

## BLESSED ARE THE MEEK II

### Psalm 37:1-11

INTRO: In our last message we looked at the first part of the third beatitude, "Blessed are the meek." We said that meekness is not weakness, but controlled power. Let me give you once more what A.W. Tozer once wrote, "The meek man is not a human mouse afflicted with a sense of his own inferiority. Rather he may be in his moral life as bold as a lion and as strong as Samson; but he has stopped being fooled about himself. He has accepted God's estimate of his own life. He knows he is as weak and helpless as God declared him to be, but paradoxically, he knows at the same time that he is in the sight of God of more importance than angels. In himself, nothing; in God, everything. That is his motto", end quote.

We have said that these beatitudes are progressive in nature. That is, poor in spirit comes first, which leads to mourning, which then leads to meekness. I mentioned that the word often translated 'humble' in the OT is also translated to 'afflict'. So Psalm 119:67 says, "Before I was afflicted (anawv, or humbled) I went astray, But now I keep Your word." We must often be afflicted before we keep God's Word. When we stray from the Lord, He often has to afflict or humble us. In this way He teaches us to keep His Word. As I see it, humbling leads to meekness. When we become poor in spirit and mourn, we are humbled. This leads to meekness.

But this morning we want to look at the promise to those who are meek. As Jesus sat on that mountain overlooking the Sea of Galilee, and taught, He said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Now here is an incredible promise. We must note carefully that it does not say, "They shall inherit heaven." It says they shall inherit the earth. So we must ask, just what does that mean, and we will be looking at that.

But I think that right here, in this beatitude, in these few brief words that 'the meek shall inherit the earth' we have a promise so beautiful, that if we understood it and kept it in mind; it would carry us through all of life's troubles. If we kept it firmly fixed in mind we would never be tempted to look back. And so, this morning we want to explore this promise.

If you are new to this church, and if you are not familiar with prophecy, do not give up this morning. In days ahead, study and learn so you will understand. And this morning, just settle for that which you can understand. I will challenge even those who are very familiar with prophecy this morning. Our message has to do with a promise and a prophecy.

#### B. The Promise To The Meek

With that, we come now to the promise to the meek. It says they shall inherit the earth. Now note the promise to the poor in spirit in verse 3, and compare it with this promise. What is the difference? Well, the kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor in spirit now. It will belong to them in the future as well. But the promise of the inheritance of the earth is in the future tense. Now some may argue that the earth belongs to us now (1 Cor. 3:21-23), because Paul says all things are ours, but I think the promise to the meek is talking about the future.

Now notice that it does not say the meek will inherit the world. No, it is the inheritance of the earth, the meek are promised. Go to Psalm 37. We could read the whole Psalm but look at verses (read 9, 11, 22, 29). The word translated 'earth' is the Hebrew 'eretz'. It speaks of the earth or some part of the earth. In the OT it has been translated land 1543 times; earth, 712 times; country, 140 times; ground 98 times; and world three times. In the NT it is the word *gee*. This NT word has been translated earth, 188 times; land, 42 times; ground, 18 times and world 1 time. Well, I think that it speaks of the inhabitable part of the earth. All of what we think of as the earth is what it is speaking about.

In the OT, as in Psalm 37, usually 'the earth' or 'the land', when used in reference to Israel, referred to Canaan or the land of Israel. I think the People's NT commentary may be right when it says that 'the land' or 'the earth' is a special reference to the Messiah's kingdom, of which 'the land' of Canaan was a type. Types are a particular kind of prophecy. And I think that a special reference is made to the earth during the

millennial kingdom. God promised Abraham that in him all the families of the 'earth' would be blessed.

So, we must ask a question here. To whom does this promise apply? Is it a promise to the nation of Israel? Is it a promise to the Church? To whom does this promise apply? I told you at the beginning that there is the dispensational view of this sermon. That view would say that this sermon does not apply to the Church at all. It applies to Israel in the millennium.

