

## **The Necessity of Right Vision**

Often when we enter into some new Biblical revelation we might think we are beginning to get a fairly good hold on what the purpose of God really is about. Even if we think we do have a handle on it, there is always more.

It's not enough to have an understanding of the Grand Purpose, we also need to know HOW we are to participate in it, and also HOW God is working all this to its appointed end.

Correct vision of this purpose and right "seeing" is important, but do we understand the ways in which God will bring all this to pass? There are certain spiritual principles ("laws" if you like) that God uses in order to bring things to their appointed end.

When we can truly say in our hearts that we not only "know" the vision but also what in us is likely to stymie it, only then can we have a valued testimony and stand before the brethren to speak it. Then they will say about us; "This one knows the vision and can even alert me to the pitfalls along the way - to this one will I listen, for he has heard from heaven".

So God will use men and women of Heavenly Vision who are able to state what it is, to disclose the ways in which God will bring it to pass, and who are able to adjust the thinking of those who might be prone to hasten or even short-circuit the prescribed way.

We dare not entertain doing this unless we have first "seen the Lord". From the Beginning of the gospel period to its End we find those who have "seen the Lord". The apostles saw Him in His resurrected state, and in John's grand revelation he saw Him in His glorified state. The whole New Testament from start to finish is a collection of writings that cry out "We have seen Him!" There is literally no greater vision than this.

Everyone from that first point on who has lived out the gospel has also "seen Him". It's this vision of Him and Who He is and our part in it, that glues the whole story together. When we get the right vision it will stay firm within us despite all the daily grind, the times of fleeting doubt or soulish fretting, even the illnesses and seeming injustices of life.

When we can stand in "a broad place" (Psalm 18:19) and see things as they are eternally meant to be, then we can proclaim from the very depths of our inner man and say "I know this to be true despite what the circumstances of life might otherwise say". We will stand firm in our conviction.

This is one reason why correct vision is so important. True heaven-sent vision that has engaged one's heart and become a foundation deep within, will bring us through. Recall that it was Joshua as a young man who remained faithful at the door of the Tent of Meeting to keep his focus and vision centred (Exodus 33: 11).

Imagine this for a moment. Moses had come down from the mount only to find another "vision" had been placed before the people; the golden calf. After this idol was destroyed we find young Joshua remaining at the Tabernacle, the meeting place of man with God, the place of extraordinary heavenly vision. No doubt he wanted to keep close as possible to God's original vision for Israel. He stayed focussed. He didn't let the sin of false vision, as displayed by the golden calf, sway him off course.

Later this would happen again. At the entrance to Canaan, Joshua was excited to at last see the Promised Land. He, along with Caleb and the other ten entered in according to God's command. They saw and they tasted the fruit of that Promise. Two grasped what God's intent was about; ten let the circumstances speak a different vision to their hearts.

The ten said, "We SAW the giants...we were like grasshoppers IN OUR OWN SIGHT..."(Numbers 13: 33). Take note of what their vision dictated to them. It was strong enough to make them fear, doubt and rebel.

But when God forbade the people to enter into Canaan that first time, when they had to endure the forty years of hardship, mumbling, fear and regret, Joshua kept his vision focussed. He kept the vision sharpened. He undoubtedly reminded himself of what was yet to come. This enabled him to be ready to go in when the Lord spoke the second time. He wouldn't let unbelieving hearts dictate to him now. He had accepted what Heaven spoke to Moses and he held fast to it, not wavering in it, but letting it day by day grow deeper and deeper in him, and yet at the same time, letting its truth rise to the surface.

Joshua's vision of "entering in" was always just below the surface. True, it had gone deep in him at first, but when it had formed a solid foundation within, it began to rise towards the surface. Day by day it must have grown within him, so much so that no doubt he groaned waiting for its reality. When that day came and Heaven spoke to enter in, he was ready. He was prepared. He was not slack. He was a man of the given vision and he had not let it wither those forty long years.

There are many today amongst the brethren who are hearing this wonderful purpose and vision extolled. Not near enough are hearing it, but at least more than in previous generations. However unless the proclaimers of this Grand Purpose of Harmony are also able to warn about the pitfalls, to alert the brethren of the subtle deceptions, and to disclose God's way of bringing it to pass, we will have "ten" more who will balk when the "entering in" is at hand.

Those ten spies (note how they are described!) would've known the vision that Moses had repeatedly spoken about the Promised Land. But when the crunch came they were self-focussed. True vision actually means death to self-vision. We need to get that straight in our thinking.

Joshua was not identifying himself so much with the vision of "entering in" as if it was some "thing", or some "purpose" to be fulfilled. Rather he was identifying with the *Mover* of that purpose, God Himself. There's a great difference between aligning with a "movement or purpose", and aligning with God who is the Mover of that purpose.

Some people will readily jump on the band-wagon of a new movement, they will clamber to identify with a new church across town who has a great vision, and they will readily give themselves to the "new work". They speak of commitment, and maybe even consecration to the new work, but when things become difficult and Satan or the soul presses in, they cave in. What's happened?

