

## Gospel Reading 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time C Exegesis

### Gospel

[Lk 6:17, 20-26](#)

Jesus came down with the twelve  
and stood on a stretch of level ground  
with a great crowd of his disciples  
and a large number of the people  
from all Judea and Jerusalem  
and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon.  
And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said:  
“Blessed are you who are poor,  
for the kingdom of God is yours.  
Blessed are you who are now hungry,  
for you will be satisfied.  
Blessed are you who are now weeping,  
for you will laugh.  
Blessed are you when people hate you,  
and when they exclude and insult you,  
and denounce your name as evil  
on account of the Son of Man.  
Rejoice and leap for joy on that day!  
Behold, your reward will be great in heaven.  
For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way.  
But woe to you who are rich,  
for you have received your consolation.  
Woe to you who are filled now,  
for you will be hungry.  
Woe to you who laugh now,  
for you will grieve and weep.  
Woe to you when all speak well of you,  
for their ancestors treated the false  
prophets in this way.”

### Jerome Biblical Commentary

**(C) The Full Ministry (6:17-9:9).** Luke’s orderly account of the Galilean ministry (4:14-9:50) began with two typical events: one at Nazareth, highlighting the rejection of Jesus by his own townsfolk (4:14-30); the other at Capernaum, symbolizing the enthusiastic reception of him by outsiders (Gentiles) in a town where he had not grown up (4:31-44).

Luke then proceeded to add other important details in the story of the establishment of the kingdom (5:1-6:16), especially that of the naming of the Twelve and the controversies with various hostile groups. The stage is now set for a presentation of the full Galilean ministry.

**68** (a) THE GREAT DISCOURSE (6:17-49). Although this sermon corresponds in many ways to Mt's Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7), there are many important differences. What Jesus originally said in a kerygmatic discourse, promising divine mercy to well intentioned persons who look to God for salvation, was first of all preserved in an Aram document. Matthew and Luke adapt this material, each to his own purpose, or else each depends upon two different Gk translations of the Aram original. Mt has 107 verses; Lk, 30 or 32. Much of Mt's excess material will reappear in Lk's journey Narrative (9:51-18:14); Lk 6:38a, 39, 40, 45 are absent from Mt's Sermon on the Mount but show up elsewhere in Mt. As regards the audience, Mt portrays Jesus drawing a select group of disciples up on the mountain, so that he might instruct them to be leaders in the kingdom; Lk pictures Jesus' coming down from the mountain and meeting a large group of disciples, of poor, and of disabled. In Lk, Jesus is always conscious of his audience, "you poor," whereas in Mt, he speaks more objectively about "the poor." Mt has preserved a catechetical discourse of the early Church, pointing out that law in some way still remains in force for Christians; Lk reflects the eschatological urgency of Jesus' original words. Luke has also rewritten Jesus' words, widening their scope to include Gentiles, underlining the social point of view, and strengthening the sacrificial demands of charity.

**17-19.** These introductory verses (and 4:41) are found more expansively in Mk 3:7-12 (= Mt 12:15-21; 4:25). When Jesus comes down from the mount (see M. Schoenberg, *BT 1* [1963] 232-39), he is surrounded by Jews and Gentiles. *power went forth from him and he healed them:* These miracles must be understood in the context of the following beatitudes. The poor and needy who seek Jesus for salvation are the very ones who are brought into the Messianic kingdom (cf. 4:18f.).

**69** (i) *The beatitudes* (6:20-23). While Mt has nine beatitudes and no woes, Lk has four of each. Lk, not only rearranges the sequence of the beatitudes from Mt's first, fourth, second, and last; but the woes follow the reverse pattern of the beatitudes. Such stylistic patterns are typical of Lk's Gospel. To the blessedness of the poor, the hungry, the weeping, and the persecuted there corresponds the sadness of the popular, the happy, the full, and the rich. **20.** *lifting up his eyes:* An action recorded of Jesus on especially solemn occasions (16:23; 18:13; Jn 4:35; 6:5; 17:1). *blessed:* "How happy" (J. B. Phillips *The NT in Modern English* [London, 1958] 120); "how blest" (NEB);

