

WHERE THERE IS NO VISION

**“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”
(Prov 29:18 KJV)**

The word here translated as “vision” is the Hebrew word “chazown” which refers to prophetic revelation. Thus the verse is not talking about man’s dreams for the future, but God’s divine revelation for man.

The word translated as “perish” is the Hebrew word “para.” It comes from the primary root which means “to loosen” and is translated as “naked” in Exodus 32:25. When Moses returned from the mountain with the Law of God he found the people “naked”. The message of Proverbs is clear, without God’s revelation man lives a “loose” life. The NIV translates the verse: **“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law.”**

Thus we have before us a sharp contrast between those who are governed by God and those who govern themselves. One group has no restraints and the other obeys the law of God. One group is condemned and the other is blessed.

When Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876 a Philadelphia newspaper described him as a “harmless madman with a useless toy.” One great visionary, however, dissented and said: “No, I think the telephone may be useful and would not be surprised if someday every city has one”. This illustration is intended to humble us as we contemplate the future of God’s Kingdom. I fear that our finite minds are incapable of understanding the infinite scope and magnitude of His eternal wisdom.

Consider, for example, the original disciples of our Lord. The primary command of Christ to them was “follow me”. W. E. Vine states that this expression is used 77 times in the Gospels of following Christ, and only once otherwise (Mk. 14:13). The apostles did not know every where Jesus was going and they didn’t need to know. All they needed to do was follow. As we would say today, they were in sales and not management. Further, Jesus found it impossible to explain to them His plans. For example, He said to Nicodemus **“I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?” (John 3:12)** He said to the Jews: **“You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.” (John 8:23)** He said to Peter: **“Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.” (Matt 16:23)** He said to all the apostles: **“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear.” (John 16:12)**

Consider, for example, the commission of Christ to make disciples of all “nations” (Matt. 28:19). The Bible word translated as “nations” is “ethnos” which means “gentile” It is translated that way 93 times in the King James Version of the Bible. Yet, for some reason, the apostles seemed incapable of understanding this for many years. It was perhaps ten years after Jesus gave them this commission that Peter dared to preach directly to a gentile (See Acts 10). Even then, as you know, it was a “controversial” thing to do and required the supernatural appearance of angels and visions to accomplish.

As we contemplate our rich heritage and look to the future, certainly there is nothing wrong with young men having visions and old men dreaming dreams. Joel prophesied that this would be characteristic of Christianity. Further, we can all cream of the day when all of the divergent elements of heaven and earth will be united in Christ (Eph. 1:10). While we do so, however, we need to realize that today we see through a glass darkly. Today, our best efforts to see the future of God’s Kingdom are like shadowy figures of men like trees walking. Someday, however, we shall see face to face. Someday we will all know fully even as also we are fully known.

On that happy day we will fall down before Him and confess that His deeds are great and marvelous and immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine.

“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!” (Rom 11:33)