

The Joyful Sound

“Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.”

—Psalm 89:15

THE PSALMIST IS ADDRESS-

ing the people of God who have the Holy Spirit of Truth, and are able to recognize and distinguish the wonderful message of God’s Word as it is taught in the Scriptures.

“In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted. For the LORD is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king.”—vss. 16-18

THE VOICE OF GOD

David has devoted an entire psalm that provides an important perspective concerning the power of sound, and as heard in the majestic voice of Almighty God. He wrote, “Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty. The voice of the LORD

breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory. The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever. The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.”—Ps. 29:1-11

THE SHEPHERD’S VOICE

John recorded the precious words of Jesus who explained the manner in which the Lord’s people would recognize his voice, even as sheep know the voice of their master. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.”—John 10:1-6

THE FAMILIAR RING

We may apply the familiar expression ‘ring of truth’ that is sometimes used to distinguish a

certain scripture, or doctrine, that we recognize and hold dear. We note that it rings 'true' because it harmonizes with the overall plan and ultimate purpose of God. Those who have learned to love and appreciate the true meaning of the 'joyful sound' of which the psalmist spoke, are also strengthened in the narrow way of Truth and understanding. Thus present Truth takes on new and added meaning as it becomes more clear and melodious.

This appreciation of Truth encourages the Lord's people, and motivates them to pursue ever deeper levels of meaning and spiritual significance in the wonderful Word of God. Those who watch and wait with diligence are promised special blessings of unfolding Truth at the end of the age, which we believe points to our Lord's Second Presence that has taken place during the closing years of this present Gospel Age. The message to the seventh, and last, church at Laodicea is, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."—Rev. 3:20

Jesus said, "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants." (Luke 12:37,38) "And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his

lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.”—vss. 42-44

The meat in due season has been a special and blessed portion of the joyful sound. It has been abundantly received from the Heavenly Father especially in connection with the High Calling in Christ Jesus. From the words of the revelator, we again read, “Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.”—Rev. 19:9

During his earthly ministry, our dear Lord Jesus often addressed various features of the Truth, and their significance in connection with the joyful sound. On one of those occasions, he had separated himself from the multitude of people who had come to see and hear him, and then went up into a mountain where he could commune with his Father in prayer. Later his disciples joined him, and he proceeded to teach them many valuable lessons concerning human frailties and their need to overcome them.

BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT

When Jesus began this series of lessons known as the Beatitudes, he told them, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5:3) To be ‘poor in spirit’ suggests being poor in the spirit of self, or to not think highly of oneself. It is the realization of one’s own need of the Heavenly Father and the rich blessings he alone can provide. This humble characteristic should cause the called ones to feel their own fleshly inadequacies. As a warning, however, it is also possible for one who may be poor in the sense of having

material possessions and yet possess a proud, haughty or self-sufficient spirit and corresponding lack of proper spiritual growth.

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN

Jesus then spoke of another important feature of Christian character. “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.” (Matt. 5:4) This does not refer to mourning in the everyday sense because countless numbers of people continue to mourn who have not been comforted. The lesson concerns what we may learn from Jesus’ life and ministry, and then adapt those principles to our own consecrated lives.

Centuries before Jesus was born as a perfect man into the world, the Prophet Isaiah was moved by the Holy Spirit of God to emphasize this special mark of the Savior’s character. “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”—Isa. 53:3,4

Jesus’ grief and sorrow was not related to his own trials, but his deep sense of love and sympathy for the poor, groaning human creation. He gave his life in sacrificial death for them, and had sympathy and compassion for the sinners of the world to be testified during the future administration of his kingdom. The Apostle Paul wrote, “We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”—Heb. 4:15

As a foreshadow of that future kingdom of Truth and righteousness, the Master brought sight to the blind, caused the lame to walk, and the lepers to be cleansed. He drove the evil spirits from those whom they had previously possessed, and even brought the dead to life again. However, these and other miracles served as mere illustrations of the grander power and authority he would exercise in his future kingdom. The prospect and magnitude of that great blessing provided him with much comfort. All who are seeking joint heirship with him in his kingdom are also encouraged to develop similar hearts that are genuinely sympathetic toward others.

BLESSED ARE THE MEEK

The disciples no doubt listened intently as the Master said, “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.” (Matt. 5:5) Those who are being blessed by the joyful sound must also strive to be meek and teachable. Faithful followers of our Lord Jesus cannot fully appreciate the Truth unless they are willing to lay aside their own beliefs and theories, and allow themselves to be led and taught by our loving Heavenly Father through his Word of Truth.

The blessing for those who diligently heed these important instructions, and who are meek and teachable, is the promise that they will ‘inherit the earth.’ Those who respond to the heavenly calling during this present Gospel Age will share with Jesus in the future work of blessing all the families of the earth. This wonderful prospect will be part of the blessed inheritance.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHO HUNGER AND THIRST

When Jesus was teaching the disciples the true meaning of this wonderful parable, he emphasized, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” (Matt. 5:6) The Master was not pointing to human appetites to satisfy the flesh, but he was teaching his disciples an important lesson concerning those consecrated Christians who ‘hunger and thirst’ to know and to do the Heavenly Father’s will. The child of God is thus encouraged to study and meditate on spiritual things that will enrich the New Creature, and to apply those truths in their own lives.

