

## BLESSED ARE...ENTER THE REIGN

**“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.”** (Matthew 6.33 NASB)

We are commanded to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. Seeking the kingdom of God must be our priority, but it must be done according to Scripture. The Father has chosen gladly to give us the kingdom (Luke 12.32). It is His heart to give His kingdom to His people; however, seeking the kingdom must be done God’s way, not man’s way. It is the difference between the narrow gate that leads to life and the wide gate that leads to ruin (Matthew 7.13-14).

As the first book of the New Testament, Matthew is very much like Genesis. Genesis, the book of beginnings, presents the framework by which to understand all Scripture, including the kingdom of God. Matthew is the gospel of the King and the kingdom, and presents the framework by which to understand the kingdom as presented in all that follows in the New Testament. Matthew is like a key that opens a door.

Matthew lays the framework for one to enter the kingdom. The offer initially went out to the Israelites according to the flesh, but many of them rejected the King which led to their disqualification from entering the kingdom. Consequently, Jesus walked out of the house of Israel, according to the flesh, and declared: **“Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!”** (Matthew 23.38 NASB). For those who rejected Christ, the Messiah, Jesus declared: **“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it”** (Matthew 21.43 NASB).

The nation called to bear fruit is *the ecclesia of God*; the company of out-called ones born from above to a living hope who have been saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2.8). According to Paul, this is the one new man in Christ. The nations were separated from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world (Ephesians 2.12).

**But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both {groups into} one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, {which is} the Law of commandments {contained} in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, {thus} establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.**  
(Ephesians 2.13-16 NASB)

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God is taking from among the nations a people for His name (Acts 15.14) [along with a remnant of Jews according to the flesh (Romans 11.5)] that are the true Jews, ones who are circumcised in heart. This is the one new man in Christ, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth (Ephesians 4.24). Thus, the one new man is the holy nation, called to become a kingdom of kings and priests (Revelation 1.6; 5.10).

Understanding this framework allows us to understand Matthew and to apply all that pertains to entering *the kingdom of the heavens* or, as stated in *Young's Literal Translation*, coming into *the reign of the heavens*, to the one new man in Christ, the nation called to bear fruit. With this basic understanding, Matthew takes on greater clarity.

### ***Jesus went up on a mountain.***

Jesus' ministry begins in Matthew chapter 4. Following His baptism and the devil's temptation in the wilderness, Jesus began to preach, saying, "**Reform ye, for come nigh hath the reign of the heavens**" (Matthew 4.17 YLT). He went throughout Galilee proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, for the King had arrived to offer *the reign of the heavens* to all who would believe His word.

**And {Jesus} was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. And the news about Him went out into all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, taken with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them. And great multitudes followed Him....** (Matthew 4.23-25 NASB)

**And when He saw the multitudes, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. And opening His mouth He {began} to teach them, saying....** (Matthew 5.1-2 NASB)

There are four very significant facts related to this account given in Matthew.

First, this is the first major teaching of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament. Just as the book of Matthew is significant as the first book of the New Testament, so is the first teaching of Jesus significant. The significance is that Jesus began to lay down the principles of entering (included in) or not entering (excluded from) the kingdom of the heavens.

Second, Jesus went up on a mountain. In Scripture, the word *mountain* is often used to represent kingdom (e.g., Isaiah 2.1-4; Daniel 2.34-39, 44, 45; Matthew 17.1-9). Whenever Jesus revealed major truths about the kingdom of the heavens, He sat on a mountain with His disciples and taught them. We discover this when He went up on the mountain and spoke to His disciples on the entrance into the kingdom (Matthew 5-7); when He summoned His twelve disciples to a mountain

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to send them out with the message of the kingdom (Mark 3.13-15); when He took three of the disciples up on a high mountain and He was transfigured in the glory of His coming kingdom (Matthew 17.1-8); and when He sat on the Mount of Olives, speaking of the sign of His coming and the rewards of His kingdom (Matthew 24.3-25.46).

*Third*, Jesus sat down. Jesus sitting down pointed to a day when He will sit upon His throne and judgment seat (2 Corinthians 5.10) to make determinations regarding who will receive the reward of the inheritance (Colossians 3.24) and who will suffer loss, even the loss of all reward and exclusion from reigning with Him in His coming kingdom.

*Fourth*, His disciples came to Him. At the judgment seat of Christ, Christ's disciples will be brought before Him for judgment to determine if they have pleased Him while He has been gone.

**“Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.’”**  
(Matthew 25.19-20 NASB)

**“And it came about that when he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him in order that he might know what business they had done.”** (Luke 19.15 NASB)

After judgment, Christ will sit upon His own throne and those who overcome will sit upon His throne with Him (meaning that they will rule with Him).

**“He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”** (Revelation 3.21-22 NASB)

Thus, Jesus going up on a mountain, sitting and receiving His disciples to Himself to tell them the principles for entering or not entering the kingdom speaks of a future day when He will sit both on His judgment seat and on His own throne with those who conquer (overcome).

On the mountain, Jesus began to teach His disciples in what is commonly called *the Sermon on the Mount*. He began with nine statements that begin with blessed are [the word *are* has been added by the translators] that are commonly called the Beatitudes. It is interesting that many Christian children often memorize these verses for recitation, and yet the meaning of them is never truly taught. It is like the prayer “Thy kingdom come,” which is contained in the prayer Jesus taught His disciples (which is part of the Sermon on the Mount). They have become words

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without meaning. However, the Beatitudes are essential for all who are seeking first the kingdom. They are not for children but for those who are growing up to be sons of the kingdom. In fact, they describe the character or quality of those who will enter the reign of the heavens. For this reason, it is very important to look at each one carefully. Although there are nine ***blessed are***, the eighth and the ninth are the same. Further, the first seven speak of character, but the last two speak of the response to the character by the unrighteous world, including the religious world or Christendom. In other words, those who are of the right character will be persecuted; however, great is their reward in heaven; a reward that will come from heaven or from the spirit realm (as opposed to one going to heaven).

