

# The Blessings of the Beatitudes

There is perhaps no passage of Scripture that has been the text of more sermons than Christ's Sermon on the Mount. This teaching begins with a series of blessings that are commonly called the Beatitudes. In order to understand the true meaning of these blessings it is important to view them in their proper context.

## Preaching From the Mountaintop

From the very beginning of Christ's earthly ministry His preaching focused on the establishment of an earthly kingdom. His message to Israel was that the Kingdom was at hand and that He was the one that could deliver it.

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Matthew 4:17

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. Matthew 4:23

This is in contrast to the message of Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, in the Age of Grace. His preaching focused on a body of believers reigning in the heavenlies.

And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: Ephesians 2:6

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. Philippians 3:20,21

The physical setting of Christ's sermon in Matthew 5, 6, and 7 gives us a very important indication of the context in which it should be placed.

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Matthew 5:1,2

Christ when into a mountain to preach this sermon. In Scripture a mountain often represents a kingdom. Isaiah referred to Christ's earthly kingdom as a "mountain".

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD. Isaiah 65:25

When Christ when into the mountain he was "set". This term is not a reference to simply sitting down. It is used in


Scripture to refer to being seated in a position of authority.

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2

Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Ephesians 1:20

Once Christ was "set" in the "mountain" His disciples came to him and he taught them. The picture we see here is that of a king set on His throne in His kingdom instructing the citizens of that kingdom. In the Sermon on the Mount Christ is instructing Israel about the principles and conditions of the Kingdom of Heaven. As we consider each of the Beatitudes, we must view it in that context.

## Blessed are the Poor, Meek Mourners

 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:3

This first blessing speaks of the attitude of the heart. The "poor in spirit" are those that realize their spiritual need.

The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Psalms 34:18

The Gospel of the Kingdom being preached to the poor was one of the credentials that verified the earthly ministry of Christ.

Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. Matthew 11:2-6

The reward for these people was entry into the Kingdom of Heaven. This is the reward reserved for little flock of believers in the nation Israel.

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Luke 12:32

This blessing and its reward are not promised to the Body of Christ in the Age of Grace. It is a promise to the believing remnant that Christ was calling out of Israel.

📖 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Matthew 5:4

This verse is often used to provide comfort to someone who has suffered a loss in this life. However, the true recipients of this blessing are those that experience a very specific type of mourning.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; Zechariah 12:9-12a

The mourning in this verse is the mourning or the believing remnant in Israel when they see the Christ that their nation crucified.

Those that mourn in this way will be comforted by the blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven.

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. Zechariah 13:1

Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; Isaiah 51:11,12

Once again, we see a condition and a blessing that applies not to the Body of Christ but to the little flock in Israel receiving their promised kingdom.

📖 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Matthew 5:5

This third Beatitude is often applied to this current day and used as an argument against war. This is not the proper interpretation and application of this verse.

First, we must understand that meekness is not weakness. Meekness has been described as strength under control. It is the quality of enduring all things with an even temper. It is a quality that Christ exhibited as he suffered the pain and humiliation of the cross.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Matthew 11:29

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2

For the believing remnant to whom Christ spoke this is a promise of blessing after they patiently endure the chastening of the tribulation.

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the

end, the same shall be saved. Matthew 24:9-13

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Hebrews 12:5-8

The reward for the meek in Israel is inheriting the earth.

For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. Psalms 37:9-11

Notice that the earth that the meek inherit is an earth of peace. This describes the condition of the earth during the Kingdom reign of Christ. Inheriting the earth as a reward is a marked contrast to the reward for the Body of Christ which is in heavenly places.

**Blessed are the Merciful Pure That Thirst**

📖 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Matthew 5:6

As with the mourning spoken of in verse 4, the seeking after righteousness spoken of in verse 6 is a very specific type of seeking. It is a reference to a member of the believing remnant in Israel seeking after the righteousness of Christ's earthly kingdom that will come only after they endure the chastening of the tribulation.

In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. . . . With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD. . . . LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them. Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O LORD. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen. Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. Isaiah 26:1,2,9,10,16-21

Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD'S anger come upon you. Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye

shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger. Zephaniah 2:1-3

The believing remnant in Israel must hide themselves and endure the suffering of the tribulation in order to receive the blessings of the kingdom. During this time of testing they will be hungering and seeking after the establishment of God's righteous kingdom.

📖 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Matthew 5:7

In this beatitude we see a clear indication of an "if-then", performance based salvation. Mercy can be obtained only by those that show mercy. This teaching parallels what Christ taught later in the Sermon on the Mount as he taught His apostles what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses: Matthew 6:14,15

The principle of giving mercy and forgiveness in order to receive them is clearly a law based teaching and is contrary to the principles of grace under which we live. In grace, we forgive because God has already forgiven us.

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Ephesians 4:32

The blessing of this beatitude is reserved for those who perform in a certain way. This clearly applies to Israel and her law based system, not to the Body of Christ in the Age of Grace.

📖 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Matthew 5:8

All men, even the lost will see God. The unsaved will see God, in the person of Christ, at the Great White Throne Judgment spoken of in Revelation. What then is this special blessing reserved for the pure in heart?

Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. . . . Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah. Psalms 24:3-7,10

The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off. Isaiah 33:14-17

This blessing is a promise to those who will see God in the person of Christ sitting on the throne of David in the earthly kingdom. It is not a promise for the Church the Body of Christ

and our heavenly calling.

### **Blessed are the Reviled, Persecuted Peacemakers**

📖 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Matthew 5:9

This verse is often misapplied to the Age of Grace as an admonition against war. While we should certainly not desire war, it is sometimes necessary in this present evil age in which we live. This passage is a reference to the peace that will be the order of the day in the earthly kingdom of Christ.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. Isaiah 9:6,7

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD. Isaiah 65:25

Even the peace of the kingdom can come only after Christ makes war with and defeats the enemies of Israel.

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. . . . And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. . . . And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. Revelation 19:11,15,19-21

There is no place in the world today that there is peace and there will never be peace until the Prince of Peace sits on the throne. This beatitude is a reference to that time.

📖 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:10

The persecution spoken of in this beatitude is the persecution that we have seen previously in this article, the suffering of the tribulation period. This suffering will reach its height in the reign of antichrist and his giving of a mark.

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Matthew 24:21-24

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had

the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six. Revelation 13:16-18

Also, as we have seen previously, the reward for those that endure the tribulation is entry into the earthly kingdom. Neither the suffering nor the reward spoken of in this beatitude can be applied to the Body of Christ in the Dispensation of Grace.

📖 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Matthew 5:11,12

In this final beatitude we once again see a reference to the suffering of the tribulation and the reward that awaits those that endure that suffering. Christ will bring that kingdom, which is currently in heaven, to the earth at his triumphant return. He explained this to His apostles in a parable.

And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. Luke 19:11,12

Daniel spoke prophetically of this event.

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Daniel 7:13,14

All of the blessings spoken of in the beatitudes are connected with the establishment of a literal, visible, physical, earthly, Davidic kingdom with Christ sitting on the throne ruling the nations with a rod of iron. This is not the destiny of the Body of Christ in the Age of Grace.

### **Putting the Beatitudes in Their Place**

The beatitudes can only be properly understood when they are placed in their proper context. They, like the entire Sermon on the Mount, are pronouncements of a King (Jesus Christ) to the citizens of His kingdom (the believing remnant in Israel). Both the blessings of the beatitudes and the requirements to receive those blessings are applicable only to that context.

