

Readings for May 2019

Sunday 5th May

Acts 9:1-6

Saul kept on threatening to kill the Lord's followers. He even went to the high priest and asked for letters to the Jewish leaders in Damascus. He did this because he wanted to arrest and take to Jerusalem any man or woman who had accepted the Lord's Way. When Saul had almost reached Damascus, a bright light from heaven suddenly flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice that said, "Saul! Saul! Why are you so cruel to me?"

"Who are you?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus," the Lord answered. "I am the one you are so cruel to. Now get up and go into the city, where you will be told what to do."

Revelation 5:11-14

As I looked, I heard the voices of a lot of angels around the throne and the voices of the living creatures and of the elders. There were millions and millions of them, and they were saying in a loud voice,

"The Lamb who was killed
is worthy to receive power,
riches, wisdom, strength,
honour, glory, and praise."

Then I heard all beings in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and in the sea offer praise. Together, all of them were saying,

"Praise, honour, glory,
and strength
forever and ever

to the one who sits
on the throne
and to the Lamb!"

The four living creatures said "Amen," while the elders knelt down and worshiped.

John 21:1-19

Jesus later appeared to his disciples along the shore of Lake Tiberias. Simon Peter, Thomas the Twin, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, and the brothers James and John, were there, together with two other disciples. Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing!"

The others said, "We will go with you." They went out in their boat. But they didn't catch a thing that night.

Early the next morning Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize who he was. Jesus shouted, "Friends, have you caught anything?"

"No!" they answered.

So he told them, "Let your net down on the right side of your boat, and you will catch some fish."

They did, and the net was so full of fish that they could not drag it up into the boat.

Jesus' favourite disciple told Peter, "It's the Lord!" When Simon heard that it was the Lord, he put on the clothes that he had taken off while he was working. Then he jumped into the water. The boat was only about a hundred yards from shore. So the other disciples stayed in the boat and dragged in the net full of fish.

When the disciples got out of the boat, they saw some bread and a charcoal fire with fish on it. Jesus told his disciples, "Bring some of the fish you just caught." Simon Peter got back into the boat and dragged the net to shore. In it were one hundred fifty-three large fish, but still the net did not rip.

Jesus said, "Come and eat!" But none of the disciples dared ask who he was. They knew he was the Lord. Jesus took the bread in his hands and gave some of it to his disciples. He did the same with the fish. This was the third time that Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from death.

When Jesus and his disciples had finished eating, he asked, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than the others do?"

Simon Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, you know I do!"

"Then feed my lambs," Jesus said.

Jesus asked a second time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you!"

"Then take care of my sheep," Jesus told him.

Jesus asked a third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt because Jesus had asked him three times if he loved him. So he told Jesus, "Lord, you know everything. You know I love you."

Jesus replied, "Feed my sheep. I tell you for certain that when you were a young man, you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will hold out your hands. Then others will wrap your belt around you and lead you where you don't want to go."

Jesus said this to tell how Peter would die and bring honor to God. Then he said to Peter, "Follow me!"

Sunday 12th May

Acts 9:36-43

In Joppa there was a follower named Tabitha. Her Greek name was Dorcas, which means "deer." She was always doing good things for people and had given much to the poor. But she got sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. Joppa wasn't far from Lydda, and the followers heard that Peter was there. They sent two men to say to him, "Please come with us as quickly as you can!" Right away, Peter went with them.

The men took Peter upstairs into the room. Many widows were there crying. They showed him the coats and clothes that Dorcas had made while she was still alive.

After Peter had sent everyone out of the room, he knelt down and prayed. Then he turned to the body of Dorcas and said, "Tabitha, get up!" The woman opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet.

Peter called in the widows and the other followers and showed them that Dorcas had been raised from death. Everyone in Joppa heard what had happened, and many of them put their faith in the Lord. Peter stayed on for a while in Joppa in the house of a man named Simon, who made leather.

Revelation 7:9-17

After this, I saw a large crowd with more people than could be counted. They were from every race, tribe, nation, and language, and they stood before the throne and before the Lamb. They wore white robes and held palm branches in their hands, as they shouted,

“Our God, who sits
upon the throne,
has the power
to save his people,
and so does the Lamb.”

The angels who stood around the throne knelt in front of it with their faces to the ground. The elders and the four living creatures knelt there with them. Then they all worshiped God and said,

“Amen! Praise, glory, wisdom,
thanks, honour, power,
and strength belong to our God
forever and ever! Amen!”

One of the elders asked me, “Do you know who these people are that are dressed in white robes? Do you know where they come from?”

“Sir,” I answered, “you must know.”

Then he told me:

“These are the ones
who have gone through
the great suffering.
They have washed their robes
in the blood of the Lamb
and have made them white.

And so they stand
before the throne of God
and worship him in his temple
day and night.

The one who sits on the throne
will spread his tent
over them.