The word *blessed* means “supremely blest.” We could say that those who are blessed are extremely fortunate, well off, and happy. Surely, those who will possess the kingdom of the heavens will be the most supremely blessed in heaven (i.e., among the celestials) and on earth. They will be the happy ones. Each statement begins with blessed and ends with why they are blessed in reference to the kingdom. Set in between the two is the character that makes them blessed. We could say that it is the character that will allow them entrance into *the reign of the heavens*, even an abundant entrance.

Interestingly, by comparing Scripture to Scripture, I discovered that the spirit of truth has given us three sets of Scriptures that are companions to each other. They are the ***blessed are*** characteristics by Matthew (Matthew 5:3-12), the ***abundant entrance into the kingdom*** by Peter (2 Peter 1:5-7, 11), and ***the fruit of the spirit*** by Paul (Galatians 5:22-23). A chart is presented at the end of the article that brings them all together; however, these comparisons are made at the end of each discussion of the ***blessed are*** statements.

Now, let us look at each blessed. Two translations are presented for each verse, one of which comes from one claiming to be a more literal translation.

### ***The poor in spirit.***

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

**Happy the poor in spirit—because theirs is the reign of the heavens.** (Matthew 5:3 YLT)

Entering the kingdom is a spiritual matter. When we are born from above, our spirit comes alive to God and the spirit of God takes up residence in our revived spirit so that we can commune with God *in spirit* (Romans 5:5; 8:16; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Timothy 1:14). We need to be reminded that man is made of spirit, soul, and body. We see the three parts of man in Paul’s blessing of the Thessalonians: **Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ** (1 Thessalonians 5:23 NASB).

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The hope of every Christian is to be complete in Christ—the salvation of the spirit, the salvation of the soul, and the redemption of the body—at the *parousia* of Christ. The salvation of the soul is the outcome of our faith (1 Peter 1.9) and is worked out while in the body. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians: **For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God** (1 Corinthians 1.18; also 2 Corinthians 2.15). Believers who take up their cross and follow the Lord (Matthew 16.24) are being saved with a view of entering *the reign of the heavens* when heaven comes to earth to rule over the nations. However, some are enemies of the cross by refusing to allow the cross to work in their lives (Philippians 3.18-20); they will not inherit the kingdom.

These are vital points to our understanding the word of the kingdom. However, a serious problem is created when no difference is seen between the spirit and the soul. In fact, many Christians hold the view that the spirit and the soul are one and the same thing. Scripture tells us otherwise. The Tabernacle that Moses was commanded to build, according to the pattern of the Heavenly Tabernacle, is a type of man's body. It consisted of an outer court (the body), the Holy Place (the soul) and the Holy of Holies (the spirit). It was in the Holy of Holies that the high priest met God. A common illustration used to describe this arrangement is that of three concentric circles with the spirit in the center circle, the soul in the middle circle, and the body in the outer circle. Thus, the spirit is surrounded by the soul first and then the body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. As Paul wrote: **Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?** (1 Corinthians 6.19 NASB).

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews (most likely Paul) also places the spirit and the soul in the same arrangement.

**For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.** (Hebrews 4.12 NASB)

In this verse, the soul is likened to the body's joints and the spirit to the body's marrow. The joints (or bones) contain the marrow. Thus, the soul contains the spirit, just as the Holy Place contained the Holy of Holies. This is another vital point, for if the marrow becomes diseased, the joints are affected; and likewise, if the joints become diseased, the marrow is affected. In like fashion, if the spirit is defiled, it will affect the soul; and if the soul is defiled, it will affect the spirit. In other words, both spirit and soul are vital to our proper growth in Christ and to our abundant entrance into the kingdom.

This basic understanding of the spirit and the soul is necessary to understand this first blessed in Matthew. However, we need to be clear that Matthew is not dealing directly with the soul in this matter of being poor in spirit.

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Now, what does poor in spirit mean? To our natural mind and, frankly, to those who see the majority of the Christian experience in exercising the gifts of the spirit, it would have made more sense to state, "Blessed are the rich in spirit." After all, if we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, shouldn't we be rich in spirit? Matthew is not referring to the spirit of God but to our spirit, and this in itself should give us an indication of why our spirit is to be poor.

Simply, if we are poor, we need help, for we do not have the resources or the capacity. In a sense, we are destitute if we do not receive help. Isn't this what poverty brings upon a person? People are poor because they lack things in their lives and they cannot provide things for themselves. The poor have nothing (or very little), and if they are to survive, they must be given provisions by some other source beyond themselves. Consequently, poor in spirit speaks of need. It could be restated: "He that is spiritual is needy and needs to be filled." Only God can meet this need.

David, God's anointed king who had a heart after God, often cried out to his God, as recorded in his Psalms.

Studying David's Psalms reveals that he was one who experienced all that is contained in the ***blessed are*** statements. For this reason, his Psalms serve as support text in the following discussion. It is interesting that Matthew begins with a reference to David: **The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham** (Matthew 1.1). Christ will sit upon the throne of David in fulfillment of Scripture (2 Samuel 7.16; Luke 1.32). However, David himself will sit upon the throne as a king under the King (Jeremiah 30.9; Ezekiel 37.24). It is no coincidence that Matthew 5.3-12 and David's Psalms have much in common. David is one who saw the kingdom and will reign with Christ. He was a man after God's heart (1 Samuel 13.14; Acts 13.22). He had a heart for the kingdom of God's Son, and we can learn from his testimony.

**Bow down Your ear, O LORD, hear me; for I am poor and needy.**  
(Psalm 86.1 NKJ)

**The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.** (Psalm 34.18 NKJ)

**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Thy presence, and do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me.** (Psalm 51.10-11 NASB)

Of course, the spirit of God cannot be taken away from a believer, in the sense that it departs the believer all together. If this were possible, which it is not, then a believer could lose his eternal salvation, which again, according to Scripture, is not possible. Once saved, eternally saved, and this requires the eternal presence of the spirit of God. When we believed, we were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1.13). However, as Paul exhorted, we can grieve the Holy Spirit of God,

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by whom we were sealed for the day of redemption (Ephesians 4.30). We can also quench the spirit (1 Thessalonians 5.19).

David the anointed king was poor and needy. He needed strength outside of himself to survive. The heart is taken up in the sixth blessed, but note David's cry for a contrite (crushed) and steadfast (fixed on a purpose) spirit, and his need for the Holy Spirit. David is an example of one who is poor in spirit.

