

“VISION” or “REVELATION”

(Prov 29:18)

“Yet our distress comes from no failure of substance. We are stricken by no plague of locusts. Compared with the perils which our forefathers conquered because they believed & were not afraid, we have still much to be thankful for. Nature still offers her bounty & human efforts have multiplied it. Plenty is at our doorstep, but a generous use of it languishes in the very sight of the supply.

Primarily, this [our distress] is because the rulers of the exchange of mankind's goods have failed through their own stubbornness & their own incompetence, ~~have admitted their failures & abdicated~~. Practices of the unscrupulous money changers stand indicted in the court of public opinion, rejected by the hearts & minds of men.

~~True, they have tried, but their efforts have been cast in the pattern of an outworn tradition. Faced by failure of credit, they have proposed only the lending of more money.~~

~~Stripped of the lure of profit by which to induce our people to follow their false leadership, they have resorted to exhortations, pleading tearfully for restored conditions.~~ They know only the rules of a generation of self-seekers.

They have no vision, & when there is no vision the people perish.

The money changers have fled their high seats in the temple of our civilization. We may now restore that temple to the ancient truths.

The measure of the restoration lies in the extent to which we apply social values more noble than mere monetary profit.

Happiness lies not in the mere possession of money, it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort. -- Inaugural Speech of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Given in Washington, D.C. on March 4th, 1933.

[FDR was quoting a well known passage from the KJV of the Scripture. “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (Prov 29:18). This is a passage that is frequently quoted but misapplied.]

I. “WHERE THERE IS NO VISION THE PEOPLE PERISH.”

A. **Used to circumvent Bible authority:** *apostolic pattern for the organization, work & worship of the church.*

1. Human pattern: Missionary Societies; Sponsoring churches; Benevolent agencies; Evangelistic organizations: World Bible School; World Radio; World Christian Broadcasting.

- a. Human organizations steal glory away from God’s perfect pattern (will).
- b. The church as God arranged it (locally) is sufficient to do His work He has called upon it to do.

B. Used to awaken the need for planning.

1. Foresight, insight, the ability to envision what can be done by faith & determination.
2. But we must not allow our vision to take precedence over the principles & commands set forth by Jesus & the apostles.

Matt 7:21-23 – Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, & done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice **lawlessness** [anomia: illegality, violation of law, wickedness]!'

Luke 13:24-27 – Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter & will not be able. 25 When once the Master of the house has risen up & shut the door, & you begin to stand outside & knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' & He will answer & say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' 26 then you will begin to say, 'We ate & drank in Your presence, & You taught in our streets.' 27 But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of **iniquity** [adikia: (legally) injustice, (morally) wrongfulness of character, life or action – Strong's].'

1 Jn 3:4 – Whoever commits sin also commits **lawlessness** [anomia], & sin is lawless-ness.

3. There are many good lessons we can glean by discussing the misuses of Proverbs 29:18, but what does the verse actually mean?

C. The Hebrew word for “vision” (KJV) doesn't refer to human foresight & planning.

1. “Chazon” – *divine revelation* (word of God).

1 Sam 3:1 (NKJV) – Now the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And **the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation.**

(KJV) – And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And **the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.** (2 Chron 32:32; Isa 1:1; Lam 2)

D. The Hebrew word for “perish” (KJV) does not refer to death.

1. “Para” – *to throw off, to let loose; hence to uncover, to make naked.*

II. “WHERE THERE IS NO REVELATION, THE PEOPLE CAST OFF RESTRAINT.”

A. Consider the importance of “vision” or “revelation” from God.

1. To know the character of God (personal attributes).

Exo 34:6-7 – And the LORD passed before him & proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful & gracious, longsuffering, & abounding in goodness & truth, 7 keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity & transgression & sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children & the children's children to the third & the fourth generation."

Rom 1:20 – For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power & Godhead, so that they are without excuse

Jas 1:17 – Every good gift & every perfect gift is from above, & comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

Acts 10:34 – Then Peter opened his mouth & said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality (Rom 2:11).

1 Pet 1:14-16 – as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

2. To understand fellowship with God.

a. Sin separates us from Him (**Isa 59:1-2**).

b. How to be set free from sin to serve righteousness (**Rom 6:16-23**).

c. How to walk in the light, that we may have fellowship (**1 Jn 1:7**).

d. Not based on human feelings or emotions.

3. To understand the will of God, matters relating to the body of Christ.

a. What was wrong with Cain's sacrifice, Nadab & Abihu's fire, Saul's burnt offering, King Uzziah incense, & David's oxcart? *The same thing as mentioned in Matthew 7 & Luke 13.*

- b. “Revelation” informs us that we cannot serve God by instinct & intuition (Jer 10:23; Prov 14:12; 16:25; Jer 6:16; Isa 8:20).

4. To understand end time matters.

- a. Universal judgment (Heb 9:27; Matt 25:31-46; 2 Thess 1:7-10).
- b. Universal resurrection (Jn 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; 1 Thess 4:13-18).
- c. Universal destruction (2 Pet 3).
- d. Jesus’ kingdom returned to the Father & our bodies changed (1 Cor 15).

[We couldn’t understand any of this without “vision” or “revelation” from God to the apostles. Paul said, “I will come to visions & revelations of the Lord” (2 Cor 12:1).]

- B. But now let’s consider what Solomon said was important about “vision” or “revelation” from God.

- 1. Without it “the people perish” or “the people cast off restraint”.

Prov 29:18 TLB – Where there is ignorance of God, **crime runs wild**; but what a wonderful thing it is for a nation to know and keep his laws.

NLT – When people do not accept divine guidance, **they run wild**. But whoever obeys the law is joyful.

K & D - ...**the people become ungovernable**.

2. Examples:

- a. Before the Law was delivered, Israel cast off restraint (Exo 32:25 & context).

Deut 12:8 (40 years after Exodus 32) – You shall not at all do as we are doing here today — every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes

Judges 17:6 (Hundreds of years after Exodus 32) – In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes (21:25).

3. In the absence of revelation from God, or refusing to heed His revelation, there is confusion, rebellion, disorder, strife, vice.

4. When people get out of touch with God's word, they lose their potential for being like God, & they become no better than animals.

- The design of God's word is to bless mankind, but it's not enough to know it or to possess it, we must truly allow it to lead us in our thoughts & actions.

1 John 2:3-6 – Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, "I know Him," & does not keep His commandments, is a liar, & the truth is not in him. 5 But **whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him**. By this we know that we are in Him. 6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

CLOSING

- How thankful we ought to be for the "vision" & "revelation" from God in the Bible.

- The masses will ignore it, & attempt to guide themselves through life.

- So it is no wonder that our society plunges deeper & deeper into the shame of iniquity.

- But notice the last part of Proverbs 29:18, "*But happy is he who keeps the law.*"