

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 28 (July 3-9, 2016)

Why does a loving God allow evil? When did it all begin? Where did it come from? These are just a few of the questions we will explore this week and in the weeks ahead.

Sunday, July 3 (read Genesis 1:26-31)

*God saw all that He had made, and it was **very good**. (Genesis 1:31a, emphasis mine)*

In the Biblical account of the six days of creation, God saves His best for last! After speaking into existence the heavens and the earth and all creatures and plants, He emphasizes the entire Trinity in the creation of mankind (v. 26). **Man** is given authority over everything else that has been formed. Humans are different from the animals, because we are created in the image of God (v. 27). The Lord's evaluation of His six days of creation is given in the printed verse above. Notice that God says it is **very good**. Evil is not a part of **His** work; therefore, death is not a part of His plan. That's God's **perfect** plan! We will see how His **perfect will** is thwarted and His **permissive will** initiated in upcoming devotions.

Monday, July 4 (read Genesis 2:15-17)

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. (Genesis 2:15)

Today is Independence Day in America! Unfortunately, many of the freedoms we have cherished as Christians are being forfeited on the altar of political correctness. In today's text, we will see how this happens in God's perfect creation long before it happens in the United States. God has placed us on earth to tend the garden that He has already planted (v. 15). He is the Gardener who has done all the hard work (see John 15:1). God gives His original maintenance man one simple restriction: ". . . but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (v. 17). Why would the Lord open the door for evil to enter our world? That's a great question! We will explore the answer tomorrow.

Tuesday, July 5 (reread Genesis 2:15-17)

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. (2 Corinthians 3:17)

God placed within mankind a **free will**, allowing His creation the right to make choices that are in conflict with His **perfect** plan. Why would He do this, knowing in advance that man would disobey and choose to sin? Great question! Without this free will, love would not exist, because we would be acting as robots! We would do the right thing only because we had no choice and not because we love the Lord. Sin and death would be eliminated, but so would the joy of loving and serving God **because we choose to**. God knew from the creation of the world that His only Son would have to redeem fallen man. Even so, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16, KJV). That's the gospel message that we must share with our lost friends!

Wednesday, July 6 (Genesis 3:1-5)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" (Genesis 3:1)

Satan enters the serpent because he is the most beautiful and perhaps the most intelligent of God's created animals; therefore, he will be a greater temptation to Eve. The devil still uses the most beautiful and/or most intelligent **person** he can find who is willing to bring temptation to others. Satan's only question is printed above: "Did God really say?" All he has to do is to put doubt in the Word of God and the Lord's children are severely weakened. That's why it is so important for you to understand that our **free will** allows evil to dominate our society; otherwise, you will find yourself blaming **God** for an imperfect world. We'll continue these thoughts in our next devotion.

Thursday, July 7 (reread Genesis 3:1-5)

"For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:5)

Eve's first mistake is to **misquote** God's command (v. 3; see 2:16-17). She adds "and you must not touch it" to His spoken Word. The final warning in the Bible commands you not to **add anything** to His Word or to **take anything away** from it (see Revelation 22:18-19). Our politically correct society has ignored **God's** answer to the question, "Did God really say?" As a result, the morals and values of America have spiraled downward to where there are no absolutes. Someone has said, "America is great because she has been good. When America ceases to be good, she will cease to be great!" We are seeing this prophetic statement come to pass! We call ourselves "the enlightened generation," because we have accepted Satan's original lie (v. 4-5). The official name is **The New Age**, but you can clearly see that it is only the same old deception! There's nothing new under the sun!

Friday, July 8 (read Genesis 3:6-11)

But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9)

Don't miss the fact that Adam is **with Eve** in the garden on that fateful day (v. 6). He is not an innocent bystander! Immediately, the **shameless** nakedness of Genesis 2:25 becomes **shameful**, so Adam and Eve use fig leaves to cover their bodies (v. 7). God comes along in the cool of the day and asks **His** first question (v. 8-9), "Where are you?" The question is literally, "Do you know where you are? Do you understand that you have introduced sin into my perfect world and that from now on, death will occur to you and to all plants and animals? Do you realize that your choice will necessitate the death of my Son? And do you realize that mankind will actually blame Me for the evils that you have introduced into my universe?"

Saturday, July 9 (read Genesis 3:12-15; 21-24)

"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel." (Genesis 3:15)

Adam blames God for his failure (v. 12, "the woman **you** put here with me," emphasis mine) and Eve blames Satan (v. 13). Thus the blame game is introduced as an alternative to confession of sins! The once beautiful serpent receives the first curse and will crawl on his belly forever, even in God's kingdom (v. 14; see Isaiah 65:25). Satan's domain will be destroyed by the death and resurrection of Jesus, who will enter our world through the seed of a **woman**, without man's help (Mary, v. 15). The temporary covering of our nakedness will be provided through the death of spotless lambs until the sinless Lamb of God pays the wages of sin (v. 21-24). Jesus has re-opened the door to the **tree of life** which is now located in the City of God (see Revelation 22:1-2). Praise His Name! The cross has become the Tree of Life to all who believe!