



Vision: Embracing the “Long View” - Part 2

- A SHORT RE-CAP

- God is releasing **courage** and **resilience**
 - What the Lord is about to release is the **courage** to do the impossible, and the **resilience** to not be taken out by the obstacles we encounter along the way.
- **The Creative Minority**
 - “These are **Christ followers** who “hold true to their beliefs while blessing the surrounding **culture**.” ~ Historian, Arnold Toynbe
- What about **fear**?
 - **Courage** is not the absence of fear, but it is the resolve to not let fear dictate what we do. ~ Rick Joyner
- **Foresight, Insight & Oversight...**A God-sized vision is more than just being able to see the future. Pastor Banning Liebsher says that...

”True spiritual vision consists of foresight, insight
and oversight that come from His sight.”

- **Foresight** is like looking at life through a telescope. This outlook allows us to know what is ahead as it connects us to our future. Foresight is the element of vision that helps life make sense and gives us the motivation to move towards it.
- **Insight** is like viewing life through a microscope. This perception gives us an understanding of why things happen in life. It also helps determine the underlying motivations of the heart.
- **Oversight** puts life into context. It is like flying over your house in a helicopter. There is a perspective that we can only receive from this vista that helps us understand where we are with respect to where everything else is. The sons of Issachar are great examples of this kind of vision. (1 Cha 12:32)

- EMBRACING THE “LONG VIEW”

- **The Long View...**does not have **ME** at it's center, but **WE**!
 - **The Long View always includes others.** Jesus didn't bring us into relationship with Himself, but with all three members of the Trinity. For Jesus, everything is about relationship, about family. So, when it comes to vision, especially the big picture vision, the goal is redemptive and inclusive. One of the few “how to” moments the disciples had with Jesus started there...
 - “Pray like this: **Our** Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.” (Matt 6:9 NLT-SE)
- **The Long View...**is **apostolic** in nature. If you are apostolic, **you long to see heaven's supernatural reality come to Earth.** This is a point of view that anticipates seeing evidence of God's love to **transform cultures.** This view makes the presence of God, worship of God, and the agenda of heaven their top priority.
 - “Your kingdom come, your will be done, **on earth as it is in heaven.**” (Matt 6:10 ESV)
- **The Long View...**finds it's power in **God's promises and character**, not in man's abilities.
 - Jesus looked at them intently and said, “Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But **WITH** God everything is possible.” (Matt 19:26 NLT-SE)
 - He replied, “What is impossible for people is possible **with** God.” (Luke 18:27 NLT-SE)
 - **Hope** = The active, confident expectation of good based upon the character of God.
- **The Long View...**is intentionally and necessarily **multigenerational.** Think, “Abraham, Issac, and Jacob.”
 - God always directs His people to **think generationally**
 - ⁵ And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. ⁶ And you must **commit yourselves wholeheartedly** to these commands that I am giving you today. ⁷ **Repeat them again and again to your children.** Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. (Deut 6:5–7 NLT-SE)
 - **Let each generation tell its children** of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power. (Psa 145:4 NLT-SE)



- TWO MEN WHO HAD GOD-SIZED PERSPECTIVES

- **DAVID...**The shepherd boy who **would be** king (1 Samuel 17)
 - This brings us to the scene where David meets Goliath. The Philistines were camped on one side of a valley and the Israelites of the other. **Goliath is challenging someone from Saul's army to fight him, mano-e-mano.**

