

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of March 31, 2019

**THEME: "Questions People Asked: When?"
COMING OF CHRIST**

Sunday Read Matthew 24:42-44

"Therefore be ye also ready; for is such an hour as ye think not that Son of man cometh."

The kingdom of God is a common theme throughout the Bible, from the time that God made a covenant with Abram recorded in Genesis 12 to the last chapter in Revelation 22. The Old Testament prophets before the birth of Christ spoke of a Messiah to take the throne of David in Jerusalem. The wise men from the East who came to Jerusalem came to worship the King of the Jews. Throughout His earthly ministry, the disciples often asked Jesus when He would establish His kingdom. Just before His crucifixion, His followers gave Jesus a Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem in what they thought would be the coronation of a King. At His trial before the Roman governor, Pilate decreed that there be placed an inscription King of the Jews on His cross. His kingdom is an established fact, but the timing is the key. The question the Pharisees asked in Luke 17:20 is still pertinent: *"And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come."* Jesus, as we read in today's Scripture reading in Matthew 24, implored people to be ready for His coming, mentioning that the timing was still a mystery to all but God Himself. The timing of His first advent was coming to an end. Jesus wanted people to be ready for His next coming, which would be as the Lion of Judah rather than the Lamb of God, the purpose of His first coming. That was essential for people to be ready for His next appearing because the sin problem had to be fixed to prepare people for God's holy kingdom. The only fix was for citizens of the coming kingdom to be cleansed from sin, something that could be done only by the blood of Christ as mentioned in I John 1:7: *"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin."* Being ready first and foremost means to have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus, which happens immediately upon a person confessing sin and receiving Jesus as personal Savior! Are you ready?

FACTIONAL RIVALRIES

Monday Read Matthew 24:6-7

"And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled, for all these things must come to pass...For nation shall rise against nation...and kingdom against kingdom." On this occasion when His disciples questioned Him about the timing of His return as King that would end the Age of Man as world rulers, His response was to give them some of the signs rather than give a direct time that is known only by the Father as mentioned in Acts 1:7. Among those signs Jesus gave were the intensified battles and wars among the various factions of people within nations and among nations. Although those skirmishes have been common ever since the world was populated and divided into factions and nations, we are now seeing these battles increasing at an alarming rate, both among the nations of the world and surely within our own nation. The political strife between Democrats and Republicans demonstrates hostility that is beyond reason. What the Democrats advocated on border security ten years ago they are now opposing because it has been proposed by the Republicans, defying all common sense. The rise of terrorism has caused international strife among nations between those trying to pacify terrorists and those wanting to confront the terrorists. We are constantly hearing of wars and rumors of wars, just as Jesus described. That is a brief description of the political strife. How about the social and cultural strife: racial and religious and economic status. Are not such descriptives as "racism" and "white supremacy" almost always in the daily news? The last days?

CULTURAL HATE

Tuesday Read Matthew 24:9-10

"...and ye shall be hated of all nations for my names sake." Never have we witnessed such hate within our nation as now. In times past, there were always disagreements, but before it seems as though leaders were looking for ways to come together; now it seems that too many leaders are unwilling to work together and are allowing their disagreements to cause them to spit hate toward those with a different viewpoint. The most obvious hate that has now hit the halls of Congress is the direct hate expressed against Jewish people that was not directly condemned by leadership; and that was followed by the House leader taking a shot at true Christians. So we are seeing a tremendous rise in expressing hate toward Jews and Christians, not only by the Moslem nations around the world, but now here in our own nation. Our beloved nation, founded on Biblical principles and mightily blessed by God, has been on a downward slide from faith in God and His

Word ever since the removal of daily reading of the Bible from public schools in 1963. The violence that is now acceptable in public protests indicates that hate is apparently endorsed as an appropriate way to express disagreement. So sad!

LOSS OF NATURAL AFFECTION

Wednesday Read II Timothy 3:1-3

"In the last days perilous times will come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers false accusers..." This, unfortunately, sounds like a pretty accurate description of the culture in which we now live in the United States of America. It was not always that way. When the United States considered the Bible to be the basis for law and for education, we had a different culture from what we have now when we look to human leaders to determine right from wrong and good from bad. The results are what we read in today's Bible reading. A close look at the list of descriptions will demonstrate that much points toward the home and family: spouse relationships commencing with the marriage vows, attitudes of children toward parents, the natural affection of a mother and her baby. It is hard to imagine a mother wanting to terminate her baby's life, and then have a government accommodating such a thing! Without that Biblical absolute on morality, our culture has become amoral as evidence by recent government decisions in our land to kill babies, not only in the womb of the mother, but even after delivery. That is barbaric, the epitome of hate! The acceptance of homosexuality as an appropriate lifestyle in another example of *"without natural affection."* Trying to correct a person with those tendencies is showing love for a person by getting them to be what our loving God made them to be; surely not hate as the new culture would have people to believe. Encouraging them to oppose the work of God that they are is actually more a demonstration of hate.

INFORMATION EXPLOSION

Thursday Read II Timothy 3:4-7

"Ever learning, but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth." There can be no doubt that this computer age has brought access to knowledge more than any other time in history. So much information is available instantly on a cell phone. People are carrying around in their pockets information previously limited to huge volumes of encyclopedias. The internet has opened the doors of sharing information unheard of in times gone by. The sad thing is that with all this knowledge, there is an ever increasing scarcity of the knowledge of real truth, from the origin of man to the purpose of man. That information can be retrieved only from the Bible, yet court decisions have minimized its spread to the public. The big picture from a spiritual viewpoint is that the devil is trying to minimize attention to God, his enemy. That is the ongoing battle in the world that will end when Jesus returns and incarcerates the devil. Jesus warned in John 8:44 that the devil is the *"father of lies."* In those remarks recorded in John 8, Jesus describes people who perpetuate those lies as *"children of the devil."* It is the devil who is trying to hide God's truth and people who do so are his agents! Truth: open the Bible!

END OF THE CHURCH AGE

Friday Read Revelation 1:1-5

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him to show unto His servant things which must shortly come to pass, and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John." Back in Daniel 9, the Holy Spirit through the prophet Daniel alluded to the Church Age as an interim period during which Christ would work through a spiritual nation other than His chosen nation of Israel. The day is coming when Israel will be the focus for a period of seven years to complete the 490 years of Israeli history of which Daniel spoke. He mentioned the Messiah's crucifixion after 483 years from the return of the Jews from captivity to rebuild Jerusalem. All of that has occurred, and we are living in what we now know to be the Church Age that will end with the Rapture of the Church, opening the door for that seven year rule of the antichrist and the attempted obliteration of Israel. At the end of the seven years when the nations will have gathered at Armageddon, Jesus will return with His people as King of kings and Lord of lords to take the throne of David and rule the world for a thousand years.

FAITHFUL REMNANT

Saturday Read Revelation 3:7-13

"Because you have kept the word of my patience, I will also keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." God used John to detail the Church Age by recording the messages to seven churches existing at that time. They give believers an idea of those things that please God and those that disappoint God. At the same time, they are a prophetic look at the entire Church Age up to the time of the tribulation. We can see that by the references to the tribulation and the return of Christ in Revelation 2:22, 3:3, and 3:12. In the letter to the church at Philadelphia, Jesus pointed out that there will be a faithful remnant in the realm of Christianity that stays true to the Scripture as opposed to professing Christians who have deviated. It is those Christians who will be caught away when Christ appears in the air to usher in the Tribulation.