

The Third Beatitude In Revelation

The beatitude in Revelation 16:15 contains three parts.

- The second Coming of Christ: "Behold, I am coming as a thief."
- Blessing upon the watchful: "Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments,"
- The penalty for not being ready: "Lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

"Behold, I am coming as a thief."

Jesus referred to His return in John 14:3. Paul indicates that His return was taught to the churches in 1 Thessalonians 5:2-4. Peter describes it in 2 Peter 3:10, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up."

The thief, who comes suddenly, does what he wants to do, and depart just as suddenly, is used as the metaphor of Jesus return. He says again in Revelation 22:20, "Surely I am coming quickly." At that time, occurring as Paul describes as "a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:52), there will be no time to prepare. It will be like the time Jesus talked about when the bridegroom came and found five young women unprepared for the wedding feast in Matthew 25:1-13. His warning there is "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming" (Matthew 25:13). This parable relates directly to the third blessing found Revelation.

"Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments."

In Matthew 24, referring to the predicted destruction of the temple, Jesus alluded to a time when the armies of Rome would lift the siege of Jerusalem long enough for some to escape. Those who were prepared to go, and were watching for the time, escaped the destruction of Jerusalem. Eusebius (*H.E.* iii, 5, 3) says that "...the Christians actually fled to Pella at the foot of the mountains about seventeen miles south of the Sea of Galilee. They remembered the warning of Jesus and fled for safety."

"Lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

Those who did not give attention to Jesus warning and were not watching suffered either death or slavery as a conquered people. And so the third part of our text speaks of captured slaves, deprived of clothing and exposed to the elements, in the end of time fully aware of their captivity. But this captivity awaiting the unprepared when Christ returns is eternal, away from God and Christ, "in the presence of the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

The message to the church of the Laodiceans in Revelation 3:18 is "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed;"

One of the first messianic prophecies in Isaiah is "...Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow..." (Isaiah 1:18). The Christ of Revelation is identified as the one who "... loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood..." (Revelation 1:5). We read of white robes being

presented to the saved in Revelation 6:9-11; 7:9. And we can read of the myriad of saved who "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" in Revelation 7:13-14.

This beatitude has a warning. We are to keep watch and Revelation 3:18 tells us how. "...anoint your eyes with eye salve that you may see." We have the Bible as a medicine for the spirit within us. Every ailment, every cause that separates us from God is addressed and its cure specified in scripture. By reading the Word, we apply that "ointment for the eye." Notice what John writes in 1 John 2:24-27:

"Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us - eternal life. These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him."

Are you fully "anointed" by the healing words of scripture? Have you washed your robes in the blood of the Lamb in baptism? Are you fully prepared and watching for His coming? If not, please let us help you.