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Gk Greek

BT *The Bible Today*

NT New Testament

NEB New English Bible (Oxford and Cambridge version)

makarioi in the Greek translates Hebr 'ašrê (lit., “the happiness of...,” Pss 1:1; 32:1; Is 56:2). It is a form of congratulation or joyful outburst: “how fortunate is such a man....” It is different from the Hebr bārûk, a liturgical expression of blessing, praise, or thanksgiving. *you poor*: The second person is certainly more direct, but the third person of Mt’s Gospel is much more common in the OT; it is difficult to decide what grammatical form was used by Jesus in his address. There is a peculiar Semitic flavor in the Gk construction, using the nominative with article in place of the vocative perhaps, an echo of Jesus’ own voice. *poor*: In the LXX ptōchoi usually translates the Hebr ‘anāwîm, the lowly one who depend desperately upon Yahweh for help (Zech 2:3; 3:2; cf. A. Gelin, *The Poor of Yahweh* [Collegeville, Minn.] 1964). While Mt writes of the “poor in spirit...who hunger for justice,” Lk writes more simply of “you poor...who hunger now...weep now.” Lk makes great demands and expects strong simplicity in following Jesus.**21. hunger now**: The word “now” is Luke’s own addition; cf. Am 8:11f. and the famine for the word of God; also Dt 8:3; Lk 4:4. Hunger and thirst are often messianic terms: Is 49:10; 55:1; 65:13; Jn 6:35; Ap 7:16.**22. In Mt (5:19) the Greek of this saying is somewhat awkward stylistically (even though his version may be more original); Luke has recast the saying to emphasize that every follower of Jesus must share the Son of Man’s rejection. Dn 7:13f., 18 understands “Son, of Man” in a corporate sense of the persecuted saints in the climactic moment of messianic trial. Jesus used the term “Son of Man” when speaking of himself in the passion prophecies and Luke immediately added the requirements of suffering in the followers of Jesus (9:22-27).23. on that day**: A messianic term, launched in biblical literature by Am (2:16; 5:18) and given a firm place by Is (2:11; 3:18; 4:2; 7:20). *reward in heaven*: The reward that will be enjoyed on this earth already exists with God.

**70** (ii) *The woes (6:24-26)*. These woes, found only in Lk, cast Jesus in a prophetic role (cf. Am 5:7, 18; 6:1; Is 5:8, 11, 18ff.). The condemnation seems directed to those not present; the immediate disciples of Jesus are again addressed in v. 27. **24. you have your comfort**: Lk uses a technical term for someone who has undertaken a debt (Zerwick, *Analysis* 147). Woe or bankruptcy upon each man who does not acknowledge that he owes every comfort to Jesus.

**71** (iii) *Love of one’s enemies (6:27-36)*. Lk has a different arrangement and at times a more expansive presentation than Mt; Lk shows a marked similarity to Rom 12:14; 1 Cor 4:12, and 1 Jn 3:16-18

## Douay-Rheims Text followed by Haydock’s Commentary

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Hebr Hebrew

OT Old Testament

Gk Greek

LXX Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT)

17 And coming down with them, he stood in a plain place, and the company of his disciples, and a very great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and the sea coast both of Tyre and Sidon,

20 And he, lifting up his eyes on his disciples, said: Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 Blessed are ye that hunger now: for you shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for you shall laugh. 22 Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. 23 Be glad in that day and rejoice; for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For according to these things did their fathers to the prophets. 24 But woe to you that are rich: for you have your consolation. 25 Woe to you that are filled: for you shall hunger. Woe to you that now laugh: for you shall mourn and weep.

