

## The Second Beatitude In Revelation

The second beatitude of Revelation is found in chapter 14 and verse 13. "Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."" (Revelation 14:13)

As we live in this physical world, fitted with a physical body, sustained by physical nutrition, and enjoying the wonders of God's creation, we have difficulty picturing a spiritual existence. We become "comfortable" in our surroundings until something occurs that makes us uncomfortable. We work at a job until we become dissatisfied with it and start looking for a new job. We eat the same food, play the same games, and visit the same places, until health, friends, or other influence causes us to change. It is no surprise that we are unsure of, fear, and avoid the huge change from life to death.

Many in this world suffer from the environmental conditions of drought at one extreme and floods at the other. Many more are suffering because of social conditions and lack enough food, clothes, and shelter. Still, others live under harsh governments that exploit their labors. Even people living in ideal conditions are subject to disease and accidental harm to their bodies. The wise preacher of Israel said these things are not new but always have been and always will be for people on this earth (Ecclesiastes 1:9-10).

But God said He will do something new that will cause people to forget and no longer consider the past. "Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" (Isaiah 43:19).

- Where the writer of Ecclesiastes saw no comforter, God says He will supply one. ""Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God. "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the LORD's hand Double for all her sins"" (Isaiah 40:1-3).
- As He announces the changes He says in Isaiah 42:1-7, "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles."
- The final result of the change is the salvation and eternal rest for the righteous. "The righteous perishes, and no man takes it to heart; merciful men are taken away, while no one considers that the righteous is taken away from evil. He shall enter into peace" (Isaiah 57:1-2).

We read of a righteous man who fully understood Isaiah's comments in Luke's gospel as Simon held the newborn promised servant in Luke 2:25-29. As Simon "took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: 'Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word;'" Simon was then ready to die in peace.

We also understand, as Paul did, that we have a job to do here in this life. Jesus left us the gospel to share with those who do not know and have not obeyed God. He wrote, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; ... to remain in the flesh is more needful for you" (Philippians 1:21-24).

A child has a desire to be home with parents. The child of God desires to be home with his/her Father and Christ. That desire is beautifully expressed by Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:6-8: "So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."

The Hebrew writer reminds us that Jesus "...for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2). If we believe in the promises made to us, as in John 14:2-3 and the teachings of Paul as in 1 Thessalonians 4:14, then we believe that Jesus died and rose again, allowing us also to rise to be with Him forever in heaven. We are therefore happy and full of joy to continue working in the flesh until, in death, we meet Him with unspeakable joy face-to-face.

If we are faithful to the task He left for us, we will indeed be blessed with the joys in His presence forever. Can you say as John did, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20)?