They will never hunger
or thirst again,
and they won't be troubled
by the sun
or any scorching heat.

The Lamb in the center
of the throne
will be their shepherd.
He will lead them to streams
of life-giving water,
and God will wipe all tears
from their eyes.”

John 10:22-30

That winter, Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Temple Festival. One day he was walking in that part of the temple known as Solomon’s Porch, and the people gathered all around him. They said, “How long are you going to keep us guessing? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly!”

Jesus answered:

I have told you, and you refused to believe me. The things I do by my Father’s authority show who I am. But since you are not my sheep, you don’t believe me. My sheep know my voice, and I know them. They follow me, and I give them eternal life, so that they will never be lost. No one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father gave them to me, and he is greater than all others. No one can snatch them from his hands, and I am one with the Father.

Sunday 19th May

Acts 11:1-18

The apostles and the followers in Judea heard that Gentiles had accepted God's message. So when Peter came to Jerusalem, some of the Jewish followers started arguing with him. They wanted Gentile followers to be circumcised, and they said, "You stayed in the homes of Gentiles, and you even ate with them!"

Then Peter told them exactly what had happened:

I was in the town of Joppa and was praying when I fell sound asleep and had a vision. I saw heaven open, and something like a huge sheet held by its four corners came down to me. When I looked in it, I saw animals, wild beasts, snakes, and birds. I heard a voice saying to me, "Peter, get up! Kill these and eat them."

But I said, "Lord, I can't do that! I've never taken a bite of anything that is unclean and not fit to eat."

The voice from heaven spoke to me again, "When God says that something can be used for food, don't say it isn't fit to eat." This happened three times before it was all taken back into heaven.

Suddenly three men from Caesarea stood in front of the house where I was staying. The Holy Spirit told me to go with them and not to worry. Then six of the Lord's followers went with me to the home of a man who told us that an angel had appeared to him. The angel had ordered him to send to Joppa for someone named Simon Peter. Then Peter would tell him how he and everyone in his house could be saved.

After I started speaking, the Holy Spirit was given to them, just as the Spirit had been given to us at the beginning. I remembered that the Lord had said, "John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." God gave those Gentiles the same gift that he gave us when we put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So how could I have gone against God?

When they heard Peter say this, they stopped arguing and started praising God. They said, "God has now let Gentiles turn to him, and he has given life to them!"

Revelation 21:1-6

I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared, and so had the sea. Then I saw New Jerusalem, that holy city, coming down from God in heaven. It was like a bride dressed in her wedding gown and ready to meet her husband.

I heard a loud voice shout from the throne:

God's home is now with his people. He will live with them, and they will be his own. Yes, God will make his home among his people. He will wipe all tears from their eyes, and there will be no more death, suffering, crying, or pain. These things of the past are gone forever.

Then the one sitting on the throne said:

I am making everything new. Write down what I have said. My words are true and can be trusted. Everything is finished! I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will freely give water from the life-giving fountain to everyone who is thirsty.

John 13:31-35

After Judas had gone, Jesus said:

Now the Son of Man will be given glory, and he will bring glory to God. Then, after God is given glory because of him, God will bring glory to him, and God will do it very soon.

My children, I will be with you for a little while longer. Then you will look for me, but you won't find me. I tell you just as I told the people, "You cannot go where I am going." But I am giving you a new command. You must love each other, just as I have loved you. If you

Sunday 26th May

Acts 16:9-15

During the night, Paul had a vision of someone from Macedonia who was standing there and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" After Paul had seen the vision, we began looking for a way to go to Macedonia. We were sure that God had called us to preach the good news there.

We sailed straight from Troas to Samothrace, and the next day we arrived in Neapolis. From there we went to Philippi, which is a Roman colony in the first district of Macedonia.

We spent several days in Philippi. Then on the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to a place by the river, where we thought there would be a Jewish meeting place for prayer. We sat down and talked with the women who came. One of them was Lydia, who was from the city of Thyatira and sold expensive purple cloth. She was a worshiper of the Lord God, and he made her willing to accept what Paul was saying. Then after she and her family were baptized, she kept on begging us, "If you think I really do have faith in the Lord, come stay in my home." Finally, we accepted her invitation.

Revelation 21:10 ,22-27,Rev:22:5

Then with the help of the Spirit, he took me to the top of a very high mountain. There he showed me the holy city of Jerusalem coming down from God in heaven.

I did not see a temple there. The Lord God All-Powerful and the Lamb were its temple. And the city did not need the sun or the moon. The glory of God was shining on it, and the Lamb was its light.

Nations will walk by the light of that city, and kings will bring their riches there. Its gates are always open during the day, and night never comes. The glorious treasures of nations will be brought into the city. But

nothing unworthy will be allowed to enter. No one who is dirty-minded or who tells lies will be there. Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will be in the city.

Never again will night appear, and no one who lives there will ever need a lamp or the sun. The Lord God will be their light, and they will rule forever.