Further to this, Jesus said that those who search for Truth and apply it to their consecrated walk in Christ Jesus, ‘shall be filled.’ Nothing could satisfy the hunger and thirst for Truth more than in studying the wonderful Word of God. The joyful sound of an increasing light of Truth is more satisfying and rewarding, and will become more precious with each passing day. Blessed, indeed, will be the divine grace in our hearts and lives.

BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

Mercy is an essential principle of the truly consecrated child of God, and Jesus taught the basic meaning and significance of this characteristic. “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.” (Matt. 5:7) Jesus included reference to exhibiting mercy in his model prayer, when he said, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” (Matt. 6:12) This suggests an important element in connection with the relationship we enjoy with our loving Heavenly Father. “For if ye forgive men their

trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”—vss. 14,15

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART

Possessing a heart of pure intentions may be contrasted with that which is merely an outward profession. Jesus thus promised, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” (Matt. 5:8) If we are faithful to the terms of our consecration vows, we will be exalted to the divine nature and see our Heavenly Father, as well as our dear Lord Jesus, face to face. John wrote, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (I John 3:2) This is one of the invisible aspects of the church’s future inheritance which may now be seen only with the eye of faith.

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

Jesus said to his disciples, “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” (Matt. 5:9) In connection with the Master’s words, the Apostle Paul also explained, “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”—Rom. 5:1,2

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, those who seek the peace of God in their lives are led by him to repentance and consecration. They receive this special blessing through faith in our Lord Jesus, and proclaim the Truth to those who have an ear,

even as foretold of the Master. "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation."—Ps. 40:8-10

The joyful sound has brought rich blessings of Truth into our lives, and has impelled us to lay down our lives as peacemakers. This is evidence that we are the children of God and walking in the narrow way of sacrifice. Let us continue to be faithful during the remaining years of this present Gospel Age.

BLESSED ARE THE PERSECUTED

In the last of Jesus' teachings known as the Beatitudes, he speaks of persecution that will be experienced in the lives of his faithful followers. He told them, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (Matt. 5:10-12) The Master sought to prepare his people that even as he had been persecuted for his faithfulness in proclaiming the joyful sound, so also would his followers.

When the Apostle Paul was travelling from one place to another to proclaim the joyful sound of

Truth, he encountered opposition, which he explained was necessary in his Christian ministry. Luke was his companion and recorded the events as they transpired. From the scriptural account, we read, “When they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lys-tra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”—Acts 14:21,22

The apostle thus confirmed the fact that difficult experiences would help prepare us for a place in our Lord’s future heavenly kingdom. Those who faithfully let their light shine will receive the disfavor of the world. However, they are assured that they are walking in the light of God’s countenance, and will share in the first resurrection. At that time, they will be exalted to live and reign with our dear Lord to bless all the obedient of mankind who will avail themselves of the blessings of everlasting life here on a perfected earth.

THE GRAND PROSPECT

In this wonderful series of teachings known as the Beatitudes, our Lord Jesus explained to his followers that certain qualifications were necessary for them to attain faithfulness and to ultimately receive a place among the blessed people of God in his future glorious kingdom.

When the heavenly calling is completed, The Christ will share in the administration of the kingdom. The revelator wrote, “I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with

Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth. These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.”—Rev. 14:1-5, *New American Standard Bible*

In this wonderful scene, the faithful class who rejoiced in the joyful sound joined in singing together the song of Moses and the Lamb of God. “I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had come off victorious from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God. And they sang the song of Moses the bond-servant of God and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the nations. Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou alone art holy; For all the nations will come and worship before Thee, For Thy righteous acts have been revealed.”—Rev. 15:2-4, *NASB*

THE FAITHFUL CLASS

To receive such a blessed reward for faithfulness, each one of the Lord's people who will share in this spiritual kingdom must be poor in spirit, and be sympathetic mourners as they endure and witness the terrible results of sin and death placed upon Adam and the whole human family because of his disobedience to the divine law. All must be meek and teachable, and hungering and thirsting for Truth and righteousness.

Jesus made clear that the wonderful quality of mercy will mark each one of his faithful people. They must all be peacemakers and pure in heart, for they are called to share in the work of reconciliation in Christ's future kingdom. In his letter to the brethren at Corinth, the Apostle Paul pointed out that future and glorious work on behalf of the world of mankind, and said, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."—II Cor. 3:6

All such are comforted as they seek to comfort others with a message of the joyful sound of Truth. All will receive a place in Christ's future kingdom for the blessing of all the families of the earth. In connection with the covenant which was inaugurated with Abraham, we read, "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."—Gen. 22:17,18

MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

The revelator gives us a glimpse of the glorious marriage that will take place in heaven between our Lord Jesus and the 144,000 members of his faithful bride. From the scriptural account, we read, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteous-ness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."—Rev. 19:7-9

The joyful sound will ring loud and clear when this wonderful promise is fulfilled under the administration of Christ's glorious and future kingdom of Truth and righteousness. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."—Rev. 20:6 ■