

## 20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 11 (March 6-12, 2016)

The last time Jesus traveled to Jerusalem, the crowds welcomed Him with praise, only to crucify Him the following Friday. We want to be ready for His next ride into the city, so we will examine the events and teachings associated with the last week of His life on earth in this week's devotions.

**Sunday**, March 6 (read Matthew 21:1-11)

*The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. (Matthew 21:6)*

I printed verse 6 above to encourage you to do the same as we wait for the rapture of the Church followed, seven years later, by His physical return to Jerusalem. Jesus knows what the future holds, so He has given instructions through His Word to prepare us for His arrival. Just as each Scripture predicting His first coming had to be literally fulfilled (v.4), all the promises prophesying His second coming must also take place. In today's text, His followers use Old Testament phrases to honor Him (v. 9). The question they ask (v. 10) is, "Who is this?" In order to be ready for life's final chapter, we must answer this question with assurance. Now that He is your Savior, allow Him to be your Lord and King!

**Monday**, March 7 (read Matthew 21:12-17)

*"It is written," He said to them, " 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.' " (Matthew 21:13)*

Today's text records the second time that Jesus cleanses the temple, but this one takes place at the **end** of His earthly ministry while the first one took place at the **beginning** (see also John 2:11-22). Today His temple is our body since He dwells within us (1 Corinthians 6:19), so He is reminding us that the cleansing of our bodies is an ongoing process. Just like in Jesus' day, the church is called to pray and to intercede for others (v. 13). Too much buying and selling still goes on within the walls of many churches. God wants an atmosphere where the spiritually blind may receive their sight and where the spiritually lame may learn to walk with Jesus (v. 14). If the older leaders fail to lead in a Christ-honoring way, the Lord will raise up a new generation to praise Him (v. 15-16). Are you among those who are praising Him and praying in the Spirit during worship?

**Tuesday**, March 8 (read Matthew 21:18-22)

*"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." (Matthew 21:22)*

When Adam and Eve sinned, they used fig leaves to try to cover their nakedness before God (see Genesis 3:1-7). From that time on, God has been looking for fruit from His creation, but all He ever sees is the leaves of cover-up. Now as Jesus enters Jerusalem to die for our sins, He is sick and tired of seeing nothing but leaves. He is aware that He must pay sin's penalty (death) and become the Vine from which the branches (us) receive their nutrients (see John 15:1-8). The fig tree is only a symbol of that much larger truth! The printed verse above is one of the great promises from the mouth of our Lord. Can you trust Him enough to live a victorious life in light of this truth?

**Wednesday**, March 9 (read Matthew 21:23-27)

*“By what authority are You doing these things?” they asked. “And who gave You this authority?” (Matthew 21:23b)*

When revival comes to a church, the structure of authority changes. Those human leaders who have made all the decisions for the church must learn to yield to the will of God received through the Word of God (v. 23). In order for us to witness that glorious event, each of us has to answer the question the Lord poses to the chief priests and the elders (v. 25). John’s baptism emphasizes **repentance** (Matthew 3:11) for the forgiveness of sins (see Acts 2:38). Those who truly repent and are baptized willingly come under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God. Those who do not repent merely become church members and will never understand, nor submit to His authority (v. 27). The rapture of the Church will not include those who refuse to submit to His will and His Word!

**Thursday**, March 10 (read Matthew 21:28-32)

*“Which of the two did what his father wanted?” (Matthew 21:31a)*

In today’s text, Jesus illustrates the teaching from yesterday’s devotion. There are two types of people within every church: 1) Those who only give lip service to their profession of faith, and 2) Those who **repent** and **serve** the Father. I hope you can see yourself in the first son who sees the error of his attitude and action, changes his mind (repents), and gets the job done in the vineyard (v. 28-29). The second son seems more obedient to the father until you observe that he never acts on his promise (v. 30). The message of the Lord’s illustration is this: True Christians come under the authority of Jesus and His Word and willingly work in His vineyard for His glory alone (v. 31-32). All others are imposters!

**Friday**, March 11 (read Matthew 21:33-41)

*“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” (Matthew 21:40)*

Today’s text is another parable to illustrate the necessity of bearing fruit for the glory of God. The landowner (God) has done all of the work necessary to have a fruitful vineyard (v. 33a). He has every right to expect fruit from the labors of the farmers to whom he has rented fields (v. 33b-34). The renters, however, refuse to share the fruit with the owner; instead, they mistreat those sent to collect some of the increase (v. 35-36). Finally, the landowner sends his son, thinking that the renters will respect him. In their greed, they murder the son, thinking that they will receive his rightful inheritance (v. 37-39). The hearers of the parable come to the right conclusion as they answer the question (v. 40-41). They do not understand, however, that Jesus has caught them in a trap, as we will see when we conclude this story in tomorrow’s devotion.

**Saturday**, March 12 (read Matthew 21:42-46)

*“Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.” (Matthew 21:43)*

The listeners do not realize that Jesus has spoken the parable (v. 33-40) to set a trap for them, because they do not apply the ancient Scriptures to themselves. Many people still read the Bible without making application to its teachings. That’s why Jesus asks the religious leaders a pertinent question (v. 42): “Have you never read in the Scriptures . . .?” In summary, those who are ready for the return of Jesus are the ones who are producing fruit in His vineyard. This fruit includes our own spiritual maturity as well as our roles in winning others to Him. Jesus is the Cornerstone of our faith and of our church (v. 42)! There is no other acceptable foundation. Like a wild stallion that has been broken to serve its master, true believers are broken of their own agenda so that they can serve the Master of the universe (v. 44). Does the thought of being broken to do His will cause you to want to arrest Jesus also (v. 45-46)?