

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

717 North Stapley Drive, Mesa, AZ 85203 Phone: (480) 833-7500

Series:	Revelation		Pastor/Teacher
Number:	43		Gary L.W. Johnson
Text:	Revelation 1:3 and others		
Date:	August 21, 2022 (a.m.)		

THE BEATITUDES OF REVELATION

We have highlighted already the blessing that is promised in Revelation 1:3. This is the *first* of seven specific blessings found in the book of Revelation. We commonly associate the word *beatitude* with the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-11) but there are a large number of beatitudes in the Bible. For example, in the Psalms there are numerous beatitudes. Some of the best known are Psalm 1:1, which speaks of the blessedness of delighting in God's law; Psalm 32:1 on the blessedness of forgiveness, and Psalm 40:4, how blessed is the man who has made the LORD his trust. The word *beatitude* comes from the Latin *beatus*. It is used to translate the Greek word *makarios*. This in turn is used in the LXX of the Old Testament to translate the Hebrew *'asre*. This is translated in English in a variety of ways.¹ The thought of "happiness" is indeed involved. The problem with the word "happy," however, is that has, as D.A. Carson observes, "been devalued in modern usage."² We used the word in a highly subjective sense. Each person will define happiness in a different way, but everybody longs to be happy. It is, in fact, our greatest quest. "The whole world is longing for happiness, and it is tragic," writes Martin Lloyd-Jones, "to observe the ways in which people are seeking it. The vast majority, alas, are doing so in a way that is bound to produce misery. Anything which, by evading the difficulties, merely makes people happy for the time being, is ultimately going to add to their misery and problems. That is where the utter deceitfulness of sin comes in; it is always offering happiness, and it always leads to unhappiness and to final misery and wretchedness."³ Beatitudes provide us with the key to true happiness.

- I. **THE BLESSINGS FROM THE TRINITY.** The source of these blessings is the Father, the Spirit, and the Son. Here is strikingly early evidence for Christian belief in the Trinity – one God existing eternally in three Persons. These Persons, however, are listed in a different order than normally given elsewhere in the New Testament. God the Father is described as **him who is, and who was, and who is to come**, found in the Bible only here and in 1:8 and 4:8. He is the God of the present, the past, and the future. Although the Greek grammar is awkward here, this is a development of God's Old Testament name, "I AM WHO I AM" (Exod. 3:14). In changing, perilous times, Christians take heart that the God they serve transcends time.⁴
 1. **Revelation 1:3.** Blessed is the one reading, and those hearing the words of this prophecy, and who keeps the things that are written in it, for the time is near.
 2. **Revelation 14:13.** I heard the voice from heaven saying, "Write, *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.*" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors; for their deeds follow with them."
 3. **Revelation 16:15.** "Behold, I come like a thief. Blessed is the one watching and guarding his clothes, so that he doesn't walk naked, and they see his shame."

4. **Revelation 19:9.** He said to me, "Write, *Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.*" He said to me, "These are true words of God."
5. **Revelation 20:6.** Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over these, the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him 1,000 years.
6. **Revelation 22:7.** "Behold, I come quickly. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book!"
7. **Revelation 22:14.** Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in by the gates into the city.

CONCLUSION: As we encounter the six remaining beatitudes, we will examine them in some detail. I close with the comments of the late Grant Osborne: "The seven beatitudes, or blessings, in the book are linked to the ethical purpose of the visions, with some challenging to persevere and live exemplary lives (Rev. 1:3; 16:15; 22:7) and others promising future rewards for doing so (Rev. 14:13; 19:9; 20:6; 22:14). The meaning of *blessed are* is the same as in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:3-12); *God blesses those who . . .*" The emphasis is on reading the prophecies in a church setting. The *reader* refers to the official reader in the service. In the second century, this person was a church officer, and in synagogues there were five readers for festivals and seven for the Sabbath. At times a rabbi would read a passage and then preach on it like Jesus did in Luke 4:16-30. The important thing to note is that this book was treated as Scripture from the start. It is sad that in many churches today the reading of Scripture is falling by the wayside. I have even heard it said that we must limit oral reading because Scripture is boring! We are dealing with the only eternal truth we have – the Word of God! We must recover the privilege and excitement of letting God speak in our services by reading his written Word as an act of worship."⁵

ENDNOTES

¹ The King James, Revised Standard, American Standard, ESV and NIV all have *Blessed*. J. B. Philips renders it *How Happy*, while The Living Bible has *fortunate*. The Hebrew word *barac*, to bless (hence the name Beracah in 1 Chron. 20:26), literally, to kneel is translated *praise* in Jud. 5:2 and Ps. 72:15; and it is to be noticed that blessing signifies not only the act of a superior to an inferior, but also the expression of grateful praise proceeding from the inferior and ascending to the superior. The usual Greek translation of this word is *eulogeō*. The word *eulogētos*, blessed, is only used of God and of Christ; but *eulogēmenos* is used more generally. The verb is often used to express the blessing promised to Abraham and conveyed to the faithful in Christ. Cf. R. B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of The Old Testament* (rpt. Eerdmans, 1974), p. 220. According to *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Moody Press, 1980), 1:132, to bless means "to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc." In essence, the one who is blessed is given a rich and abundant life.

² D. A. Carson, *Matthew: The Expositor's Bible Commentary* VIII, ed. F. E. Gaebelin (Zondervan, 1984), p. 131.

³ M. Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon On the Mount* (Eerdmans, 1959), p. 32.

⁴ K. H. Easley, *Revelation: Holman New Testament Commentary* (Holman, 1998), p. 14.

⁵ G. R. Osborne, *Revelation Verse By Verse* (Lexham Press, 2016), p. 22.