

Seven Beatitudes of Revelation

#0149

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—November 13, 1976

I wonder how many have thought of what happened 144 years ago tonight. The night of November 12, November 13, 1833. People went to bed that night, little dreaming of what would happen before morning. But not long after midnight, the greatest star shower in the history of the world began, and from then until daybreak all over North America, the heavens were aglow with the light of the falling meteors.

Professor Amstead of Yale University estimated that there were no less than 200,000 meteors visible at one time above the horizon in Boston. As fast as these fell, others took their places, keeping up the display until the light of the rising sun caused them to fade out.

Heaven had placed its signal where all could see it; that the time had come when those that were watching the signs could know that the coming of Jesus was near, even at the doors.

And it's still near, even at the doors, my friends! Do you know how near a person is when he's at the door? That depends on how fast the people inside open the door. It's no longer a matter of time, but a matter of response for the time of the end is here. The last days are here. While the Lord is long-suffering to us not willing that any should perish, therefore He has tarried. Thank God, the Blessed Hope is certain that we shall see Him soon.

This evening I want to look with you at this wonderful book of Revelation; the last book in the Bible, the book that focuses on our time, the end time. I want you to notice the word that begins the third verse of this book, Revelation 1:3. Revelation is a book of many symbols; its numbers are significant. There are a number of "3s" in the book of Revelation. The 3 angels' messages of Revelation 14 perhaps are best known in the "3s."

There're the "4s": The 4 living creatures about the throne, the four-square city. And when you put 3 and 4 together, you get what? 7. The number 7 is used a great many times in the book of Revelation. It stands in the Bible for perfection or completeness, fullness. And so we have the 7 candlesticks, the 7 churches, the 7 seals, the 7 trumpets, the 7 plagues, and there are other 7s in this wonderful book.

Tonight I'm going to study one of those series of 7s with you, the 7 beatitudes of the book of Revelation. When we hear the word "beatitudes," we usually think of our Savior's blessings in the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in Matthew 5. These are indeed beatitudes.

But the same voice that spoke from that unnamed mountain beside the Sea of Galilee spoke to John His dearly loved friend there on the isle of Patmos, and told him to write down these beatitudes for the benefit of the church and all ages, and

particularly for the church of the last generation. Will you read with me Revelation 1:3:

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand” Revelation 1:3.

Now this word “blessed,” is also translated “happy.” It includes the idea of joy, satisfaction, prosperity, what’s good for a person, receiving blessings. That’s the idea. The Hebrew word is “asher.” This book, of course, is written in Greek, but Hebrew influenced the book of Revelation. In fact, much of the imagery of the book of Revelation is borrowed from the Old Testament.

We’re told in the book *Acts of the Apostles*, page 585, that in the Revelation all the books of the Bible meet and end. So that means that in every book, there are certain notes sounded, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and so on down through the patriarchs and prophets and apostles. In each book certain notes are sounded, which, if we listen, we’ll hear them again in this final symphony of the book of Revelation.

This word “blessed” coming from the same word that means “happy” is repeated 7 times in this wonderful book. The first one, very fittingly, pronounces a blessing upon those that do what? Read this book. And listen to it. And do what it says. Food, of course, is a joy to behold on the table, but nutrition is dependent upon what? Eating it.

Let’s go back to Jeremiah 15:16 and hear this note that the prophet speaks in this ancient prophecy the echo of which we may hear in the beatitude we have just read. Jeremiah 15:16:

“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O LORD God of hosts”
Jeremiah 15:16.

Jeremiah found joy and blessing in eating the words of God. We find this figure in the book of Revelation in the 10th chapter. The angel has a little book in his hand, and the prophet John is told to go and take that book that’s open in the hand of the angel, and eat it. This is speaking especially of the great Advent message of 1844 based on Daniel’s prophecy.

My point is—there is a blessing in eating the words of God. And so the book of Revelation has this special blessing pronounced. I might call attention to this fact, of all the books of the Bible this is one that popular ministers have often warned their people that it could not be understood. There’re reasons for this. An earnest, faithful, sincere study of the book of Revelation will lead people to the testing truths of the threefold message.

