

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 30 (July 17-23, 2016)

Satan has been given temporary authority over the planet earth. Jesus will not reclaim the title deed to earth until the Great Tribulation (Revelation, chapter 5). We will look at some of the passages that teach this truth in this week's devotions.

Sunday, July 17 (Luke 4:5-8)

And he said to Him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to." (Luke 4:6)

With the statement printed above, Satan claims to have authority over the earth. He hears no rebuke from Jesus, so we can know that this claim is valid, even though temporary. The devil offers a kingdom without a cross. God, on the other hand, offers His Kingdom to those who will pick up their cross and follow Him (see Luke 9:23). Jesus knows from the very beginning that He will have to die on Calvary to pay the price for fallen mankind. His Kingdom would not be available to believers had He not chosen the cross. Even today, Satan leads many to believe that worldly fame and fortune will come only to those who follow his ways, thus denying the Word of God. Does this help you to understand why this world is in such turmoil? We will spend the rest of this week studying other passages that teach the same truth about the devil's authority.

Monday, July 18 (read John 14:28-31)

"I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming." (John 14:30a)

In the Upper Room, on the night prior to His crucifixion, Jesus comforts His disciples by informing them that He is returning to His Father until time for Him to come back for us (v. 28). The Father is greater than the Son only in function, because the two of them are one (see John 10:30). The Bible is the only book that tells readers what is going to happen in the future with absolute accuracy; therefore, these words of Jesus are not a prediction, but rather Bible prophecy (v. 29). It is at this time that Jesus refers to Satan as the "prince of this world" (v. 30). Is it any wonder that the world is in such a mess? The great news is that the devil has no hold on Jesus; therefore, he has no hold on any of us who choose to walk with the risen Lord in obedience to His Word (v. 31; see v. 20 also). The world will continue to deteriorate until Jesus returns for us. Wait patiently for His arrival!

Tuesday, July 19 (read John 12:20-26)

"Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." (John 12:21b)

Today's text does not specifically teach the week's theme, but it is an important lead-in to tomorrow's study. I have the printed verse on the wall in my office to remind me that I have failed in my presentation unless the listeners or readers have seen Jesus. With the limitations of a human body, Jesus could be in only one place at a time, but now that He has His glorified body, He is omnipresent as the Son of God. He sits at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us while His Spirit abides in our fallen world to teach believers and to convict sinners (23-24). Since Jesus laid down His life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for others (see 1 John 3:16). It is an **honor** to follow the Lord and to serve Him. We are not saved because of obedience, but rather we obey and follow because we are saved (v. 25-26).

Wednesday, July 20 (read John 12:27-33)

"But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." (John 12:32)

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prays for the cup of death and separation from the Father to be taken away if there is any other way to save lost mankind (see Matthew 26:36-46). God could not spare His Son this suffering, because "it was for this very reason (He) came to this hour" (v. 27). The Lord's only desire is to glorify the Father through completing God's predetermined will (see Matthew 26:39). God speaks affirmation from heaven just as He did at His Son's baptism (Matthew 3:17) and transfiguration (Matthew 17:5). Jesus declares that the prince of this world (Satan) will be defeated and driven out by His death and resurrection. The debt of sin could **only** be paid by the One who is perfect! The Lord has already been "lifted up from the earth" on the cross! Are you ready to lift Him up in praise?

Thursday, July 21 (read John 16:31-33)

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

Those who claim that a Christian will be exempt from sorrows and heartaches in this world are denying the words of our Lord quoted above. When believers fail to have their selfish requests for health and wealth granted, preachers tell them that it is because of their lack of faith. In today's text, however, Jesus predicts a time when all of His followers will be scattered. Of course, it happened in the Garden of Gethsemane, but I believe it is also happening in our country today. Jesus asks a sad question in Luke 18:8, "However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" The peace Jesus offers is not an absence of conflict, but rather the presence of calmness in the midst of the storm. He didn't sugarcoat the troubles that we will face, but He is more than sufficient to supply our needs (Philippians 4:19).

Friday, July 22 (read John 16:1-4)

"They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me." (John 16:3)

I have an awfully difficult time understanding why so many ministries have adopted the "Health and Wealth" doctrine. Oh yes, I know that this teaching brings in more money for the ministry than an emphasis on commitment or self-discipline. Jesus says that there will come a day when you will be put out of the church or even killed for the sake of truth (v. 1-2). Does that sound like He promises to supply your every material or health wish? The printed verse above is from John 16:3 and is actually the opposite of John 3:16. The God that I serve promises eternal life when we leave these old earthly bodies, but in the meantime, He promises heartaches, troubles and persecutions. How can you expect to live in a world controlled by Satan, and still be free from pain and suffering?

Saturday, July 23 (read John 15:18-21)

"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first." (John 15:18)

Jesus says, "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also" (v. 20b). Many TV preachers are misleading their listeners by promising them instant gratification when they pray. God is in the process of molding us into the image of His Son! Shouldn't we expect that process to be painful? Do we fail to understand from Romans 5:3 "that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance, character, and character, hope?" Although Satan is the god of this age, the one true God holds the key to eternal life. This life is found only in His Son (1 John 5:11-12)! We will understand everything clearly when we see His face. In the meantime, expect the world to hate you because Jesus told you that it would (v. 18)!