Those who are poor in spirit know that they need to be filled, to be helped in the spirit. There is only one Helper who can do this, and it is the Holy Spirit. Paul, who referred to the spirit quite often, wrote to the Ephesians to be filled with the spirit (Ephesians 5.18). If we are poor, we are empty. If we are empty, we must be filled. But what does being filled mean and why must we be filled?

*Being filled* means that we are totally dependent on the spirit of God. We need the spirit of Christ if we are to walk in righteousness. By the spirit, we put to death the deeds of the flesh (Romans 8.13) that, if not put to death, will lead us to practice that which will not inherit the kingdom (Galatians 5.17-21). As Paul wrote to the Galatians: **But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh** (Galatians 5.16 NASB). **If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit** (Galatians 5.25 NASB). We are alive to God because of the spirit of Christ that dwells within in us, but we must walk by the spirit.

As an illustration, consider an automobile that runs on gasoline. It has a tank with a certain capacity that, if filled to its full capacity, will allow the automobile to travel the full distance specified for the vehicle. If the tank is partially full, then the vehicle can only travel as far as the fuel will allow. If the tank is empty, then the vehicle will not go anywhere. It will simply sit and fail to meet the purpose for which it was built. We are like the automobile, for we must be filled with the spirit to walk. If we are on empty, then the flesh will take over and we will fail to come into the very purpose for our creation and redemption—to rule with Christ as a co-heir in His kingdom. We need to be filled with the spirit in order to complete the race of the faith. We need a full tank so that we will not run out and fall short of the goal.

*Being filled* in Ephesians is not outward manifestations of the so-called gifts (e.g., tongues, etc.). The filling to which Paul referred leads one to live a sanctified life in which the spirit, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, directs the life of the believer through the soul that is being saved.

As we are filled with the spirit, we yield to the will of God. So, poor in spirit means that we are totally dependent on God to do His will and to bear fruit to His glory.

This leads to the next question. How are we filled with the spirit? By comparing Scripture to Scripture, we discover that Paul has given us the answer. There is a companion verse to Ephesians 5.18-19 (be filled with the spirit) in Colossians.

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**Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms {and} hymns {and} spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.** (Colossians 3.16 NASB)

By comparing the two verses, we discover that the content of the verses that follow *be filled with the spirit* and *let the word of Christ richly dwell within you* are the same. Thus, according to Paul, we are filled by the spirit through the word dwelling within us, or the word dwelling within us will fill us with the spirit. The spirit of God and the word of God are inseparable. There is no filling apart from the word of God, and understanding the word of God cannot be done apart from the Holy Spirit. Another way of stating this is that being filled with the spirit and being filled with the word is being filled with Christ who is the Word and is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3.17).

Thus, we are poor in spirit, and we need God's spirit or, if you will, the spirit of the Lord, to open the eyes of our understanding to the reign of the heavens.

There is another matter to consider with being blessed, and that is discovered in James' epistle.

**Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world {to be} rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?** (James 2.5 NASB)

James referred to those who are materially poor as rich in faith. As stated previously, the poor have very little. Poor Christians are more likely to be rich in faith because they know that they must trust God for their daily provision, even their survival. This does not mean that all Christians who live in poverty trust God in this way. Poverty in itself does not mean that a person is rich in faith. What makes a believer an heir of the kingdom is being rich in faith, not being materially poor. It just means that the poor may have more opportunity to trust the Lord than a materially rich person.

If we carry this thought back to blessed are the poor in spirit, we see that being poor in spirit means living and walking by faith. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10.17). The poor in spirit depend on the spirit and the word of God, which makes them rich in faith as they trust in God, doing His will and being governed by His spirit working through their spirit to their soul.

Why are the poor in spirit blessed or happy? Because they will receive the greatest reward that has ever been offered to man! Theirs is the reign of the heavens.

Faith is the first building block of the abundant entrance into the kingdom as presented by Peter (2 Peter 1.5-7, 11). Faithfulness is one of the fruits of the spirit as presented by Paul (Galatians 5.22).

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There is was one other matter that needs to be understood in light of this matter of being filled. It does not mean that while in our bodies of death we will achieve spiritual perfection, as if we have arrived at our destiny of being like Christ.

We need to understand that during the Pentecostal Age, those of us who have been given the faith of the Son of God to believe have been given *an earnest of the spirit of God*, which means that we have been given a taste of the spirit, but we have not yet received our glorified, spiritual, celestial bodies in the image of our Lord that will come with resurrection and transfiguration.

**Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.** (2 Corinthians 1.22 KJV)

**Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.** (2 Corinthians 5.5 KJV)

**Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.** (Ephesians 1.13-14 KJV; also 2 Corinthians 1.22; 5.5)

An *earnest* is “something given or done as an indication or assurance of what is to come; token; pledge.” We can experience a fullness of this spirit today but we must realize that it is only a token or a pledge of what it so to come with resurrection and transfiguration. Consequently, we have not entered into the full promise of God in His Son when we occupy spiritual bodies. The fullness of God (Ephesians 3.19) comes with the Feast of Tabernacles on the eighth day (John 7.37-39). Until then, we only have an earnest of the spirit in this eon.

Further, Pentecost was celebrated with leavened bread (Leviticus 23.17), which indicates that God never intended for the Pentecostal Age to be a huge success. *Leaven* means “corruption,” which has been manifested throughout this age as God has called out a people to Himself. Thus, failure was built into the Pentecostal Age. Similarly, this is seen in the parable of the leaven (Luke 13.21).

The point that I want to impress upon your heart is that as long as we occupy bodies of death and humiliation we remain in a leavened condition. Being filled with the spirit compensates for this condition, but we should not see it as the end point, as if we have arrived. I see being filled as only a temporary measure so that God can work through us in this present wicked eon, but it is not, and never was intended to be, a perfected state for believers living in the eon that precedes the kingdom of Christ. We need to be transfigured into the image of Christ in order to come into spiritual perfection. We have not arrived because our Lord has not arrived to introduce the Tabernacles Age to this earth.

