

20:20 Vision Ministries -- Devotions by Roger Browning Week 14 (March 31-April 6, 2013)

The resurrection of Jesus Christ separates Christianity from all the world's religions. We serve a risen Savior who is in the world today. As we study this week, let's celebrate the Truth that is above all truths.

Sunday -- March 31 (Matthew 28:1-10)

Today is Easter Sunday, 2013. Last year, I wrote two weeks of devotions emphasizing the resurrection (weeks 15 & 16). This year, I felt led to focus on the **cross** leading up to today, but now, our attention turns to the empty tomb. Matthew's resurrection account gives a few details that are missing in the other three gospels. All four writers feature Mary Magdalene as the leader among the women who go to the tomb (v. 1). She has a special reason for loving her Lord: He had driven seven demons out of her (Luke 8:2). Matthew, alone, tells about the violent earthquake caused by the angel descending from heaven to roll back the stone (v. 2). It is the second one in Jerusalem that weekend (Matthew 27:51). Earthquakes will also be prevalent during the days of the Great Tribulation (see Revelation 6:12, 11:13 & 16:18), just prior to His return. Everything that can be shaken will be shaken so that what cannot be shaken may remain (see Hebrews 12:27-28). We will look at other aspects of the story in tomorrow's devotions.

Monday -- April 1 (Matthew 28:1-10)

Jesus, in His resurrected form, is no longer subject to the limitations of a human body; therefore, the stone is not rolled away so that He could get out, but rather, so that the women could get in. Those Roman soldiers are terrified at the appearance of the angel (v. 3-4). The heavenly visitor delivers the glorious message to the women: "He is not here; he has risen, just as He said" (v. 5-6). Can you think of more beautiful words than these? Whereas the leaders of all other religions died and stayed in the tomb, our Savior is alive! Because He lives, we will also live after death (John 14:19). Verse 6 concludes with an invitation to "Come and see the place where He lay." What should you do after you verify in your minds the resurrection of Jesus Christ? "Then go quickly and tell" others where they will find Him (v. 7).

Tuesday -- April 2 (Matthew 28:1-10)

Because Jesus is omnipresent (everywhere at once), I used to think that location was not important in experiencing Him. I have come to believe that we will see Him most clearly when we are willing to go where He sends us. His desired location may not always be evident, but when it is, learn to obey His command. In verse 7, the angel specifically says that Jesus will go ahead of the disciples into Galilee. It is their **obedience** that guides them into His presence (see v. 16)! Feeling fear and joy simultaneously, the women follow the angel's instructions (v. 8). Jesus honors their **obedience** by allowing them to be the first people to see Him following His resurrection (v. 9). They fall at His feet and worship Him! Only God can be worshiped; therefore, Jesus is God! Jesus always honors **obedience**! Are you willing to seek the risen Lord?

Wednesday -- April 3 (Matthew 28:1-10)

I have asked you to read the entire resurrection story for four consecutive days because of the importance of this message. Our Lord gave us a new name on that first Easter Sunday. He now calls us His **brothers or sisters** (v. 10). Have you praised Him for that wonderful Truth? We are joint-heirs with the One who is the Heir of the entire universe (Romans 8:17). We are **God's children** as a result of His death and resurrection (Romans 8:16)! "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God" (1 John 3:1)! Praise Him for all that He has done to purchase our salvation. Then fall on your knees before the One who is willing and "able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20).

Thursday -- April 4 (Matthew 28:11-15)

It cost the religious leaders only thirty pieces of silver to place Jesus in the tomb (Matthew 26:14-15). In today's study, you will learn that it takes much more than that to keep Him there in the minds of those who would hear this story (v. 11-13). I'm amazed at what many of today's religious leaders in liberal denominations are willing to spend to keep the resurrection story from becoming known. After all, if Jesus arose from the grave, then **He alone** offers salvation to our world. Only those who believe in Him will spend eternity in heaven. This narrow way does not fit into the politically correct teaching of universal salvation (**everyone** eventually goes to heaven). Unfortunately, most of the Jews still reject Jesus as their Savior and Lord (v. 15). Pray that God will open their eyes before they have to face the Great Tribulation.

Friday -- April 5 (Acts 2:14-24)

As we saw in yesterday's study, the Jews are deceived into believing that the disciples came during the night and stole the body of Jesus (Matthew 28:12-15). Does anyone really think that these men who had betrayed and denied our Lord would be brave enough to come and steal His body from a tomb that had been sealed and guarded by the powerful Romans? In today's text, Peter, the former coward, **confronts** those Jews who have believed the lie concerning the resurrection. What changed Peter into a bold evangelist? He was filled with the **Holy Spirit** on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13). He accurately quotes Old Testament Scriptures to define this marvelous visitation of God's Spirit (17-21). Next he confronts the Jews by stating that **they** nailed Jesus to the cross according to God's purpose and foreknowledge (v. 23). Verse 24 is priceless! Because "God raised Him from the dead," we can have **eternal life** simply by believing, receiving and trusting in Him. **That is the Easter message!**

Saturday -- April 6 (Acts 2:25-41)

Peter uses the words of their Jewish hero, King David, to emphasize his message (v. 25-31). Then he testifies to the truth of the resurrection (v. 32). From His new position at the right hand of God, Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in the believers, **just as He promised** (Acts 1:8). He reminds them that **they** crucified their Savior, Lord and Christ (v. 36). Feeling immediate conviction, they ask the question that demands an answer (v. 37). Peter gives them the entire plan of salvation in one verse (v. 38) and tells them that this promise is meant for everyone, no matter how far off they are currently living from Him (v. 39). The results of this first sermon are amazing (v. 40-41). I pray that we will soon see another revival of this magnitude!