

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of November 1, 2020

**THEME: "The Foundation of the Church"
THE FOUNDATION**

Sunday Read Ephesians 3:1-10

"And to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realm." The real author of human history is God Himself! He is the Creator of the earth and all that is therein as detailed in Genesis 1, and He placed man on earth to manage His earth. That is history. Human writers have written much about their version of the ages of man, and that provides some very interesting and valuable information, but is subject to error. They have divided history into various division including such times as the Prehistoric Age, the Age of the Emperors, the Middle Ages, the Dark Age, and the Modern Age. God has divided time in a different manner, including such periods as the Patriarchal Age, the Kingdom of Israel, the current Church Age, the coming Period of Tribulation to be followed by the Millennial Reign of Christ, and then the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. God's account is the one in which we should be most aware in that He tells us what is coming as well as what has already occurred. That way we can be prepared! It is especially important we understand the Church Age in that is where God has placed us. It appears, from Biblical prophecy, that we are nearing the end of the Church Age in that many of the signs of the end of the age are now in the current news. No one knows the day or the hour, but it is important that we be ready, and as our Savior commanded in Luke 19:13: *"Occupy till I come."* Stay busy.

A NEW ENTITY

Monday Read Matthew 16:18-20

"I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." In this discussion with His disciples recorded in the gospel of Matthew, Jesus announced the coming of the Church Age, a new entity in God's plan for His earth. The disciples did not have a full understanding of what Jesus was speaking because they still anticipated His taking the throne of David to restore the kingdom of Israel. God actually had made reference to the Church Age through the prophet Daniel in chapter nine where he spoke of a gap of time between the crucifixion of the Messiah and the restoration of the Kingdom. In that same prophecy, God revealed that there would be a seven year period which we now know from the book of Revelation to be the Tribulation. Is the building of the Church near completion? How many souls are yet to be saved? Time will tell!

COMING OF THE SPIRIT

Tuesday Read Acts 2:2-5

"Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." This event is the beginning of the Church Age. It is the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus in John 13, where He said that the Holy Spirit would come to earth after He went back to heaven. Jesus had accomplished the purpose of His first advent, and it was now time to build the church to be made up of people from all nations: Jews and Gentiles alike. The Holy Spirit came to indwell the bodies of all believers to empower them to do the work of

God. It began there in Jerusalem with the amazing reality of people of all languages being able to understand the gospel message. Many came to faith in Christ and the Church Age had its start.

APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS

WednesdayRead Acts 1:24-26

"They gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles." The primary purpose of the church is to proclaim the truth of God and engage with God in prayer. Christ is the Head of the Church and He is relying on Elders to assure this is being done. That requires fervent and consistent prayer! By consistently approaching the throne of God in heaven, we can discern His will for His church. The lifestyle of each Elder should be exemplary, a Spirit-filled life. Since there are so many needs of the body of believers other than spiritual, God's plan is to have others meet those needs so the ministries of teaching and prayer are not neglected. As a result, the office of Deacons was introduced to assume that responsibility. Together, with Elders and Deacons, the church has responsible leadership to attend to the flock of believers.

APPOINTMENT OF DEACONS

ThursdayRead Acts 6:1-4

"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." It is the responsibility of the Deacons in a local assembly to attend to the church's material needs. To have an effective teaching ministry requires a facility, supplies and equipment. That means having a responsible budget and adherence to that budget, with the full realization that our God will provide for the unexpected because nothing comes as a surprise to our Father in heaven. Notice the qualities God mentions for Deacons: honesty, Spirit-filled, and wisdom. It is incumbent on every Deacon to maintain a Spirit-filled lifestyle and to be efficient in determining appropriate material needs to enhance the ministry in attending the flock of believers in that local church. Prayer obviously is the key to all of that!

CHURCH UNIVERSAL

FridayRead Acts 8:1-4

"Therefore they that were scattered abroad and went everywhere preaching the word." Here is a perfect example of God's using the bad for good, just as He promises in Romans 8:28: *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."* The religious and political leaders in Jerusalem, who had ordered the crucifixion of Jesus, did not take kindly to the message of His disciples. They were determined to extinguish it, and a wave of persecution followed. Stephen, one of the Deacons in Jerusalem, was martyred; and a scattering of people of "The Way" followed. Our sovereign God used this terrible persecution to fulfill the final command of our Lord to be *"His witnesses in all Judaea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth."* The Christian Church became a universal church with local assemblies sprouting up all around the known world, a truly Catholic (universal) Church.

SEVEN MESSUAGES

Saturday.....Read Revelation 1:20

"The seven stars are the seven angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks that thou sawest are the seven churches." The book of Revelation begins with a couple of chapters addressing seven of the churches at that time. The letters

detailed some of the things that pleased God about these local churches, and some things that disappointed Him. It appears, looking back, that they are also prophetic in that they describe what has occurred in the Church Age right up to the lukewarmness of the last church mentioned, an apt description of some churches in the last days. Praise God for those who have kept the faith as mentioned in the letter to the Philadelphia Church. The last four letters seem to have a description of church conditions up to the time of the Rapture that begins the fourth chapter of this final book in the Bible.