



Day One: Vision for THE Church

Last week, we looked at the fact that the House of Love that God is building, is a house of people. WE are His house and He is building us all up together, according to Ephesians 2:20 – 22. The ‘Ekklesia’ (the word translated ‘church’) never ever describes an institution or a building – it describes people. People are what matters to God’s heart, and His church is His people.

Another place where we never find buildings and institutions described is in vision. If you scour the New Testament from one end to the other, you will never find a vision statement for a congregation. That’s because Holy Spirit never gave one and they were people who lived by the power of the Holy Spirit, not their own flesh, good ideas, and flashy designs. What we do see, is vision for THE church, of which they were part, such as what we term ‘the Great Commission’ given by Jesus to *go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19 NLT)*.

Just as vision was given to THE church as a whole, so too were instructions. Ephesians 4:3 – 6 is one such example of vision and instructions together. Paul actually states that we are all called into the same glorious hope of divine destiny.

Ephesians 4:3 – 6 (TPT) *Be faithful to guard the sweet harmony of the Holy Spirit among you in the bonds of peace, so that you will be one body and one spirit, as you were all called into the same glorious hope of divine destiny. For the Lord God is one, and so are we! For we share in one faith, one baptism, and one Father. He is the perfect Father who leads us all, works through us all, and lives in us all!*

Now you may wonder what I mean, as this letter was written to the Ephesians church. Isn’t that vision for a specific congregation? No! The very first verse clearly tells us who this letter was for:

Ephesians 1:1 (NLT) *This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I am writing to God’s holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus.*



What you discover in this letter is the same as any other letter that was written. They were always written to people! Never to institutions! And they were always designated for THE church in a given geographic location. The only distinction ever made was for geography – not institution, individual vision of congregations or denominations or any other such thing. The mindset of the early church was that there was one church and that it was made up of PEOPLE. They met in homes and had larger regional gatherings from time to time, in public places.

They didn't have individual church visions because they knew what the vision was for THE church and they knew they were each part of it.

Each person knew the same Father led them all, worked through them all, and lived through them all. There were no individual congregation or institutional vision statements because there was no concept of a congregation or a group of believers being separate from another group of believers. There was no concept of believers having different instructions. And there certainly was no concept of only some special people in the church having the vision that everyone else was to 'come under'. They all had the same vision, the same instructions, and the same Father working through them to fulfil His vision and instructions. Each believer was as valuable, important and needed as the next. And as such, they were all passionate and engaged in the vision.



What is the vision for THE church, as you understand it?



Day Two: Vision for Individuals

Yesterday, we looked at the fact that vision was never given in the early church, to specific congregations or groups of believers. In fact there was only ever three levels of vision given. The first was Churchwide vision, which we've briefly looked at yesterday. The second was individual vision. And this vision was more on the level of individual calling – vision for who they were in the fulfilment of the Churchwide vision.

Individuals received callings and instructions for their lives – essentially, their identity and who they were and how they fit into the vision of THE church. Peter was told by Jesus to *'Feed my sheep'* (John 20:17 NLT). Jesus had already said to Peter that he was the rock on which Jesus was going to build His church (Matt 16:17 – 29). In Acts 9:15, Saul's (who became Paul) vision is revealed by the Lord. *...for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel.*

Vision was always given to individuals and to the church, as comprised of individuals. Often even to the believers in a specific geographic location. But never to a 'congregation' (which were house churches). Never to a structure, institution or building. And never was the vision given to build buildings and create institutions. It was always about individual callings coming together collectively, to fulfil the vision of THE church. In fact, the disciples and believers never even considered it to be any different than that – they had no framework or concept of the church either being buildings or being fragmented.

Vision for individual congregations doesn't exist in His eyes.

I'm sure many people will find that statement unpopular, but I believe that God is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb 13:8), and we simply have not been given a blueprint for this. And when we create vision for individual congregations, it becomes a means of division, keeping the churchwide vision unfulfilled because it's only when we are one that the world will believe (Jn 17:19 – 21).

Individuals are given calling (because the church is a collection of individuals, each filled with the treasures of Christ and equally valuable to Him). They are given an individual vision of who they are and what they have been called to,



to help fulfil the vision of the wider church, within the concept of oneness – that we need what Christ places in each one of us, and it's only as we come together that we see the fullness of Christ.

And ALL are given vision. Not just those called as Pastors or currently recognised leaders in the church (and if we were in early church times, many recognised leaders now would not be considered leaders, and many unrecognised and ignored people would be. But that's a discussion for another time...). All have a calling, all have a vision within the vision, and the New Testament gives us no instruction to seek vision for 'a church', or 'a congregation'. All we can find is instructions to the church in a specified geographic area.

Imagine what would happen if the vision of individuals congregations and pastors shifted from upgrading buildings, to uncovering the individual callings of the people within the four walls we have – those who actually comprise the church! What would happen if people weren't told their job was to 'come under' the vision of the pastor, and instead they were empowered to hear the Lord's vision for their own lives. What if people were no longer kept apart, congregation from congregation, and they discovered that their individual callings were similar, and they started working together – outside of the 'church' – to solve the problems of society as lead of the Lord. We would soon find that the world would believe! We would soon find that there's wouldn't be any area of human need where God had not sent His people. But while we still see the church as separate 'churches' with buildings that keep us within their four walls, and separate visions that people are told they are required to come under, the treasure chests of the people will never open, and the world will lie in want and longing for us to embrace the truth.



How many times have you 'come under' a 'vision' for an institution, congregation or organisation? Has this distracted from or added to your understanding of the church as people, and as a singular body?



Day Three: HE is Our Vision

We are His house, and He has individual identity which brings vision for each and every one of us. However, there is one really important thing we must remember about individual vision. It's never OUR vision. It's always HIS. And if our vision ever becomes more important to us than Him, we'll lose it.

