

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 36 (August 28-September 3, 2016)

Since Satan's first question, "Did God really say?" is dominating my thoughts, I want to spend another week asking you to examine your trust in the Bible. Many say they believe Scripture, but few alter their lifestyles to bring them in line with His Word.

Sunday, August 28 (read Genesis 19:15-17)

As soon as they had brought them out, one of them said, "Flee for your lives! Don't look back, and don't stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!" (Genesis 19:17)

God is trying to lead His people to Higher Ground (my favorite hymn)! Through the rapture, He offers us the ultimate escape from this old Satan-controlled earth. The event in today's text is a picture of the rapture. There can be many reasons why a Christian wants to remain in "Sodom." For example, our friends and our lost loved ones are special to us, even though they think our beliefs are a joke (v. 14). We can even be enjoying the economic advantages of going along with the sinful lifestyles of the people. If we look back or if we stop on our journey to the Promised Land, we will be swept away by the cunning ways of the world (v. 17). Did God really tell us to flee to mountaintop living? You need to answer this question daily!

Monday, August 29 (read Genesis 19:18-26)

But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. (Genesis 19:26)

Not wanting to give up his big city advantages, Lot bargains with the angels so that he can downsize to only a small town (v. 18-20). In agreeing to his request, the angels declare a wonderful promise from God: He will not destroy the earth until He has taken His righteous children away in the rapture (v. 21-22). The Lord destroys Sodom and Gomorrah by raining down burning sulfur, probably a picture of hell (v. 24-25). It's a reminder that God will someday destroy the earth by fire (2 Peter 3:10), even though He has promised not to flood the earth again (Genesis 9:11, interestingly enough). Once you start on your spiritual journey, God doesn't want you to look back, longing for the sinful past (v. 26; see also Luke 9:62)

Tuesday, August 30 (read Genesis 19:27-29)

So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, He remembered Abraham, and He brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived. (Genesis 19:29)

Before we leave this story, I want to point out the value of intercessory prayer. Abraham had bargained with the heavenly visitors on behalf of his nephew and the other citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah (18:16-33). Don't miss the fact that it is **Abraham's** intercessory prayers that save Lot and his family (v. 29). Perhaps my most important assignment at the present time is to intercede for you in prayer. You also need to be interceding for your family, church, country, etc. God says, "The prayer of a righteous man (or woman) is powerful and effective" (James 5:16b). You have been declared righteous by the blood of Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:21). Did God really say that prayer is your privilege and your duty? Decide today!

Wednesday, August 31 (read Matthew 4:1-4)

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:4)

Those who want to live on a higher plain of life must believe that the Bible is indeed the inspired Word of God! Those who cannot bring themselves to believe this truth have no way of growing in their faith. Likewise, they don't even have any way to know that they are saved, because it is only through the Bible's teachings that we know that "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). When Satan tempts Jesus to satisfy the needs of His body by using His supernatural powers, the Lord quotes **Scripture** from Deuteronomy 8:3 to answer him. **Every** word of Scripture is God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16)! Did God really say that?

Thursday, September 1 (read John 10:25-30)

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." (John 10:27)

Perhaps the most comforting passage of Scripture is found in today's text. Do you feel safe in the hands of Jesus? Can you trust Him to hold you, even during your times of rebellion? In other words, did Jesus really say the words recorded in this passage? His real sheep listen to His voice and follow Him (v. 27). He gives them eternal life and they will never perish, because He holds them in His hand (v. 28). For further assurance, He says that the Father also has us in His hand, since He and His Father are one (v. 29-30). If God really says this, what do you have to be worried about? Ask yourself, "Does my lifestyle say that I **believe** this?"

Friday, September 2 (read John 14:1-6)

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

Did God really say that Jesus is the **only way** to salvation? The politically correct world does not believe this even though many of them claim to be Christians. Does Jesus promise to call you home to Heaven and to receive you in the rapture? Has He already died in your place to prepare for you a home in Heaven? Can you trust His promises, even the ones that have yet to be fulfilled? If you can, you can "Let not your heart be troubled" as you trust in the Father and the Son (v. 1). God wants us to live on a higher plain, but we cannot do this until we trust His Word and the promises it contains. "Did God really say?"

Saturday, September 3 (read John 3:16-18)

"Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in God's one and only Son." (John 3:18)

Did God really say the words recorded in John 3:16? If so, how can you question your salvation? Didn't He promise eternal life to those who believe? Didn't He verify that He didn't come into the world to condemn it, but rather to offer salvation to anyone who believes (v. 17)? Therefore, "whoever believes in Him is not condemned" (v. 18). Most Christians can say "amen" until they get to the second half of our printed verse. Did God really say that whoever rejects the Son is already condemned? Since, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), those who don't come to Jesus by way of the cross are lost forever. You must answer the question posed by Satan, "Did God really say?" (Genesis 3:1)