26 Woe to you when men shall bless you: for according to these things did their fathers to the false prophets.

**Ver. 17.** To a more extended and even part of the mountain, as we learn from comparing this text with St. Matthew v. 1. as it was from the mountain that Jesus Christ addressed to the people the following discourse. (Bible de Vence)

**Ver. 20.** St. Matthew (v. 3. 10.) mentions eight beatitudes, St. Luke only four; but St. Luke only gives an abridgment in this place of the discourse, which St. Matthew gives more at length. We are also to remark, that in these four the whole eight are comprised, and that both evangelists place poverty in the first place, because it is the first in rank, and, as it were, the parent of the other virtues; for he who hath forsaken earthly possessions, deserves heavenly ones. Neither can any man reasonably expect eternal life, who is not willing to forsake all in affection, and in effect also, if called upon for the love of Jesus Christ. (St. Ambrose) --- Not that every one under great poverty is happy, but that the man who prefers the poverty of Christ to the riches of the world, ought certainly to be esteemed such. Many indeed are poor in worldly substance, but are avaricious in affection; to such as these poverty is no advantage. Nothing that is against the will, merits reward; therefore all virtue is known by the will. Blessed, therefore, are the poor, who bear poverty for the sake of Christ: he himself hath already trodden the path before us, and taught us by his example that it leads to honour and enjoyment. (St. Cyril in St. Thomas Aquinas)

**Ver. 24.** Jesus Christ having declared how meritorious poverty of spirit was to eternal life, proceeds to denounce heavy chastisements upon the rich and proud. (St. Cyril in St. Thomas Aquinas) --- Although in great riches there are great inducements to sin, yet there are not wanting even in that state great incitements to virtue; neither is this woe aimed against those who abound in affluence; but against "those who abuse that affluence which Providence has bestowed upon them: Non enim census, sed affectus, in crimine est." (St. Ambrose)

**Ver. 25.** As before he promised blessings to those that hunger, that weep, that are outcasts for Christ's sake; so here, and in the next verse, he denounces curses to such as are filled, that laugh, and are praised; i.e. to such, as so far seek their beatitude in present enjoyment, as to become indifferent with regard to the good things of the next world. (Haydock)

**Ver. 26.** *Woe to you, when men shall bless you.* The ministers of the gospel must not value themselves, when they are applauded by men; for so did the *fore-fathers* of the Jews, formerly commend the false prophets, when they flattered the people, and spoke things that were pleasing to them. (Witham)

## Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 35a (non-Catholic)

### *Beatitudes and Woes (6:20–26)*

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FS Festschrift, volume written in honor of

ed. edited, edition(s), editor

ExpTim *The Expository Times*

JBR *Journal of Bible and Religion*

NovT *Novum Testamentum*

Regensburg: Pustet, 1963. 53–64. ———. “Béatitudes égyptiennes.” *Bib* 47 (1966) 185–222. ———. “Introduction aux béatitudes.” *NRT* 108 (1976) 97–108. **Flusser, D.** “Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit...” *IEJ* 10 (1960) 1–13. ———. “Some Notes to the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3–12, Luke 6:20–26).” *Immanuel* 8 (1978) 37–47. **Frankemölle, H.** “Die Makarismen (Mt 5,1–12; Lk 6,20–23): Motive und Umfang der redaktionellen Komposition.” *BZ* 15 (1971) 52–75. **Funk, R. W.** “The Beatitudes and Turn the Other Cheek: Recommendations and Polling.” *Forum* 2 (1986) 103–28. **George, A.** “La ‘Forme’ des Béatitudes jusqu’ à Jésus.” In *Mélanges bibliques*, FS A. Robert. Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1957. 398–403. **Gerstenberger, E.** “The Woe-Oracles of the Prophets.” *JBL* 81 (1962) 249–63. **Grimm, W.** “Die Hoffnung der Armen: Zu den Seligpreisungen Jesu.” *TB* 11 (1980) 100–113. **Himmermann, D.J.** “Jesus’ Eschatological Concern for Poor Folk: An Exegetical Study of Luke 6:20–21, 24–25.” In *Vita Laudanda*, FS U.S. Leupold, ed. E. R. W. Schultz. Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier University, 1975. 73–83. **Hoyt, T.** “The Poor/Rich Theme in the Beatitudes.” *JRT* 37 (1980) 31–41. **Jacquemin, P.-E.** “Béatitudes selon Saint Luc (Lc 6,20–26).” *AsSeign* 37 (1971) 80–91. **Kahlefeld, H.** “Selig ihr Armen.” *BibLeb* 1 (1960) 55–61. **Klein, P.** “Die lukanischen Weherufe Lk 6:24–26.” *ZNW* 71 (1980) 50–59. **Kloppenborg, J. S.** “Blessing and Marginality: The ‘Persecution Beatitude’ in Q, Thomas, and Early Christianity.” *Forum* 2 (1986) 36–56. **Köhler, K.** “Die ursprüngliche Form der Seligpreisungen.” *TSK* 91 (1918) 157–92. **Légasse, S.** “Un programme chrétien: les Béatitudes (Mt 5,3–12).” *Les Pauvres en Esprit: Evangile et non-violence*. LD 78. Paris: Cerf, 1974. 19–53. **Leisegang, H.** *Pneuma Hagion: Der Ursprung des Geistesbegriffs der synoptischen Evangelien aus der*

