

# *Catching the Vision*

Catching the Vision is a way of looking at and learning about God's wonderful plan and purpose with this earth. This plan is found in the Holy Bible and glimpses and hints of it can be seen from the first book of the Old Testament, Genesis, to the very last book of the New Testament, Revelation. It is a plan that will take one from the original creation and revelation of the way God wanted this world to be to a time in the future when men and women, the final and most special part of his creation, will be an integral part of the ultimate fulfillment of this plan, a time when God will be all in all and his glory will fill the whole earth.

Catching the vision will allow you to look at the whole panorama in a systematic and progressive manner showing each step along the way that the creator has taken to show the extent that he has gone to show his love for his people by wanting them to share in these glorious things that are going to take place.

We are going to look at a number of people from the pages of the Bible; ordinary people like you and I. The Bible does not present its characters in a light that shows only their strengths

and not their weaknesses. Throughout the Bible what God wants man to become is constantly presented as a spiritual counter-point to what the natural tendencies in man lead him to. God took these people and to some he gave promises of the vision, to others he gave the strength and insight to pour forth in prophecy not only the need to repent but a sharpness and clarity that conveys the vision in a manner that no writer not so inspired could ever convey.

We will be looking at the teachings of Jesus for in them he teaches a great deal about the kingdom to come. Much of this is in parables, short stories which usually begin "the kingdom of God is like....." In these parables he teaches concepts about the time of restoration to come. Much can be learned not only from his parables and prophetic teachings but from his death and resurrection as well. After all, Jesus will be the future King of this kingdom and his death and resurrection play a significant role in our own redemption and becoming a part of this kingdom.

We will be looking at the speeches and writings of the apostles and follow them in

their tireless efforts to show the Jews how Jesus was indeed the Messiah that the Old Testament promised. To the gentiles they worked as tirelessly showing them that the Jesus whom the Jews rejected would for them become their hope of salvation. As they spread their message throughout the then known world, both Jew and Gentile would come to know that Jesus was to become King one day of a kingdom here on this earth, a marvelous kingdom where all the ills and evils of this current world will be "put to rights" and his saints, those who are resurrected from the dead or alive at his coming will be part of that team that will help restore this earth to the place that God wanted it to be from the time of creation.

Catching the Vision will be presented in eight parts, each part covering a major concept or a major time period in Bible history. We will begin with a special look at God and the vision he had for this earth at the time of creation. After looking at God we will look at the focus of his creation, man and woman. We will see how sin thwarted God's original intentions and how much of the scripture

*(Continued on Page 2)*

## *Catching the Vision*

*(Continued from page 1)*

demonstrates the power of sin and the destruction that it can bring about.

The perfection of man and the change to a spiritual and im-

mortal life will restore men and woman to that creation that God wanted man to be in the beginning when he created Adam and Eve. It was only the entrance of sin that marred the lives of this special part of

creation and delayed that part of the vision that God had for the human race thousands of years when the times would ultimately be fulfilled and the vision would become a reality.

\* \* \* \*

## *Catching the Vision*

### **IN THE BEGINNING, GOD**

The Bible begins with these words:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... (Genesis 1:1, NIV)

Everything begins with God. Everything depends on God for life and existence. God is the center and source of all life, all knowledge, all wisdom, all power, all love. Everything. He is the one, and only God. He is righteous, and faithful and good. He is eternal, without limits. He is everywhere, present by his powerful spirit.

I am the LORD, and there is no other;

There is no God besides Me.

I will gird you, though you have not known Me,

That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting

That there is none besides Me.

I am the LORD, and there is no other;

I form the light and create

darkness,

I make peace and create calamity;

I, the LORD, do all these things.' (Isaiah 45:5-7, NKJV)

God, the Almighty Creator, wants us to know him. It's crucial that we know him:

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. (John 17:3, NKJV)

How can we possibly know him—and not just know him intellectually but know him to serve him, to worship him, and to love him with all our heart and soul and mind and strength?

