

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 1 (January 1-7, 2017)

I am writing these devotions during the Thanksgiving week, so it is possible that the events I am warning you about will have already happened by the time you are reading this. Our outgoing government is considering allowing the United Nations to declare Jerusalem the capital of the Palestinians. This will not change the Word of God, but it will bring disaster on America! God's promises to the Jews will be the topic of discussion for the next few weeks.

Sunday, January 1 (read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, and the new has come! (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Regardless of what may have happened in the world, today is a day for a brand new start. The printed verse reminds us that we begin a new life when we are born again and that we begin a new life everyday for the rest of our lives. This is God's gift to us through Jesus Christ (v. 18). The world is in turmoil, but we alone have the "message of reconciliation" (v. 19). We are ambassadors for the Lord, so we must make sure our words and our actions lead others into this new life in Christ. You may not feel adequate for such a task, but if you will just believe and follow v. 21, you will not fail. These may be the last days God will give us to witness prior to the rapture of the Church. Don't waste a minute!

Monday, January 2 (read Ezekiel 36:1-7)

Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: "I swear with uplifted hand that the nations around you will also suffer scorn." (Ezekiel 36:1-7)

The entire world hates the Jews because they are God's chosen people. The United States has thus far prevented the United Nations from giving their land and their rights away to the Arabs. I hope this has not changed since I penned this devotion. The text describes the current attitude of the Muslim nations surrounding Israel (v. 2). The politically correct world believes that these people want the **land** of the Jews, but in effect, they want to destroy them and push them into the Mediterranean Sea. This desire is in the charter of many of the nations that surround Israel. God will repay the nations for the harm they inflict on His people as this text declares, but woe to us if we become one of the nations that harms them!

Tuesday, January 3 (read Ezekiel 36:8-12)

"But you, O mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel, for they will soon come home." (Ezekiel 36:8)

It took 2500 years for God to fulfill the prophecy given to Ezekiel, but on May 14, 1948 the Jews became a nation again against all odds. Today's text is being fulfilled before our eyes. Israel has increased in number and in prosperity beyond human explanation. They have been able to defend their land against enemy attacks even though the odds are against them beyond belief. Did you notice the reason God has allowed them to prosper? Is it because of their ingenuity or their goodness? Not at all! It is because God wants them to know Him (v. 11)! If America messes with His plan for the Jews, we will pay a tremendous price. Christians must be aware of God's plan for Israel, even if the world is against this tiny nation!

Wednesday, January 4 (read Ezekiel 36:13-15)

"No longer will I make you hear the taunts of the nations, and no longer will you suffer the scorn of the peoples or cause your nation to fall," declares the Sovereign Lord. (Ezekiel 36:15)

The lies concerning the Jews are believed all over the world. Muslim children are taught that the Jews murder the Arabs and drink their blood. They are taught that the greatest act they can perform to please Allah is to become a suicide bomber in order to murder their enemies. The world believes that the Jews stole the land on which they live and that it rightly belongs to a people who never existed, the Palestinians. The Sovereign Lord is in complete control, no matter how ridiculous the odds are against Israel. Soon He will act on behalf of His children, just like He promised Abraham. Don't be on the wrong side of Biblical truth!

Thursday, January 5 (read Ezekiel 36:16-21)

"I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions." (Ezekiel 36: 19).

God dispersed the Jews from Israel because of their sinful conduct. They thought their own good works should qualify them to live in God's presence. That is what v. 17 means. Their own flow of blood could never produce the blessings of a holy God, because salvation is His gift to us! Even the places where God scattered His people were defiled by their actions. The residents of those countries mocked the Jews, just like they still do today (v. 20). For the sake of His holy name, God has returned the Jews to their native land. The Name of the Lord will be glorified when He completes the prophecy made about them (v. 21). This text is a reminder that none of us wants to stand before God to be judged by our works alone!

Friday, January 6 (read Ezekiel 36:22-23)

"Then the nations will know that I am the Lord," declares the Sovereign Lord, "when I show myself holy through you before their eyes." (Ezekiel 36:23b)

In today's text, God expands His reason for His dealings with Israel. Not only does He want **His people** to know He is the Lord, but also He wants **all the nations** to understand that He is the only true God. Allah can never save anyone! Only Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died for our sins and rose again so that the entire world can come to know Him as their personal Savior. God didn't love just Israel and America! "For God so loved the **world** that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16, emphasis mine). Like Israel, we cannot say that He saved us because of our righteousness! No, "For it is **by grace** you have been saved, **through faith**—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9, emphasis mine). Praise His Name today!

Saturday, January 7 (read Ezekiel 36:24-32)

"For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land." (Ezekiel 26:24)

I am amazed that so few people, even Christians, understand the miraculous return of the Jews to the Promised Land on May 14, 1948. All end time prophecy depends on the Jews being in their Homeland. God used the Satanic acts of Hitler to create an atmosphere in which the world would allow God's people to have back part of their land promised to them through Abraham. The Lord previews the born-again experience in His plans for Israel (v. 25-27). As we will see next week, only a handful of the Jews have accepted His gift of salvation, but that will change after the rapture of the Church. The promise of prosperity has been fulfilled (v. 28-30), but the world still awaits the true salvation of God's chosen people (v. 31-32).