

MONDAY MANNA

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VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

By Rick Boxx

In the esteemed magazine of years past, the *Saturday Evening Post*, Alexander Winton, who was the first automobile manufacturer, wrote about his experiences of being ridiculed in the 1890s. Winton claimed his banker soundly criticized him, urging him to give up talking about his “crazy ideas” of automobiles one day overtaking horses as a primary means for transportation.

And yet, years later, Winton succeeded in building and selling his first automobile. It seems hardly imaginable today that anyone would have ever doubted the value and importance of automobiles, but there was that day. Thankfully, Winton and many others never ceased believing that a “horseless carriage” was feasible.

I believe that it is God who gives some people like Winton, and countless other inventors and innovators a clear vision for the future. Where would we be today without the foresight and vision of people like Leonardo da Vinci, Nicolas Copernicus, Galileo Galilei, Isaac Newton, Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla? Or George Washington Carver, Alexander Graham Bell, Johannes Gutenberg, Rudolf Diesel and Michael Faraday?

For many of these people, unprecedented times led to unimagined developments that have benefited humanity for centuries since. Perhaps in your own industry you can think of individuals and groups whose wisdom and perception led to dramatic changes and improvements.

But this vision is not limited to invention and innovation. In the Old Testament of the Bible we read about Daniel, the prophet who also received a very specific vision for the future. In the book named after him, we read God telling Daniel, *“Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come”* (Daniel 10:14).

Daniel and other prophets, including Isaiah, Jeremiah, Elijah, Elisha, Micah, Amos, Hosea and Malachi, shared visions for the future that God had given to them. These are recorded in other Old Testament books. Over the centuries, these messages have inspired hope, motivated believers in God to undertake great exploits, and helped in providing a new understanding of the Creator of the universe.

The prophet Isaiah, for example, wrote that, *“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.... ‘Woe to me!’ I cried. ‘I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the king, the Lord almighty’”* (Isaiah 6:1-5). He felt totally unworthy, yet he realised God was calling him to a special role. When God asked, *“Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”*, Isaiah responded, *“Here am I. Send me!”* (Isaiah 6:8).

Isaiah was living in very unusual times when he had this vision. We too are living in unprecedented times. Because of this, we should not be too quick to dismiss those God has given visions for the future. Ignoring new trends can be harmful to the future of your business.

Elsewhere in the prophetic book, God informs Isaiah, *“Do not call to mind the former things; pay no attention to the things of old. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland”* (Isaiah 43:18-19). Are you prepared if you see God doing a new thing at work – or in your life? What vision might He be giving to you that could lead to a brighter future?

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

How would you define "vision"? What are some examples of people with vision that come immediately to your mind?

What do you think it takes for someone to gain a unique vision for the future? Do you think that such vision ultimately comes from God? Or is there a difference between being a visionary and a person with godly vision? Why or why not?

When you think about the uncertain future, do you find yourself filled with hope and optimism, or does it fill you with anxiety, even fear? Explain your answer.

As you consider your career, or your business, especially given the chaos and confusion most of us experienced in 2020, what kind of vision would be most helpful? What role, if any, do you think God must play for you to embrace the vision needed to move forward?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Proverbs 3:5-6

Isaiah 41:10, 18-19, 42:9, 48:21, 49:10

Jeremiah 1:4-10

2 Corinthians 5:17