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Bib *Biblica*

NRT *La nouvelle revue théologique*

IEJ *Israel Exploration Journal*

BZ *Biblische Zeitschrift*

TB *Theologische Beiträge*

JRT *Journal of Religious Thought*

AsSeign *Assemblées du Seigneur*

BibLeb *Bibel und Leben*

ZNW *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*

Q “Qumran”, “Qere” Qere (To be “read.” Masoretic suggested pronunciation for vocalized Hebrew text of the OT), or Quelle (“Sayings” source for the Gospels)

TSK *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*

LD *Lectio divina* (Paris: Cerf)

*griechischen Mystik*. Leipzig: Hinrichs'sche, 1922. 134–40. **McCown, C. C.** “The Beatitudes in the Light of Ancient Ideals.” *JBL* 46 (1927) 50–61. **McEleney, N. J.** “The Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount/Plain.” *CBQ* 43 (1981) 1–13. **Michaelis, C.** “Die π-Alliteration der Subjektsworte der ersten 4 Seligpreisungen in Mt. v 3–6 und ihre Bedeutung für den Aufbau der Seligpreisungen bei Mt., Lk., und in Q.” *NovT* 10 (1968) 148–61. **Nauck, W.** “Freude im Leiden: Zum Problem einer urchristlichen Verfolgungstradition.” *ZNW* 46 (1955) 68–80. **Neuhäusler, E.** *Anspruch und Antwort: Zur Lehre von den Weisungen innerhalb der synoptischen Jesusverkündigung*. Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1962. 141–69. **Phillips, C. A.** “Luke 6,24: ”ΟΤΙ ΠÉΧΕΤΕ Τ V παράκλησιν μ v.” *Bulletin of the Bezan Club* 6 (1929) 27–29. **Rezevskis (Resewski), J.** “Die Makarismen bei Matthäus und Lukas, ihr Verhältnis zueinander und ihr historischer Hintergrund.” *ST* I. Riga, 1935. 157–69. **Schottroff, L.** “Das Magnificat und die älteste Tradition über Jesus von Nazareth.” *EvT* 38 (1978) 298–313, esp. 306–9. **Schulz, S. Q:** *Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten*. 76–84. **Schwarz, G.** “Lukas 6,22a. 23c. 26. Emendation, Rückübersetzung, Interpretation.” *ZNW* 66 (1975) 269–74. **Schweizer, E.** “Formgeschichtliches zu den Seligpreisungen Jesu.” *NTS* 19 (1972–73) 121–26. **Seccombe, D. P.** *Possessions and the Poor in Luke–Acts*. 84–93. **Sloman, S.** “ ‘Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit,’ Matt. V. 3; cf. Luke VI. 20.” *JTS* 18 (1916–17) 34–35. **Steinhauser, M. G.** “The Beatitudes and Eschatology: Announcing the Kingdom.” *Living Light* 19 (1982) 121–29. **Strecker, G.** “Die Makarismen der Bergpredigt.” *NTS* 17 (1970–71) 255–75. **Tuckett, C. M.** “The Beatitudes: A Source-Critical Study. With a Reply by M.D. Goulder.” *NovT* 25 (1983) 193–216. **Zimmerli, W.** “Die Seligpreisungen der Bergpredigt und das Alte Testament.” In *Donum Gentilicium*, FS D. Daube, ed. E. Bammel et al. Oxford: Clarendon, 1978. 8–26.

