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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Hebrews 12:12-13

THE BEATITUDES OF THE REVELATION

But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. Matthew 13:16-17

There is a portion of the LORD's teaching, commonly referred to as "The Sermon on the Mount", which can be found in Matthew, chapters 5-7. This "sermon" encapsulates the heart of the LORD's teaching to men. In it HE describes the foundation and operating principles of HIS Kingdom. Therein we see a great contrast between the nature of HIS Kingdom and the nature of men. Everything HE taught men about Kingdom propriety and order is quite contrary to the natural thinking and bent of men, not to mention their conduct.

For instance, HE said, "*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.*" (Mat 5:43-44) I can think of no other teaching which is more in conflict with the natural thinking of men than this. HE gave a concrete example of this principle when HE said, "*But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.*" (Mat 5:39-40)

By nature, men show the work of the law written in their hearts (see Rom 2:15) as they fully embrace the concept of "*an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.*" Indeed, the Law of Moses sets forth this principle (see Ex.21:24) and men delight in it for the wrong reason. Everything which is posited in the Law manifests the sin of men. Men delight in the "letter" of the law when it suits their purpose and despise it as it breathes out their just condemnation. When the message of the LORD's Kingdom is declared, men despise it as well because it gives them no place to hide and reveals their innate corruption and their total inability to measure up to the STANDARD of holiness which is revealed in and by JESUS CHRIST. "*Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.*" (1Pet 2:22) If a man is to be found acceptable in this Kingdom, he must be clothed in the perfect RIGHTEOUSNESS of JESUS CHRIST and not one iota of his own.

Verses 3 through 11 of Matthew 5 all begin with the word "*Blessed*". These verses have generally been called the "Beatitudes". The LORD began HIS "sermon on the mount" with these nine declarations. While the word "beatitude" does not appear in the scriptures, it is quite an appropriate description of these statements. The definition of "beatitude" is, "supreme blessedness". The Greek word which is translated as "blessed" in these "beatitudes", appears in the NT scriptures 50 times. This same Greek word is also translated as "happy or happier" five times in other instances where it appears. Thus, we can ascertain that when the LORD made these statements beginning with "blessed", HE is speaking about a "happy" or "fortunate" condition.

All of the blessings that men enjoy come from HIM. "*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.*" (James 1:17) The children of GOD are not blessed because they perform certain tasks or meet certain conditions. Their blessing is bestowed upon them **as** HE works in them both to will and do of HIS good pleasure. (see Phil.2:13) They are "*blessed*" (i.e.; happy) as HE makes them "*poor in spirit*", "*mEEK*", "*merciful*" and "*pure in heart*". HE even said they would be "*blessed*" in "persecution" (see Matt 5:10,11) We see this demonstrated in Peter and John. "*When they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.*" (Acts 5:40-41)

Beatitudes are not only found in the LORD's sermon on the Mount but we them in seven verses of HIS Revelation which HE sent to HIS servant John (see Rev.1:1) We will look at them:

1. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." (Rev 1:3) There is indeed a "blessing" in being enabled to read the WORD of GOD with understanding. Thus, we would exhort the children of GOD to "read" the scriptures regularly and prayerfully. GOD alone can open the understanding to receive and rejoice in HIS WORD. To "hear" HIS WORD is a gift which no man can bestow but must be given by HIS SPIRIT. This is especially true as HE gives HIS children the ability to "hear the words of this prophecy." "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Rom 10:17)

2. "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." (Rev 14:13) In Hebrews 11:13 we read of those who "died in the FAITH". The blessing of those who "die in the FAITH", is visited on those who are given the gift of "living in the FAITH." "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." (Rom 1:17)

3. "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." (Rev 16:15) The LORD exhorted HIS disciples to "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." (Mat 26:41) reminding them of the weakness of their flesh. CHRIST will come in a surprising manner to the world, but Paul reminds the children of GOD: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." (1Thes 5:4) We have the LIGHT of LIFE if we be in CHRIST.

4. "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." (Rev 19:9) What a great blessing it is to be those who are numbered among the "called". "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom 8:28) "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:39) "He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." (John 10:3)

5. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." (Rev 20:6) There are many varying opinions about what the "first resurrection" is referring to as it is mentioned here. It is not my intention to point out possible errors in all of these different opinions but to state what I believe is being spoken of by the use of this terminology. It seems to me that this "first resurrection" has to do with that work of the SPIRIT of GOD in the sons of GOD whereby they are quickened (i.e.; made alive) from a state of deadness in sin. It is that of which the LORD spoke to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again." A man cannot precipitate his "resurrection" from this state of death anymore than he can raise his body from the grave in the second resurrection. He is dead in sin and raised to LIFE in CHRIST.

The second death, is that casting of those not written in the LAMB's book of LIFE into the lake of fire along with death and hell "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev 20:14-15) Those who are given a part in the first resurrection are blessed not to have a part in this second death. This is a great blessing bestowed on them strictly according to HIS purpose to show them grace and mercy. "When I hear the wicked call on the rocks and hills to fall, when I see them start and shrink on the fiery deluge brink, then, Lord, shall I fully know, not till then, how much I owe." (Robert Murray McCheyne, c.1837)

6. "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." (Rev 22:7) CHRIST is our "LAWKEEPER" insofar as the satisfaction of the Law is concerned. The blessing of the sons of GOD is in "keeping" (i.e.; guarding and keeping ones eye upon) the prophecies of this book as well as all of the WORD of GOD given to us in the Bible. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psa 119:11) Therein are all of our blessings revealed.

7. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Rev 22:14) GOD's people are exhorted to "do" the commandments of GOD. They have no greater joy (blessing) than when they are walking in obedience to HIS precepts, believing HIS promise and holding on to it. "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." (1John 3:23)

Those who are awakened by the SPIRIT of GOD to flee from the wrath to come, are the most "blessed" people in the Earth. They are given eyes to see and ears to hear the Testimony of JESUS, which is the SPIRIT of prophecy. Many have sought to look into these things more fully in times past but were not able. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ." (Rev 12:10) Have you heard HIS VOICE and believed? mam