

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 53 (December 25-31, 2016)

We will celebrate the birth of Jesus this week when families will get together and gifts will be exchanged. Through these devotions we will continue to celebrate the greatest Gift of all!

Sunday, December 25 (read John 1:14-18)

The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

Merry Christmas! Could I have printed a better verse to explain the true meaning of Christmas? “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). Does the combination of this verse and the printed verse above make it plain to you that Jesus Christ is God, the second person of the Trinity? The cults deny the deity of Jesus as well as the Trinity, but all Christians must not only accept the truth, but also be able to explain it to others through the Word of God. That is one reason why it is vital that believers spend time in His Word every day—especially on Christmas. Today, by giving gifts to one another, you are celebrating the greatest Gift ever given. There is nothing wrong with expressing your love to one another, but be careful that you don’t forget whose birthday it really is. Enjoy this special celebration!

Monday, December 26 (reread John 1:14-18)

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:17)

Now that you understand the Biblical truth of the incarnation, I want you to focus on the reason Jesus had to become a human. The Jewish people knew the law, but none of them could keep it (see Galatians 3:11). No one has ever been saved by keeping the law. For anyone to live forever in God’s presence, the Lord requires perfection (see Matthew 5:48); therefore, He devised a plan to save whoever would believe in the birth, life, death and resurrection of His Son. In other words, “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). You can’t be perfect in your own strength, so when Jesus took your sins to the cross, He covered you with His righteousness and now you are perfect in His sight. That’s the entire gospel message in one verse! Celebrate your salvation as you enjoy the Christmas gifts given by those who love you.

Tuesday, December 27 (reread John 1:14-18)

No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only who is at the Father’s side, has made Him known. (John 1:18)

The printed text once again identifies Jesus as God. Through Him, **grace** and **truth** are offered to the world (v. 17). If you study the first four chapters in John’s gospel, you will see four ingredients in salvation (grace, water, Spirit and truth). When we accept His **grace**, we are baptized in the **water** and the **Spirit** comes to live in us to guide us into all **truth** (see Acts 2:38, Ephesians 2:8-9 and John 16:13). Jesus says, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9) and “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30). We don’t have to understand the Trinity completely. We only need to trust in the fact that God appears to us in three persons. A God small enough for me to explain would not be big enough to worship. We must accept through faith the things too wonderful for us to understand at this time.

Wednesday, December 28 (read Colossians 1:15-17)

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. (Colossians 1:15)

No passage of Scripture declares the deity of Christ better than today's text. Jesus was not the first person to come back from the dead, but He was the first one to receive His new heavenly body when He arose. Someday, all Christians will receive a body like His, but until then, we are stuck in these bodies that are wasting away (see 2 Corinthians 4:16-18). Many Christians do not realize that Jesus has existed with the Father throughout eternity. They think His birth in Bethlehem 2000 years ago was the beginning of His life, but Paul declares that Jesus is the Creator and Sustainer of all things (v. 16). Hebrews 1:1-3 proclaims the same truth! Be sure that you worship **Jesus** this week as we celebrate His birth and as we move toward New Years Day. It's easy to get caught up in the celebration while we leave Him out completely!

Thursday, December 29 (read Colossians 1:18-20)

For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him . . . (Colossians 1:19)

Paul declares, once again, the deity of Jesus Christ and His supremacy over all things as the Head of the Church (v. 18). He then makes one of the most powerful and definitive statements about the necessity of the cross in providing the salvation of mankind when he writes, "and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross (v. 20). The more I understand God's mercy and grace, the more I preach about the cross. His death produces life in everyone who believes and receives. From the time God created Adam with a free will, He knew that His Son would have to take on a human body to die for our sins. The perfect, unblemished Lamb of God became the acceptable sacrifice to a Holy God who cannot look upon sin. Praise Him all week for His perfect Gift!

Friday, December 30 (read Colossians 1:21-23)

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. (Colossians 1:21)

All of us possess a sin nature that draws us away from the teachings of God. Without Jesus' death and resurrection, we would have to stand before the Father and give an account of our lives. Just one sin would be enough to disqualify us from heaven. We were alienated from God and were actually His enemies because of our evil behavior (v. 21). "But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation . . ." (v. 22). Even verse 23 and the big word "if" is not scary, because we know "that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6). Can you praise Him throughout 2017 because of this truth?

Saturday, December 31 (Colossians 1:24-29)

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27)

I cannot imagine a better verse with which to end the year than the printed one above. I want to know Christ in His fullness, and then I want to present Him to you in a way that you can understand (v. 25-26). Unlike Paul, I have yet to suffer for the gospel (v. 24), because God has supplied all my needs, just as He promised to do (Philippians 4:19), but His truth stands even if persecutions come later on. The entire message of the gospel can be consolidated into the printed verse. Jesus lives in you in the form of the Holy Spirit to provide comfort as well as continuing knowledge. There is nothing to fear as we move into another year with a new president. Can you trust Him to do for you what no one else can?