

## 20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 29 (July 10-16, 2016)

It seems that someone slipped in and changed all of the standards while Christians were not praying. Isaiah 5:20 says, “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.” I believe we are living in the generation that has done this very thing. We will look at Scriptures on the topic of good and evil this week.

**Sunday**, July 10 (read Psalm 2:1-6)

*The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against His Anointed One. (Psalm 2:2)*

God’s infallible Word prophesies a time when the nations will come together to form a one-world government based on the teachings of man while rejecting the Scriptures that predict the event (v. 1-2). “Let us break their chains,” they say, “and throw off their fetters” (v. 3). Don’t you love God’s reaction? He **laughs** at them because He has the ultimate trump card (v. 4, no pun intended). God will **allow** evil to reign during the Great Tribulation when He pours out His wrath, but then Jesus will return with His followers to put an end to the government of man, replacing it with His own reign for 1000 years (v. 5-6). At that time, Isaiah 9:6-7 will become a reality!

**Monday**, July 11 (read Psalm 2:7-12)

*Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for His wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him. (Psalm 2:12)*

The first dictatorship that will actually work will be the rule of Jesus Christ as prophesied in Isaiah 9:6-7. The Lord will rule with an iron hand and the believers who were called home seven years earlier in the rapture will reign with Him (v. 7-9). The psalmist issues a final warning to the rulers of this earth, admonishing them to serve the Lord and not the politically correct demands of those seeking a man-made global government (v. 10-11). Embrace (kiss) the Son and His teachings while you still live in the Day of Grace! Take refuge in Him, no matter what the personal cost may be to you and your family (v. 12). The cost of rejecting Him is much higher!

**Tuesday**, July 12 (read Joshua 23:14-16)

*But just as every good promise of the Lord your God has come true, so the Lord will bring on you all the evil He has threatened, until He has destroyed you from this good land He has given you. (Joshua 23:15)*

I have used Randy Alcorn’s marvelous book, *If God Is Good* as I have studied this topic for the past couple of months. Many of the points I am sharing and even some of the phrasing comes from him since he is the expert on this subject. He describes two categories of evil, primary and secondary. In a nutshell, primary evils are the **cause** and secondary evils are the **sufferings** that result from the act. In today’s text, Joshua reminds the people that God has not failed to keep any of the wonderful promises He has made (v. 14). However, if you can trust His promises to **bless**, you must also accept His promises to **punish** those who refuse to obey His Word. The primary evil will be to violate His covenant; the secondary evil will be destruction and expulsion from the Promised Land. As we saw with Adam and Eve, **disobedience** is the root cause of evil, but the sufferings that occur are the result. Because the Lord has trusted us with a free will, He often gets the blame for our problems (for example, “I was born that way”). I am surprised that God has not already judged our land!

**Wednesday**, July 13 (read Romans 8:17-21)

*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. (Romans 8:18)*

While it is true that the sins of mankind result in untold sufferings, it is just as true that the future glory for the Christian will make these sufferings seem like nothing (v. 17-18)! Even though the rest of God's creatures did not choose to sin as Adam and Eve did, nevertheless, they also have to live under the curse of sin and death until Jesus comes back to redeem the earth (v. 19-21). The entire universe is subject to decay and destruction, waiting anxiously for humans to fall on their knees and acknowledge that Jesus is Lord. Animals were not created to destroy each other! Stars were not created to burn out or fall from the sky! God allows evil only because we have refused to worship Him in spirit and in truth. God loves you, but He hates your sin, because He knows what your life could be like if you fully trusted Him.

**Thursday**, July 14 (read Romans 8:22-25)

*For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? (Romans 8:24)*

In the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans, Paul has just described the old sin nature as it battles against the Spirit of God. In the printed verse above, he affirms that we are saved and are not in danger of losing our salvation; however, he challenges us to move on toward the future life that has been promised to God's children. No true Christian should fail to grow in the faith and to bear fruit for His glory. Our spiritual life **begins** when we are saved, but that is only the starting point on our journey to being like Jesus (see Philippians 3:20-21). All of creation waits for the fulfillment of His promise to us (v. 22). Our earthly body waits for the completion of God's work in us (v. 23). In the meantime, we live in a fallen world of sin and suffering!

**Friday** July 15 (read 2 Corinthians 1:3-7)

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)*

You will be ineffective in any effort to comfort someone who is suffering if you have never had any pain or suffering of your own. This thought gives you at least a hint as to why God allows difficult circumstances to enter your life. Couples who have to bury a child often look to me because I have experienced the devastation of losing a little one. I cannot relieve their pain, but I can understand the hurt they are experiencing and refer them to 2 Samuel 12:23. In today's printed verse, God is called "the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort." It is He who will ultimately bring comfort, but He chooses to use our testimonies to accomplish His task. I was introduced to Romans 8:28 because of the death of my 2<sup>nd</sup> son. The verse became the foundation for my entire youth ministry. God only knows how many of these youth would have been lost had it not been for the knowledge gained through trials. Praise His Name!

**Saturday**, July 16 (read 2 Corinthians 1:8-11)

*Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened (so) that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. (2 Corinthians 1:9)*

God allows us to get in over our heads **so that** we will learn to call out to Him. As you read the Scriptures, take note of the "so thats." For example, you will find one in v. 4 and v. 8. There is also one in the printed verse above. God has a reason for everything, even the difficult things we encounter. He has always been more than sufficient to meet any need you have had, and He will continue to deliver you from future perils until the day He calls you home (v. 10). We can pray for one another and give thanks because we know that He is working all things for our good (Romans 8:28).