## Translation

<sup>20</sup> Then<sup>a</sup> he lifted up his eyes upon his disciples and said:

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JBL *Journal of Biblical Literature*

CBQ *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*

ST *Studia theologica*

EvT *Evangelische Theologie*

NTS *New Testament Studies*

cf. *confer*, compare

JTS *Journal of Theological Studies*

et al. *et alii*, and others

a a. lit., “and” ( ).

*“Fortunate are you<sup>b</sup> poor, because yours is the kingdom of God.*

*<sup>21</sup>Fortunate are you who hunger now, because you shall be satisfied.*

*Fortunate are you who weep now, because you shall laugh.*

*<sup>22</sup>Fortunate you are when people hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you and cast out your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. <sup>23</sup>Rejoice in that day and leap for joy,<sup>c</sup> for behold, your reward shall be great in heaven. For their fathers treated the prophets in the same way.*

*<sup>24</sup>But, woe to you who are rich, because you have received your consolation.*

*<sup>25</sup>Woe to you who have had your fill now, because you shall be hungry.*

*Woe to you<sup>d</sup> who laugh now, because you will mourn and weep.*

*<sup>26</sup>Woe to you<sup>e</sup> when all people speak well of you. For their fathers treated the false prophets in the same way.”*

## **Notes**

a. lit., “and” (καί).

b. Nothing corresponds to “are you” in the Greek text here or in the second and third beatitude.

c. “For joy” is supplied to complete the sense.

d. μ v, “to you,” is missing here from most texts. It is supported by P<sup>75</sup> A D lat etc

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b b. Nothing corresponds to “are you” in the Greek text here or in the second and third beatitude.

c c. “For joy” is supplied to complete the sense.

d d. μ , “to you,” is missing here from most texts. It is supported by P<sup>75</sup> A D lat etc

e e. “To you” is added here to complete the sense.

lit. literally

P Peshar (commentary)

A Codex Alexandrinus

D Codex Bezae or Deuteronom(ist)ic

e. “To you” is added here to complete the sense.

### ***Form/Structure/Setting***

After vv 17–19 have established a crowd setting of disciples and would-be disciples the address itself begins with a declamatory pronouncement of beatitude and woes. For the larger structure see at vv 17–19.

The overall parallelism between the beatitudes and woes is based on the fact that the woes have been formed by assigning to people in situations quite the opposite of those identified in the beatitudes a fate that is also quite the opposite of that assigned in the corresponding beatitude. Woes two and three (which, with their corresponding beatitudes, are most straightforwardly expressions of a coming reversal of states) are only kept from being simple inversions of the terms of the corresponding beatitudes by a change of verb (and tense) in the second woe and by a doubling of the verb in the third.

In the first three beatitudes verbless clauses identify the “fortunate” ones by means of a substantival use of an adjective or a participle, as is also the case for the first three woes. The woes have a second person indicator absent from the first three beatitudes. The second and third beatitudes and woes have an added “now.” The explanatory clauses that follow these three beatitudes and woes are not quite as uniform: in beatitudes two and three there is simply a future verb; the corresponding woes have futures as well, but two verbs are provided in the third woe; slightly more complex forms (with present verbs) serve for the opening beatitude and woe. The fourth beatitude and woe are much more elaborately developed and formally distinct from the earlier three. Both beatitude and woe provide a verb for the opening clause, use a “when” ( ταν) clause, and use γάρ, “for,” in the explanatory clause. In the case of the beatitude but not the woe, the initial “when” clause is expanded in a second “when” clause with three coordinated verbs. Before the concluding explanatory clause, the beatitude (and again, not the woe) is glossed with a double imperative (“rejoice,” “leap [with joy]”) which carries its own explanatory clause.

