

20:20 Vision Ministries—Devotions by Roger Browning Week 34 (August 18-24, 2019)

Despite what you may hear from many modern preachers, Jesus never promised smooth sailing for His followers. Instead, He warns us that people will treat us the way they treated Him. We will continue to explore this truth this week.

Sunday, August 18 (read Matthew 10:26-31)

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28)

Today’s passage reminds us to focus on Jesus, not on the leaders of this world. They may persecute us and even kill us, but they have no power whatsoever over the soul. God, on the other hand, is sovereign over everything, so He watches over us as well as the creatures He has created (v. 29). Many people in today’s society don’t believe in a literal hell, but you need only this passage to tell them they are sadly mistaken (v. 28). I pray that you are learning to trust the promises of God. You can do this only when you take the Word of God literally. “For no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Christ” (2 Corinthians 1:20a). You can remain faithful even though severe persecutions are coming!

Monday, August 19 (read Matthew 10:32-36)

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.” (Matthew 10:34)

The world is seeking peace through the formation of a one-world global government. However, based on the warning in v. 32-33, Christians are to follow a Biblically correct worldview instead of a politically correct one. It will be difficult during the days of persecution to say, “Thus says the Lord,” but we must remain true to Him and His Word. Even our own families will turn against us, especially those who have been “educated” in liberal colleges (v. 35-36). “Let God be true, and every man a liar” (Romans 3:4). Every day, in an effort to combat the world’s teachings, I send Scriptures in a text to my young believers as well as those who have walked with the Lord for a long time. Pray that these Scriptures will find fertile soil in their seeking hearts!

Tuesday, August 20 (read Matthew 10:37-42)

“Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” (Matthew 10:39)

Today’s text teaches us that our love for Jesus must go far beyond our love for our family and friends (v. 37). We are to lay down our lives for Him! This means that we go where He sends us, say what He tells us, and do what He says. “You are not your own; you were bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6:19b). Salvation is **His** gift to us, but obedience is **our** gift to Him. Once we establish our love for Him (v. 37-39), then we are ready to serve Him and honor others who teach His Word to us (v. 40-42). Jesus says in Matthew 25:40b, “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Wednesday, August 21 (read Matthew 24:4-8)

"All these are the beginning of birth pains." (Matthew 24:8)

Jesus warns His disciples about the perils that are ahead. While the worst of the signs given in Matthew 24 will not occur before the rapture of the Church, God has allowed us to see the tip of the iceberg. In other words, we are now seeing all the signs listed in today's text, but these will get much more intense as the time for Jesus to come back to earth draws close (v. 8). I have never seen the world in more turmoil! False religions and false teachers are getting the headlines, while the Word of God is being held in contempt. The Lord says in Luke 12:40, "You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him." Will it be long before He shouts (Revelation 4:1), "Come up here?"

Thursday, August 22 (read Matthew 24:9-14)

"Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved." (Matthew 24:12-13)

As we see the kingdom of Islam rising up against the kingdom of God, we can know for certain that the birth pains of suffering are intensifying (v. 7-8). Jesus will call His true Church home in the rapture before the fulfillment of all these events, but He has allowed us to witness first-hand the hatred that brings about this division. False converts are already falling away and are following the god of political correctness (v. 10-12). True converts will endure to the end, because Jesus keeps us safe in His sheepfold (v. 13; see also John 10:27-30). Through satellite TV, the gospel can soon be preached to all nations (v. 14). Can you almost hear the sound of the trumpet?

Friday, August 23 (read Luke 21:25-28)

"When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." (Luke 21:28)

The government blames global warming for the fulfillment of all the signs mentioned in v. 25-26. Unaware that they are doing Satan's work, they are using this to scare the world's citizens into a one-world global government, just like Satan tried to form in Genesis 11:1-9. God is in control of all of nature because He created it (see Nahum 1:3-6). When I was a kid, I had never heard of Tsunamis, but thousands of people have been swept away by them recently (v. 25). Jesus is letting Christians see a tiny bit of what it will be like during the Great Tribulation when His wrath is poured out on the planet earth. What should we do in light of this? The printed verse says it all!

Saturday, August 24 (read Luke 21:29-36)

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." (Luke 21:33)

Many scholars think that the nation of Israel is the fig tree referenced in the parable Jesus tells in v. 29-30. If so, the fig tree bloomed on May 14, 1948 when Israel became a nation. That would place a deep meaning to Jesus' words recorded in v. 32: "I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened." In other words, if these scholars are correct, the generation of people who were alive in 1948 will not die off before Jesus comes back! The Word of God is the only thing you can trust in these perilous days (v. 33). Don't get caught up in the ways of those who do not believe in the finished work of Jesus. Instead, pray that you will be among those who go into heaven in the rapture prior to the tribulation (v. 36).