

Introduction: From the time God created people in His image to have dominion over all the rest of His creation, He blessed them and saw all He created as very good. Until then it was good (*Genesis 1:25-31*). *** Then He communicated with Adam and graciously, in love, made a helper corresponding to him. Adam was delighted and they became one flesh (*Genesis 2:18-25*). *** The love of Yahweh for His people through the generations is brought out in the last book of the Torah, *Deuteronomy*. The Torah is God's instruction to people, given through Moses, as to how to live in His covenant relationship to experience the maximum blessings of His love. His covenant love goes back to Abraham; His love moved Him to bring His chosen people out of bondage in Egypt and give them a land to be free to worship Him; and, the book closes with a praise song beginning with the truth that His love led Him to give them His Torah of instruction (*Deuteronomy 4:32-40; 10:12-22; 33:1-4*). *** As Jesus gives His inaugural address as the King of God's Kingdom to His disciples, His preamble is filled with declarations of blessedness to those who are empty and persecuted for His sake and that they will be rewarded for rejoicing in their pressing circumstances. He says that the reason for this is that He has come to fulfill the Torah, right down to the smallest detail. *** In fact, He fulfills all of Scripture. And those who delight in and meditate on God's Word in faith will become fruitful trees as described in the first *Psalm*. In the last chapter of Scripture John was given a vision of fruitful trees alongside the eternal river flowing from the throne of God (*Revelation 22:1-7*). *** Now let's look closely at our passage to see these truths of God's love in Jesus, and more.

I. Jesus says God's empty and persecuted children are blessed and will be filled and rewarded; and, His disciples must shine in good works to God's glory. (*Matthew 5:1-16*)

A. Jesus declares that people who are empty and persecuted peacemakers are blessed and will be filled and rewarded. (*Verses 1-12*)

1. Having seen the multitudes He went up into the mountain; and having sat down, His disciples came to Him; and, having opened His mouth, He began teaching them. (*Verses 1-2*)

He went up: Jesus went up into the mountain region just west of the Sea of Galilee.

They came: The multitudes are those who responded to His miraculous healings. The disciples were those following Him.

He was teaching: Teachers sat when teaching. His teaching likely lasted a few days rather than a few hours.

2. He proclaims blessedness on the poor in spirit, the mourning, the meek, and those greatly desiring righteousness. (*Verses 3-6*)

Blessed: The word describes the gracious blessing God bestows on people in spite of their weakness. These initial blessings elaborate on the words of the anointed one given in *Isaiah (61:1-3)*.

Poor in spirit: God expresses a special concern for poor and needy people with a lowly and contrite spirit (*Psalm 37:14; 40:17; 69:32-33; Proverbs 16:19; 29:23; Isaiah 57:15; 66:2*). These are a blessing when they produce humility towards God to enter His Kingdom.

Mourning: These people mourn over their sins committed in poverty of spirit. The Psalmist wrote of tears flowing because the Torah was not obeyed (*Psalm 119:136*); and, Paul also wept over his own sins and the sins of people (*Romans 7:24; Philippians 3:18*). They will be comforted.

Meek: These people have a gentle spirit even when corrected. The earth Jesus refers to is given at the end of the age as expressed in the messianic *Psalm 37 (verses 9, 11 and 28-29)*.

Desiring righteousness: These people desire to wholly do God's will from their heart and grieve over all social injustice. They are longing for the new heaven and earth of righteousness (*2 Peter 3:13*) and they will be filled.

3. Jesus proclaims blessedness on the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and the persecuted. (*Verses 7-10*)

Merciful: Mercy is both forgiveness to the guilty and compassion to the poor and needy. It is related to meekness. We forgive because we are sinners too. God is merciful.

Pure in heart: This refers to an inner moral purity from a heart singly devoted to God and His Kingdom.

It is a gift of grace by faith (*1 John 3:1-3; Revelation 21:22-27*).

Peacemakers: Jesus is the supreme peacemaker, and His disciples make this known to others. Peacemakers receive wisdom from heaven and produce righteousness (*James 3:17-18*).

Bottom Line: The people of the world hate people who are receiving the grace to be made righteous according to all the above qualities. As a result, the righteous will be persecuted, but they will enter God's Kingdom just as the poor in spirit.

4. You are blessed when they reproach, revile, and say evil against you falsely for My sake. (*Verse 11*)

For Jesus' sake: Jesus now rephrases the last blessing putting it in the second person for His disciples. When this happens for His sake, they will be blessed.

5. You all must be rejoicing and exceedingly glad because your reward is great in heaven because in this way they persecuted prophets before you all. (*Verse 12*)

Rejoice in reward: The reward for persecution for Jesus' sake may not be in this life, but it will come.

Prophets of old: Jeremiah was thrown in a cistern under the evil king Zedekiah (*Jeremiah 38:1-13*).