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So I ask: Do you understand that you only have an earnest of the spirit of God in you, and do you groan for the day that you will enter into the fullness of Christ as His complement, living *in* spirit? Or, do you see yourself full of the spirit, as if you have arrived and have no further need except to die and “go to heaven?” Only those who are poor in spirit will enter into the coming reign of the heavens on the earth to rule and reign with Christ. It is not about going to heaven but about bringing the will of God to the nations on earth.

### *The mourners.*

**“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”**

(Matthew 5.4 NASB)

**Happy the mourning—because they shall be comforted.** (Matthew 5.4 YLT)

Those who are poor in spirit are ones who know the word of the kingdom and see the coming reign of Christ. They are happy because they know the expectation (hope) that is set before them, and they love the thought of the appearing of Christ. David, as well, looked forward to this day and rejoiced (2 Samuel 7.18-29; 23.5, see Isaiah. 9.7).

The poor in spirit are also the mourners. Mourning means “to grieve” or “to sorrow.” Groaning within the soul often accompanies mourning. We groan when we mourn. David was a mourner and a groaner. He was often in great conflict of his soul as his enemies pursued him or when he committed sin against God. He described himself as one bowed down mourning, as one who sorrows for a mother (Psalm 35.14). At times, he went mourning all day long and his heart was agitated and he sighed (Psalm 38.6, 8, 9). However, he always looked to the Lord and trusted in His mercy and goodness. He was comforted in the Lord. There are many Psalms from the sweet psalmist of Israel (2 Samuel 23.1), but two of them reveal the heart of the matter of mourning.

**“Hear, O LORD, and be gracious to me; O LORD, be Thou my helper. Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; Thou hast loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness; that {my} soul may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to Thee forever.”** (Psalm 30.10-12 NASB)

**I will say to God my rock, “Why hast Thou forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?” As a shattering of my bones, my adversaries revile me, while they say to me all day long, “Where is your God?” Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance, and my God.** (Psalm 42.9-11 NASB)

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In all his mourning and sorrow, David saw beyond it to a day of dancing and gladness, a day of expectation. He was comforted with the thought that a better day was coming. David is a type of the mourners today who will be comforted in the day of Christ.

Today, there is much to mourn over—our sin and chastisement (Psalm 51.1-8; Hebrews 12.4-11), our momentary light afflictions (2 Corinthians 4.17), the fleshly lusts that wage war against our soul (1 Peter 2.11), the many struggles that we might have in our bodies of death (Romans 7.15-25), and the many enemies around us (both seen and unseen) that stand against us (Ephesians 6.12; 2 Timothy 4.10, 14-15), to name a few. We mourn in these earthly tents, waiting for our full redemption. Just like the Lord, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12.2), so too we endure our cross for the same joy. We take up our cross daily so that we might sit upon His throne in His coming kingdom (Luke 9.23; Revelations 3.21).

As David wrote: **For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy {comes} in the morning** (Psalm 30.5 NASB). The new day will dawn soon and those who conquer will be comforted. One of the Psalms of Ascent gives us a similar thought: **Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting. He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying {his} bag of seed, shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves {with him}** (Psalm 126.5-6 NASB).

Thus, we see that mourning in this day will lead to joy in that day. This is our hope.

Mourning is an indication of suffering, and we are called to suffer so that we might come into glory (Romans 8.17). However, we must be clear that our mourning and suffering must come from righteous living and must be according to the will of God (1 Peter 3.13-16; 4.12-19).

Righteous living speaks of virtue or moral excellence, the building block that is added to faith in seeking the abundant entrance into the kingdom (2 Peter 1.5). Mourning leads to joy, a fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5.22); and as we mourn, we are given a taste of the joy to come.

Now, there is one other matter, and that is the weeping of our Lord Jesus. When Jesus approached Jerusalem, He wept over it (Luke 19.41-42). Why? He wept because they rejected the offer of the kingdom and were being set aside, having failed to come into their highest purpose as God's nation. His brethren had rejected Him, and the Jewish people were about to enter the fire of persecution again that would last for the next 2,000 years.

Dear brethren, do you not think that Jesus weeps over the condition of His people today? Christendom has lost sight of the glory that is set before every born from

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above child of God. The word of the kingdom is leavened (Matthew 13.33); and many of His people are lukewarm toward Him (Revelation 3.16) and His coming. Do you weep over the condition of the visible church on earth today? Do you mourn over the many brothers and sisters who have no heavenly vision? Do you mourn when the blessed coming of our Lord is held as a teaching and not a heart reality? Do you mourn that so few are loving His appearing?

But looking beyond Christendom, do you mourn over the unrighteousness, wickedness, and injustice that abound in the world of our day? Do you mourn over the many murders occurring each day and the wars that are being fought, even in the name of justice and democracy? Or, do you desire to destroy or get even with those who do harm to others? People of the world get angry, for they do not understand the heart of man. The people of God know that there is no good in man, and they mourn over man's condition without God. Only those who mourn will be comforted, not only in this day but also in the day of Christ.

Let us put this question in the positive. Do you long for the kingdom whose foundation is righteousness and justice (Psalm 89.14; 97.2)? Be encouraged; your mourning will be turned to joy one day; we pray very soon.

### ***The meek.***

**“Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.”** (Matthew 5.5 NASB)

**Happy the meek—because they shall inherit the land.** (Matthew 5.5 YLT)

The word *meekness* refers to being “gentle” or “humble.”

The Lord Jesus called Himself meek, and when He rode into Jerusalem, He was declared meek.

**“Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls.”** (Matthew 11.29 NASB)

**“Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold your King is coming to you, gentle, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’”** (Matthew 21.5 NASB)

Scripture describes Moses as a very humble (meek) man, more than any man who was on the face of the earth (Numbers 12.3).

*Meekness* is a quality of character, a virtue, that is learned, and this learning comes through trial, suffering, or affliction. Learning is knowledge. Thus, meekness and knowledge go hand in hand.

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Scripture says of Jesus as a man: **Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered** (Hebrews 5.8). Christ was perfected or made complete in character through His sufferings. Even His soul was perfected as He cried out to the Father at Gethsemane. His soul was deeply grieved, to the point of death (Matthew 26.38). He is the Son perfected forever. In other words, His character as Man was perfected through all that He suffered. This is why He is able to aid those who are tempted (Hebrews 2.18). He is a High Priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses (Hebrews 4.15) and who is able to save us to the uttermost (spirit, soul, and body) if we draw near to God through Him (Hebrews 7.25).

