

BEATITUDES OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Text: Revelation 1:3

INTRO: Jesus' sermon on the mount begins with what has commonly been called the beatitudes--those statements, "blessed are the poor in spirit," "blessed are the meek," "blessed are those who mourn," etc.

Webster defines beatitude: "consummate bliss, blessedness." Some of the newer translations have rendered Jesus' words, "Oh, the blessedness of..."

There are 7 beatitudes scattered thru the book of Revelation. They will be the subject of our study.

I. BLESSED IS HE WHO READS & THOSE WHO HEAR THE WORDS OF THIS PROPHECY, & KEEP THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN IT; FOR THE TIME IS NEAR, Rev. 1:3.

A. As the context shows, this book was written primarily to the 7 congregations in Asia Minor named in the book. It was written in the last half of the first century, A.D.

B. It was written with certain specific events in mind & the time for it to begin to be fulfilled was very near, at hand.

C. Of course, it is based on solid, eternal principles, so that even tho many of the specific details have long since been fulfilled, the lessons of the book are as valid to 20th century Americans as they were to first century Asians. We too may claim the blessings Christ promised to them.

1. He who reads. The public reader.
2. Those who hear.
3. Those who keep those things which are written.

NOTE: Some needed to repent; others simply needed to continue on the course they were already pursuing. All need to keep on doing what is right.

4. The time is near. A time of reckoning is never really very far away. And someday, the time of eternal reckoning.

II. BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD FROM NOW ON, Rev. 14:13. The Bible places death in 2 categories:

- A. Death of the righteous, Psa 116:15; Num 23:10
- B. Death of the wicked.

"As I live," says the Lord God, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way & live. Turn, turn from your evil ways!" (Ezek 33:11).

- C. There is no middle ground. Either we are in fellowship with God, or we are not. MT 12:30.

1. Those who die in fellowship with the Lord will rest from their labors. MT 11:28.

Heb 4:9-11, There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

2. Their works follow them. 1 Cor 15:58. Not fruitful? Is it God's will? If so, it's fruitful.

III. BEHOLD I AM COMING AS A THIEF. BLESSED IS HE WHO WATCHES & KEEPS HIS GARMENTS... Rev. 16:15.

- A. Repeatedly, Jesus has warned His followers to be alert, be watchful.

1. His 2nd coming will be as a thief--at a time unannounced & unexpected.
2. Often His coming in lesser judgments is also like a thief. Rev 3:3 [Sardis].

3. His coming in blessings & opportunities is also often quick & unexpected. We must be awake, alert & watchful so that we do not waste them or allow them to slip away unclaimed.

B. He admonishes His servants to keep their garments. Throughout the book, garments of white are used to represent purity & victory.

1. The 24 elders in 4:4 were clothed in white robes & victory crowns.

2. The martyrs in 6:11 were given white robes & told to rest while they await the final vindication of their cause.

3. In 19:8 the Lamb's bride is clothed in fine linen, clean & bright--the righteous acts of the saints.

4. Note also the statements made to the churches in Sardis & Laodicea, 3:4-5, 17-18.

C. Those who do not keep their garments undefiled will be found naked like those in Laodicea & face the danger of everlasting shame.

IV. BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE CALLED TO THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB! Rev. 19:9.

A. The blessings of the relationship between Christ & faithful Christians are often viewed as a splendid banquet. This figure is used to portray the kingdom of Christ, both in its present state & in its future state in heaven itself.

1. In the present state, Rev 3:20; MT 26:29.

a. parable of the wedding feast, MT 22:1-14

b. parable of the great supper, LK 14:15-24

2. In the glorified heavenly state.

Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. (LK 14:15).

And I say to you that many will come from east & west & sit down with Abraham, Isaac & Jacob in the kingdom of heaven... (MT 8:11).

V. BLESSED & HOLY IS HE WHO HAS PART IN THE FIRST RESURRECTION... Rev. 20:6. In his account of the gospel, John records that Jesus spoke of 2 resurrections:

John 5:24-29, Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word & believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, & has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

A. The first resurrection is spiritual. Being made spiritually alive after having been dead in sin.

Col 2:11-13, Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him thru faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses & the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

B. The 2nd resurrection is bodily. All will be raised, tho for the wicked it will not be a blessing.

C. Those who take part in the first, or spiritual resurrection are blessed in at least 3 different ways:

1. The 2nd death has no power over them
He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the 2nd death. (Rev 2:11). [Smyrna]

2. They shall be priest of God & of Christ. All Christians are priests. READ I PETER 2:5, 9
3. They share in the reign of Jesus as they bask in the blessings of His heavenly rule. They are a royal priesthood, 1 Pet 2:9. They are kings & priests. Rev 1:6; 2:26-27; 3:21

VI. BEHOLD I AM COMING QUICKLY. BLESSED IS HE WHO KEEPS THE WORDS OF THE PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK, Rev 22:7.

- A. Keep them in mind. Don't forget or neglect.
- B. Keep them in our behavior.
 1. Some of the Christians to whom this book was addressed needed to repent & return to a right relationship with God.
 2. Others needed to continue in faithfulness in order to maintain the right relationship they were enjoying with God.
 3. Both groups then--& now--need to keep in mind the warnings & promises of this book--& keep making application of these Divine truths to their daily lives.

VII. BLESSED ARE THEY WHO DO HIS COMMANDMENTS, Rev. 22:14.

- A. They will have access to the tree of life. Everlasting life.
- B. Enter the city that cannot be entered by those who do not keep His commandments. READ REV. 21:25-27.
- C. Others will EXIST forever, but those who are obedient to the will of God will LIVE forever.

CONCLUSION: READ REVELATION 22:17-21.

Exton, PA, November 20, 1988
Shiloh, Mexia, TX, June 11, 1989 (meeting)
Eastside, Indianapolis, IN, April 25, 1990 (meeting)
Tri-State, Ashland, KY, June 23, 1991 (meeting)
La Porte, TX, May 8, 1992 (meeting)
Shiloh, Mexia, TX, August 4, 1996
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, February 8, 1998
Fairfield, PA, March 26, 1998
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, March 28, 2004