

## The Seven Beatitudes of Revelation

Everyone has heard about the Beatitudes of Matthew 5; the sayings where Jesus said “Blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek” etc. The word “*beatitude*” means “*blessing*” – referring to “happy, favoured, recipients of God’s grace.”

There happen to be seven lesser known beatitudes in Revelation, and I’d like to look at those today. It’s not surprising that there are seven beatitudes in Revelation, because there are so many sevens in the book of Revelation!

There are 7 churches, 7 spirits at God’s Throne, 7 seals, eyes, horns, trumpets, bowls or vials, thunders etc. The word “Christ” is used 7 times, Jesus announces His second coming 7 times, there are 7 “amens” in the book, “the Lord God Almighty” appears 7 times, “the one who sits on the throne” appears 7 times, etc.

Seven is a number signifying completeness or perfection.

It’s interesting that throughout a book of fearsome prophecy about the 7 seals, trumpets and last plagues, there are the last 7 beatitudes that Jesus wants us to apply in our walk with Him. They start in chapter 1, end in the last chapter, and are spread out in between.

Let’s take a look at them and see what we can learn and put into practice.

### 1. The Beatitude of the Reader and Hearer

Revelation 1:3 “Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.”

There is a blessing for those who read the book of Revelation. A lot of people say it’s no use reading Revelation because you can’t understand it. Why would God promise to bless the readers if He didn’t expect them to read it?

A blessing comes to those who read Revelation, and hear it, and take it to heart, or obey it, as other versions say.

This applies to the entire Bible of course.

Luke 11:28 “He replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”

But it applies very much to Revelation, because it tells us about end-time events, and the time is near. This refers to the fact that we need to be ready at any time for Christ’s return, because none of us knows how much time we have left in our lives. When we die, that is the time of Christ’s return for us.

So we need to read Revelation, listen to it, and do something about it. That doesn’t mean to try to work out when the end will come! It means to obey the instructions of Christian living that are found in the book. And indeed there is a lot of moral exhortation in this book, which is in fact more significant than the prophecy! Because prophecy will pass away (1 Corinthians 13:8), and be fulfilled, but purity and righteousness will last forever.

## **2. The Beatitude of the Labourer**

Revelation 14:13 “Then I heard a voice from heaven say, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “they will rest from their labour, for their deeds will follow them.”

A very comforting verse, which is sometimes read at funerals.

The Bible speaks a few times of those who die in the Lord, or “the dead in Christ” or “those who have fallen asleep in Christ” (1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:18). This refers to those who come to the end of their life still maintaining their faith, still believing in and living in Christ.

They will rest in the Kingdom of God, after the trials and troubles of living in this world. Those who struggle the most will probably enjoy the rest more, as you usually sleep better after a hard day's work. We won't earn our salvation by our works, but we will be rewarded according to them. Our good deeds and character will be rewarded as we enter the glorious “rest” of the Kingdom of God.

## **3. The Beatitude of the Ready**

Revelation 16:15 “Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed.”

It's good to be reminded of our need to live in constant readiness for Christ's return. This brings to mind the night of the Exodus, where God told Israel to eat the Passover “with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand” (Exodus 12:11-12) – ready to go at any time!

The death angel came like a thief in the night, and that's how Jesus will return. His return is also compared to the sudden onset of Noah's flood, where the people who weren't ready were suddenly wiped out.

Jesus told lots of parables about the necessity of being ready for His return, which of course happens at the instant we die, and no one knows when that will be, but it is only a heartbeat away.

So we need to “stay awake” and “keep our clothes with us” – which is speaking of spiritual alertness and spiritual clothing. We'll see something else about our spiritual clothing in the very last beatitude.

## **4. The Beatitude of the Invited**

Revelation 19:9 “Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”

Have you been invited?

2 Corinthians 11:2 “I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to Him.” (Also Ephesians 5).

This shows us that those in the Church are the bride of Christ. When He returns He is going to marry His bride and have a wonderful banquet. Wow! What a blessing that will be!

But even if we weren't in the Church we would be invited, according to Revelation 22:17: "The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life." There are no exceptions. Everyone is invited.

## **5. The Beatitude of the Resurrected**

Revelation 20:6 "Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years."

The second beatitude said those who are Christ's are blessed in their death; now we see they are blessed in their resurrection. "The dead in Christ shall rise first" along with those who are still alive at that time. That will be the first resurrection. Those in that resurrection are blessed. Not only blessed, but also holy (set apart, sanctified for God). They will never again sin after that. They'll be spirit beings then. They will never be able to die again. They will be Priests and Kings or Queens. Priests are those who introduce people to the presence of God, and Kings are those who rule in the Kingdom.

Isn't it amazing that ordinary people like us – "the weak of the world" – will be kings and queens! What a blessing!

## **6. The Beatitude of the Keepers** (Those who keep the Words of the Bible)

Revelation 22:7 "Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll."

The first beatitude was for the readers and hearers, and now we see they need to keep the Words of the Book too. We need to take this prophecy seriously, remember it, and do what it says.

That doesn't mean we will be tested on whether the 6<sup>th</sup> beast had 7 heads and 10 horns, etc – we don't need to know those details. But there are many principles of Christian living in the book of Revelation we need to follow.

Basically, they can be summed up in believing Jesus Christ and following His Way of life, His teachings, and being ready for His return.

It's not simple and easy; in fact lots have people have been killed for believing in Jesus. There was a great persecution of Christians going on at the time the book was written. It's much easier for us these days, but it's not always going to be that way, according to this book. So we need to ask ourselves the question: Am I willing to die for my beliefs?

## **7. The Beatitude of the Cleansed**

Revelation 22:14 "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city."

How do we wash our robes? Have you washed yours?

Revelation 7:14 “And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

Jesus doesn't wash them – we have something to do. But we can't use our own blood, we can't do anything of ourselves to earn salvation – it can only be done through the blood of Jesus. We just need to apply that sacrifice to ourselves, by repenting and living as Jesus would.

In Revelation 22:14 the KJV says “Blessed are they that do His commandments,” but almost every other version says “blessed are they who wash their robes.” The two phrases in Greek are almost identical, just one or two letters are different. The best manuscripts of the New Testament say “washed their robes,” but by a simple copying mistake a scribe could change it to read “keep the commandments” (a more common expression). It doesn't matter much, because someone who has truly washed their robes in Jesus' blood will keep His commandments anyway!

The result is access to the Tree of Life, which was cut off in the Garden of Eden. So at the end of the Bible that access is restored again. We have the opportunity Adam and Eve rejected.

And access to the City of God, the New Jerusalem, the glorious presence of God in His universe ruling Kingdom forever.

So those are the seven blessings of Revelation. Truly God gives His people blessing after blessing!

