What Vision? Proverbs 29.18

“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” KJV

This verse has been frequently used by politicians, i.e. “She is a leader with a vision.” Meaning she “sees” bike trails and parks where there are none. In 1929 the Republican president of the depression, Herbert Hoover, is reported to have used this verse in his inaugural address. (I couldn’t confirm this without spending money for a subscription…so I’ll just say “reported.”) The vision was probably his idea for America and the law was probably the constitution. Lest the Democrats be offended, Bill Clinton also used Proverbs 29:18 in his 1992 inaugural address; we all know how important the Bible is to the Clintons.

Let’s take a closer look at this verse: it starts with a negation of existence; there is NOT a vision, or better, a revelation. This is not a politician’s big idea, but the revelation that comes from God via a true prophet or the written scriptures. Whenever this is missing the general population moves toward mob rule. Consider Exodus 32:25 and remember the state of the camp when Moses returned from the mountain; “unrestrained” is the same word used here. It is actually an understatement when we read the chapter. The stem used in the Hebrew takes a look at the end of the matter, i.e., this is where things end up.

We have watched a shift in our culture over the past 1 ½ years. Increasingly we must now be concerned about encountering an unrestrained mob. Without biblical revelation permeating the minds of people in a culture, the culture moves steadily towards chaos and never towards order.

Happiness, or blessedness comes in observing or keeping the law. “Law” here probably refers to all of the Old Testament. Jesus spoke about the “law and the prophets” as a way of referring to all of God’s revelation. His word is what provides instructions to His people. The last pronoun could be subjective, “happy is he who keeps the law” or objective “happy is (the one) keeping it.” Because Solomon is talking about revelation, I am inclined to see the pronoun as objective.

Removing God’s word sends a culture into chaos; keeping His word brings true happiness.

Keep being a culture contrarian!

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