Meekness comes through the breaking of the soul of the man. Moses suffered and learned meekness as he tended sheep on the west side of the wilderness (Exodus 3.1) for forty years. While in Egypt, he thought that he could deliver his brethren his way, but it would not do. He was too strong in himself. He had to be broken if he was to be of any use in fulfilling God's plan for the Hebrew people. Like a wild horse, he had to be broken. He learned by the things that he suffered.

**By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.**

(Hebrews 11.24-26 NASB)

Moses suffered the reproach of Christ, for he was looking to the reward, the reward of the inheritance of the kingdom. Blessed are the meek, for *they shall inherit the earth*.

Knowledge means that Moses learned. First, he learned that he could not do what God had called him to do (Exodus 4.10). He was poor in spirit and he needed God. Second, he learned of God's purpose and plan, which led him to line up with what God was doing (Exodus 4.18-23).

In Psalm 25, David started out by lifting up his soul to the Lord and ended by crying out for the redemption of Israel (Psalm 25.1, 22). In reference to the humble, he wrote: **He leads the humble in justice, and He teaches the humble His way** (Psalm 25.9 NASB); he added that **his soul will abide in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land** (Psalm 25.13 NASB). So we can see that David joined meekness with being taught, with a view toward the inheritance, which refers to a coming day, the Kingdom Age.

David made a similar declaration in another Psalm.

**For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land. Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; and you will look carefully for his place, and he will not**

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**be {there.} But the humble will inherit the land, and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity. The wicked plots against the righteous, and gnashes at him with his teeth. The Lord laughs at him; for He sees his day is coming.** (Psalm 37.9-13 NASB)

**For those blessed by Him will inherit the land; but those cursed by Him will be cut off.** (Psalm 37.22 NASB)

Notice how the Lord laughs at the wicked. This should remind us of Psalm 2, which looks forward to the kingdom of Christ as well.

**He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them. ... “I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to me, ‘Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee. Ask of me, and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, and the {very} ends of the earth as Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt shatter them like earthenware.’”** (Psalm 2.4, 7-9 NASB)

Thus, inheriting the land or the earth is reserved for the humble.

**“You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”** (Revelation 5.10 NASB)

**Blessed and holy is the one who has a 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 for a thousand years.** (Revelation 20.6 NASB)

Are you gentle or humble? Or, are you proud? The Lord gives grace to the humble but resists the proud (James 4.6; 1 Peter 5.5). Only the gentle or humble will reign with Christ who has been given the nations as His inheritance and the ends of the earth as His possession.

In his abundant entrance, Peter added virtue to faith and then he added knowledge to virtue (2 Peter 1.5). Paul included meekness or gentleness as a fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5.22-23 KJV).

### ***The hungry and thirsty for righteousness.***

**“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”** (Matthew 5.6 NASB)

**Happy those hungering and thirsting for righteousness—because they shall be filled.** (Matthew 5.6 YLT)

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*Righteousness* is a major theme throughout all Scripture, and, as such, there is an abundance of Scripture on the matter. We are told to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness (Matthew 6.33). In both of his letters to Timothy, Paul encouraged him to pursue righteousness (1 Timothy 6.11; 2 Timothy 2.22).

Again, we turn to the sweet psalmist David.

**He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the lovingkindness of the LORD.** (Psalm 33.5 NASB)

**For the LORD loves justice, and does not forsake His godly ones; they are preserved forever; but the descendants of the wicked will be cut off. The righteous will inherit the land, and dwell in it forever.** (Psalm 37.28-29 NASB)

**Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Thy throne; lovingkindness and truth go before Thee.** (Psalm 89.14 NASB)

**The LORD reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the many islands be glad. Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.** (Psalm 97.1-2 NASB)

David knew the Lord's heart, and he knew that righteousness and justice are at the center of the heart of God and the center of His kingdom—the very foundation of His throne. According to Hebrews, we also know that the kingdom that is coming is the kingdom of righteousness because Melchizedek, most likely Shem, a type of Christ as King-Priest, was the king of righteousness (Hebrews 7.1-2).

Dear brethren, when you look around at the world, do you see righteousness and justice? Do you see any nation or government on earth in which there is absolute righteousness and justice? Do you long for true righteousness and justice to prevail? If you know God's heart, there must be a cry for righteousness. If you see the kingdom and if you understand the word of the kingdom, then there should be, no there must be, a hungering and thirsting for righteousness, for it is the very foundation of the kingdom. It is only in the day of Christ that this hungering and thirsting for righteousness will be satisfied. How will we be satisfied? It will come by being filled with righteousness. We must be equipped to serve with the King of Righteousness. Being conformed to His image involves being conformed to His righteousness as well. In that day, we will be filled, for we will become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5.21).

But this poses a question. If a believer does not practice righteousness, will he be satisfied in that day? David's son, Solomon wrote: **To do righteousness and justice is desired by the LORD rather than sacrifice** (Proverb 21.3 NASB).

If the Lord loves righteousness, then it only follows that He looks for righteousness in His people. It is true that He became righteousness for us (1 Corinthians 1.30),

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but there also is a demand on us that we practice righteousness (1 John 2.29; 3.7, 10) so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5.21). We must live in the right manner in order to bear fruit and be found worthy of the kingdom and glory. Of course, this essential matter will be reviewed at the judgment seat of Christ. It is in that day alone that the righteous will inherit the kingdom.

The unrighteous will not be satisfied in the day of judgment, for as Paul wrote to the Corinthians, the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6.9). So we must live righteously if we are to be satisfied in the kingdom. Simply, the unrighteous will lose their soul life in that day and suffer the loss of millennial reward. Why? Because the unrighteous seek to gain their soul life in this day!

**Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.** (Psalm 1.5-6 NASB)

Righteous living demands that we lose our soul in this day. Taking up our cross and denying ourselves require that we have self-control, which means more than controlling bad habits or temperament. It means yielding our soul life to the spirit under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Again, this brings us back to being poor in spirit. We must be obedient to the will of God in our lives.