B. Jesus declares His disciples to be the light of the world and commands them to shine in publicly performed good works to the Father's glory. (*Verses 13-16*)

1. You all are being the salt of the earth; but, if it has lost its distinct character it is fit to be cast out and trampled underfoot. (*Verse 13*)

Failure: Whenever anything or anyone loses the quality for which it was created becomes a failure.

2. You all are the light of the world; a city on a hill cannot be hid; neither are men lighting a candle and putting it under a bushel, but on a candlestick and it is giving light to all in the house. (*Verses 14-15*)

Light: Jesus called Himself 'the light of the world' using the divine name 'I AM'. (*John 8:12*)

All: Jesus tells His disciples that lit candles are always lifted up and displayed so all receive light.

3. In the same way, you all must shine your light before all men, so they might see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (*Verse 16*)

Bottom Line: Jesus' disciples must display the light they have received from Him for all to see.

And as people see the good works done in Jesus' light, they will glorify Father God.

II. Jesus came to fulfill Torah, and whoever does and teaches it is great in the Kingdom; the poet says delighted meditation on Torah gives fruit and blessed success. (*Matthew 5:17-20; Psalm 1:1-3*)

- A. Jesus says the reason He came is to fulfill Torah, and whoever does and teaches all of Torah is great in the Kingdom of Heaven. (*Verses 17-20*)

1. You should not think I have come to destroy the Torah or the Prophets; I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill. (*Verse 17*)

NOT destroy: Jesus would continually correct their faulty interpretations of the Torah and the Prophets because both present all the truths God wants His people to know.

Fulfill: As The Son of Man, Jesus would show people how to correctly live according to Scripture.

And when people live according to God's Torah of instruction in living, they will be blessed.

Blessings in fulfilling God's Torah in Jesus

2. Because in truth I am saying to you all, until heaven and earth pass away, in no way whatsoever even the smallest portions of Torah may pass until all may be fulfilled. (*Verse 18*)

Eschaton: Jesus says every bit of the Torah will stay until the last day of the current heavens and earth.

Eschaton means the last thing. Until then, Torah fully expresses God's will for us.

Purpose: Jesus fulfilled the Torah, and all those who are in Him will be enabled to do likewise.

This results in blessings now to be culminated in the end.

Blessings in fulfilling God's Torah in Jesus

3. Whoever may break one of the least of the commandments and may teach men to do thus, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven. (*Verse 19a*)

Do NOT break Torah: Jesus clearly states people must not break any of the Torah, and then lead others to do so, under penalty of being made the least in God's eyes.

4. But, whoever may do and teach the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. (*Verse 19b*)

Do AND teach: Greatness comes to those who by grace through faith rightly model and teach the Torah, as Jesus did.

5. Because I am saying to you all, unless your righteousness exceeds the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way whatsoever you may enter the Kingdom of Heaven. (*Verse 20*)

Righteousness by faith: This is an impossible standard for all human beings. It is only possible by grace through the faithfulness of Jesus. Because Jesus fulfilled all of the Torah, all who are in Him by grace through faith share in His righteousness and are blessed in Him.

Blessings in fulfilling God's Torah in Jesus

- B. The Author of the first *Psalms* says the one who delights in Yahweh's Torah and meditates on it day and night is blessed, fruitful and successful. (*Psalms 1:1-3*)

1. Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the wicked, and has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the seat of scorners. (*Verse 1*)

Blessed: The first *Psalms* starts with a blessing, just as Jesus began His first teaching with blessings.

Three evils: Those who are blessed shun three evils: wicked advice, continuing in the way of sin, and sitting with people who scornfully boast against God and His way.

2. But, he delights in Yahweh's Torah and meditates on His Torah day and night. (*Verse 2*)

Delight: Delight is pure pleasure. Do we find our time in God's Word to be delightfully pleasant?

Meditate: To meditate on something, it must be memorized. Have we memorized Scripture?

3. He is like a tree planted by streams of water which gives fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither and all which he will do will be successful. (*Verse 3*)

Good fruit: Delighting in and meditating on God's Torah causes one to be as fruitful as a perfectly situated tree.

The fruit will be good.

Delighting in the Torah produces good fruit

Success: Most translations use the synonym 'prosper', but today this word can be misunderstood.

The word means to be a success in the eyes of Creator God even if poor and needy.

Conclusion: Jesus begins by declaring blessedness to those who are humble and persecuted for His sake. He calls His disciples the light of the world and commands them to shine in publicly performing good works to the glory of the Father. He says His reason for coming is to fulfill all the Torah, and whoever does and teaches the Torah is great in the Kingdom. Jesus is elaborating on the first *Psalms* which says the one delighting in Yahweh's Torah and continually meditating on it is fruitful, blessed and successful.

Blessings in fulfilling God's Torah in Jesus