

Why the Poor Are Inheritors of the Messianic Era

Our Master Jesus had a divine mandate to proclaim Good News to the poor. He declared the poor to be inheritors of the Messianic Era.

In Luke's Gospel, Rabbi Jesus declares, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" (Luke 6:20). Why do the poor receive the Messianic Era?

In the Messianic Era, the first will be last and the last will be first. The kingdom reverses the value system of this present age. The kingdom will satisfy those who once suffered in want. That's good news for the poor, but not such good news for the wealthy.

"Woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full" (Luke 6:24). "It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:23). The rich have failed to store their treasure in heaven; they have stored up treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy.

Most of us don't think that we are rich, but by comparison with world poverty and the standard of living in Jesus' day, the majority of modern people in developed, first-world countries are rich. So what can we do about it?

Matthew's version of the saying offers a little more hope for the affluent disciple: "Blessed are the poor in spirit." The poor in spirit might be men of wealth, but they conduct themselves with the lowly attitude of the poor. They do not rely upon their riches or live according to the extravagances of the wealthy.

A rich man who is also poor in spirit does not conduct himself with the haughtiness and pride that his wealth affords. He

lives modestly, humbly and below his means. He uses his wealth for the kingdom. By the same measure, a poor man who lives extravagantly and at the expense of others is not poor in spirit:

“There is one who makes himself rich, yet has nothing; there is one who makes himself poor, yet has great riches” (Prov. 13:7)

James, the brother of the Master, explains the “poor in spirit” as those who refuse to glory in their wealth but adopt the attitude of the humble, remembering that their lives are fragile and quickly fleeting (James 1:10-11). Paul warns those who are rich “not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy,” and He urges the rich to be generous in good deeds and sharing in order to store treasure for the future” (1 Tim. 6:17-19). {eo}

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