

The God of the Mountains (4)

Citizens of the Kingdom of God (1)

There are a number of mountains associated with the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. These are presented to us by the Gospel writers, who through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God, bring before us the pilgrim pathway of our blessed Lord, as He travelled here on earth.

Perhaps one of the most well known is what is referred to as *“the Sermon on the Mount”*, in chapters 5, 6 and 7 of the Gospel of Matthew. The exact location of the mountain is not told us, but the teaching given by our Lord in that place has been referred to down through the ages, and still has relevance and meaning for the citizens of the Kingdom of God, even in this present time.

As Matthew presents the Gospel of the King, the Sermon on the Mount is essentially a message from the King to the citizens of His Kingdom, regarding their character and conduct. The message has present applications and can also be viewed as describing the character of God’s people during the future reign of the Lord Jesus. The citizens of the Kingdom are those who are born again, who have trusted the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. John wrote, *“except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”* Jn. 3:3).

In Matthew chapter 5, the message from the King involves teaching for the citizens of the kingdom regarding the law. The message begins with a pronouncement of blessing from the king. The *“poor in spirit”*, refers to those that serve the king with all humility of mind, as the apostle Paul did (Acts 20:19). Solomon wrote, *“By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life”* (Prov. 22:4).

“Those that mourn”, may refer to those that weep because of the sinful state of a world that has rejected God. They are promised comfort in the coming kingdom. The *“meek”*, are those who exercise self control and restraint, bringing themselves under the yoke of the Lord Jesus, who Himself is *“meek and lowly in heart”* (Matt. 11:29). These are promised a place in the coming kingdom.

Those that hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled, under the King whose reign is described in the Holy Scriptures, *“And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins”* (Isa. 11:5). The *“merciful”*, are those who show compassion and forgiveness to others. that have showed mercy to others, will obtain mercy. The Lord asked through the prophet Micah, *“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”* (Mic. 6:8).

Those that show mercy to others will obtain mercy. This truth seems to have both a present and future application. An example of this is Onesiphorus, who was not ashamed to be associated with Paul the prisoner, but sought him out and ministered to him. Paul prayed for him that he might have mercy from the Lord here on earth and also in a future day of reward (2nd Tim. 1:17-18).

The *“pure in heart”* may refer to those who serve the Lord out of honest and pure motives. Joshua exhorted the people of Israel, *“Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth”* (Josh. 24:14). Paul wrote at the end of his letter to the church at Ephesus, *“Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity”* (Eph. 6:24).

The promise to them that “*they shall see God*”, has both present and future aspects. God is revealed to us in His holy Word, as we read from its pages. The Lord Jesus said that He would manifest Himself to those that keep His commandments and love Him (Jn. 14:21). Now we see Him by faith, but very soon we shall see Him in person. The apostle John wrote that in a coming day we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (1st Jn. 3:2).

The “*peacemakers*”, will be called the children of God. We understand that a person becomes a child of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:12; Gal. 3:26). The Lord is indicating here that those who are peacemakers will be recognized as children of God.

God is referred to a number of times in the New Testament as “*the God of peace*” (Rom. 15:33, 16:20; 1st Thess. 5:23; Heb. 13:30). In the book of Colossians, Paul reminds us how that Christ has made peace through the blood of His cross (Col. 1:20). Paul exhorts us in the book of Ephesians, “*Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children*” (Eph. 5:1). To be a peacemaker we must “*follow the things that make for peace*” (Rom. 14:19), and as the writer to the epistle to the Hebrews advised, “*follow peace with all men*” (Heb. 12:14).

Those who suffer persecution for the sake of righteousness and for the sake of Christ in this life are promised a future reward. The prospect of heaven and home in the presence of the Lord Jesus should sustain those dear saints who suffer for His name’s sake. Paul wrote in the book of Romans, “*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*” (Rom. 8:18).

Leaving the subject of blessings, the King proceeds to outline what should characterize the citizens of the kingdom. He refers to them as “*the salt of the earth*” and “*the light of the world*”. As salt is a preservative, so citizens of the kingdom should by their testimony be a preserving influence, standing against the wickedness and corruption of the world, through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

As the light of the world, citizens of the kingdom are to reflect the light of Christ, who is the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world (Jn. 1:9). The light of the child of the kingdom should be like a city set on a hill, visible to all or a candle that gives light to the entire house. The light that radiates from their good works toward others will bring glory to their Father in heaven.

*True citizens of kingdom grand
Heirs with Christ, and jointly blessed;
The saints of God from every strand,
Christ our Lord by all confessed.*

*Salt of the earth, the savour trace
Yielded thus, live unto Him;
A witness to His saving grace,
Shining lights in world so dim.*

*He who our ransom price has paid,
From sin’s grasp to set us free;
By precious blood atonement made,
Bore God’s wrath so willingly.*

*Til He shall come we gladly serve
In His kingdom, here, below;
With every fiber, every nerve,
Christ our Lord who loved us so.*

*Soon shall the earth and heav'n resound
Summon saints, the ransomed, all;
Archangel voice and trumpet sound,
Spell the Sovereign's kingdom call.*

Bernie Payne