

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Will you inherit the earth?

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Is the eternal destiny for the Christian Heaven, or is it the earth? If you say, “Heaven,” are you sure? Have you overlooked clear revelation from Scripture in forming your belief? Some view the Bible as pointing to this earth as our future home, especially after reading Jesus’ statement: “*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth*” (Matthew 5:5).

Jesus’ statement expands a theme made earlier by David in Psalm 37. David, in encouraging the people of God to live righteously writes, “*But the meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace*” (Psalm 37:11). Meekness was just one characteristic that needed to be manifested by God’s people if the land promise was to continue to be theirs. Those who “*wait for Jehovah,*” those who “*deal graciously and giveth*” along with the meek, all make up the “*righteous*” who have the promise of inheriting the land (Psalm 37:9, 21-22, 29). While inheriting “*the land*” was important to the Jews in David’s day, Jesus broadens the inheritance to “*the earth,*” for the meek who would include both Jew and Gentile followers of Jesus.

Neither David nor Jesus is speaking of some future land or earth, but the present abode of

God’s people. David was not saying that his people will one day enter the land of promise, but recognized they were already in the land. If they were to live a life of wickedness, they would not remain long. David’s plea is “*Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell forever more*” (Psalm 37:27). They were to “*Trust in Jehovah and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness*” (Psalm 37:3). Likewise, the hearer of Jesus’ words would not be thinking of some future cleaned up or refurbished earth, but the one they were currently living upon.

Like other statements in this portion of Jesus’ sermon, the meek inheriting the earth seems incongruous at first. How could one be blessed if they are poor, or happy if they mourn? Meekness to many indicates weakness of character, not the self-asserting, power seeking mind set that is needed to inherit the earth. Jesus’ oxymoron not only wakes up the sensibility of the curious hearer but conveys absolute truth.

“Meekness” is not weakness, but issues from a strong and healthy mind regarding oneself. As in David’s day, the meek person is one who willingly trusts in God, not self, and is interested in pleasing God, not pursuing self-interests. The meek person is humble in his

thoughts regarding self, and exercises strength in self-control as directed by the will of God (*Ephesians 4:2, Galatians 5:23, 2 Timothy 2:24*).

Moses is an instructive example of the strength of meekness. God reveals that Moses was “*...very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth*” (Numbers 12:3). He was not a weak “milk toast” man. He absorbed the accusations of Aaron and Miriam without defending himself or retaliating. He controlled himself, allowing God to vindicate his good name. He allowed the truth about his leadership to be voiced by God as he absorbed others’ lies (Numbers 12:6-8).

When we humbly submit to God in trust, we connect ourselves with One who is in control of the earth. Paul claims, “*For all things are yours... whether Paul... or the world or life...*” (I Corinthians 3:21-22). As we live in meekness before God who holds all things together by His power, we enjoy earth’s blessings at His hand.

Our future inheritance is reserved “in heaven,” not the earth (I Peter 1:4). But this earth is ours already to enjoy with thanksgiving unto God who is in control. Be blessed in meekness, not cursed in the frantic race for the world!