

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 15 (April 3-9, 2016)

We will spend one more week celebrating our new life brought about by the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Sunday, April 3 (read Acts 10:34-38)

Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right." (Acts 10:34-35)

The scene in today's text takes place in Caesarea at the home of Cornelius, a "centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment" (Acts 10:1b). Peter has been taught a valuable lesson that God loves **all** of His creation, regardless of nationality (Acts 10:9-20). That eye-opening event leads him to begin his speech with the words recorded in our printed text. Have **you** learned that "God so loved the **world**," or do you think He loves only America? How does this belief reflect in your gifts to missions? Peter presents Jesus as the only answer to the dilemma facing the entire world, even though His earthly ministry took place in Israel (v.36). He takes his listeners from the baptism of John the Baptist to the ministry of Jesus and the Holy Spirit (v. 37-38). We will continue this story in tomorrow's devotion.

Monday, April 4 (read Acts 10:39-43)

"They killed Him by hanging Him on a tree, but God raised Him from the dead on the third day and caused Him to be seen." (Acts 10:39b-40)

Peter lets his audience know that he is an eyewitness of the events he is telling them about (v. 39a). Then he presents the death and resurrection of Jesus as the foundation of our faith in Him, events that **many** witnesses can verify (v. 39-41). Still today, when Jesus' Presence is manifested in a church service, He only appears to those He has chosen, those who have **spiritual** eyes and hearts to experience Him. The Lord's command to us is to preach, teach and witness that someday Jesus will judge all who have lived on this earth by His marvelous Word (v. 42). Since we are still living in the Day of Grace, be sure that you have responded to His offer of salvation. The Old Testament and the New Testament, properly understood, both testify that salvation is given to everyone who believes in Jesus and receives Him as their personal Savior (v. 43). I pray that all of my readers know the joy of new life in Christ.

Tuesday, April 5 (read Acts 10:44-48)

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. (Acts 10:44)

Other Jews come with Peter to see Cornelius, a Gentile, even though they bring their prejudices with them. God honors the centurion's obedience (v. 30-33) and comes upon the Gentiles in the power of the Holy Spirit (v. 44-45). These new converts have a similar experience to the one the disciples had in the upper room on the day of Pentecost (see Acts 2:1-13). Don't miss the fact that these events occurred in reverse order from what we learned in Acts 2:38, with the coming of the Holy Spirit **preceding** baptism (v. 47). This only proves that God, who wants all men to be saved (see 1 Timothy 2:3-4), can reach the lost **anyway** He determines, using **anyone** that He chooses. He can never be restricted to our formula! The new believers are baptized in the name of Jesus as an outward demonstration of the Holy Spirit's work within them. Then they request the continuing presence of the disciples in order to learn more about their new faith (v. 48). Thus the gospel is opened to the entire world, to anyone who will believe on His Name!

Wednesday, April 6 (read Acts 13:13-22)

After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue rulers sent word to them saying, "Brothers, if you have a message of encouragement for the people, please speak." (Acts 13:15, emphasis mine)

The message of the death and resurrection of Jesus is the only one that can bring **encouragement** to the listeners, especially to those who are trying to live under the Old Testament laws. (Note that Paul and his companions still go to the synagogue to worship (v. 13-15) even though they have received the New Covenant of grace from their Savior.) Paul reminds his listeners of their Jewish heritage learned from the reading of the Law and the Prophets (v. 16-22). This is a very important way to teach God's Word. It is vital that those who hear or read your message also understand the relationship between today's truth and the foundational truth of the past. When this occurs, the new truth will solidify and build upon the knowledge they already have! Paul does not move to the message of the resurrection before laying a foundation of Old Testament history. We will see how this works in our next devotion.

Thursday, April 7 (read Acts 13:23-31)

"The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning Him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath." (Acts 13:27)

Paul ties the life of King David into the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 23). He then reminds them of the humble ministry of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus (v. 24-25). Now he is ready to move his audience toward the main point, the death and resurrection of the Lord. He reminds them of **their** role as well as **Pilate's** role in the crucifixion of Jesus (v. 27-28). The death of the Lord only sets the stage for Paul's main message: "But God raised Him from the dead . . ." (v. 30). The entire Bible, from Genesis through Revelation, hinges on that sacred event. I hope and pray that you are a living witness of the truth that is vital to all generations (v. 31).

Friday, April 8 (read Acts 13:32-37)

"But the One whom God raised from the dead did not see decay." (Acts 13:37)

All of the promises in God's Word are fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (v. 32-33a; see also 2 Corinthians 1:20). Paul quotes several Old Testament passages and applies them to the life and ministry of Jesus (v. 34-35). He wants his listeners to know that the prophecy is not about King David, because he died like everyone else and his body decayed. That only happened after David had fulfilled God's purpose for him in his own generation (v. 36). Can you see God's sovereign hand at work throughout all the history of man? Having declared that David was only a human vessel devoted to God, Paul now moves to the application that will determine eternal life for his audience. We will look at that in tomorrow's devotion.

Saturday, April 9 (read Acts 13:38-43)

"Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you." (Acts 13:38)

Every message, whether it is from the Old Testament or the New Testament, must be given for the purpose of introducing Jesus to unbelievers as well as advancing the knowledge of those who have already accepted Him (v. 38). The "law of Moses" could never save anyone, because it depends on our ability to keep it perfectly (v. 39). It did, however, make us aware of our sins and shortcomings before a Holy God (see Romans 5:20-21). Paul warns his listeners not to repeat the failures of their ancestors, but rather to accept the free gift offered to them because of the death and resurrection of Jesus (v. 40-41). The disciples receive an invitation to speak again on the following Sabbath (v. 42). Many of the hearers believe the message and find salvation that day (v. 43). Paul and Barnabas urge them, as I urge you, to continue in the grace of God!