There is scarcely any parallel in the OT and other Jewish materials for the listing of beatitudes and/or woes. A remote parallel is provided by the lists of blessings and cursings in, e.g., Deut 27:15–26; 28:1–6, 15–19, but beatitudes are not blessings. The series of woes in Isa 5:8–23, while much more elaborate in form than the Lukan woes, comes close to being a list toward the end (cf. also Sir 2:12–14; Hab 2:6–19). Sir 25:7–10 identifies ten situations of happiness but uses the beatitude for its expression only once or twice. Otherwise, both beatitudes and woes occur only singly or in pairs (for paired beatitudes see Pss 84:4–5; 119:1–2; 144:15; Tob 13:14 [in the S text only] has three beatitudes). A woe and a beatitude are juxtaposed (in that order) in Eccl 10:16–17

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OT Old Testament

e.g. *exempli gratia*, for example

and in the Lukan order in 2 *Apoc. Bar.* 10.6–7. (cf. Schweizer, *NTS* 19 [1972–73] 121–22.)

Beatitudes are normally formulated in the third person, but the second person form of the Lukan beatitudes can be paralleled (Deut 33:29; Isa 32:20; Eccl 10:17; 1 *Enoch* 58.2). In the case of woes there is more of a distribution between first, second, and third person forms.

Beatitudes perform various functions in OT and other Jewish materials. In the wisdom literature they serve to commend the proposed path of goodness (e.g., Prov 14:21; 28:14; Ps 41:1; Sir 31:8; 2 *Enoch* 42.7–9). In prophetic and eschatological texts they express confidence in God's intervention to put to rights the present unhappy situation (e.g., Isa 30:18; Dan 12:12; *Pss. Sol.* 17.50; 18.7; *Sib. Or.* 3.371; Tob 13:14). In an eschatological context *As. Mos.* 10.8 speaks of a future state of happiness. In Deut 33:29 the exodus deliverance is celebrated. In 1 Kgs 10:8 the blessing of Solomon's glory and wisdom is marked. In every case what is fundamental is that those to whom the happiness belongs are singled out and their blessedness proclaimed. Tob 13:14 (B) comes closest to the Gospel beatitudes: "Fortunate [μακάριοι] are those who love you; they will rejoice over your peace. Fortunate are those who have grieved over your sufferings, because they will rejoice over you, seeing all your glory." The OT woes (generally with הוי, *hōy* or אוי, *ōy*) are found almost exclusively in prophetic contexts and call to mind the judgment of God (e.g., Isa 5:8; Jer 48:1; 50:27; Zech 11:17).

At the beginning of the sermon Luke leaves the Markan source he has been following fairly consistently since 4:31 (5:1–11 was inserted; Mark's 3:7–12 was used out of order for Luke 6:17–19). He makes use of materials that have already been gathered into a sermon prior to Luke, as may be seen from the essential similarity of the Matthean sermon (Matt 5–7). It does not seem possible to ascertain whether Matthew and Luke used quite the same form of the sermon, though it is clear that both evangelists have adapted the tradition that came to them in various ways.

In the case of the first three beatitudes it seems most likely that Luke's version is the more original, except for the uses of "now" and possibly the second person form. Luke may have switched the order of beatitudes two and three. Also in the fourth beatitude Luke has stayed closest to the tradition, though some Lukan alteration is evident (see

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2 *Apoc. Bar.* Syriac *Apocalypse of Baruch*

1 *Enoch* Ethiopic, Slavonic, Hebrew *Enoch*

*Pss. Sol.* Psalms of Solomon

*Sib. Or.* Sibylline Oracles

*As. Mos.* (See *T. Mos.*)

details in *Comment* below). Matthew's additional beatitudes have for the most part an OT basis.

The case of the woes is altogether more difficult to evaluate. There is some evidence that either the composition of the woes reflects knowledge of material in the Sermon on the Mount not found in the present Lukan text or that the Matthean text shows acquaintance with the woes. Jas 5:1 seems to reflect an awareness of the woes. If Luke 6:21b is more original than the Matthean parallel (5:4) as argued below (*Comment*), then Matthew will have the verb he uses there ("mourn") from the corresponding Lukan woe. This makes it likely that Matthew has deleted the woes.