In seeking the abundant entrance into the kingdom, we are to build upon knowledge with self-control (righteous living), which is also a fruit of the spirit (2 Peter 1.5-7, 11; Galatians 5.22-23).

Thus, if we see the kingdom that is coming, then we must be hungering and thirsting for righteousness, and we must be practicing righteousness. The two matters go hand in hand like a hand in glove. Those who practice unrighteousness will not inherit the kingdom.

The kingdom of Christ is the kingdom of righteousness. Are you hungering for the day that His righteousness rules the day? Or, are you demanding righteousness in this day, even demanding it with the weapons of the flesh? Rather than demanding righteousness, are you standing in the righteousness of God, even if it leads to your persecution? Persecution for the sake of righteousness is not fighting back with carnal weapons; it is standing in the strength of His might. Standing in righteousness is a far cry from forcing righteousness through war. Those who hunger for righteousness in this day will lead the nations to the righteousness of God in the next eon.

If righteousness is not an issue in our life today, then we need to seek first the kingdom and His righteousness, and we need to practice righteousness under the

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leadership of the spirit of God. We can be satisfied today or satisfied in the day that is coming. If we are hungering and thirsting for righteousness today, then be assured that the Lord will fill us with a righteousness that you have never known. Let us hunger and thirst!

### ***The kind.***

**“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”** (Matthew 5.7 NASB)

**Happy the kind—because they shall find kindness.** (Matthew 5.7 YLT)

The word *mercy* means “compassionate” or “kind,” and involves longsuffering and perseverance.

*Mercy* points us to the judgment seat of Christ and thus is clearly a kingdom matter. James wrote: **For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment** (James. 2.13 NASB). Those who are merciful in this day will be honored in the day of Christ. In writing to Timothy, Paul referred to a brother who had given him much help. **The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains ... the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day...** (2 Timothy 1.16, 18 NASB). That day refers to one day only, and that is the day of Christ.

Again, David was one who knew the mercy of the Lord and often cried out for mercy. Notice how righteousness is recompensed, and righteousness and mercy are joined together.

**Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His eyes. With the kind Thou dost show thyself kind; with the blameless Thou dost show thyself blameless; with the pure Thou dost show thyself pure; and with the crooked Thou dost show thyself astute.**  
(Psalm 18.24-26 NASB)

**Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him. Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!**  
(Psalm 32.10-11 NKJ)

When will mercy surround the righteous? The righteous might not find much mercy in a world of unrighteousness, but there is a day coming in which they will be surrounded with mercy, for God is a merciful God and remembers His people.

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David cried out to the Lord: **But Thou, O Lord, art a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth. Turn to me, and be gracious to me...** (Psalm 86.15-16a NASB).

God is abundant in His love and mercy for His people. He suffers long with His people. He endures with much patience. We find this thought in Paul's letter to the Romans.

**What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And {He did so} in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, {even} us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.**  
(Romans 9.22-24 NASB)

He endures with much patience vessels of wrath for one purpose—to make known the riches of His glory upon a people who were not His people but now whom He calls, **'My people'** (Romans 9.25). When will these riches of His glory be manifested? It will be when He comes to be glorified in His saints (2 Thessalonians 1.10), when sons adopted to rule with Christ are delivered, along with creation, from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Romans 8.18-22). It will be in the day of the revealing of the sons of God, the joint heirs with Christ who have suffered in this day (Romans 8.17, 19). As Paul wrote: **For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us** (Romans 8.18 NASB). Just as suffering leads to glory, so does mercy lead to glory!

Do you have a heart of mercy, even for your enemies or the enemies of your country? Or, do you seek for vengeance? We need to be reminded that we are to love our enemies (Matthew 5.44). God's word does not tell us to get even with them but to leave vengeance to Him.

In the abundant entrance into the kingdom, we discover that Peter added perseverance to self-control. Perseverance can be translated as patient endurance. As we have seen, self-control refers to righteousness, and now we see that perseverance refers to mercy. As God endures with much patience to have mercy on us, so are we to endure patiently in our dealings with our brethren in Christ and those in the world. We are to exercise kindness as God has been kind to us, which is a fruit of the spirit. And as we are kind, we learn to suffer long with one another as God has suffered long with us, which is another fruit of the spirit. Thus, we discover that mercy involves perseverance, one of the building blocks of the abundant entrance (2 Peter 1.6), and it also involves patience, longsuffering, and kindness, three of the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5.22).

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If we exercise mercy, God will be most merciful to us at the judgment seat and our entrance into the kingdom will be an abundant entrance. Let us practice mercy!

### *The clean in heart.*

**“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”** (Matthew 5.8 NASB)

**Happy the clean in heart—because they shall see God.** (Matthew 5.8 YLT)

Throughout Scripture, there are many references to the heart. In His Sermon on the Mount, the Lord gave one of the keys to seeking entrance into the coming kingdom.

**“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”** (Matthew 6.19-21 NASB)

Clearly, the Lord was pointing to the future day of His kingdom on earth, His celestial kingdom that will rule the nations of the earth. If we are looking for and seeking the abundant entrance, then our hearts will be set on the things above, not on the things on earth. As Paul wrote: **If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth** (Colossians 3.1-2 NASB). Of course, he mentioned the mind, but according to our Lord, our heart must be there as well.

What is the heart? It is often described as an organ, just like the spirit and the soul. After all, the human physical heart is the vital organ of man. The heart is related to the spirit and the soul. We could say that it is what makes man tick. It is the inner man. It is the true you!

We know that our spirit is the center of our being, and it brings us into relationship with God and His spirit. Some state that our soul is the organ of our personality, which includes our mind, will, and emotion. Others state that the soul is simply the byproduct of the combination of the body and the spirit and represents the sensations and experiences of the body and cannot exist apart from the body. When all the references to soul in Scripture are studied, it appears that the soul is the consciousness, feelings, and desires that come about when the breath of life vitalizes the body at birth. I concur with this understanding. The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and allows us to live in the environment God created for us to inhabit.

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This leads to the question: Where does the heart reside, and what is its function? It has been described as encompassing the soul and the spirit and, as such, speaks of the conscience of the spirit and the mind, will, and emotion of man, or the consciousness, feelings, and desires of man (see Hebrews 10.22; 1 John 3.19-20).