Well, let us see if the Bible tells us who it is that inherits the millennial kingdom, or the earth. First, there is no doubt the Church will inherit the earth. The Church began at Pentecost. Jesus said He would build His Church and the gates of hell, or hades, would not prevail against it. From the NT we learn that when the Church is complete, Christ will catch her up to be with Him (John 14:1-3 and 1 Thess. 4:13-18). I understand that to happen before the tribulation, the explanation for which we cannot take time now.

After the Church is caught up to heaven, the picture is that Christ and the Church are married. The Church is in heaven with Christ until the end of the tribulation. So, go to Revelation 19 to see that happens just before the tribulation ends. Babylon the great has just fallen. And chapter 18:20 says, "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!" Now look at chapter 19 (read 1-10). Christ and the Church have become united as husband and wife, and now will come the marriage supper of the Lamb!

Now look at 19:11-16 (read). Christ here comes to earth with the Church and the battle of Armageddon takes place. Revelation 11:15 says that at this time, "...the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" Christ and the Church have come back to earth and Christ takes over the whole earth.

Go with me to Matthew 19. Look at verse 27 (read). Now look at how Jesus answered Peter (28). Now this

regeneration, is the millennial kingdom. It is here on earth. And Jesus said in our present beatitude, "You will inherit the earth." Not only will you inherit the earth, but Jesus said to the Apostles, "You will, each of you, sit on a throne and you will judge the 12 tribes of Israel."

Now picture this. The Herod's and the Pilate's of Rome were ruling the inhabited earth at that time. They ruled over Israel as well. They wore purple robes and fine clothing and ate all the delicacies of the world. They were ruthless and assertive. You will hardly find a more assertive, nor a more wicked man than Herod. They were among the rulers on earth. They ruled according to the principles of this world. By the time we get to Matthew 19, Herod had already beheaded John the Baptist. And the Apostles? Well, they followed Jesus in sandals, lived out of a common purse, and had no permanent place of residence. But Jesus said, "When I set up My kingdom, each of you will sit on a throne, and each will rule a tribe of Israel." No wonder they were always wondering who of them would be the greatest in the kingdom!

Now I want to show you what happens next in Revelation 19 (read 17-21). The false prophet and the antichrist are cast into hell alive. That brings us to Revelation 20 to see what happens next (read 20:1-3). Satan is bound. You see, we are here in the process of this earth becoming the possession of the meek.

Now we go to Revelation 20 (read 4-6). We have already seen that Christ and the Church have come back to earth. But here, we now find another group on earth. As I see it, the first resurrection takes place in stages (1 Cor. 15:20-26). Christ is the first-fruits. Then is the Church, and here, in 20:4-6 we have all the OT saints as I understand it. So we have the resurrected Christ, the resurrected Church and the resurrected OT saints on earth now. It was to these OT saints that the promise of the Messiah's kingdom was made again and again. At this time such prophecies as Psalm 37 and hundreds of others are fulfilled.

But, there are two more groups on earth. These are the people that have remained alive after the tribulation is over. They have not died and therefore have not been resurrected. For this we go to Matthew 25 (read 31-33). In 25:30-46 we have these two groups called the sheep and the goats. And at the end of the tribulation they are judged. You will remember that in 1 Corinthians 6 it says the Christian will some day judge the world (1 Cor. 6:2). I believe that is what happens right here. In Revelation 20:4-6, it says that those who have part in the first resurrection carry out the judgment at the end of the tribulation.

So let us see what happens to these two groups. Look at Matthew 25. Now notice in verse 34 that these righteous living people are invited to inherit the kingdom that was prepared for them from the foundation of the world (read 34). That is the millennial kingdom! The second group that is now judged are called the goats. We go to verses 44-46 (read).

So, let us ask this question now: Whom do we have left on earth now after this judgment? Well, there is the Lord Jesus Christ. Then there is the Church, who is now the wife of Christ. Then there are the resurrected Old Testament saints. And last, there are those believers who came out of the tribulation alive. There is not one unsaved person on earth now. Here are the meek, as I see it, and they are in the process of inheriting the earth here.