The fourth beatitude has not always been with the other three, but it is not necessary (with Dupont, *Béatitudes* 2:359–65) to attribute the formation of the beatitude to the later church period (see *Comment*). It is not unlikely that the most primitive form of this beatitude (minus the second "when" statement and the gloss with its double imperative and explanatory clause) was originally joined with the fourth woe in poetic antithetical parallelism (cf. Schwarz, *ZNW* 66 [1975] 269–74; Schwarz suggests that "revile" rather than "hate" originally stood as the first verb). It may be that the addition of this fourth beatitude (which necessarily led to the splitting of the poetic unit) was also the inspiration for the generation of the first three woes (as antitheses to the beatitudes) to which the separated-off fourth woe could then be attached.

### ***Comment***

Jesus has met healing needs of the disciples and of the people who have come to hear him and to be healed; now his address with his eyes upon his disciples opens with a declaratory pronouncement of beatitudes and woes. These set in prominence the happy situation which is the lot of the disciples who in their poverty and need have recognized the action of God in Jesus and made their stand with him.

**20** The crowds came "to hear and to be healed" (v 18). Their healing has been reported in vv 18b–19; now it is time for them to hear (cf. vv 27, 47 and 7:1). More precisely, Jesus addresses himself to the "great crowd of disciples" while the "great multitude of the People" overhear (7:1): the boundary between the two groups is permeable and Jesus speaks for the benefit of disciples and would-be disciples. The Matthean sermon is also in the first instance directed to disciples (5:1; cf. 7:28–29).

Jesus' address opens with a set of beatitudes. The cryptic terms in which these are expressed have occasioned no end of controversy, as has the evidently more than verbal difference between the Lukan and Matthean beatitudes (Matt 5:3–12).

Dupont (*Béatitudes*, vol. 2) has argued at length for a major shift in meaning between the beatitudes on the lips of Jesus and the beatitudes in the text of Luke. The sense he gives to the beatitudes on the lips of Jesus is, however, vulnerable at two points. Dupont argues that in the beatitudes Jesus is announcing the nearness of the kingdom of God—which, because God exercises his royal justice in favor of the poor, is

a message of good news to the poor. According to Dupont, it is not that the kingdom of God is not also for others, but since a particular function of the ideal king in Israelite as other ancient Oriental royal ideology was to be protector and defender of the poor, it was for the poor especially that the coming of the kingdom was good news. Dupont's case is impressive in many respects. It does not, however, account for the beatitude form (see *Form/Structure/Setting* above) in which Jesus' affirmations here are made. Those in relation to whom beatitudes are spoken are people who for whatever reason find that they are in a privileged situation, and there is always an implied or explicit contrast with others who do not share the happy state. Dupont's setting can provide no adequate account of the beatitudes' affirmation that the poor are privileged by contrast to others. The best he can give is that the poor should be happiest about the news of the coming kingdom: they stand to gain the most because currently their situation is the worst. The second difficulty confronting Dupont is presented by the emphatic "yours" of v 20 ("theirs" in Matt 5:3). Here once again we have the language of implied contrast: the kingdom is for the poor, whose poverty distinguishes them from others who will not enter the kingdom. On Dupont's rendering the kingdom can be in no sense especially for the poor. The most he can say is that they specially benefit from it.

While no doubt the change of setting from the ministry of Jesus to that of the Gospel of Luke will necessarily have produced some modification in the thrust of the beatitudes (see further below), it seems unlikely that there is such a fundamental shift as that proposed by Dupont.