Now, to add some meat to this explanation, let us turn to the book of beginnings, Genesis. In the first three uses of the word *heart* in Scripture, we discover that the heart is described just like the soul.

**Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.** (Genesis 6.5 NASB)

Out from the heart come thoughts, and it was because there was only evil in the thoughts of man that the flood came.

**And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.** (Genesis 6.6 NASB)

Out from the heart of God came grieving over the condition of man, which represents feelings.

**And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done."** (Genesis 8.21 NKJ)

Out from the heart of God came His will. He willed in His heart not to curse the ground after the flood.

Thus, in these three simple examples, it can be shown that the heart represents the thoughts, feelings, and will of man. Another way of stating this is that the heart stands for the mind (thoughts, consciousness), the will (action, desires), and the emotions (feelings) of man. It is through the heart that we relate to and respond to the people and the world around us. All three components of the heart, along with the conscience of the spirit, give each person his or her uniqueness. The heart reveals who the person is, for what comes from the heart represents the moral and intellectual character of the person. In speaking to Samuel, the LORD said: **"Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God {sees} not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart"** (1 Samuel 16.7 NASB). The Lord Jesus, who knew what was in man (John 2.25), said: **"For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil"** (Matthew 12.34b-35 NASB).

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So the heart is an essential part of every person. In fact, the heart is the person. Take the heart away and all you have is a shell of a man with no thought, no emotion, and no will. This is why the Lord looks at the heart. Being prepared in this day to enter the kingdom in that day is based on the condition of the heart. It requires a pure heart, for, as David wrote, these are the ones who will ascend to the throne.

**O LORD, who may abide in Thy tent? Who may dwell on Thy holy hill? He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart.** (Psalm 15.1-2 NASB)

**Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood, and has not sworn deceitfully. ... Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in! Who is the King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates, and lift {them} up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in! Who is this King of glory? THE LORD OF HOSTS, HE IS THE KING OF GLORY. Selah.** (Psalm 24.3-4, 7-10 NASB)

Notice that David joined ascending into the hill with the King of glory coming. Thus, having a pure heart is essential to entering the reign of the heavens.

What is a pure or clean heart? It is an undivided heart, one that is wholly for the Lord. David cried out: **Teach me Thy way, O LORD; I will walk in Thy truth; Unite my heart to fear Thy name. I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and will glorify Thy name forever. For Thy lovingkindness toward me is great, and Thou hast delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol** (Psalm 86.11-13 NASB). Notice that David was looking for his soul to be delivered from Sheol. Poetically speaking, David saw the Lord lifting up his soul in that day; but prophetically speaking, a day will come when David's soul will be released from Sheol (the unseen, the place of the dead) and raised in glory (Jeremiah 30.9; Acts 2.27, 29, 34). Again, the soul has no life apart from the body, for the soul speaks of the sensations of the body. In other words, David will be resurrected from among the dead.

Having an undivided heart also means the soul has been yielded to the spirit. It is joined to the poor in spirit, which according to David, corresponds to the crushed in spirit. It is the soul that has denied self to follow the Lord. It is not divided between personal interests and the Lord's interests. An undivided heart is a broken heart, one in which the hard soil of self has been broken up to be soft and pliable in the Lord's hands. Just as we must come to a place of poverty of our spirit, so we must come to a place of brokenness of our heart. David was a man who had a broken heart.

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**The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous, and His ears are {open} to their cry. The face of the LORD is against evildoers, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. {The righteous} cry and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the LORD delivers him out of them all. He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken. Evil shall slay the wicked; and those who hate the righteous will be condemned. The LORD redeems the soul of His servants; and none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned.** (Psalm 34.15-22 NASB)

When will the Lord redeem the souls of His servants who have broken hearts? He will do it in the first resurrection. For this reason we must watch over our heart. As Solomon wrote: **Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life** (Proverb 4.23 NASB), or **Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life** (NKJ). What flows out of a pure, clean, undivided, broken heart? Such a heart yields a life of godliness and goodness.

For the abundant entrance, godliness is what Peter added to perseverance (2 Peter 1.6). Goodness is a fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5.22).

The Lord Jesus said, **“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”** (Matthew 5.8). When will we see God? We will see Him when we stare into the face of our beloved Lord when He comes to be glorified in His saints, and He presents His glorious bride to His Father.

**For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.** (2 Corinthians 4.6 NASB)

This is a spiritual reality today, but very soon it will be a kingdom reality.

Is your heart pure for the Lord; is it undivided? Or, is your heart divided between God and the world? When will the pure in heart see God? They will see Him when they look into the face of the love of their life at the first resurrection and transfiguration that commences the Tabernacles Age.

### ***The peacemakers.***

**“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”** (Matthew 5.9 NASB)

**Happy the peacemakers—because they shall be called Sons of God.**  
(Matthew 5.9 YLT)

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David wrote: **Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it** (Psalm 34.14 NASB). Why do we seek peace? We seek peace because one of the characteristics of the kingdom that is coming is peace. The writer to the Hebrews reminds us that Melchizedek, a type of Christ, was the king of Salem, which means king of peace (Hebrews 7.2). Paul said that the kingdom is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14.17). Today, we are to have a foretaste of the kingdom; but in the millennial reign, it will truly be the kingdom of peace.

Of course, peace starts with God and the blood of Christ. God made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven (Colossians 1.20). Through the death of Christ peace has been made with man.

When Jesus set His face toward Jerusalem and the cross, He encouraged His disciples with His peace.

**“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”** (John 14.27 NASB)

**“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”** (John 16.33 NASB)

So today, we not only have peace with God but we also have the peace of Christ, or as Paul wrote: **And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus** (Philippians 4.7 NASB).

With this peace comes responsibility to exercise peace with others in the body of Christ and with those in the world. We are to be peacemakers, and we are encouraged in this regard throughout the epistles.