They have made the error of aligning with the "vision or purpose" rather than aligning themselves to the Mover, the Lord God. Worse still they may be the type of people who live off second-hand revelations rather than receiving the call direct from the Lord. Our commitment or consecration must always come out of identification *to* the Lord, rather than our identification *with* the vision. He must always take the priority.

As we allow the Lord to take His rightful place, we begin to see what He's really about. We glimpse the vision He has, and it's out of seeing like He sees that we're moved to identify with that vision. In other words, commitment to a vision should come out of seeing as the Vision-Giver sees, not just because we approve of the vision itself. We need to see as God sees.

There's a principle in the Word: **"Seeing precedes entering in"**.

Think about that for a moment. Abraham had to "see" the stars in the heavens before he could move on in his journey. Moses was taken up the mount to "see" the Promised Land before the people could enter in. The disciples had to "see" what the Kingdom was about through signs and wonders, before Jesus could send them out to proclaim it.

A wise pastor or elder will not get too excited when people want to join their church because they "like the vision". He will be cautious, because such people often put the vision before He who gives it. They'd never say that of course, but their words and works will eventually betray that attitude. How important it is to make certain the flock under one's care know the Vision-Giver first before they sign up to the vision itself.

Without "seeing" the vision for ourselves we are prone to want to adjust it later as we tire of, or get frustrated with, the outworking of the vision. Our own ideas may begin to surface in an attempt to rescue the supposed decaying vision. Striving soon takes place, and a spiritual battle will ensue. Sadly this often ends in spiritual depression for some and usually results in a parting of ways for others.

So it is that we first need to get to know God's great eternal purpose, as clearly as possible in our heart. Once we have seen what He purposes then the next step falls into place.

That next step is to be so close to Him that we know His heartbeat. We recall that Jesus said the twelve were no longer servants but friends to Him (John 15:15). Servants certainly know about their job description, they act according to given commands. Friends on the other hand are closer and they know the mind and heart, and they are even privy to certain issues not disclosed to others (Matthew 11: 13).

We need to know both the "outward" eternal purpose as well as the "inward" heartbeat of our Divine Friend. When these two are harmonious in a person's life then we'll have people who know the Vision-Giver well, and are equally clear about the vision itself. This

marrying of the inward and outward will bring about a consecration of a person's will to the task. Such a person becomes both a Knower and a Seer of the grand vision.

It's this combination that enables a person to remain steadfast to see the vision through. It will be tested, certainly, but the Knower-Seer will stand and wait, assured that the outcome will truly come to pass.

How will God bring us to His desired end? What spiritual laws will He use in our preparation? One of the most fundamental ways, which God uses to prepare us for our destined role, is the New Birth. Just as Jesus was a Son from above, so we too, who are Born Again from above (John 3: 3 margin note) are members of "the First Family".

We are partakers of the Divine Nature of God (2 Peter 1: 4), a very real "next of kin" if you like. In fact our association *with* and *to* the Lord Jesus enables us to be of one Spirit with Him:

**"The one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him"**

*1 Cor. 6: 17*

This is our starting point; our preparation for having right vision is the New Birth. It propels us into a new order of being. This spiritual heredity enables us to perceive the Eternal Vision of the heavens; our mindset can now know the Purpose, while the carnal mindset cannot:

**"The mind of the flesh is enmity towards God; for it is not being subjected to the Law of God, and neither can it be."**

*Rms. 8: 7*

Jesus Christ is THE Son; He is the mould, the prototype, the "image" of what all other Born Again ones are to be like. We are "spiritual blood-brothers" to Christ.

**"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. "**

*John 1: 12-13*

This relationship with the great Son of God is not confined to being of "one family" but extends to actually partaking of His glory. He said:

**"...and I have given them the glory which You have given Me, that they may be one, as We are One."**

*John 17:22*

Thus the purpose of our being is unravelled even further with this understanding. Paul prayed that his readers would begin to grasp this wonderful truth when he wrote:

**"(I pray) that the eyes of your mind having been enlightened, for you to know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."**

*Eph. 1: 18*

Only by a divine revelation of God's eternal purpose can we ever begin to know what has been proposed for us. Only by the Holy Spirit enlightening our regenerated mindsets can we see this truth, which begins with the New Birth. This then is the first spiritual law that is enacted to bring about our "seeing" of the vision.

A second spiritual law that soon follows is that governing time. "Time" is a fundamental characteristic of those who are coming to maturity. Saints who begin to appreciate the seasons and times of God, particularly in relation to waiting, are on that road.

The outworking of any vision requires the obvious passage of time. Time must elapse before the vision becomes a concrete reality. This is so in the natural realm and it's even more so in the spiritual. Rarely if at all, do we see an "incarnation" of a vision come about quickly. We must wait, expectantly, yet with an increasing desire of yearning for the vision to come to pass. Patience is of paramount consideration. It's a testing.

As God is still seasoning our flesh and mind in this waiting period, but we're prone to want to hasten the day. This can occur in various ways.

A practical sort of person, like a pastor for instance, might want to use some method or programme to help the vision become a reality. He may attempt to "prime the pump" and help the spiritual flow come forth. He may even subconsciously misread events around him to try to convince either himself or others that "something is moving in God; can you sense it?" Discernment is displaced by undue haste. Confusion begins to take root and wrong decisions soon follow.

