

VISITATION VISION

A Devotional Meditation on Sh'lach L'cha (Send for Yourself)

Numbers 13:1-15:41; Joshua 2:1-24; Proverbs 29:18; Hosea 4:6;
Luke 1:5-25, 57-66, 19:43-45; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Peter 2:10-12

Albert J. McCarn
June 13, 2026

The Bible tells of wicked people like Pharaoh of Egypt, Goliath of Gath, Ahab and Jezebel of Israel, Haman the Amalekite, and Herod of Judea. We consider them evil and wicked because of their blatant opposition to the word of God and the people of God. We are encouraged when we read that justice was done to them, even if it didn't happen as quickly as we would like or quite the way we expected.



Photo by Amir Benlakhlef [on Unsplash](#).

But what about the people who weren't noticeably wicked? What about those who seemed to be genuinely nice people, but who didn't go far enough in obedience to God?

Those in that category include Ananias and Saphira, the couple who withheld part of the price they received from a land transaction when they made an offering to the apostles, and Zacharias, the elderly priest who questioned the angelic messenger who told him he and his wife would become the parents of John the Baptist. Because of those missteps, Ananias and Saphira died, and Zacharias lost his voice until his son was born. We could also include Judas, the man who betrayed Messiah Yeshua thinking he was doing the right thing, and in the end was driven by guilt to hang himself.

Many good people named in scripture suffered bad consequences simply because they chose not to seek God's counsel on a matter and relied on their own understanding and preferences. The record goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden, where our first ancestors acted entirely on what they saw and desired. It might have been different if they had considered God's vision for them and for the earth before making their choice to eat the forbidden fruit.

It's reasonable to expect God's people take his perspective into account. Yet it seems that the Bible's warnings to and judgments of God's people happen precisely because they disregard his ways. Even those who keep the letter of his instructions and commands often stumble and fall in this way. That's why Yeshua wept over Jerusalem, the Holy City where God placed his name. We read about that in Luke's Gospel:

And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Luke 19:42-44 ESV

Parents should understand the logic in this. We discipline our own children, not our neighbor's children. We hold our children to a higher standard because they are part of our family. If we want the family to have a future, we must have a vision for its survival and prosperity, and we must transfer that vision to our children. That's why we teach our children the rules of the house and expect their obedience. We might also do this with the children of close friends and neighbors, but we still draw a distinction unless they become part of our family somehow.

Even with careful training, though, it still happens that children depart from the way of the family. Perhaps they never identified with the vision of the family, or perhaps they rejected it in favor of something more appealing, or perhaps there might have been no vision imparted to them. That can happen after several generations, as the ties that hold the family together become less important, and eventually cease to matter. The people living in the same house may go through the motions of being a family, but there is no substance giving meaning to those motions. When trials come, such as a health crisis, a serious brush with the law, financial collapse, or an unwanted pregnancy, there is no vision to offer guidance on how to respond in a way that best ensures the family's survival. With lack of vision, the responses come as often as not from a flight or fight reaction based on individual preservation rather than mutual commitment to the common identity and shared future.

When we extend this family model to a people and a nation, we see how societies and civilizations drift into decay. This is how people perish when there is no vision to keep them from casting off restraint. In a crisis, or even in daily decisions to buy beer and a lottery ticket rather than pay the bills, there's very little reckoning of what consequences might come, or how to deal with them when they do.

That's why Yeshua wept over Jerusalem. His people had lost the ability to reckon with the visitation of divine accountability that was to come on that generation. It's the same reckoning that came on their ancestors when the Ten Spies returned with a fearful report about the land God had promised his Covenant family as their inheritance. Those men weren't wicked; they were respected tribal leaders. That means they were husbands, fathers, productive members of society, and generally good guys. So were Caleb and Joshua, but those two men had the vision of Israel and Israel's God that the good men who spied out the land with them lacked.

The sad conclusion in the days of Caleb and Joshua, and in the days of Messiah Yeshua, was that the people of vision were too few to contend with the loud voices of the people who thought they had too much to lose from following God's leading in the trials before them. They weren't wicked, just shortsighted. That's how the time of their visitation caught them unprepared.