Elder Richards tells about one popular minister who said it was too bad this book of the Revelation was in the Bible. He said that if it weren't for that, we wouldn't be bothered with these Seventh-day Adventists. I think he had a point.

Oh friends, I wonder if we're conscious of how much we owe to this blessed book, the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Indeed without it, we would not be a movement, we would be a people, and we would not be a church. It is in this book that in a special way, we find the identifying photograph of the remnant church, right? Thank God as we read this book, we can say, this day is this Scripture fulfilled in our ears.

Thank God as we read this book, we hear the call of God calling to His sheep in every fold, His followers in every church, come out of Babylon the confused religion of this last generation, and come into the remnant church we keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ which is the spirit of prophecy. Blessed indeed is he that readeth!

The thought, the idea, that the book of Revelation is a sealed book not to be understood, is disproved by its very title. Of all the books of the Bible, this is the one that we should expect to be clear, the revelation. What does that mean? Something clear, something shown.

It's true there are symbols here. They need to be studied. I tell folks if they don't understand it all, ask God for light, and do what is clear.

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" Proverbs 4:18.

Now let's read again Revelation 1:3.

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" Revelation 1:3.

So we're getting a blessing as we read and study this book, right? The next beatitude is clear over in the 14th chapter of Revelation and the 13th verse. It comes in fittingly at the close of the threefold message. As this message draws to it close, as the announcement of the present judgment, the fall of Babylon, the warning against the mark of the beast, as these warnings accomplish their work a people are prepared, pictured in the 12th verse, that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus; then follows the beatitude of the 13th verse.

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yes, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" Revelation 14:13.

This may sound strange, but God sometimes says some things that sound strange. They're not strange to Him. The only reason they're strange to us is that we're not thinking in those lines. But oh, what a wonderful thing it is to those who are called to lay away their loved ones who have gone to sleep in Christ under the preaching of this message, to read this text, and find the special blessing that God has promised.

“...Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth...” Revelation 14:13.

From the preaching of this threefold message unto the end.

Now let's go back and find the note which is echoed and reechoed in this beatitude. Isaiah 57:1–2:

“The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness” Isaiah 57:1–2.

You notice that some of the very words spoken here are echoed in our beatitude in Revelation. “They shall rest,” and who is this? The righteous. This text in Isaiah gives us an interesting angle showing us one of the reasons that God in His love lets certain ones go to rest. What does it say? “The righteous is taken away from the evil to come.”

Does the book of Revelation portray that great time of trouble such as never was? Does it picture the pouring out of those seven last plagues that bring such anguish upon the wicked, and a certain amount of suffering during that time of trouble to the righteous? No wonder God in His loving providence as He thinks of each one recognizes that for some, a great blessing will come in resting in the grave until the resurrection call.

So from henceforth, from the preaching of this message on:

“...Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yes, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them”
Revelation 14:13.

We think of the pioneers of this message: of Joseph Bates, James White, Ellen White, Steven Haskell, J. N. Andrews, Uriah Smith, and then a host of others coming on down through. What a cloud of witnesses, what a glorious life, and thank God, soon Jesus is going to call them from their dusty beds.

Meanwhile, Blessed, Blessed:

“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints” Psalm 116:15.

The next beatitude is Revelation 16:15. This occurs in the setting of the seven last plagues. Here as the sixth plague is described, this plague of miracle work demons using miracles and signs, and wonders to gather the wicked to Armageddon to fight against God; there is a warning and a blessing.

“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame” Revelation 16:15.

Those who come up to this last great test when all the world is leagued against God and His church, those who come up to this test will be in one of 2 camps or classes. They will either be standing with Satan in law-breaking or standing with Jesus in law-keeping.

Turn please to Zechariah the third chapter, where we get an interesting picture of the garments that the members of the remnant church will be wearing at this time. Here the people of God are symbolized by Joshua the high priest. In the opening part of it, the third verse, we see Joshua closed with filthy garments. But as the vision proceeds, in the fourth verse, he hears the command:

“...Take away the filthy garments from him, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment” Zechariah 3:4.