- ⁸ Goliath stood and shouted a taunt across to the Israelites. “Why are you all coming out to fight?” he called. “I am the Philistine champion, but you are only the servants of Saul. Choose one man to come down here and fight me! ⁹ If he kills me, then we will be your slaves. But if I kill him, you will be our slaves! ¹⁰ I defy the armies of Israel today! **Send me a man who will fight me!**” ¹¹ **When Saul and the Israelites heard this, they were terrified and deeply shaken.** (1 Sam 17:8–11 NLT-SE)
- David didn’t just decide to go to leave his flock and head out to the battlefield, **he was sent there by his father to bring food for his brothers.** When he arrived, he went to the front lines because he was taking food to his brothers, but he was also intrigued and wanted to hear for himself what the Philistine was saying to Saul and his army.
- David asked the soldiers standing nearby, “What will a man get for killing this Philistine and ending his defiance of Israel? **Who is this pagan Philistine anyway, that he is allowed to defy the armies of the living God?**” (1 Sam 17:26 NLT-SE)
- He took the things Goliath was saying about all Israel seriously. His response was that someone should **step up and trust that God** was about to silence this obnoxious bully. **He didn’t approach Saul**, but the King heard him asking questions about a response to the giant and called for him.
- There is an obvious argument about **David’s qualifications as a warrior.** David tells Saul how the Lord gave him the strength to protect his father’s flock by taking out a **bear** and a **lion**.
 - ³⁴ But David persisted. “I have been taking care of my father’s sheep and goats,” he said. “When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, ³⁵ **I go after it** with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, **I catch it** by the jaw and **club it to death.** ³⁶ I have done this to both lions and bears, and **I’ll do it to this pagan Philistine**, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God! (1 Sam 17:34–36 NLT-SE)
- Eventually, he convinces Saul to let him go. Saul then attempts to **get David into his armor**, which doesn’t work, so David goes into battle with Goliath with a sling and five smooth stones.
- **Question: Where did David’s courage come from?**
 - When David is **confronted about his qualifications as a warrior**, he tells Saul about God’s faithfulness, giving him the courage he needed to protect his father’s flock. Now, in answering Goliath’s call to battle, **he is responding to the threat against God’s flock.** David is confident that God will be faithful as he steps up to protect and deliver the Israelite army.
 - In a last ditch effort to bolster David’s faith that he could win this battle, **Saul encourages David to rely on his personal armor for protection.** It’s obvious to David that, not only will Saul’s armor be a hindrance in battle, but that it would also tempt him to trust in Saul’s armor and name instead of God, Himself!
- **STEPHEN’S COURAGE...**The brave martyr who **saw** the King
 - Stephen is chosen by the Apostles to come into a position of leadership. Of the seven that are chosen for the task, Luke **uniquely** describes Stephen this way...

- ² The Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, “We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program. ³ And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility. ⁴ Then we apostles can spend our time in prayer and teaching the word.” ⁵ Everyone liked this idea, and they chose the following: **Stephen (a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit)**, Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas of Antioch (an earlier convert to the Jewish faith). ⁶ These seven were presented to the apostles, who prayed for them as they laid their hands on them. (Acts 6:2–6 NLT-SE)
- Luke **continues his description of Stephen** in Acts 6:8, writing...
 - **Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, performed amazing miracles and signs among the people.** (Acts 6:8 NLT-SE)
- All this supernatural stuff that God was doing through Stephen **caught the attention of the church leaders**, and not in a good way. They needed a reason to stop him, so they accused him of **speaking against “Moses, and even God,”** almost identical to what the church leaders accused Jesus of!
 - ¹³ The lying witnesses said, “This man is always speaking against the holy Temple and against the law of Moses. ¹⁴ We have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy the Temple and change the customs Moses handed down to us.” ¹⁵ At this point everyone in the high council stared at Stephen, **because his face became as bright as an angel’s.** ¹ Then the high priest asked Stephen, “Are these accusations true?” (Acts 6:13–7:1 NLT-SE)
- **Did Stephen defend himself?** No. When accused, did Jesus defend Himself? No. This is a remarkable similarity and it doesn’t stop there. **For the next 48 verses**, Stephen tells the story of **God’s faithfulness to Israel**, starting with God calling Abraham to leave his home and venture off in faith under the Lord’s leadership. This was the longest recorded message in Acts, which shows the importance Luke attached to it. He closes his message with Isaiah 66:1-2, and then rips into them, turning the tables and accusing them!
 - ⁵¹ “You stubborn people! You are heathen at heart and deaf to the truth. **Must you forever resist the Holy Spirit?** That’s what your ancestors did, and so do you! ⁵² Name one prophet your ancestors didn’t persecute! They even killed the ones who predicted the coming of the Righteous One—the Messiah whom you betrayed and murdered. ⁵³ You deliberately disobeyed God’s law, even though you received it from the hands of angels.” (Acts 7:51–53 NLT-SE)
- **They accused him of blaspheming Moses** and his comeback was that they, “deliberately disobeyed God’s law, even though you received it from the hands of angels.” **Where did this courage come from?** What was going on with Stephen?
 - It seems that his courage came from **recounting the history** of God leading His people and **reminding himself** of the Lord’s faithfulness to deliver them every time!
 - You can see the opposite of courage when the people of Israel **took their eyes off God** and **fixed their eyes on natural things.**

