

# Proverbs 29:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

## Analysis

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This famous proverb addresses the necessity of divine revelation: 'Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.' The word 'vision' (chazon) refers to prophetic revelation, God's word communicated through prophets. Without it, people 'perish' (para—become unrestrained, cast off restraint, perish). Some translations render it: 'Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint.' God's word provides moral boundaries and life-giving guidance; without it, chaos and death result. The parallel phrase emphasizes keeping the law (torah)—those who guard God's instruction are blessed ('happy,' ashrei). This verse celebrates Scripture's essential role in providing divine direction for life.

## Historical Context

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Periods when God's word was rare in Israel resulted in moral chaos (1 Samuel 3:1; Amos 8:11-12). The people needed prophetic revelation to know God's will and live righteously. Post-exilic Judaism centered on Torah as written revelation. Christianity recognizes Scripture as God's inspired, sufficient word (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21). Without biblical revelation, societies descend into moral relativism and destruction.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does your life demonstrate dependence on Scripture as God's revealed vision for living?
2. What happens in cultures and churches when God's word is neglected or rejected as authoritative?

## Interlinear Text

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בְּאֵין	חֵזוֹן	יָפֵּץ	עַם	וְשֹׁמְרֵי	תוֹרָה
H369	Where there is no vision	perish	the people	but he that keepeth	the law
	H2377	H6544	H5971	H8104	H8451
אַשְׁכְּחֶהוּ:					
happy					
H835					

## Additional Cross-References

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**James 1:25** (Word): But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

**Luke 11:28** (Word): But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

**Hosea 4:6** (Word): My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

**John 13:17** (Parallel theme): If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

**Proverbs 19:16** (Word): He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his ways shall die.

**Psalms 119:2** (Parallel theme): Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.

**1 Samuel 3:1** (Word): And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.

**Exodus 32:25** (Parallel theme): And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:)

**Matthew 9:36** (Parallel theme): But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

**Psalms 74:9** (Parallel theme): We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.