A dear friend of mine told me about a vision in which she saw many babies floating and she asked the Lord what they were. He said, "These are the aborted babies because people took their eyes off Me and put them on the vision." I almost cried when I heard that – all of these precious spiritual babies that were conceived by Holy Spirit in people's hearts... all the assignments needed to see the world saved, delivered and set free... and because the vision became the reward, they were lost to the world!

God told Abraham, when He gave Him his individual calling, that God Himself would be Abraham's exceedingly great reward (Gen 15:1). For Abraham, who God called, 'My friend', the reward was never about the fulfilment of the promise (his individual calling). His reward was always God Himself. And it's not to be any different for us. If Christ Himself – knowing Him more, becoming one with Him, loving Him – is not our ultimate vision and hope, then we'll be looking for something else to fulfil us. We may birth something, but it won't be what He planted in our hearts, because that will be aborted in favour of something we have conceived.

Vision without a revelation of oneness with Jesus and each other is dangerous. Our hearts must view what God shows us about ourselves and what He wants us to do, through the lens of knowing that we are one with Him, and it's His Life in us which accomplishes the vision. And no matter how lofty or wonderful the individual vision He gives to us, it is never more wonderful than Jesus Himself!



Soak Time

Which consumes your focus more? Your vision or Jesus?

Is your individual vision really yours? Actually, is it really HIS vision for you? Or is it an institutional, denominational 'vision' that you were expected to 'come under'?



Day Four: Vision for Nations

And this brings us to the last level of vision and that is national vision. But here's an interesting thing – Nations are individuals to God. Consider the imagery and words used as God describes nations.

Genesis 18:18 (NIV) *Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation.*

And the nation which came from Abraham was Israel. He also said:

Genesis 26:24 (NLT) *...I will multiply your descendants, and they will become a great nation.*

The nation came out of the loins of one man, in God's eyes. From Abraham, the nation was birthed, and it was from His descendants that Israel became. How does God see Israel? As an individual. Just look at the words He used in Exodus 4 to describe it:

Exodus 4:22 (NASB) *...Israel is My son, My firstborn.*

And if that didn't convince us that God sees nations as individuals, consider this. The calling given to Abraham, from whom Israel came, is now the calling for the nation of Israel – to bless the nations of the world.

Genesis 12:2 – 3 (NLT) *I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.*

Can I make this point loud and clear. God and the vision He gives is always about people, people, people, because the house He's building is made up of people. It's NEVER about institutions, or organisations. I am confident to say that God has never, ever given a vision for a denomination. He has never ever given a vision for a 'local church' (which in His eyes, does not exist). He doesn't see institutions any more than He sees sin when He looks at us and calls us the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus (2 Cor 5:21). It's just not in His framework; He sees us perfect in Christ Jesus. And He sees His church as a gathering of His children – institution is never part of His view. He doesn't give prophetic words



about 'this house' and 'that house'. Yes, I believe He gives the words to the people in those so-called 'houses' but it's the framework of the ones delivering the message who declare it to be over 'this house'. Every prophetic word is received by a human being, and goes through their 'filter' of understanding and perspective. God will declare direction and prophetic promise to people, but that's who the promise is for – the people, not the institution.

He needs us to start thinking, speaking, declaring and receiving through His filter... His heart. We are one. God is about people. As people receive and fulfil the vision He gives them individually for their lives (often working together with those called to the same area to do so), the vision of THE church is fulfilled. And when we do that, we will see His commission to us finally completed – the discipleship of the nations...the expansion of the Kingdom... the transformation of the world.



What is Holy Spirit saying to you on the subject of vision?



Day Five: Built into His House

So this brings us back to where we started – WE are His House. His House is people. Joey LeTourneau describes this beautifully:

*“We are watching the Father make His children, His sons and daughters, into a house. When David wanted to build God a house out of the purest of desires, God’s answer was no. Instead, the Lord told David, “I will make **you** a house” (see 2 Sam. 7:11). God’s best house is the one He grows out of those who co-labor with Him to give life! In fact, that was the original vision in the Garden of Eden, to “Be fruitful and multiply.” We often focus on houses of a physical structure; but with God, whether through Abraham, David, or Jesus, God’s priority and the ultimate blessing He would bestow was to make His house in and from His people, empowering a family structure of people who are sent, who go, who stretch out the walls of His house to cover His family around the world.*

God is making us a house. This house is full of spiritual sons and daughters who become spiritual fathers and mothers who live out an overflowing, life-giving multiplication that redeems His family all around the world. We look at those who are lost, poor, orphaned, or widowed, but whatever a person’s current state, God already sees that person as His child, part of His family.”
Joey Letourneau TPOUU

Is this not beautiful imagery? Just as David, God is making US a house. And it’s an amazing house! It’s extravagant and glorious, world-changing and absolutely full of love! And in the whole scheme of things, there’s still a long way to go. But He’s going to keep building until what He sees, matches His blueprint, because God is not one who gives up or stops short.

Philippians 1:6 (NLT) *And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns...*

Is it possible to be His child and yet not be built into His house, His temple? I believe so. Because we all have free will – if we try to build ourselves into something that we’re building, and it’s not something that He’s building, we may indeed find ourselves as part of a house, but it won’t be His House of love. But if we’ll allow Him to awaken the vision inside of us – His vision for us within



His vision for the church – and totally submit ourselves to only Him as He brings it to pass, He will build us into His House of Love. And in the end, the House of Love is the only house which will stand. I know where I'd like to be.



Now that you are seeing what His House of Love looks like, it's time to ask yourself some sobering questions. Are you being built into His house? Or are you building something else?
