

## Introduction: Elon Musk

After the hype and hoopla surrounding Jesus' birth abated, the angels, shepherds, kings, prophets and prophetesses, and everyone else goes home. Now onto the realities of life. They say life hits you while you are making other plans, well, as we read in Matthew 2:13-16, life hit the small family of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus with a wallop:

*13 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." 14 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, 15 where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son." 16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.*

## Herod's Executive Order

The egomaniac Herod went all terminator when he realized that the Magi outsmarted him and snuck out of town before sundown without reporting back where this rumored newborn king was located. In response, he issues an executive order that male children, two and under, residing in the vicinity of Bethlehem, must be "terminated, so that none could grow up and eventually usurp his throne. In a lucid dream, an angel notifies Joseph of Herod's city-wide abortion policy. Even before the paint dried on the new nursery, Joseph packs up the family and hops the red eye to Egypt. Joseph's swift action not only fulfilled the prophecy from Hosea 11:1, but also, in a very different way, teaches us something about vision.

## Vision Works

God sent his "only begotten son" not only because he loved the world, but also because he had a vision for it. This vision is found in the "Model Prayer" (Matthew 6:9-13) where an adult Jesus taught his followers that the absolute best thing they could ask of the Father is :

*Your Kingdom come; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

God sent Jesus to implement his vision of making heaven and earth one again, just as it was at creation and before the "Fall." Jesus would do this primarily in his public ministry of teaching, preaching, and healing. After his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus continued to implement his Father's vision by sending the Holy Spirit to empower his Church to go into all the world and do what he had essentially done; preach, teach, and heal.

Right from the get-go, however, "vision terminators" tried to snuff out the Father's vision by eliminating Jesus when he was just a toddler. Later, and quite predictably, these terminators again attempted to abort Jesus while he was in the wilderness for 30 days, and when he was in Jerusalem, where the religious establishment constantly subjected him to threats and taunts, bullying and harassment. In all cases, Jesus prevailed, which is why we are here this morning, and why the world is a far different and better place, than if Herod's plan was successful.

## Visions Are Tough

Our main takeaway, however, from Jesus' emergency flight to Egypt is that visions are hard to implement. If visions were easy, we would be earth would be heaven right now but obviously, it's not. By their very nature, visions are tough, even when they are "Big Hairy, & Audacious" and divinely inspired. Nevertheless, is there any grander vision than getting hunks of heaven down to earth? I don't think so, which is why the Church needs to be the most visionary of any organization, institution, or business.

### Visionocracy: Macro-Micro-Mio/Mia

Vision is called "vision" because vision is a seeing thing. Vision sees things before they are. Vision principates everything! Everything starts with vision because we are creatures that live by what we see, especially by what we see in the future. That's the power of vision. To get hunks of heaven onto earth, churches must live in what I call a "Visionocracy." What is a visionocracy? A visionocracy is a place where the vision reigns supreme over all priorities, agendas, and preferences of the church. Visionocracies consist of three levels:

#### **The Macro Level:**

**The vision God has of getting heaven to earth.**

#### **The Micro Level:**

**The vision God gives the leader on getting heaven on to earth.**

#### **The Mio/Mia Level:**

**The vision God gives Christians for their ministry that gets heaven on to earth.**

### Leaders' Micro-Vision

Since we already talked about God's macro-vision of getting heaven to earth, let's look at the leader's micro-vision for a moment. God will strategically call someone to get a hunk of heaven onto a specific place on earth. God then burns that vision into the leader's heart. It becomes his passion. He eats, drinks, and sleeps it. He allows it to consume and possess him. It is his *raison d'être*, his M.O. and in some ways, his identity. Using every leadership tool in the book (I.M.C.E.E.), the leader must initiate, articulate, and motivate the people of God to live into that micro vision, i.e., adopting the attitudes/behaviors that fulfill the vision. For instance, God gave Moses a micro-vision to lead his people out of slavery and into the Promised Land. God gave David a micro-vision to build Israel into a world superpower. And God gave Paul the micro-vision, to win the Roman Empire to Jesus, including its emperor!

As an aside, let me just say that these leaders didn't bring their micro-visions to the congregation for a vote, nor form a committee to change or adjust it. By the way, do you know what committees are? Committees are where visions meet a quick and untimely death. Did you know that Proverbs 29:18, which says, "Where there is no vision the people perish" was written ten seconds after a committee meeting! If visions were subjected to votes and committees, Israel would still be enslaved in Egypt, humanity would still be "dead in sin," and Christianity would still be in its Jewish cocoon!

Here's what a committee recently posted in their hunt to find a new pastor:

**We're looking for an innovative pastor with a fresh vision to inspire the congregation to remain the same.**

### **Mio Visions**

I'm just having some fun, but to clarify, God has the macro-vision of getting heaven to earth. To fulfill it, he gives micro-visions to leaders. So where does that leave you? Joel 2:28 promised that when the Holy Spirit is poured out, he will give God's people "visions." I refer to these as "mio/mia-visions" which are given to each Christian for the ministry they are to do to help the church fulfill its micro-vision. Yes, you are the most important part of the visionary process. Yes, you called to help God and church leadership get heaven to earth. Without you, the macro and micro visions go nowhere! Sounds great and awesome stuff for reforming sinners and rookie saints like us!

### **Conclusion**

Today only begins our "Visionocracy" series so let's conclude with the mico-vision God has emblazoned into my heart for in 2022:

*To build a flourishing church that worships God, equips the saints, and wins the lost.*

How will this vision become a living, breathing reality? Come back next week to find out.

Before then, however, "Beware!" because vision terminators, in the spirit of Herod, are still on the loose. And we said, "O Me, O My!"