We certainly learn about the Creator by seeing his creation:

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. (Psalm 19:1, NIV)

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. (Romans 1:19-20, NIV)

Jesus instructs us to learn about God through the love and actions of our parents:

"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! (Matthew 7:9-11, NIV)

But besides the lessons of the creation itself and the love extended through our families, God has inspired the entire Bible to be written and preserved and taken to the far ends of the earth so that anyone and eve-

## In the beginning, God

*(Continued from page 2)*

ryone can learn about him. He reveals himself to everyone who humbly searches for him in these pages. Over and over again, in many different ways, God teaches us about who he is, what he is doing and his plan and purpose for his creation:

Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation." (Exodus 34:4-7, NIV)

For thus says the LORD,  
Who created the heavens,  
Who is God,  
Who formed the earth and made it,  
Who has established it,  
Who did not create it in vain,  
Who formed it to be inhabited:  
he says: "I am the LORD,

and there is no other.

I have not spoken in secret, from somewhere in a land of darkness;

I have not said to Jacob's descendants, 'Seek me in vain.'

I, the LORD, speak the truth;

I declare what is right. (Isaiah 45:17-18, NKJV)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. (Romans 8:28-30, NIV)

Through the praises of those who have come to know him, we, too, come to know him:

O LORD my God, You are very great:

You are clothed with honor and majesty,

Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment,

Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain. (Psalm 104:1-2, NKJV)

Oh, give thanks to the

LORD!

Call upon His name;

Make known His deeds among the peoples!

Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;

Talk of all His wondrous works!

Glory in His holy name;

Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!

Seek the LORD and His strength;

Seek His face evermore!

Remember His marvelous works which He has done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth,

O seed of Abraham His servant,

You children of Jacob, His chosen ones! (Psalm 105:1-6, NKJV)

Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

if I settle on the far side of the sea,

even there your hand will guide me,

your right hand will hold me fast. (Psalm 139:7-10, NIV)

*(Continued on page 4)*

## In the beginning, God

*(Continued from page 3)*

Through the commands he gives us we learn what he wants for us, his creation, and what he wants us to do and to be:

These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes

of your houses and on your gates.

(Deuteronomy 6:1-9, NIV)

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. (1 John 4:16-17, NIV)

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. (James 1:16-18 NIV)

Through the lives of his servants, told to us in the Bible, and especially of His Son, we come to know God:

Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do

even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. (John 14:9-12, NIV)

In all our reading and searching for God in the creation, in our lives, and in the Bible, we need God's power and wisdom to begin to understand and know this God who is beyond our mortal, limited experience and knowledge. In all things we must follow the Apostle Paul's example and pray for help:

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. (Ephesians 1:17-18, NIV)

Finally, as we do come to know him, we, too, will join in praise of him who is worthy of all praise:

*"You are worthy, O Lord,*

*To receive glory and honor and power;*

*For You created all things,*

*And by Your will they exist and were created."*

(Revelation 4:11, NKJV)

When the Bible talks about the spirit of God, what does it mean? What is the spirit of God? What is the Holy Spirit? To understand what the Bible is saying, two things are helpful. The first is to go back to the original meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words that are translated "spirit", in the New Testament and the Old Testament. We don't need to be Greek scholars to do that but we do need some Bible study tools. One good tool is a book entitled "Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words. In that we find the following:

In the Old Testament the Hebrew word *ruach* is translated as "breath; air; strength; wind; breeze; spirit; courage; temper; Spirit."

In the New Testament the Greek word *pneuma* "primarily denotes 'the wind' (akin to *pneo*, 'to breathe, blow'); also 'breath'; then, especially 'the spirit,' which, like the wind, is invisible, immaterial and powerful."

(from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Both the Hebrew and the Greek words, then, that are translated "spirit" are also translated as "wind", "breath", "air", or "courage" in different verses depending on the con-

text. Two examples of the original Hebrew and Greek words that are translated as "spirit" much of the time but are also translated as "wind" or "breath" are:

1) The wind (*pneuma*) blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit (*pneuma*)." John 3:7-8 (Notice that this verse has the same word *pneuma* in the Greek but it is first translated "wind" and then "spirit".)

2) Pairs of all creatures that have the breath (*ruach*) of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. Genesis 7:15

Spirit, then, has to do with "life force" as in "breath" or power as in "wind". Spirit is something that you cannot see yet it is full of power and makes things happen, such as the wind that makes the trees bend.

