

**Happy in this world vs. Blessed in God's Reign (Kingdom of Heaven)**  
**The Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount - Matthew 5:3-12 (NRSV)**

The right column are Jesus' sayings as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew.  
The left column represents a common world view of happiness in contrast.

**Happy in this world**

A common view of happiness in the world

**Blessed in God's Reign** (Matthew 5)

The blessed ones in the Kingdom of Heaven

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Happy are the **self-confident** for they can do anything they want in the world.

<sup>3</sup> Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy are those whose life is always **smooth and pleasant**, for they will be the envy of all.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who **mourn**, for they will be comforted.

Happy are the **proud and mighty** for they will become the powerful leaders.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed are the **meek**, for they will inherit the earth.

Happy are the **self-sufficient**, for they will never lack anything.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness**, for they will be filled.

Happy are those who **enforce the rules**, for they will be seen as law-abiding citizens.

<sup>7</sup> Blessed are the **merciful**, for they will receive mercy.

Happy are those who can **maneuver** any situation **to their advantage**, for they will always get their way.

<sup>8</sup> Blessed are the **pure in heart**, for they will see God.

Happy are those who **fight for the right**, for they will be called heroes and patriots.

<sup>9</sup> Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they will be called children of God.

Happy are those who **lobby vigorously** to enforce righteousness, for they will always be able to say that they are on the right side.

<sup>10</sup> Blessed are those who are **persecuted** for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy are you when people **praise** you and **lift you up** and say all sorts of **good things** about you, for you will receive ribbons and plaques, and awards.

<sup>11</sup> Blessed are you when people **revile** you and **persecute** you and **utter all kinds of evil** against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**From Romans 12**

<sup>9</sup> Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; <sup>10</sup> love one another with mutual affection... <sup>14</sup> **Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.** <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with one another... associate with the lowly... <sup>17</sup> Do not repay anyone evil for evil...live peaceably with all. <sup>19</sup> Beloved, never avenge yourselves... <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

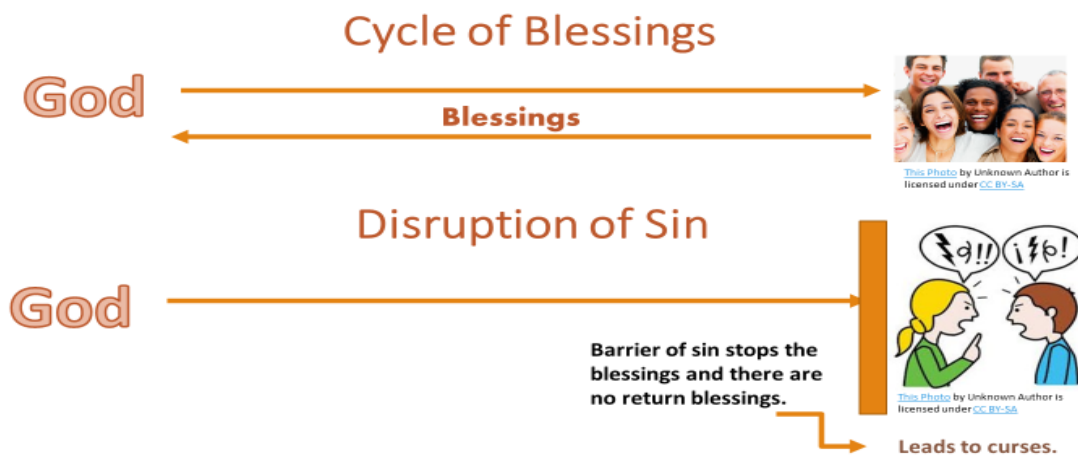
## Old Testament words for “bless”

**bâraq** = bend the knee; kneel.

- People → God = **worship, submission**
- God → people = **provide benefits**
- God stoops down; gives life.
- God desires we recognize that life comes from God.

**'âšar (ashar)** = happy

- Used in Psalms and Proverbs.
- Psalms 1:1 - “Blessed (Happy) are those...”
- Result of **barak** is **ashar**
- **Blessings** opposite of **curses**.
- Restoring God’s peace where sin damaged and disrupted



### Invitation to the Kingdom of Heaven

- Return to God’s Blessing Cycle
- Giving up the politics of this world.
- Giving up our selfish power positions.
- Following the way of the cross

### Understanding the Beatitudes

- Not the so-called “happiness” of the selfish.
- True blessings come as we put others ahead of ourselves.
- In identifying with the powerless, we absorb more consequences, following Jesus in the way of the cross.
- The resurrection shows us the true victory of the Kingdom of Heaven.