**So then let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.** (Romans 14.19 NASB)

**Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.** (2 Corinthians 13.11 NASB)

**And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.** (Colossians 3.15 NASB)

**Live in peace with one another.** (1 Thessalonians 5.13b NASB)

**“And let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.”** (1 Peter 3.11 NASB)

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**Grace, mercy {and} peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.** (2 John 1.3 NASB)

**May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.** (Jude 1.2 NASB)

If we exercise peace today, then Christ will honor us in His day, and we will be called sons of God. Who are the sons of God? Paul tells us: **For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God** (Romans 8.14 NASB). Again, this brings us back to the Holy Spirit and being poor in spirit. Those who yield to the spirit of Christ are the peacemakers and the future sons of God who will reign with Christ.

Peace is a fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5.22); therefore, if we are led by the spirit, then we must be peacemakers. A peacemaker is one who exercises brotherly kindness to others in the body of Christ.

This is the seventh building block of Peter's abundant entrance (2 Peter 1.7). We are to add brotherly kindness to godliness. By the spirit, we are to be a people who live in peace, even seek it and pursue it, as we look toward the coming of the kingdom of peace. After all, God has made peace with us and given us His peace.

In fact, peace is joined with our hope. As Paul encouraged the believers in Rome so too are we to be encouraged.

**Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.** (Romans 15.13 NASB)

Abounding in hope points to the future glory of the kingdom. What are we to believe? We are to believe in *the word of the kingdom* and *the reign of the heavens* coming to this earth. The message of the kingdom is our hope.

### ***The persecuted.***

**“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when {men} cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”** (Matthew 5.10-12 NASB)

**“Happy those persecuted for righteousness' sake—because theirs is the reign of the heavens. Happy are ye whenever they may reproach you, and may persecute, and may say any evil thing against you falsely for my sake—rejoice ye and be glad, because**

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**your reward is great in the heavens, for thus did they persecute the prophets who were before you.”** (Matthew 5.10-12 YLT)

Finally, those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness are blessed, for theirs is the reign of the heavens. We hardly need to say much on persecution, which is a form of tribulation. David's Psalms have used to highlight these blessed characteristics of ones who will enter the reign of the heavens. The Psalms are full of the cry of the man after God's heart who was in continual persecution in the days of Saul. The Lord warned His disciples: **“In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world”** (John 16.33b NASB). Paul declared: **“Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God”** (Acts 14.22b NASB). He even exulted in his tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance and proven character that builds hope for the kingdom future (Romans 5.3-5). John, our brother, was exiled on Patmos as a fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus (Revelation 1.9).

Tribulation through persecution is throughout Scripture. It is unavoidable if we are to come into glory. **And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted** (2 Timothy 3.12 NASB). **Tribulation is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering** (2 Thessalonians 1.5 NASB). It is abundantly clear that persecution will come to all who are diligent seekers of the kingdom and who are looking for the abundant entrance.

Are you a peacemaker? Do you turn the other cheek? Are you an ambassador for Christ going forth with the word of the conciliation **how that God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them** (2 Corinthians 5.19 cv)? Or, are you one who demands war or a battle to correct all wrongs? Being called a son of God means that one has been counted worthy to attain to the coming age to reign with Christ. *Sonship* means *rulership*. *Sonship* means *glory*, becoming a son of glory in the kingdom of glory.

### **Love.**

There is one essential matter regarding persecution that brings the abundant entrance and the fruit of the spirit into view again. There is one building block and one fruit that is left, and it is love (2 Peter 1.7; Galatians 5.22). How does love relate to being persecuted for righteousness' sake? Simply, we discover love at the Cross of Calvary!

**But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.** (Romans 5.8 NASB)

**We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.** (1 John 3.16 NASB)

## BLESSED ARE...ENTER THE REIGN

**By this, love is perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.**

(1 John 4.17 NASB)

In His love, Christ suffered for us by laying down His life on the Cross for the Glory to come. He loved then and He continues to love us now. Abiding in His love will perfect us in love so that we will have confidence in the day of judgment.

### ***Faith, hope, and love.***

Finally, throughout this chapter, comparisons have been made between the ***blessed are*** characteristics in Matthew and Peter's ***abundant entrance*** and Paul's reference to ***the fruit of the spirit***. The following chart brings all these verses together. This is the character of those who will inherit the kingdom, entering into the joy of the Lord.

MATTHEW 5.3-12	2 PETER 1.5-7	GALATIANS 5.22
The Poor in spirit...	Faith	Faithfulness
The Mourning...	Moral Excellence	Joy
The Meek...	Knowledge	Gentleness, Meekness
The Hungering for Righteousness...	Self-control	Self-control
The Kind, Merciful...	Perseverance	Patience, Long-suffering, Kindness
The Clean in Heart...	Godliness	Goodness
The Peacemakers...	Brotherly Kindness	Peace
The Persecuted...	Love	Love

In Paul's epistles, we discover other listings of what could be called character issues, that is, the type of character that must be worked into our lives if we are to bear fruit and be found worthy of the kingdom and glory. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul encouraged him to pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness (1 Timothy 6.11b). In his second letter, he encouraged him to pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart (2 Timothy 2.22b). Notice that all of these character traits are listed in the chart above as well. To the Romans, Paul wrote something similar to Peter's building blocks for the abundant entrance into the kingdom.

**Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Romans 5.1-5 NASB)**

## BLESSED ARE...ENTER THE REIGN

Although hope is not listed in the above chart, it is the driving force between faith and love, and the driving force behind the poor in spirit and the persecuted. It is hope that drives us toward the goal for the prize. It begins with faith, is driven by hope, and ends in love, the greatest of the three.

**But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.** (1 Corinthians 13.13 NASB)

God is after a people who are yielding to His spirit, producing a proven character; a people who are bearing the fruit of the spirit; a people who are being perfected through suffering as His Son was perfected; a people who are being conformed to the image of His Son; a people who are taking the grace to stand and are holding to the hope of the coming reign of Christ; and a people who are in love. If these things are being worked into your life, then be assured that you will not be disappointed, for you are among the blessed or the happy of the coming kingdom.

Let us pursue all that is contained in the blessed qualities of those who will enter *the reign of the heavens*.

Let us be a blessed people by conquering through the life of Christ and His spirit that dwells in all who believe.

Supremely blest are those who live in such a manner, *for theirs is the reign of the heavens*.

Scripture Abbreviations:

CV	Concordant Version
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NKJ	New King James Bible
YLT	Young's Literal Translation

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Article #15

November, 2008