The second way to consider the word "spirit" is to find out how it is used in the Bible. A concordance is very helpful. Here are a few entries from the PC Study Bible Concordance:

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." John 4:23-24

But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD, and of justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin. Micah 3:8

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Luke 1:35

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life. Job 33:4 NKJV

By the word of the LORD

## God is spirit, What is spirit?

(Continued from page 5)

were the heavens made,  
their starry host by the  
breath of his mouth.  
Psalm 33:6 NIV

This is what God the LORD  
says — he who created  
the heavens and stretched  
them out, who spread out  
the earth and all that  
comes out of it, who gives  
breath to its people, and  
life to those who walk on  
it: Isaiah 42:5 NIV

When you send your  
Spirit, they are created,  
and you renew the face of  
the earth. Psalm 104:30  
NIV

In the beginning God cre-  
ated the heavens and the  
earth. Now the earth was  
formless and empty, dark-  
ness was over the surface  
of the deep, and the Spirit  
of God was hovering over  
the waters. Genesis 1:1-2

This is the word of the  
LORD concerning Israel.  
The LORD , who stretches  
out the heavens, who lays  
the foundation of the  
earth, and who forms the  
spirit of man within him...  
Zechariah 12:1-2 NIV

For this is what the high  
and lofty One says — he  
who lives forever, whose  
name is holy:

"I live in a high and holy

place, but also with him  
who is contrite and lowly  
in spirit, to revive the spirit  
of the lowly and to revive  
the heart of the contrite. I  
will not accuse forever,  
nor will I always be angry,  
for then the spirit of man  
would grow faint before  
me — the breath of man  
that I have created. Isaiah  
57:15-18 NIV

What do these verses teach  
us about "spirit"? From  
these we learn that the spirit  
is powerful, life-giving, and  
creative. It is the source  
of our life and the expres-  
sion of God's power and  
glory.

## *Catching the Vision*

### **"I am God and there is no other..."**

Over and over again God  
warned Israel about idolatry.  
The first two commandments  
of the "Ten Commandments"  
that were given to Israel  
stated:

"I am the LORD your God  
who brought you out of  
Egypt, out of the land of  
slavery. You shall have  
no other Gods before me."

"You shall not make for  
yourself an idol in the form  
of anything ..." (Deut. 5)

And of, course, the first and  
greatest commandment tells  
us that God is the only God:

"Hear, O Israel: The  
LORD our God, the LORD  
is one. Love the LORD  
with all your heart and  
with all your soul and with

all your strength." (Deut.  
6)

These commandments were  
repeated over and over to Is-  
rael but throughout the Old  
Testament their history tells us  
over and over again that Israel  
fell to worshipping the idols of  
the nations around them. The  
prophets call out to the people  
to return to the living God, the  
God that has saved them and

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*"I am God and there is no other"*

*(Continued from page 6)*

is ready to save them again. Idols are lifeless, useless, helpless:

The idols of the nations are silver and gold, made by the hands of men.

They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see;

they have ears, but cannot hear, nor is there breath in their mouths.

Those who make them will be like them,

and so will all who trust in them. (Psalm 135:15-18 NIV)

What fault did your fathers find in me, that they strayed so far from me?

They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves. (Jeremiah 2:5 NIV)

Some pour out gold from their bags and weigh out

silver on the scales;

they hire a goldsmith to make it into a god, and they bow down and worship it.

They lift it to their shoulders and carry it; they set it up in its place, and there it stands.

From that spot it cannot move.

Though one cries out to it, it does not answer;

it cannot save him from his troubles. (Isaiah 46:6-7 NIV)

Yes, our God is alive and powerful. He is a God of action. Just read a few of the Psalms or some chapters from the prophets and see all the things that the LORD our God does:

He creates and gives life.

He listens and answers.

He redeems and saves.

He satisfies the hungry and the thirsty.

He loves and is merciful.

He judges and brings punishment on the wicked.

The history of Israel is given to us as a warning. We may not worship "idols" as they did, but do we truly know the one and only LORD God and worship him only?

Remember the former things, those of long ago;

I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.

I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come.

