

Sermon on the Mount—Beatitudes
Matthew 5:13—16

As we go through the Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5, 6 and 7 keep firmly in mind to whom they were spoken and for what reason. Jesus was addressing Israel, specifically the righteous nation (Isaiah 26:2) or the Little Flock of Luke 12. These were the true believers from among the Jewish nation. They were the nation that was not a nation (Romans 10:19). It was to these believers to whom the Kingdom would be given (Matthew 21:43). The reason for the Sermon on the Mount was to set up the ordinances that would be in play in the soon-to-come Kingdom. Every kingdom or nation on earth has rules and regulations that govern how it is to operate. The Kingdom of Heaven will be no different. (Remember the Kingdom of Heaven is not heaven as so many would have you believe. Just as you didn't need to be in Rome to be in the Roman Empire, you will not need to be in heaven to be in the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven will envelope the earth with a godly government when Christ comes back at His Second Coming.

The first part of the Sermon on the Mount is often called the Beatitudes. These are pointing out the type of people who will be in the Kingdom. Each reward is focused on the Kingdom and has nothing to do with members of the Body of Christ in today's Church. They will receive the Kingdom, inherit the earth, be comforted, be satisfied, receive mercy, see God and be called sons of God. Every one of these points to the day Christ takes the throne putting an end to the dreadful Tribulation. Israel will finally be given preeminence over all the nations of the world (Isaiah 60).

Have you ever wondered why God calls Israel the Children of Israel? Matthew 5:9 gives the promise to Israel that they will be called sons of God in the Kingdom. Before this time Israel is called a child (Deuteronomy 1:3). Jesus also called them children when He was talking with the Syrophoenician woman (Mark 7:27). After they have become of age they will have the full rights of sonship and be able to receive their inheritance and will then be called sons of God. This is their adoption. We are also called children who are waiting for our adoption (Romans 8:14—17) but our inheritance is entirely different than that of Israel.

Notice verse 12 promises a great reward in heaven. Most people again assume that this refers to our salvation when we get to heaven. This unfortunately twists the true meaning because the focus is on believing Israel at the Second Coming. This also cannot mean that Israel is looking for being rewarded by going into heaven because verse 5 clearly indicates that they will inherit the earth (Deuteronomy 11:21; Daniel 2:35). There are a number of verses that show how this ties in with Israel's Kingdom program.

Isaiah 42:10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might, With His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him And His recompense before Him.

Isaiah 62:11—12 ¹¹ Behold, the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth, Say to the daughter of Zion, "Lo, your salvation comes; Behold His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him." ¹² And they will call them, "The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD"; And you will be called, "Sought out, a city not forsaken."

1 Peter 1:4 ⁴to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Revelation 22:12 "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

Notice how perfectly 1 Peter 1:4 and Revelation 22:12 fit together. Peter makes it clear that Israel's inheritance is being preserved in heaven to be revealed in the last time. Revelation shows that Christ's reward will be brought back to earth at the Second Coming and distributed to every man according to how he has born fruit.

Salt and Light

Verses 13 and 14 compare Israel to salt and light. Salt that does not have flavor and light that is hidden are worthless and are not doing what they are designed to do. Israel was to be the salt that flavors the Word of

God to the world and makes it appealing. Christ calls Himself the Bread of Life. Israel will be completely filled and satisfied by believing in Him (John 6:35). Israel was to demonstrate to the world how well Christ could fulfill their spiritual hunger and thus make God's word very appealing and desirable. Instead, Israel rejected God leaving the world with a bitter taste of whom God is. The wonderful blessings that were to be poured out on Israel were denied them and replaced with curses. The world only saw God acting as a disciplinarian.

In like manner, Israel was to be a light, reflecting God's light to the world. When Christ was in the world He was called the light that shined in the darkness (Matthew 4:16; John 8:12; 12:35, 46). As long as He was on earth there was light. When He left, there was darkness again except for the light provided by Israel in the form of good works that would in turn glorify God (Matthew 5:16). I believe Moses was a picture of how Israel was to reflect God to the world. After Moses met with God on Mount Sinai his face glowed but only for a short time. This light of Israel from the reflection of God's glory faded so that the world remained in darkness. Israel was to be the light set on a hill to bring the world to Christ but they failed to do so.

Isaiah 30:26 The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be seven times *brighter*, like the light of seven days, on the day the LORD binds up the fracture of His people and heals the bruise He has inflicted. [We see Israel compared to the moon in the Millennial Kingdom.]

John 9:4—5⁴ We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.⁵ While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world."

Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;

Exodus 34:29 It came about when Moses was coming down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the testimony were in Moses' hand as he was coming down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because of his speaking with Him.

2 Corinthians 3:7 But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was,

A little history will help us understand why Israel was given this position.

From the beginning God created Gentiles. There was no Jewish nation and all non-Jews are Gentiles. God revealed Himself to this Gentile world directly through individuals. He told Cain and Abel to present sacrifices to Him, He told Noah to build an ark and He had even set up a system of priests (Genesis 14:18). Even after God wiped most of the human race for their evil by the flood, mankind still rebelled against God by building the Tower of Babel. It was after this event that God began to form the nation of Israel by calling Abram. Since the Gentiles rejected God, He formed the nation of Israel to act as salt and light to the world so that the world would believe in Christ.

When Israel rejected her Savior and Messiah, the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, had now been locked up in disobedience. God raised up Paul to introduce the light of the Mystery to the world with the proclamation that He was no longer working through Israel but that all people could come to Christ individually. It is in this Age of Grace that God is showing mercy to both Jews and Gentiles even though both groups have already rejected Him.

Romans 11:30—32³⁰ For just as you [Gentiles] once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their [Israel's] disobedience,³¹ so these [Israel] also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you [Gentiles] they also [Israel] may now be shown mercy.³² For God has shut up all [Israel and Gentiles] in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek [Gentiles], there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:14—16¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups into* one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,¹⁵ by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is* the Law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus* establishing peace,¹⁶ and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

We in the Church, the Body of Christ are also to reflect God's glory (2 Corinthians 3:18).

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