But, I must show you more. You see, when Jesus said the meek would inherit the earth, we have an incredible prophecy. So, go with me now to Daniel 12. Look at verse 11 (read). The abomination of desolation that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24 and here by Daniel happens right in the middle of the tribulation. And it says there will be 1290 days, but it does not tell us what those 1290 days take us to. But they go 30 days past the end of the tribulation because from the abomination of desolation until the end of the tribulation is only 1260 days. So what are these

extra 30 days? Well, I think this judgment we just considered takes place during those 30 days.

So, let us look at some more that is related to this prophecy. We go now to Daniel 12:12 (read). What is that? What is significant about the 1335th day? Well, it is the 75th day after the tribulation. And what is significant about that? I believe this 75th day is the inauguration of the millennium. It is the official opening day! The Lord Jesus is officially placed as King of kings and Lord of lords, and the earth officially belongs to the meek! Here the meek inherit the earth!

We may have an example of this type of thing in the US elections. Dr. Harold Willmington, quoting Dr. Franklin Logsdon writes, "We in the United States have a national analogy. The President is elected in the early part of November, but he is not inaugurated until January 20. There is an interim of 70 plus days. During this time, he concerns himself with the appointment of cabinet members, foreign envoys and others who will comprise his government. In the period of 75 days between the termination of the Great Tribulation and the Coronation, the King of Glory will likewise attend to certain matters", end quote (From 'Profiles in Prophecy', p. 81 and Basic Stages OT pg. 376).

I would propose that here the meek inherit the earth! The only people on earth now are Christ, the King of the new order. The Church and resurrected Israel as co rulers with Christ, and the saints that lived through the tribulation.

This morning we have time for only a very little of what is prophesied about this millennial age, the age in which the meek inherit the earth. But go now to Matthew 8. Jesus had healed a Gentile Roman centurion's servant. And Jesus was amazed at this Gentile's faith. Now look at verses 10-11 (read). So, there in the millennial kingdom are the OT saints. They are part of the first resurrection. Then all the Church age saints will be there. They too are part of the first resurrection. And in this kingdom we will be able to sit down with the OT saints! It is absolutely incredible!

Go to Romans 8 for a moment (read 18-23). Paul was looking forward to when the sufferings of this present time would be over and the animal world would be delivered from this bondage of corruption. And when is that? It is when the meek inherit the earth! Listen to the prophet Hosea in 2:18, "And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely." Now go to Isaiah 11 (read 6-9).

J. Dwight Pentecost published a book in 1958 called, "Things To Come". It is still one of the best books on prophecy available. If we should discuss the Scriptures that deal with the millennium, we would be here a long time. But let me give you some of the characteristics of this kingdom according to Pentecost. The very first characteristic he gives is righteousness. That is not a new topic to us here. So our very next beatitude says, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness." So Matthew 6:33, in this same sermon says, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." Do you not long for a kingdom in which righteousness reigns?

Pentecost says, "The key words of Christ's millennial reign are righteousness and peace, the former the root of which the latter is the fruit..." (483). Isaiah 60:17 says, "Instead of bronze I will bring gold, Instead of iron I will bring silver, Instead of wood, bronze, And instead of stones, iron. I will also make your officers peace, And your magistrates righteousness." Psalm 72:7 says, "In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endures."

Ezekiel says in 34:25, "I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods." And in 37:26, he writes, "Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and

multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore."

Then this kingdom will be marked by holiness. The Lord Jesus will rule with a rod of iron. Zechariah 14 says, "In that day upon the bells of the horses will be inscribed 'HOLINESS TO THE LORD'..."

Third, Pentecost says this kingdom will be characterized by truth! It is no wonder for Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." Almost everything on the present earth is stained by lies. Even in the professing church, lies happen on every hand. Listen to Zechariah 8:7-8, "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; I will bring them back, And they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. They shall be My people And I will be their God, in truth and righteousness.'" "

Fourth, Pentecost says this age will be marked by the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Now there are many names for the Spirit of God, but "Holy" Spirit is one of the primary names. And when there is fullness of the Holy Spirit, then holiness will be there.

