

Scriptures and Doctrine :: proverbs 29:18 How can you tell what vision means?

proverbs 29:18 How can you tell what vision means? - posted by staff, on: 2013/2/8 20:19

Hi all,
Just wondering how can we tell whether the "vision" in proverbs means vision like prophetic vision or i had a night vision or is it to do with vision as in the man with the plan kinda thing?
I looked in the concordance and am not sure how you decide one meaning over another?
Thanks for your help staff

Re: proverbs 29:18 How can you tell what vision means?, on: 2013/2/8 20:46

A. Nouns.

chazon (חֶזְיוֹן, 2377), "vision." None of the 34 appearances of this word appear before First Samuel, and most of them are in the prophetic books.

Chazon almost always signifies a means of divine revelation. First, it refers to the means itself, to a prophetic "vision" by which divine messages are communicated: "The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth" (Ezek. 12:22). Second, this word represents the message received by prophetic "vision": "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he" (Prov. 29:18). Finally, chazon can represent the entirety of a prophetic or prophet's message as it is written down: "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz" (Isa. 1:1). Thus the word inseparably related to the content of a divine communication focuses on the means by which that message is received: "And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision" (1 Sam. 3:1—the first occurrence of the word). In Isa. 29:7 this word signifies a non-prophetic dream.

chizzayon (חִזְיוֹן, 2384), "vision." This noun, which occurs 9 times, refers to a prophetic "vision" in Joel 2:28: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." Chizzayon refers to divine communication in 2 Sam. 7:17 (the first biblical occurrence) and to an ordinary dream in Job 4:13.

B. Verb.

chazah (חָזָה, 2372), "to see, behold, select for oneself." This verb appears 54 times and in every period of biblical Hebrew. Cognates of this word appear in Ugaritic, Aramaic, and Arabic. It means "to see or behold" in general (Prov. 22:29), "to see" in a prophetic vision (Num. 24:4), and "to select for oneself" (Exod. 18:21—the first occurrence of the word).

In Lam. 2:14 the word means "to see" in relation to prophets' vision: "Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity."

Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W., Jr. (1996). Vol. 1: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (277). Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.

Re: - posted by staff, on: 2013/2/9 14:25

Hi Armkelly,
Thank you for such a detailed reply. If you were to paraphrase this proverb what message do you think the writer was trying to get across?
Much appreciated Staff

Re: proverbs 29:18 How can you tell what vision means?, on: 2013/2/10 3:53

The danger with paraphrasing is that doing so implies an understanding already. My own preferred method of drawing out meaning is to broaden the meaning from which it may then be possible to demonstrate the meaning itself and therefore the particular passage or verse. In this case it is just one verse.

Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he. Proverbs 29:18

However:

The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, the oracle. The man declares to Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ucal: Surely I am more stupid than any man, And I do not have the understanding of a man. Neither have I learned wisdom, Nor do I have the knowledge of the Holy One. Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name or His son's name? Surely you know! Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar. Proverbs 30:1-6

This passage from Proverbs chapter thirty gives a view of things from the perspective of what must be the opposite position as is commonly proposed by the meaning of Proverbs 29:18. Or perhaps it reinforces the real meaning of Proverbs 29:18.

The general way in which Proverbs 29:18 is presented is that of claiming that God's people "perish" without a vision, therefore "behold the man with the vision" and God's people are led astray. This interpretation then becomes justification for both following a man as well as his prophecies. I have always rejected such an understanding because it is in reality blasphemous. Agur clearly did not have a mind to boast either in intellect or in knowledge, and he knew some realities of God as the passage demonstrates. Yet Agur goes on to warn against adding to the word of God. Today, this verse from Proverbs 29:18 has become justification for every kind of deception and falsehood in the church by becoming a covering for the vanity of men, and thereby God's people in following the man, thereby adding to the word of God and justifying every kind of stupidity. In the end of course these things will be held to the account of both the one who has visions and the one who believes them. There is no doubt however that God does give those who He has chosen to lead His people, visions, dreams and prophecies. Hence there is an aortic possibility.

In context both of its deeper meaning in both Israel at that time as well as the Church now, I don't believe this proverb actually has an aortic meaning but it speaks a condition of Israel when God Himself is not speaking to Israel through the prophets, albeit that the prophets may be prophesying falsely. As God Himself is not speaking in such a time it is necessary to fall back to one's own walk and take stock of it. Hence the phrase "but he that keepeth the Law, happy is he". The right attitude which one needs to have, is this reality of knowing both times as well as one's own true heart condition, otherwise one will be led astray both outwardly and inwardly.

Two things I asked of You, Do not refuse me before I die: Keep deception and lies far from me, Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion, That I not be full and deny You and say, "Who is the Lord?" Or that I not be in want and steal, And profane the name of my God. Proverbs 30:7-9.

Also the way the NASB translates the word "perish" Proverbs 29:18 is:

Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, But happy is he who keeps the law. Proverbs 29:18 NASB

This word "perish" in the KJV is "unrestrained" in the NASB. It carries the contextual side of the Proverb and therefore its true meaning.

There has never been a lack of false prophecies and false prophets in the church or Israel. The dirth is not a lack of falsehood but an absence of God Himself speaking because of the condition of His people. In short there is a lack of true prophecy. When Israel is in an apostate condition then this lack of prophetic leading makes for a lack of restraint amongst God's people. This is no less true in the Church. What prophecy and vision could there be when the condition of a people is continuously wayward and rebellious; given to self interest and self indulgence? For the one who desires to serve God in such a time then the words of the Proverbs becomes wisdom. How can a wayward and rebellious people possibly please God? There is no need for visions when there is no willingness to true obedience. Therefore to prophecy about visions which speak other than "repent" is false.

Two things I asked of You, Do not refuse me before I die: Keep deception and lies far from me, Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion, That I not be full and deny You and say, "Who is the Lord?" Or that I not be in want and steal, And profane the name of my God. Proverbs 30:7-9.

Re: - posted by staff, on: 2013/2/10 16:55

Hi Armkelly,

Thanks again for your detailed response.

The reason I asked:

During the week I was led to study the word Vision and the only verse that came into my head was Proverbs 29:18.

I realize now that God was showing me among other things that this verse has been misused badly.

I also had a revelation: that the preacher that uses this scripture for the wrong reasons are the same ones that lack vision and show no restraint. Also if you flip the coin over then whoever are happy keeping the law are the ones that have vision and restraint,

Yours Staff