

JESUS IS OUR REVELATION

Proverbs 29:18

Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint;
But happy is he who keeps the law.

This is a much quoted verse that is usually quoted using the King James Version where it says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Many times, or I could say most times, the last part of the verse is left off, "but he that keepeth the law, happy is he." Why is that? Because it doesn't fit in with what their message is, that's why. Without a vision the people perish. That is when the preacher says that we need a fresh vision from God into where He is leading us. The church has gone stale. We need a vision. Our membership totals are waning. We need a vision. Sin abounds in this world. We need a vision. No, no, and no. It has been revealed to us one of the greatest of mysteries of God. This deepest of mysteries has baffled, perplexed, confused, and miffed men and women throughout the centuries, from one millenia to the next. The mystery that has baffled and perplexed mankind from the very beginning of time of their existence on this earth. What does this all mean? What is the meaning of life? Why am I here? Why are we here? What is the point of our lives on this planet? After all, King Solomon in all his wisdom came to the conclusion that it's all a bunch of nothing. Work hard all your life so that someone else inherits your wealth. Whether you eat well or suffer hunger, whether you have many riches or you don't know where you'll find your next nickle, whether you live in a four thousand square foot home with a pool in the back or whether you live under the bridge in a cardboard box, we all meet the same fate. We all die and end up in the ground, in one way or another. Meaning some may get cremated. Some get buried in a coffin. We all end up in the ground.

Without a vision the people perish. Sounds like an interesting proverb that Plato or Socrates could have wrestled with. If we don't have it revealed to us about our destiny, we will perish. Well, as mentioned, we all ultimately perish on this earth in the appointed end of our lifetime. No one has continued to live forever on this earth. Right? I suppose that is where many of the philosophers ended their musings. We exist, and then we die. Ooh, that's deep, profound even. Something that you could take into the "coffee shops" in the '60s. "We exist, and then we die." [Mic drop] Although Methuselah had a pretty good run at it, he made it to 969 years old before he went to the ground. Noah was a close second, making it to 950 years old. But yet, they all met the same fate. Live, for a while, then die. So, the word perish, as it is translated in the King James version, and is translated as "cast off restraint" in the New King James version

comes from the Hebrew word para (pawrah). It literally means to loosen with an implication to expose or dismiss. So let's take that and put it in the sentence. Without a vision (KJV) or revelation (NKJV) the people loosen and are exposed and/or dismissed. Looking at it from the view of one's morals, without a vision or revelation people are exposed and dismissed. Exposed of what and dismissed by whom? The answer to that is in the second part of that verse. "But happy is he that keeps the law." The law comes from where? God Himself. He gave Moses the ten commandments. Who knows what they are? They can be found in **Exodus 20** and **Deuteronomy 5**.

1. "You shall have no other gods before Me."
2. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image...and shall not bow down to them nor serve them"
3. "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain..."
4. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."
5. "Honor your father and your mother..."
6. "You shall not murder."
7. "You shall not commit adultery."
8. "You shall not steal."
9. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."
10. "You shall not covet...anything that is your neighbor's."

What came from God and given to Moses as well, to tell the Israelites is, "[T]he Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live" (**Deuteronomy 30:6**), and also "that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days." (**Deuteronomy 30:20**)

There we have it, the vision, or revelation, from God, and the law which should keep them from perishing, from loosening from a subjective set of morals that would expose themselves before God and man and be dismissed by God and man. God said do this and it will be well with you. With no revelation, the people cast off restraint. That translation is a bit more pointed and specific. It could be phrased, "if we don't know what God wants us to do then we will surely just do whatever we think we should do, or do whatever we want to do." "But if we follow God's rules, we will be happy." Another option is to deny that God even exists and to just say everything is subjective, and that we can and should just do whatever we want. After all it does seem as though we are here to just choose as we see fit. Whatever suits our purpose and pleasure.

Here it comes...but God! "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." **Colossians 1:16** says, "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him." All things were

created through Him and for Him. That includes us. We were created for God's purpose. God chose to have us be born and have this life that we live. "The earth is the Lord's and all its fullness." (**1 Corinthians 10:26**). We are His. We were created for Him. And we were created for His good pleasure. **Ephesians 1:9-12** says this, "having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory."

I suppose it seems like I suddenly jumped the track. We were finally to a place of getting a handle on "without a vision the people perish" or "without revelation the people cast off restraint." Follow the law, right? You may have wondered what became of that "but God." Here it comes. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (**Romans 5:8**) Here's another bonus "but God." This one more fully reveals the great mystery of our purpose in life, what it all means, why am I here? "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

God knew that Adam and Eve would sin in eating the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden. God knew that everyone born thereafter would sin against God and follow their own desires. God gave the law to express His desires for us but as we find out, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (**Romans 3:23**) But God, here it is again. "[F]or all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." But God! In His Righteousness we are justified. That is the great mystery that has been revealed to us. We are forgiven of our sins by Jesus taking our sins upon Himself so that we can be justified in the eyes of God. We take on His Righteousness! "For by

grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Yes, we are created by God to do good works but it is only by Jesus Christ that we are justified by God to be forgiven by God and to inherit ETERNAL LIFE in Him. **John 3:16-17**, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." Eternal Life! Being righteous in the eyes of God! All, through believing that Jesus paid the price of our sins against God, dying on a cross and then raising from the dead on the third day, to where we too will raise from the dead and have eternal life.

So why even mention the law and the Ten Commandments? Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment as "Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (**Matthew 22:37-40**) The Apostle Paul explained the comparison of the law and grace in the book of Galatians and in Romans. Paul said, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him."

God still wants us to do His will which can be summarized by what Jesus said about loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. But, that is not what saves us. We are saved by the grace of God, in believing in His promise of eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. But God...does have a plan and purpose for our lives. Each and every one of us, to do His good works, now for His eternal kingdom, and eternally IN His eternal kingdom. We just have to believe in His promise.

There is no other way to be found to receive that promise from God Almighty, Creator of the heavens and the earth. "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father

except through Me." (**John 14:6**) **Romans 8:9-10** says, "Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." We become alive in Christ. That is for **eternal life**. When we truly believe on Christ, turning to Him for our salvation, turning to Him to be Lord of our lives, for **He is the Lord**, He gives us His Holy Spirit to comfort us, guide us into His Truth, to intercede with the Father for us, and to have us bear fruit for the kingdom of God. God has a very specific plan for each of us to do good works for His eternal kingdom but His vision or revelation has been revealed to us through God's only begotten Son.

Once again, the same Word that was given Moses to tell the Israelites, is for us even today.

"[T]he Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live", and then our responsibility in that is "that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days." (**Deuteronomy 30:20**)

That is through Jesus the Christ, the Savior to all who will believe on Him. That vision or revelation that we need to keep us from being loosened, exposed, or dismissed is in **Hebrews 12:1-2**, "let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith**, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." God indeed promises that He will complete the work He has begun in us, if we will continue to believe and keep **looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith**.

"Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint;
But happy is he who keeps the law."

Here is a Jesus version of that Proverb:

"Where one has not Jesus, they will surely perish. And happy is he/she who finds Him."