#### AFTER THE MILLENNIUM

But, we are not done with this promise that the meek shall inherit the earth. When it says the meek shall inherit the earth, I think that is not finally and fully fulfilled in the millennium. There is still more that follows. Let me show you briefly what follows. The book of Revelation so carefully sets this all out for us. After the millennium Satan is released for a short season and he deceives people by the millions. We were up to Revelation 20:6 before. Now look at Revelation 20:7-10 (read). Here is the final defeat of Satan. After this, all the unsaved are resurrected and judged (read 11-15). After that final judgment something most incredible happens. Look at Revelation 21 (read 1-7). You see, here the overcomer inherits all things and that includes the new earth!



So, when it says the meek will inherit the earth, I think, it goes beyond the millennium to include the 'new earth' which is to come. You see, we saw earlier that Jesus Christ will rule forever. He will rule during the millennium but He will also rule on the new earth. And I want to tell you a little about this new earth. First, from the original word for 'new' that is used here, I think the new earth is this present earth renewed. There are two Greek words for new, and the word here is *kainos*, not *neos*.

Let me show you something else, and I have told you this many times but it is so outstanding to me that I must tell you again. You see, I grew up in a church where amillennialism was taught. That means, we did not believe there would be such a thing as a literal 1000 year reign of Christ on earth. And here is the picture I had. Some day we would die and go to heaven and always be with God in heaven. Heaven was some indescribable place up in heaven. This earth would be burned up and we would always be with God in heaven.

But when I learned to take the Bible literally, the Scriptures opened up in a way entirely new to me. So look at Revelation 21:3 (read). You see, what will really happen is that God will make a new earth and He will come down and dwell with man forever! And this new earth will go on forever and ever! And the meek will inherit this new earth. And they will live there forever, with God being personally present in Jerusalem forever!

Then I want to show you something else. Just before Jesus was crucified He told His disciples that He was going away and that they could not now come where He was. Then He said this to comfort them. "Let not your hearts be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am there you may be also."

And so, after the Church age, He catches up the Church (1 Thess. 4:13-18), and takes her to this place He has

prepared for her. This is exactly how Jewish marriages took place and it is a perfect picture of this. But I have no doubt that when the New Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven, it is in this place that we have those mansions or dwelling places that Christ had prepared for the Church.

Then I want to show you something else about this new earth. The New Jerusalem is described for us in Revelation 21:9-21. It is an incredible city! It is about 1500 miles square! Now look at verse 22 (read). John saw no temple in this city. Now there had been a temple in that city. That temple, God Himself built. And why would it no longer be in existence?

Well, this temple was constructed by God Himself! (Heb. 8:1-2). It was built, I believe, because of sin (Eze. 43:10-11). I believe it was constructed when Adam and Eve sinned. And this temple is removed before the New Jerusalem comes back down to earth, for when John sees it on earth, it has no temple. Why not? Sin is over forever! Hallelujah!

Then look at 21:4 (read). Sin has an end! Sorrow and crying has an end! Death has an end! Pain has an end! All of this has passed away. So look at verse 7 (read). This overcomer, nikee, inherits all things! He inherits the new earth and all things! Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth!

CONCL: So, let me boil all of this down to these basics. Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." When will the meek inherit the earth? In my understanding it happens after the tribulation. When the millennium begins, the meek will inherit the earth. And they will live and reign with Christ for 1000 years.

But after the millennium is over, Satan is released for a little while. In that little while he does tremendous damage, but at the end of that he is permanently cast into hell. Then this world is made new, and the New Jerusalem from heaven comes down onto the new earth, and God comes down and lives in this city to be with man on this new earth forever and ever! Then every tear

will be dried from every eye and sin and sorrow will exist no more for the righteous!

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth!