

The Red-Letter Words of Yeshua ~ Part 22

Sermon on the Mount ~ Part B

Before we move on to the rest of the Sermon on the Mount, I want to go back to the first twelve verses of Chapter 5 and provide some commentary.

¹ *Seeing the crowds, Yeshua walked up the hill. After He sat down, His talmidim came to Him,*

Talmidim (plural; singular **talmid**), "disciples." The English word "disciple" fails to convey the richness of the relationship between a rabbi and his **talmidim** in the first century CE. Teachers, both itinerant like **Yeshua** and settled ones, attracted followers who wholeheartedly gave themselves over to their teachers (though not in a mindless way, as happens today in some cults). The essence of the relationship was one of trust in every area of living, and its goal was to make the **talmid** like his rabbi in knowledge, wisdom, and ethical behavior.

² *and He began to speak. This is what He taught them:*

³ *"How blessed are the poor in spirit! for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*

How blessed. Greek **Makarios** corresponds to Hebrew **Asher** and means "blessed," "happy," and "fortunate" all at once so that no one English word is adequate.

Poor in spirit ~ refers to those in **Yeshua's** day who recognize and bear their desperate plight and who long for **God's** restoration through the **Messiah. Kingdom of heaven** ~ the crowd was already familiar with this terminology through **Yochanan** the **Immerser's** proclamation; they anticipated a time of restoration.

⁴ *"How blessed are those who mourn! for they will be comforted.*

The ones who mourn ~ could refer to those who mourn for **Isra'el** and for their plight within its then present conditions (e.g., Roman occupation, what seems like a lack of **God's** presence, impoverishment, etc.). Alternatively, it could refer to those who mourn over their sin or are currently enduring difficult times. **They will be comforted** ~ those who mourn for the unfulfilled condition of **Isra'el** will be comforted when the **Kingdom** is fulfilled. In the new **Kingdom, God's** new covenant will restore what had been lost due to violations of the **Torah**.

⁵ *"How blessed are the meek! for they will inherit the Land!" ~ Mattityahu 5:1-5.*

The meek ~ refers to someone humble or gentle. The meek do not seek gain for themselves; instead, they hope in the Lord. **Will inherit the Land** or will they, as other versions have it, "inherit the earth"? **Non-Messianic Believers** often think that since the **Gospel** is for all humanity, **God** is no longer interested in **Isra'el** as a nation (even though Mattityahu 23:37–39 proves the opposite). This error - known variously as Replacement, Dominion, Kingdom Now, Covenant, et cetera theology is so widespread that **Brit Hadashah** passages are even mistranslated in conformance with it. The present verse is one of those passages. While **Believers** will return to rule with the Messiah at his Second Coming (1 Thess. 4:13–18, Rev. 20), here **Yeshua** is quoting **Psalm 37:11**, where the context makes it clear that "the meek" refers to the meek of **Isra'el**, who, according to **God's** promises, "will inherit the Land," the Land of **Isra'el**, which Mattityahu has already mentioned explicitly (2:20–21).

Although **Greek gê** can mean either "earth" or "land," in **Psalm 37**, the **Hebrew** word **Eretz** means "Land" (and not "earth") not less than six times: those of **Isra'el** who trust in **Adonai** will "dwell in the Land" (v. 3); and those of **Isra'el** who wait upon **Adonai** (v. 9), are meek (v. 11, cited here), are blessed by

Adonai (v. 22), are righteous (v. 29) and keep his way (v. 34) will “**inherit the Land.**” The term “**inherit**” in the **Tanakh** refers to the **Jewish** people’s inheritance from **God**, which includes, in addition to spiritual elements, not the whole earth but a specific small territory on the east shore of the **Mediterranean Sea**.

Because the **Gospel** is universal, and because of the false theology teaching that **God** is no longer interested in the **Jews** as a nation, **Non-Messianic Believers** tend to suppose that the **Brit Hadashah** somehow cancels God’s promise of giving the **Jewish** people the **Land of Isra’el**. No small amount of opposition to the present-day **State of Isra’el** on the part of **Non-Messianic Believers** is based on this false assumption. To combat this error, it is crucial for **Jews** and **Non-Messianic Believers** alike to understand that the **Brit Hadashah** does not alter any of **God’s** promises to the **Jewish** people; **God’s** literal promises are not somehow spiritualized out of existence “*in Christ.*”

I pause here because I really would like to let the interpretation of verse 5 sink in.

In our next post, we continue to explore the **Sermon on the Mount**.