Or there might be a prophet who was initially used by God to prophesy the vision, which may become impatient and start to prophesy slight alterations to God's programme. The prophet who at first spoke boldly about the coming Move might cautiously add to the original word as time seems to pass by rather more slowly than expected. The prophet who first saw what God revealed tends to live in that future realm and often finds the waiting hard. This is particularly so with immature prophets. If they've been so foolish as to prophesy a date or time they inwardly panic as the day draws near with no sign of the Move breaking forth. Right at this point they "add" some later "revelation" to save face. Of course it's all done subconsciously, and they would never think it's them - but it usually is.

Little "excuses" creep in; subtle changes to the original vision take place; and impatience comes into the mind. The excitement of first grasping the vision, of seeing it and being thrilled by its grandeur, begins to fade as we await the hour of its fulfilment. But it's this very passing of time that the Lord can use to adjust our thinking.

It's a truth that we usually don't comprehend the full nature of the initial vision until much time has elapsed. Only then do we truly see what it's about. This "blind spot" is done by the Lord in an attempt to increase our faith. It also quickly sorts out those who have really appreciated the given vision from those who have put their hand up without considering the responsibility it requires.

Now a third spiritual law comes into play; that of the adjustment period. We're not expected to simply get the vision, and then wait around until one day it comes to pass. No, there's a requirement for us to be corrected, adjusted and transformed during this time. More often than not it requires suffering!

The suffering is of course the challenging of our mindset by the Lord. How often do we see or hear of saints who leap into fervent action when a vision is prophesied or first presented. They might even appreciate the need for a waiting period, much like a pregnancy, before seeing the fruit. After all, they concede, that's Biblical enough.

But they're not ready for the transformation of the mind that MUST take place if the vision is to change them. The suffering it will entail brings all the dross of their inner life to the surface and they can't cope with it. Hurts, regrets and unresolved issues quickly surface as the Spirit stirs the depths within.

It's at this vulnerable point that the vision they were once so excited about takes a dive while they focus on the mess that's floated to the surface of their mind. Over and over we see such people consumed, no longer by the God-given vision, but by the sewage of the past.

At this moment God's wonderful grace and mercy can cleanse and restore them, but more often than not the process of adjustment is too much to bear. In order to find some relief from their inner woes they begin to attack the Keepers of the Vision to divert attention. A displacement of purpose and vision takes place, and unless there are wise men and women of God to help restore such ones, the outcome is often tragic.

As painful as this is, it's nevertheless one of the ways which God uses to purify the outcome of His vision. He yearns for the vision to remain pure and intact. Inevitably there will be some "deaths" along the way. Some may "die" in the early stages of the vision, only to find a wonderful opportunity of restoration later. Others may well "die" and never see a resurrection from their inner struggles that would enable them to be part of the vision.

At this stage a rather wonderful thing happens. The initial vision, which could only have been in embryonic form, begins to expand outward. The very core of the vision, coming from God Himself, does not alter, but it does take on a new shape as it were.

As we yield to the correcting, adjusting and patience needed to see the vision unfold, our spiritual eyes begin to take in a grander panorama than first envisaged. Our spiritual horizon expands quite markedly, and in some cases very rapidly. What we saw from one perspective is now seen from another, and the scenery is breathtaking. From this new vantage point, that of submitting to God's ways, the view encompasses so much more than we first thought.

When this begins to take place, the former vision is not abandoned, but actually enhanced; it becomes broader. Right at this point others who were not aligned with the earlier vision begin to line up with this new "seeing". The new blood brings a great thrusting forward of intensity, and it can be a very exciting time.

But some who initially refused the earlier vision may now try to jump on the wagon and be part of the new move. Sometimes the Lord allows this; other times He resists the resisters for not moving on in faith earlier. It will require wisdom to know just who is approved by the Lord in this and who is not. No one should think they can simply "get" the fresh vision and join the parade. This vision is not "got" - rather it is "given".

This is precisely where the maturity of apostles and prophets comes into play. The mature prophetic voices will herald the broadening horizon, and encourage the saints to go with it, while at the same time warning people to have a right heart in their motives for wanting to be part of all this.

There's also likely to be a marked increase in dreams, visions and prophetic words at this time. However the words of the prophets will not be enough to stabilise the ship. The spiritual fathers, the apostles, will need to know how and when to apply the truths that will cause the vision to become a reality. Generally they will do so in tandem with local eldership.

The prophets will proclaim the fresh vision **to** the Body, the apostles apply its truths **for** the Body, while the local elders administer these **within** the Body.

One sees the vision and speaks it; one *applies these truths* to the here and now, and the other *facilitates* it locally.

Of course it's not as clear cut as that, for there will inevitably be some overlap as each ministry works in harmony with the others to bring the saints into greater maturity.

This exciting marrying of ministries will set the church on a new course of life. Currently this is where the Body of Christ is heading, but there'll be many labour pangs yet to come before we see the birth.

Blessings and the Lord's favour upon you,

Peter McArthur

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