

## 20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 14 (April 2-8, 2017)

The United States is more divided than I have ever seen. Protesters are out in full force as I am writing these devotions. What is our responsibility as Christians? I will address that question in this week's study.

**Sunday**, April 2 (read Romans 13:11-14)

*And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. (Romans 13:11)*

Before I look at our responsibilities as Christian citizens, I want to point out the obvious. We are living in the last days and it can't be long before we hear Jesus shout, "Come up here and I will show you what must take place after this" (Revelation 4:1b). Today's printed verse references the three stages of salvation. There should be a moment in your **past** when you **first believed**, when you acknowledged your sin before God and asked Jesus to save you and to send His Spirit to abide in your heart. As a result, you should be **living for Jesus today** as you enjoy the eternal life that already lives in you. Finally, there will be a time when Christ **calls you home** and your sinful earthly body will be exchanged for a new heavenly body (1 Corinthians 15:50-54). Are you looking forward to His return?

**Monday**, April 3 (reread Romans 13:11-14)

*The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. (Romans 13:12)*

We are living in dark times as our nation is divided, perhaps unlike any time since the Civil War. These troubling days will come to an end when Jesus calls us home in the rapture of the true Church. Therefore, our responsibility is to live as children of the Light, not as children of the darkness (v. 12). Christians have been left on earth to bring flavor and light into this dark world (see Matthew 5:13-14). We do not have to protest and beat against the darkness; we only need to turn on the light and the darkness will flee. Jesus is the only Answer for the problems in our country, so don't get bogged down with political arguments. The world needs to know our Savior, not our political opinions. As far as I know, no one has ever been argued into the kingdom of God.

**Tuesday**, April 4 (reread Romans 13:11-14)

*Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature. (Romans 13:14)*

Paul lists some of the acts of the sinful nature in v. 13. This is only a random sample of the sins we can be involved in if we follow the ways of this world. As Christians, we are to get all wrapped up in Jesus (v. 14)! At the moment of our salvation, Jesus removed the **filthy rags** of our own self-righteousness (see Isaiah 64:6) and clothed us in His spotless **robe of righteousness** (see Isaiah 61:10). The Lord keeps our robe spotless by forgiving our daily sins as we walk with Him and grow in our knowledge of Him. He warns us to avoid even **thinking** of ways to gratify our sinful nature. This includes what we look at, where we go and what we touch (see Matthew 5:27-30). Are you listening to His command?

**Wednesday**, April 5 (read Romans 12:17-21)

*If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. (Romans 12:18)*

George W. Bush has strengths and weaknesses as all leaders do, but he is my hero for fulfilling the command in v. 17. For eight years, many in the opposition party and some in his own party blamed every problem in America on him, but he did not say one word in retaliation. Even after he left office, he has not fought back in spite of continued attacks. He rises above the noise and quietly helps wounded warriors by doing the tasks God leads him to do. He has been the best **human** example of the prophecy of Isaiah 53:7, which was actually fulfilled by Jesus, Himself. Can you trust God to defend you and your cause? Only He can judge, because He sees the motives of the heart as well as the actions of the body (see Matthew 7:1-2). We are taught to love our enemies, not to avenge their actions (see Matthew 5:44-45). This world needs Christians to be salt and light, not avengers.

**Thursday**, April 6 (read Romans 13:1-5)

*Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. (Romans 13:1)*

The printed verse gives you all you need to know about trusting God with the new president, regardless of your political affiliation. God is the One who allowed President Obama to occupy the White House for eight years and He is the One who allowed President Trump to win the last election in spite of the tremendous odds against him. I believe God used Franklin Graham and his 50 state prayer strategy to change the course of history by uniting the Christians in America (see 2 Chronicles 7:14). Proverbs 21:1 says, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; He directs it like a watercourse wherever He pleases." So the question is not, "Do you trust Donald Trump?" but rather, "Do you trust God?" We will continue with that thought in tomorrow's devotion.

**Friday**, April 7 (reread Romans 13:1-5)

*Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment to themselves. (Romans 13:2)*

Everyone has a right to his/her own opinion, but no one has a right to destroy the property of others. Protesters who are burning police cars and throwing objects through windows and looting stores should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. I'm tired of hearing, "Bless their hearts. They are angry." In the first two verses of this text, Paul uses the word "authority" four times. The bottom line is this: We are called to be under the authority of the government, policemen, teachers, parents, etc. The protesters are not rebelling against President Trump; they are rebelling against authority! According to v. 2 printed above, the same people are actually rebelling against the authority of Jesus Christ and of the Word of God. Don't get caught up in anarchy!

**Saturday**, April 8 (read Romans 13:1-7)

*For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. (Romans 13:4a)*

I understand v. 3 by experience. When I am going the speed limit and run through radar, I smile and wave at the officer, but when I am speeding, I look in my rearview mirror with fear. Why? Because policemen are assigned to protect the innocent and punish the guilty! God has even given the government the right of execution in extreme cases (v. 4). We should obey, not only to avoid punishment, but also because our Spirit-led conscience tells us that this is right (v. 5). Do not withhold your taxes, revenue, respect or honor (v. 6-7); instead, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Matthew 22:21, KJV) and trust God to fulfill His Word. I pray the devotions this week have given you a clearer view of our responsibilities as Christian citizens living in a confused country.