on to ask God to provide them with the same joy that He has. Jesus asked God, and still is, to keep His people protected from the evil in the world. He is asking our Heavenly Father to help us apply the truth of the Scriptures to our lives. He then went on to repeat five times that His people would stay unified: five times! I feel certain that what He asked for His people while He was here on earth is what He is asking God now for our blessing and

benefit. Should we not be determined that His prayers be answered? That prayer was for His followers then and for *"those who will believe."* He is praying that we have joy, that we are guarded from the evil, that we follow the Scriptures, that we have unity!

### **BELIEVERS' ANTICIPATION**

**Wednesday ..... Read Titus 2:11-15**

*"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."* A real motivation for living the Christian life is our anticipation of Jesus' appearing in the air to take us to be with Him forever. Yes, Jesus will do as He said and will *"come again and receive us unto Himself."* I have to believe He wants to be with us as much as we want to be with Him. Not only do we get to be in the very presence of our Savior, but we will be involved in some of the great events when we get there. We read of one in Revelation 19:9: *"Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."* I guess we would call that our wedding reception to celebrate our marriage to Christ. These are spiritual identifications, not physical. This is *agape* love, not *eros* love; a divine love, not physical love. We become part of the Bride of Christ the moment we receive Christ. As Christians we are both the bride of Christ and joint-heirs with Christ in the family of God, brothers and sisters in Christ. Spiritually speaking, we have the best of all worlds. Right now, we are living here on earth as God's children. When the Church is complete, we will as the Bride of Christ be moving into His Father's residence. Anticipating His return to take us to His home is parallel to the anticipation of a bride for her wedding, at which time she will be the wife of her husband. Christians are specifically called the wife in Revelation 21:9: *"Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."*

### **BELIEVERS' INCENTIVE**

**Thursday ..... Read Philipians 1:20-26**

*"For me to live is Christ."* Jesus is our primary reason for living on God's earth. The ultimate for Christians is to be in our eternal home in heaven, but the timing for that is God's decision. While on earth, our incentive is to be faithful to Christ, our Lord and Savior. The specific instructions from Christ in Matthew 5:13-16 is that we are to be *"the salt of the earth and the light of the world."* Salt fights off decay, and light penetrates the darkness. To be the salt of the earth means that believers are compelled to live pure lives, avoiding the social contaminants in a society. Living for Christ means living a pure life with the highest of moral standards, the standards of the Bible: some of the most important are included in the Ten Commandments. No wonder the devil has worked so hard to rid the American culture of the public display of them. Living for Christ as a light in our world means to live according to the light provided in the Bible and to share the truth of God when given the opportunity. Staying pure in conduct and preventing things that would block the light is living for Christ. Such living will cause others to read us to be different from cultural norms. Living for Christ means the Bible preempts political and social correctness. Living for Christ means honoring Him is our highest priority!

### **BELIEVERS' PREPARATION**

**Friday ..... Read I John 2:28-29**

*"And now, little children, abide in Him, that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."* Since we do not know the time of Jesus' appearing in the air, we should be ready all the time. How do we stay prepared? I think that our daily lives should demonstrate that we are ready at any time and all the time. Being ready for His coming means I should never be involved in anything in my daily life that would be shameful if Jesus were to show up. I think we try to be on our best behavior when we are around other people so as not to be embarrassed. There are things we would avoid saying or doing in the company of others. How much more should we be concerned if Jesus were to walk in! Would my habits in selecting television programs be appropriate if Jesus were to drop by? Are the places where I go in my leisure time for social and recreational pleasure places where I would not want to take Jesus with me for company? As we anticipate the coming of our Lord, it may be well to ask ourselves if there is anything that for which we would be ashamed. This is a good test for decision making for where we will go and what we will do.

### **BELIEVERS' SEPARATION**

**Saturday ..... Read II Corinthians 6:14-18**

*"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord."* This command to stay separate from the world is not a contradiction to the command of our Lord in Mark 16:15 to *"Go into the world."* Being separate is obeying the specific instructions in Romans 12:1 and I John 2:15: *"Be not conformed to the world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world."* When Jesus told us to go into the world, it is so we can be a light in the world in which we live and bring the truth of the gospel so people can be set free from the darkness of the world and from the power of sin that is so prevalent in the world. We are citizens of heaven and His ambassadors in our world. Our eternal home is heaven! We are pilgrims on earth!