

Devotions Jan. 4 – 9, 2010

Monday, Jan 4

Scripture to read:

Matthew 28:16-20
Mark 16:15-18

Thoughts to consider:

Although both Matthew and Mark give the Great Commission, most scholars think that these are two different occasions. Probably on each occasion. the apostles, who were now convinced of His resurrection, would have asked, "What shall we do now?" We have here Jesus' program of missions, "make disciples of all nations." It involves three steps: 1) go; 2) baptizing them; 3) teaching them to obey everything Christ has commanded. Since this commission was given almost 2000 years ago, why haven't we made disciples of all nations? Have you been a helper or a hindrance?

Tuesday, Jan 5

Scripture to read:

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Thoughts to consider:

We cannot be sure how many post-resurrection appearances Jesus made. The gospel writers vary in their listings and in our passage today we see two more appearances. The James listed here is in addition to the apostles. This is James, the half-brother of Jesus, son of Joseph and Mary. He did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah before the resurrection. Later he became one of the prominent leaders in the Jerusalem church. The appearance to Paul was much later. He did not qualify as one of the Twelve as he had not lived with Jesus. This appearance was a very special one for one who would be "the apostle to the Gentiles." These appearances were sufficient to convince the apostles and other disciples that Jesus had conquered death. They devoted their lives to the spreading of the good news. They even braved death as martyrs. Are you convinced of this truthfulness of Jesus' resurrection? Enough for you to reconfirm your faith in this Christian doctrine?

Wednesday, Jan 6

Scripture to read:

Luke 24:44-49

Thoughts to consider:

There was widespread belief among the Jews that a Messiah was coming who would be a powerful earthly leader. It was held that He would expel the enemies of Israel and establish a mighty earthly kingdom. The apostles had been with Jesus for over three years. They had heard Him teach concerning the nature of the kingdom. They still couldn't free their minds of this worldly concept. It is not sufficient to simply believe in the crucifixion and resurrection. There is a necessary human response (repentance) and the resulting benefit (forgiveness). One reason we have so many different churches is that people have preconceived ideas about baptism, end times etc. Pray that we may all believe and understand the simple teachings of the Scriptures.

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Thursday, Jan 7
Scripture to read:
Acts 1:3-8

Thoughts to consider:

Perhaps Luke 24:49-52 is a parallel passage to Acts 1:3-12. Of course, Luke wrote both books. This describes what happened forty days after Jesus' resurrection. Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit would be fulfilled ten days later on the Day of Pentecost. Verse 8 is a virtual outline of Acts: the apostles first witnessed in Jerusalem, then Judea and Samaria, later in Caesarea, Antioch, Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome. We, today, are to witness in the same manner: our local area, surrounding areas, and to the far-flung reaches of the earth. What is our congregation (ESCC) doing to fulfill this? What are you personally doing? We are Christ's ambassadors. We dare not drop the baton and disobey His command.

Friday, Jan 8
Scripture to read:
Mark 16:19, 20
Luke 24:50-53
Acts 1:9-12

Thoughts to consider:

At Jesus' ascension we are told that "he lifted up his hands and blessed them." It must have been a beautiful and touching scene, one never forgotten by the apostles. Whether He was "carried up," "received up," or "taken up" to Heaven does not really matter, a cloud received Him out of the sight of the apostles. The angels said that Jesus will return to earth "in like manner." That will be one cloud we will all be glad to see! The apostles stayed continually at the temple, praising God. We do not meet as a body every day but, when we do, we should praise God with great joy.

Saturday, Jan 9
Scripture to read:
John 21:24, 25

Thoughts to consider:

Testimony is the keyword in these verses. John, the apostle was the author of this gospel. He had been with Jesus from the time of his call by the seashore. He had witnessed Jesus' miracles and teachings. It was he whom Jesus asked to care for His mother. He went into the empty tomb. He was present at several of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances. John was a creditable witness and author. He did not write all of Jesus' deeds and words. He was selective. Our historical knowledge of Jesus is partial; however we have been given all we need to know in order to believe. What will you do with this knowledge? Perhaps one of your resolutions for 2010 is to be available to serve in whatever capacity you might be asked.

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