

Teach In No. 2 God's Gift to us, Vision and Faith. This document was originally in two parts but has been brought together into one. Undated. Unsure if ever shared with SCF\*

## Vision

Once again we will be looking at God's Word with regard to how we can begin to understand what He has in mind for us, His people. The vision that we are to have revealed to us is straightforward and simple to understand, our problem, after this session, will not be in the area of our intellect, but in the area of how do we get into doing it. However, let's find out where it is that God wants to take us.

### **Matthew 13 verse 11-12**

*Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. 12 For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.*

Jesus tells His disciples that to them (the unbelievers) the mysteries have not been granted and that to whoever has, they will receive more, but to whoever doesn't have even what he has will be taken away. How privileged are those who have been given the free gift of the life of Jesus, not because of self effort on our part, but because God's vision includes Salvation for all those who will place their lives in the hands of His Son. We start off then with one step of faith, receiving Jesus as both Saviour and Lord and then as we get to know more and more about Him and His plan and purposes for our lives, so we shall be given increasing understanding and the ability to put it all into practice. In the Old Testament God spoke through His Prophets, He unfolded something of His intentions for His people, men like Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Jeremiah and many others. They were all men whom God had chosen to declare His eternal purposes to, that each one might envision the people of their day of both the present and future direction that He had planned for them.

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In the times of Jesus it was He who demonstrated the purposes and the resurrection power that would change the course of history, so that it would fit into God's plan for the whole world. Jesus brought His Father's words into being for all to see and we now enjoy His resurrected life in ourselves. He came that we might have that life abundantly.

Lets look at what He has said about those who have no vision. The different Bible versions help us to see the relationship between the words in the Bible and what we are expressing.

## **Proverbs 29 verse 18**

### **New American Standard Version**

*Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, but happy is he who keeps the law.*

### **Living Bible**

*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.*

### **Revised Standard Version**

*Where there is no prophecy, the people cast off restraint, but happy are those who keep the law.*

### **Authorised (King James) Version**

*Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.*

We have here several descriptions of what vision is. First of all the words *no vision* which is the revelation of God's purposes now and in the future, also we have the words *ignorance of God* which indicates the state of the unbeliever in the first place and of many Christians unfortunately, many of whom have not believed through wrong understanding and lastly we have the words in the RSV *no prophecy*. *No vision, ignorance of God and no prophecy*, this is not the way into the Kingdom of God, this is how the world sees things.

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We are called to be different to this and not only have we been called, but He has made it possible for us to be different.

Lets look at what Jesus said about the times in which we live, they are called the *end times*. As we look at what Jesus said in the Gospel of Mark we will recognise many of these things taking place around us today, both in the church and in our society.

### **Mark 13 verse 1-4**

*As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" 2 And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down." 3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately, 4 "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?"*

They were very proud of the achievements around them, these were monuments to the works for God. Jesus was not impressed at all. It was not part of His Father's plan to erect temples built out of human resources, so Jesus did not approve it. Do we not have many monuments of this kind today? What is happening to them? Are they not mere buildings? Does God dwell in such places? What does God's word say about His temple? Is there such a place as a Holy Temple?

### **Acts 17 verse 22-29**

*So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. 23 For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.*

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*24 The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; 25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, 27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.' 29 Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.*

As Paul stood in the Areopagus or assembly place on Mars Hill and spoke to the men of Athens about their worship of the unknown God, he told them just who God was and how He made everything on the earth including Human Beings who are His children. God's vision for us as His people is that we understand first and foremost, something of His heart. We can see in Matthews account of the signs of the end times.

### **Matthew 24 verse 5**

*For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. We are encouraged to look at the fruits of the lives of such people.*

### **Matthew 7 verse 20**

*So then, you will know them by their fruits.*

Matthew 24 continues to show us what we can expect in these times.

### **Matthew 24 verse 10-12**

*At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. 11 Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. 12 Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.*

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There will be a build up of hate, even amongst Christians there is already evidence of this, we have failed to obey Jesus' command that we should love one another, love our wives, love our husbands, love our neighbours, which is the kind of lifestyle that is in line with His vision. We are warned of false teachers and prophets who will lead many astray, there will be a growth in crime. We certainly don't have to look too far in our society for this problem. It's all to do with authority and there's not much respect for the law of the land, let alone God's Holy laws. The same verse tells of love growing cold. You don't need a degree in theology to tell you that this kind of lifestyle is not in line with God's vision, either in or out of the church. It is only depressing if there is no solution, praise God we have all the answers in His Son!

## **Faith**

### ***Hebrews 11 verse 1***

*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*

Faith is active, not passive, it's the putting into practice of the Words that Jesus has spoken to us. We can express our faith in many ways, but essentially it is a life style that is first of all pleasing to God because it demonstrates to Him that you have received the Word of God in a believing heart.

### ***Hebrews 11 verse 6***

*And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.*

Faith comes first of all, by hearing. We need to be able first, before we can be doers. The hearing that I am referring to is not only the natural hearing, but the awareness of the spiritual inner ears that we have when we receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

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## **2 Corinthians 4 verse 7-15**

*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; 8 we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death works in us, but life in you. 13 But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE," we also believe, therefore we also speak, 14 knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you. 15 For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. At His word without question, it is in one sense blind obedience. God has allotted to every believer a measure of faith.*

## **Romans 12 verse 3**

*For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.*

As we use our faith it grows, unlike natural things; shoes wear out, your car tyres wear out, faith will grow as you use it. Faith leads us into action, we can begin to thank God for His word that has given to us this understanding.

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## **Mark 16 verse 17-18**

*These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; 18 they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."*

Note that when Jesus said this to His disciples He didn't say *pray them out*, He said *cast them out*. In some cases you may have to ask God for revelation but Jesus spoke of action. They will speak with new tongues. In the whole of these two verses Jesus gives them the authority to act as He did, we go in His name, in His place to do what He did.

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