- No wonder our hearts have melted in fear! **No one has the courage to fight after hearing such things.** For the LORD your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below. (Josh 2:11 NLT-SE)
- chased the Israelites from the town gate as far as the quarries, and they killed about thirty-six who were retreating down the slope. **The Israelites were paralyzed with fear at this turn of events, and their courage melted away.** (Josh 7:5 NLT-SE)
- **VISION IS BEING GIVEN TO THOSE WHO HAVE EYES TO SEE...PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.**
 - **Vision...to prepare** for a harvest of souls
 - ²⁴ Here is another story Jesus told: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. ²⁵ But that night as the workers slept, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat, then slipped away. ²⁶ When the crop began to grow and produce grain, the weeds also grew. ²⁷ “The farmer’s workers went to him and said, ‘Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?’ ²⁸ “‘An enemy has done this!’ the farmer exclaimed. **“Should we pull out the weeds?’** they asked. ²⁹ “‘No,’ he replied, ‘you’ll uproot the wheat if you do. ³⁰ **Let both grow together until the harvest.** Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn.” (Matt 13:24–30 NLT-SE)
 - Jesus’ seven words (*Let both grow together until the harvest*) have motivated me to challenge the people of God to become radical, God-empowering, miracle-working, people-rescuing followers of Jesus as the final harvest nears. ~ **Prepare!:** *For the End-Time Harvest*, by Don Finto
 - We know that God causes **everything** to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. (Rom 8:28 NLT-SE)
 - **Vision...to be resilient** in the midst of difficult times
 - ⁶ As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near. ⁷ **I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful.** ⁸ And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing. (2 Tim 4:6–8 NLT-SE)
 - ¹² Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. ¹³ You must warn each other every day, while it is still “today,” so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. ¹⁴ **For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ.** (Heb 3:12–14 NLT-SE)

- **Vision...**to see our **region prosper**
 - ⁴ This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says to all the captives he has exiled to Babylon from Jerusalem: ⁵ "Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. ⁶ Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away! ⁷ And **work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare.**" (Jer 29:4–7 NLT-SE)
 - There is a direct correlation between what we **invest** into the Kingdom and what we **receive** in blessing, anointing, and authority. The truth is this same blessing, anointing, and authority is not really for us, but **to enable us to help bring peace and prosperity to the region we dwell in.**
- **Vision...**to be **active participants** in God's kingdom, not just spectators
 - We live in a highly visual culture, having become captivated **consumers** and dazed **spectators**, enticed and distracted by a never-ending parade of distractions that keep us from the pain, grief, and sorrow of what it means to be human.
 - "I made a **covenant with my eyes** not to look with lust at a young woman. (Job 31:1 NLT-SE)
 - **The society of the spectacle creates passivity among its citizens, a reluctance to initiate, to lead.** Instead we are encouraged to view, to consume. We fear committing, worrying that by doing so we will reduce our freedom, cut ourselves off from the myriad of choices that constantly entice us. ~ **Facing Leviathan: Leadership, Influence, and Creating in a Cultural Storm**, by Mark Sayers