

LAW VERSUS GRACE (30)

Beatitude #6 - Matt. 5:8 - “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

In the Kingdom, the pure in heart shall literally see God, which is literally to see Jesus Christ as God and as King. As we have said, many of the Kingdom teachings are found in the Psalms and in the prophets, and from these books we learn that righteousness for Israel will precede her seeing her King with her eyes (**Is. 33:14-17; Ps. 24:3-10**). When Jesus Christ was here the first time, only those whom God had given His righteousness saw Jesus as God. For example, in **Matt. 16:13-20**, it is clear that Christ’s disciples saw this fact. So the pure in heart are not pure by their doing. The problem with most of Israel was that she never saw the fact that she did not have a pure heart and, as a result, she never saw Jesus as God. But the day will come when she will be pure in heart by the grace of God and she will see Jesus as God.

I believe there are two Grace Age applications we may make to this beatitude:

- 1) Under grace, every true believer has already seen Christ in this regard. In fact, the Apostle Paul said this very thing in **II Cor. 4:6** and so did the writer of **Heb. 2:9**.
- 2) Any person who refuses to see Jesus as God does not have a pure heart, which is the work of the Holy Spirit no matter how religious the person may be (**Rom. 10:9**).

Beatitude #7 - Matt. 5:9 - “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

In the Kingdom, those classified as “peacemakers” shall have a special distinction of being named a child of God. The ideas of righteousness and peace are closely connected to Israel’s Kingdom promises (**Ps. 72:1-7, 18**). It is clear from the prophetic teachings of John that just before Christ returns there will be a major warfare aimed specifically at Jesus Christ (**Rev. 19:19**). One who truly will be blessed will be one who realizes that Jesus Christ is the One who can bring Israel into a peaceful relationship with God and into her Kingdom. This person will not want to promote war against Christ, but to be at peace with Him. That one will be called a son of God.

Under grace, the only way to have the distinction of being called a child of God is through faith in Jesus Christ (**Gal. 3:26; John 1:12**). One who believes in Jesus Christ in this Grace Age is at peace with God and is called a child of God, even if he is not a peacemaking type of person.

Beatitude #8 - Matt. 5:10 - “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Those who are persecuted for righteousness sake are rewarded by being given the Kingdom. Specifically, this refers to those who stood for righteousness during the Tribulation after the Rapture of the Church and were martyred (**Rev. 6:9-11**).

Under grace, we suffer because of our faith (**II Tim. 3:12; Philip. 1:29; Rev. 1:9**) and not to earn heaven. We suffer because we reflect a life that says heaven is already ours.

LAW VERSUS GRACE (31)

It is quite contextually evident in the discussion that follows, particularly beginning in **Matt. 5:17** that the Kingdom has a righteous system that contains a restatement of a legal code and is much more extreme than even the O.T. Law.

For example, when we read verses such as **Matt. 5:22; 29-30**, these kinds of mandates are totally different than what is found in the teachings of grace. The particular target of discussion which Christ aims this message is against pharisaical righteousness (**Matt. 5:19-20**), which will not get any Jew into the promised Kingdom.

The Pharisees had developed their own codes by which they deemed themselves as being right with God and even considered their own man-made traditions as being equal to that of the law of Moses (**Matt. 23:2**). They convinced themselves that they lived up to the righteous standards of the law and that they were deserving of the righteous Kingdom of God. These beatitudes clearly refute that.

In **verses 21-22**, Christ further develops the O.T. commandment of “you shall not commit murder.” The Pharisees believed that they had perfectly kept this commandment and therefore merited the Kingdom. Christ clearly points out that their attitudes toward their own brothers were not only a violation of the law of God, but enough to send them to fiery hell.

In **verses 27-32**, Christ again shoots at Pharisaical righteousness. The Pharisees would tell people that they were completely pure, deserving of the Kingdom and had never been guilty of adultery. Their thinking was that this righteousness entitled them to Kingdom entrance. Actually, the Pharisees had developed a very pseudo-type of righteousness that would permit them to lust after a woman, marry her for one night and then divorce her the next day and claim they had not done anything wrong.

Jesus graphically makes His point in **verses 29-30**. I am certain the Pharisees totally missed the point. It is clearly taught that murder, adultery, evil thoughts, etc., is not a physical problem but a heart problem (**Matt. 15:19; Jer. 17:9**). What Christ is telling the Pharisees is that the righteousness required to keep a person out of fiery hell and give them entrance into the Kingdom is one that has no connection to anything from God’s perspective that could be classified as adulterous. Now the Pharisees believe that they themselves can eliminate all forms of evil from their existence, so Jesus uses an extreme illustration and says, “If your eye causes you trouble, cut it out.” Of course, even if one did cut out one eye they still have another eye. If a hand causes you trouble, cut it off. Of course, you would still have the other hand and you couldn’t cut that off. The problem was not the eye or the hand; it was the heart, which is exactly what Christ says in **Matt. 5:28**. The problem is a heart problem, not an eye or hand problem.

The contextual point of all this is that unless these Pharisees did something that would make them completely pure in heart, not only wouldn’t they enter the Kingdom, but they would end up in hell. What they refused to do was to acknowledge their need for God’s righteousness, and that is precisely what the Beatitudes are all about.