This experience has been repeated in the life of every repentant, believing soul down through the ages. But in a special sense, it applies to the remnant church in the closing hours of the great Day of Atonement when the iniquity of God's people is blotted out forever, and they are clothed in white. Concerning this our beatitude in Revelation 16:15 says:

“...Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments...” Revelation 16:15.

Oh, the trouble with Laodicea, the True Witness says, is that she thinks she's clothed, but she's ragged and half-naked. But thank God the True Witness counsels and offers to provide white raiment that she may be clothed. Thank God for the offer of the righteousness of Jesus, not as a cloak to cover sins that we hang on to, but it represents the precious blood of Jesus to cover every sin that we confess and give up.

“...Blessed [indeed] is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments...” Revelation 16:15.

Now Revelation 19:9—another text which suggests the garments. And this is the middle beatitude of the seven, we'll read beginning with the sixth verse:

“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent

reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” Revelation 19:6–8.

Now, will you read with me the ninth verse?

“And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God” Revelation 19:9.

Indeed, what a blessing for those who are invited to share in this marriage supper of the Lamb in the kingdom of God. You remember that Christ, on more than one occasion, used this symbol. In Matthew 22, we have it in the parable of the marriage of the King’s son, and the guests, each one is provided what? A wedding garment.

Again in Matthew 25, the first 13 verses, we have the parable of the ten virgins, guests at the marriage feast waiting for the coming of the bridegroom. And our beatitude says:

“...Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb...” Revelation 19:9.

Have you received your invitation? Down in the corner, you will see R.S.V.P. You know what that means, don't you? Have your acknowledgment? Have you let heaven know that you're accepting the invitation? Oh, what an infinite price has been paid for your seat at the table, for the robe that's to clothe you as you come to the feast.

“...Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb...” Revelation 19:9.

I know this, dear friends, in this life, whatever event you attend, whether it be a birthday celebration or a wedding, you missed something else, right? There's no way to be two places at the same time. And if we're going to be at this wedding, there's a lot that is going on in this world we'll have to miss. It's a good miss. What do you say?

Now Revelation 20:6, here's our word blessed again:

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” Revelation 20:6.

The expression, "the first resurrection," of course, implies a second resurrection. There are two resurrections. And in this 20th chapter of Revelation a special blessing is pronounced for those who are in which one? The first. This is at the beginning of the 1000 years when Jesus comes from heaven, calls His sleeping saints. He speaks of it in the fifth chapter of John as the resurrection of life.

The other is the resurrection of damnation and occurs 1000 years later.

All the righteous will be raised before the millennium begins. And all the wicked must come up to face God at the final judgment at the end of the 1000 years. That's the message of this 20th chapter of Revelation.

Now let us focus on this blessing.

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection..." Revelation 20:6.

Here I catch an echo from the prophecy of Isaiah 26:19. Hear the exultant song as the prophet looks forward to this time.

The man, who wrote this through prophetic inspiration, was later a martyr. The cruel king Manasseh, in his zeal to cut down the saints and prophets of God, had the prophet Isaiah put in a hollow log and then had the log sawed in two—Thus perished this man. But thank God, before he died in prophetic vision, he looked forward to the glorious resurrection day, the first resurrection of the blessed and holy.

"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" Isaiah 26:19.

Won't it be wonderful to see Isaiah in that reunion day? The faithful from righteous Able the martyr there at the gates of Eden on down to the last one all coming forth from their graves. You know friends, if we're fortunate, if we are among those who live through we'll see all these graves being opened, won't we? And even if we go to sleep and are among those special, blessed ones of Revelation 14:13, we'll rise in the special resurrection and thus be present to see the general resurrection of the righteous.

In any event, "blessed and holy is he that hath part" in what? The first resurrection.

You notice in these seven beatitudes, two are especially for the dead. Most of the people of God who will be in the kingdom will be those who come from the grave. Won't they? Yes. There're blessings for the living too.

Now, we'll come to the last chapter of Revelation where, uniquely we find two beatitudes in one chapter. Revelation 22:7 is the first of the last two. Here Jesus is speaking:

“Behold, I come quickly...” Revelation 22:7.

Three times He tells us this “Behold, I come quickly.” Here with it He puts the beatitude:

“...blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book” Revelation 22:7.