I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. (Isaiah 46-9-10 NIV)



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## Catching the Vision

Read more about it in  
 this newsletter and  
 ones to follow

## Daily Bible Readings for October, November, December

*Read the Entire Bible in One Year*

Day	October		November		December	
	Old Test	New Test/Psa	Old Test	New Test/Psa	Old Test	New Test/Psa
1	Hosea 11,12	Titus 1	Jerm 19-21	James 3	Eze 12-14	Psalms 139
2	Hosea 13,14	Titus 2	Jerm 22,23	James 4	Eze 15, 16	Rev 1
3	II Chron 1,2	Titus 3	Jerm 24-26	James 5	Eze 17, 18	Rev 2
4	II Chron 3,4	Philemon	Jerm 27-29	I Peter 1	Eze 19,20	Rev 3
5	II Chron 5,6	Psalms 110, 111	Jerm 30, 31	I Peter 2	Eze 21, 22	Rev 4
6	II Chron 7, 8	Psalms 112, 113	Jerm 32, 33	I Peter 3	Eze 23, 24	Rev 5
7	II Chron 9,10	Hebrews 1	Jerm 34-36	I Peter 4	Eze 25, 26	Psalms 140
8	II Chron 11,12	Hebrews 2	Jerm 37,38	I Peter 5	Eze 27, 28	Psalms 141
9	II Chron 13,14	Hebrews 3	Jerm 39-41	Psalms 120, 121	Eze 29-31	Rev 6
10	II Chron 15,16	Psalms 114, 115	Jerm 42,43	Psalms 122, 123	Eze 32, 33	Psalms 142- 143
11	II Chron 17,18	Hebrews 4	Jerm 44-46	Psalms 124, 125	Eze 34, 35	Rev 7
12	II Chron 19,20	Hebrews 5	Jerm 47,48	II Peter 1	Eze 36, 37	Rev 8
13	II Chron 21,22	Psalms 116, 117	Jerm 49,50	II Peter 2	Eze 38, 39	Rev 9
14	II Chron 23,24	Hebrews 6	Jerm 51,52	II Peter 3	Eze 40, 41	Psalms 144
15	II Chron 25,26	Hebrews 7	Ezr 1, 2, 3	Psalms 126, 127	Eze 42-44	Rev 10
16	II Chron 27,28	Hebrews 8	Ezr 4, 5, 6	Psalms 128, 129	Eze 45, 46	Rev 11
17	II Chron 29,30	Psalms 118	Ezr 7, 8, 9	I John 1	Eze 47, 48	Psalms 145
18	II Chron 31,32	Hebrews 9	Ezr 10 Neh 1	I John 2	Dan 1,2	Rev 12
19	II Chron 33,34	Hebrews 10	Neh 2,3,4	I John 3	Dan 3,4,5	Rev 13
20	II Chron 35,36	Psa 119: 1-24	Neh 5,6, 7	I John 4	Dan 6,7,8	Rev 14
21	Lam 1,2	Hebrews 11	Neh 8,9	I John 5	Dan 9,10	Psalms 146
22	Lam 3,4,5	Hebrews 12	Neh 10,11	Psalms 130, 131	Dan 11,12	Rev 15
23	Jerm 1,2	Hebrews 13	Neh 12,13	Psalms 132, 133	Habakkuk 1-3	Rev 16
24	Jerm 3,4	Psa 119: 25-48	Esth 1,2,3	Psalms 134, 135	Zephaniah 1-3	Psalms 147
25	Jerm 5,6	Psa 119: 49-74	Esth 4, 5, 6	II John	Haggai 1, 2	Rev 17
26	Jerm 7,8	Psa 119: 75-96	Esth 7-10	III John	Zechariah 1-3	Rev 18
27	Jerm 9,10	Ps 119: 97- 120	Eze 1, 2, 3	Psalms 136	Zechariah 4-6	Rev 19
28	Jerm 11, 12	Ps 119: 121-144	Eze 4, 5, 6	Psalms 137	Zechariah 7-9	Psalms 148
29	Jerm 13, 14	Ps 119: 145-176	Eze 7,8,9	Psalms 138	Zechar 10-12	Psalms 149, 150
30	Jerm 15, 16	James 1	Eze 10,11	Jude	Zechar 13,14	Rev 20, 21
31	Jerm 17, 18	James 2			Malachi 1-4	Rev 22

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