

SABBATH THOUGHT 2022-12-17—BEATITUDES IN THE PSALMS

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

The New Testament is what we call the part of the Bible that was written after the death of Jesus Christ. The amazing part is how much of the New Testament actually quotes the Old Testament. This should not be surprising since the way of salvation is also contained in the Old Testament.

Immediately following the spiritual battle with Satan, Jesus Christ began preaching to the people. He laid before them some of the most comforting and beautiful sayings in the entire Bible. Matthew 5:2 begins with, “He [*Jesus Christ*] opened His mouth *and* taught them, saying:”

“Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Mat 5:3).

“Blessed *are* those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” (Mat 5:4).

“Blessed *are* the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” (Mat 5:5).

“Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” (Mat 5:6).

“Blessed *are* the merciful, for they shall find mercy.” (Mat 5:7).

“Blessed *are* the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Mat 5:8).

“Blessed *are* the peacemakers, for they shall be called *the* sons of God.” (Mat 5:9).

“Blessed *are* those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Mat 5:10).

“Blessed are you when they shall reproach you, and shall persecute you, and shall falsely say every wicked thing against you, for My sake.” (Mat 5:11).

Some have said that *beatitude* is a short word for *beautiful attitudes*. I wonder, however, how many can view someone who is actually crestfallen, mourning, meek, humbly seeking God, merciful, loving, peacemakers, or being persecuted as having a beautiful attitude. I am certain that God does, but it is still a puzzling name in that regard. The reason is that Jesus said that those who do these things are **blessed**, which is quite different from a beautiful attitude.

The Greek word for *blessed* is *makarios*. The root meaning of that word means to make something *beautiful*. It is this meaning that is behind *blessed*, not beautiful attitude. In other words, *blessed* **is** the meaning for the Old French word *beatitude*. So, Jesus is

saying to all those mentioned in verses 3-11 that they *will be* blessed or made beautiful. Obviously, this does not happen in this physical life.

I imagine Paul pondering these sayings of Christ when he wrote the agape love chapter especially when he said:

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-8 Love is **patient** and is **kind**; **love envies not, does not brag** about itself, **is not puffed up**. 5 Love **does not behave disgracefully, does not seek its own things, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil**, 6 **Does not rejoice in iniquity**, but **rejoices in the truth**. 7 Love **bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things**. 8 Love never fails. But whether *there be* prophecies, they shall cease; whether *there be* languages, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away.

Are not all of these attitudes reflected by those situations mentioned in the Beatitudes? In other words, those mentioned in the Beatitudes are fulfilling the Great Commandments¹. As Saul, he was responsible for much suffering to others so it is no wonder that Paul was so transformed when he received the Holy Spirit of God's agape love. The growth of God's love working in him is striking as you read his epistles.

In the Old Testament, the word translated "blessed" is *'esher*, meaning *happiness*. It is a form of *'asher*, which is also the name of one of the twelve tribes. Did you know that the Psalms are full of "Blessed is/are..." scriptures? I present some of them here, but there are others throughout the Old Testament. Notice that the first verse in the first Psalm² is a "Beatitude":

"Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." (Psa. 1:1).

"... Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him." (Psa. 2:12).

"... Blessed *is he* whose transgression *is* forgiven, whose sin *is* covered." (Psa. 32:1).

"Blessed *is* the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no guile." (Psa. 32:2).

"Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD; and the people *whom* he hath chosen for his own inheritance." (Psa.33:12).

"... blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in Him." (Psa. 34:8).

"Blessed *is* that man that maketh the LORD his trust, ..." (Psa. 40:4).

¹ Matt. 22; Mark 12; John 13:34; 1 John 2; Matt. 5:43-44; Luke 6:27, 35.

² I used the KJV for the prose; however, it sometimes wrongly translates the word for *blessed* as *happy*.

“... Blessed *is* he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.” (Psa. 41:1).

“Blessed *is the man whom* thou choosest, and causest to approach *unto thee, that* he may dwell in thy courts: ...” (Psa. 65:4).

“Blessed *are* they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.” (Psa. 84:4).

“Blessed *is* the man whose strength *is* in thee; in whose heart *are* the ways of *them*.” (Psa. 84:5).

“... blessed *is* the man that trusteth in thee.” (Psa. 84:12).

“Blessed *is* the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.” (Psa. 89:15).

“Blessed *is* the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law;” (Psa. 94:12).

“Blessed *are* they that keep judgment, *and* he that doeth righteousness at all times.” (Psa. 106:3).

“... Blessed *is* the man *that* feareth the LORD, *that* delighteth greatly in his commandments.” (Psa. 112:1).

“Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed You out of the house of the LORD.” (Psa. 118:26).

“... Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.” (Psa. 119:1).

“Blessed *are* they that keep his testimonies, *and that* seek him with the whole heart.” (Psa. 119:2).

“Happy [Blessed] *is* the man that hath his quiver full of them (children): they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.” (Psa. 127:5).

“... Blessed *is* every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways. 2 For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy *shalt* thou *be*, and *it shall be* well with thee.” (Psa. 128:1-2).

“Happy [Blessed] *is that* people, that is in such a case: *yea, happy [blessed] is that* people, whose God *is* the LORD.” (Psa. 144:15).

“Happy [Blessed] *is he* that *hath* the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope *is* in the LORD his God:” (Psa. 146:5).

This particular Sabbath Thought deviates somewhat from my usual writings. However, it seemed appropriate with this topic that I offer it as an opportunity to you to search for other “Blessed is...” scriptures on this Sabbath. I encourage you to seek out those “pearls” because they are truly uplifting and encouraging. There are many in Proverbs, but do not stop with the Old Testament because they are strewn throughout the NT as well, particularly in Luke but also Matthew, Romans, James, and Revelation.

If you want a challenge, see how many you can find in the NT that are direct quotes from the OT. You might also notice a big difference in the Old and New Testaments. The OT focuses on the happiness in this life, which is a result of obedience to the old covenant with God. Those in the NT are clearly pointed to a future, and more abundant and eternal blessing for enduring hardships and having the agape love of God directing our ways.

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

Steven Greene

<https://sabbathreflections.org>