Here we have an echo of that first beatitude:

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein” Revelation 1:3.

“...blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book” Revelation 22:7.

Will you turn back to Deuteronomy 5:29? The blessing is dependent, not simply on hearing, not knowing alone, but on keeping.

“O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!” Deuteronomy 5:29.

Why does God tell us things? That it might be well with us. This is the blessing of listening to His Word in both the Old and New Testaments.

Again, the 11th chapter, verses 26 and 27. How Moses longed for Israel that he had led those 40 years to learn the commandments of God and follow them faithfully. Again and again he went over them.

“Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: and a curse, if ye will not obey...” Deuteronomy 11:26–27.

So there it is friend, the blessing is not merely for those who listen, those who know, but those who what? Do. Now, this is again emphasized in the closing beatitude, Revelation 22:14. And I am sure that there are scores of people here that know this one by heart, shall we say it together?

“Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” Revelation 22:14.

I was thinking of expressions in this Old Testament of which this final beatitude is especially an echo. Notice this in Isaiah the 48th chapter and the 18th verse on the happy results of listening to God’s law, keeping His commandments.

“O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments!
then had thy peace been as a river, and thy
righteousness as the waves of the sea” Isaiah 48:18.

Is there a blessing for those that keep the commandments? What’s the blessing here? Peace. Thank the Lord! Now let’s go to Isaiah 26:2. See if you catch the expression here which is reechoed in our final beatitude:

“Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which
keepeth the truth may enter in” Isaiah 26:2.

What words do we have here that is in Revelation 22:14? The gates. Thank God the gates are open in Isaiah. The gates are opened in Revelation. In both the Old and New Testament the truth is emphasized that the gates are open to those that keep something, those that do something.

“Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which
keepeth the truth may enter in.” “Blessed are they that do
His commandments, that they may have right to the tree
of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city”
Isaiah 26:2; Revelation 22:14.

Catch the echo and reecho? Thank God!

Now on that word blessed, Proverbs 29:18. What other word did I tell you this word blessed may be translated? Happy.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that
keepeth the law, happy is he” Proverbs 29:18.

Does it make people happy, blessed? The Bible says so. Proverbs, in the Old Testament says, “He that keepeth the law, happy is he.” John, the last apostle and prophet of the New Testament, “Blessed [happy] are they that do His commandments.”

Now dear ones, there will be many who will say, “Yes. But I can’t keep them.” Well, you can’t keep them without Jesus. Anybody would be foolish to try to do it without Him. You know, this whole thing of going to heaven and getting ready for heaven is something that we’re dependent on Christ for. Isn’t it? Did you ever wonder how you were going to get from this planet to the throne of God? It’ll be a miracle, won’t it?

Listen, if Jesus can work with such mighty power that He can transport me from this planet to heaven, don’t you think He can get me ready? Now go back to Revelation the 14th chapter, the heart of the book, and notice that 12th verse again.

Here is the picture of those who receive the blessings of these seven beatitudes. Blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed Here they are all together.

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus”
Revelation 14:12.

Not the commandments of God without the faith of Jesus, and certainly friends, not an emasculated, cut-up, torn-apart, so-called faith in Jesus which omits, or defies, the commandments of God. Here in this last book of the Bible, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus are joined in indissoluble union. Are they being joining in your life? Are you finding by experience that the happy way is the way of God’s law through faith in Christ?

Ah, but somebody says, “I fall.” I was reading about a little girl. She was being examined for baptism. The minister asked her if she had been a sinner—Yes; if she believed in Jesus as her Savior. Well, the minister said, “Are you still a sinner?” She thought a little, and she said, “Yes, I guess I am.”

Well he said, “What’s the difference between now and before?” Well, she thought and she said this, “Before I was running towards sin, but now I’m running away from it.”

I think she had it, don’t you? And that’s the change that the Gospel makes in human hearts. In our human weakness, through faith in Jesus, we can run away from that which is as natural as breath to do the wrong thing. Thank God! He’s working miracles in human hearts.

Blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed. Can you say, “Amen”?

[Testimony service follows]

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