

## 20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 14 (March 29-April 4, 2015)

I have chosen to remain in the book of Isaiah for our Holy Week devotions. This book, written 700 years before Christ entered our world, is amazing in its prophecy.

**Sunday**, March 29 (read Isaiah 52:13-15)

*See, my Servant will act wisely; He will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. (Isaiah 52:13)*

When did the event predicted in the printed verse take place? That's right! It was Palm Sunday and you are celebrating it today. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a borrowed donkey and the crowd cheered, quoted Scripture, and placed cloaks and palm branches along the road (see Matthew 21:1-11), thus fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9. It was the only time He was "raised and lifted up and highly exalted." The scene predicted in today's text switches immediately to the cross after these same people, who praised Him on Sunday, demand His crucifixion (v. 14). Have you ever seen a picture of Jesus on the cross that adequately depicts the description in v. 14? Neither have I! We will take a closer look at this in tomorrow's devotion.

**Monday**, March 30 (reread Isaiah 52:13-15)

*Just as there were many who were appalled at Him—His appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and His form marred beyond human likeness—so will He sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of Him. (Isaiah 52:14-15a)*

Good Friday is several days away, but this passage of Scripture will prepare your heart for that special day. We are used to seeing a picture of Jesus on the cross with a trickle of blood flowing from His side and from His head. Can you see from the printed verse that this picture of Him is not accurate? The beatings that He endured prior to carrying His cross to Calvary were enough to kill Him. The spikes through His hands and feet were the only things holding His powerful body on the cross. Can you imagine extending your body in midair with its entire weight being held by three nails? Remember that this prophecy was written more than 700 years prior to the event it predicts. I hope that none of you have doubts about the accuracy of the Word of God.

**Tuesday**, March 31 (read Isaiah 52:13-53:1)

*Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? (Isaiah 53:1)*

From the date of Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-7), God's only plan to redeem fallen man was this: Jesus, the perfect One, had to give His life for the sins of all mankind (15a). All the governments of man will someday yield to the rule of Jesus Christ (15b). The vital question appears in the opening verse of chapter 53 (printed above). God is not willing that anyone should perish (2 Peter 3:9); instead, He "wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). Are you doing your part in spreading the gospel? Are you telling others about the amazing accuracy of every word of Scripture? If so, you are eagerly awaiting the return of the Lord to earth.

**Wednesday**, April 1 (read Isaiah 53:2-3)

*He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. (Isaiah 53:3a)*

Seven hundred years prior to the birth of our Lord, Isaiah prophesies that Jesus would be born of a virgin (see 7:14). Now he says the Messiah would be “like a root out of dry ground” to illustrate the same truth (v. 2). Pictures of Jesus with a halo around His head are not Scriptural, since the Bible says “He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him” (v. 2b). Therefore, “He was despised and rejected by men” because they were expecting a military leader who would lead them against their enemies, not a tender, kindhearted, suffering servant who would not resist the persecutions He faced (v. 3). I hope that you are one who esteems Him. I pray that this generation will do a better job of recognizing and accepting Him!

**Thursday**, April 2 (read Isaiah 53:4-6)

*We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)*

Take careful note of the unselfishness of Jesus Christ. The people of His day and many of the people of our day do not realize that His death is all about us. In today’s text, notice the references to **our**, **we** and **us**. It makes me sad to know that He died for each of us; yet, so few believe (v. 1, 4). The good news is that “by His wounds (stripes) we are healed” when we receive His sacrifice as full payment for our sins (v. 5). Isaiah reminds us that we are all sinners and need His death and resurrection to pay the price for our sins (v. 6; see also Romans 3:23). Have you accepted His wonderful gift that makes Holy Week so special?

**Friday**, April 3 (read Isaiah 53:7-9)

*He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth. (Isaiah 53:7)*

Today’s text makes me realize how far I am from His standard of holiness. Whenever I have faced oppression, I have opened my mouth in defense. I, who am guilty, can get vocal, but He, who is innocent, does not fight back (v. 7). Jesus’ sacrificial death on our behalf has granted salvation to every person on earth who has believed and accepted Him (v. 8). This prophecy is so accurate that it even predicts the role of Joseph of Arimathea, the rich man who provided a grave for the body of our Lord (v. 9; see also John 19:38-42). How can anyone doubt the Word of God, knowing that all the events of Holy Week were prophesied hundreds of years before they came about?

**Saturday**, April 4 (Isaiah 53:10-12)

*After the suffering of His soul, He will see the light of life and be satisfied; by His knowledge my righteous Servant will justify many, and He will bear their iniquities. (Isaiah 53:11)*

God knew from the beginning that the sacrifice of His Son to purchase the souls of sinful men would be the only way to accomplish His will (v. 10). He also knew that death would not defeat His Son. His **resurrection** is prophesied in v. 11 printed above. How can God’s plan of salvation be any clearer? Because of His faithful sacrifice, “God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (v. 12 & Philippians 2:9-11). Hallelujah!