In the Lukan text the best starting point for the identification of the "poor" is in v 24 with its reference to the "rich" to whom the poor are the antithesis. There can be little doubt that the rich in v 24 are the literal rich, who are, however, addressed not simply in relation to their material prosperity, but rather in view of the personal orientation that almost inevitably accompanies such material prosperity (see at v 24 below). In v 20 the "poor" will be the literally poor who presently have a hard life (thus the hunger and weeping of v 21), but the context of their poverty, if not its cause, is that they are disciples of Jesus (v 19) who are likely to suffer because of their identification with Jesus (vv 22–23). And their advantage over the rich will be their freedom from that state of mind which ensnares the rich in the limited perspectives of this world, lulls them into a foolish self-confidence, and beguiles them into thinking that their material prosperity has its goal simply in their own rich enjoyment of the good things of life. Matthew narrows the beatitude, but does not falsify it, when he focuses attention on the attitudinal with his "poor in spirit" (Matt 5:3).

Nothing in the OT background goes as far as this beatitude in identifying the poor as the recipients of the kingdom of God. The weak and the afflicted are certainly seen to be objects of God's special care (Deut 10:17–18; Pss 10:17–18; 68:5–6; 76:9; 146:7–10), and the hope for a future intervention of God has as a component part the meeting of needs of the disadvantaged and the destitute (Ps 132:15; Ezek 34:15–16, 28; Isa 35:5–6; 61:1–2). The sixth-century exile setting for the formulation of much of the OT eschatological hope takes us a little further. The catastrophe of the exile reduced the whole of God's people to the status of the afflicted. Because of their sin they had

become the prey of the nations. In such a context of national disaster God's promise to champion the cause of the poor and afflicted addressed the situation of all (Isa 49:13; 42:7; Ezek 34:28; Mic 4:6–7; Isa 61:1–4). Despite the sixth-century restoration there was an important strand of Jewish thought that continued in later centuries to wait for a greater restoration (Dan 9:24; CD 1.5–8; *1 Enoch* 93.1–14; 91.12–17; Sir 36; cf. Neh 9:32–37; Ezra 9:6–9). Indeed, the OT promises with an exile setting became an expression of Jewish eschatological hope only by being separated from the sixth-century restoration. Along these lines, the members of the Qumran community identified themselves as the poor to whom the eschatological promises apply (1QH 18.12–15). They were those who continued patiently to bear until the day of the final battle the affliction and poverty of the exile period, the period of God's wrath (1QM 11.8–15; CD 1.5, 8–9), continued and heightened in their own experience of persecution (4Qp Ps37 1.9; 1QH 5.16–19, 20–22). Those at Qumran felt they had the lesson of the exile and gloried in their powerlessness apart from God. This matrix of Qumran thought offers the best point of comparison for the Gospel beatitude.

There is no glorifying of poverty involved in the beatitudes. To be poor, hungry, and weeping is not at all the situation that Luke envisages in the ideal state of Christian existence (Acts 2:43–47; 4:34). While renunciation is a very important theme in the Gospel of Luke, this is never thought of as making oneself poor (against Minear, *NovT* 16 [1974] 104). The beatitude of the poor connects naturally in the Gospel not with the renunciation material but rather with the reversal motif (cf. at 1:52–53; 16:25; note also the “afflicted state” of 1:48) and more particularly with the announcement of good news to the poor (4:18; 7:22).

It is not unlikely that an eschatological immediacy which originally characterized Jesus' utterance of the beatitudes has been softened down in the Lukan text (see discussion at vv 21, 23). Nevertheless, the eschatological note has not disappeared completely. The fulfillment language (4:21) connected with 4:18 must be kept in mind. The reversal of 1:52–53 is presented there as at least potentially already effected in the provision of the messiah by miraculous conception. The ministry of Jesus already begins to bring that which he announces.

The good fortune of the poor is that theirs is the kingdom of God. Luke has the second person form, “yours,” for Matthew's third person, “theirs.” An awkward construction is created by the lack of a corresponding second person indication in the first half of the beatitude. This suggests that Luke may be secondary. The possessive is placed in the emphatic first position. The Matthean text has the more Semitic “kingdom of heaven.” The kingdom of God is also spoken of as something that may be possessed in Luke 12:31–32 and 18:16–17 (cf. Jas 2:5, which is probably dependent on the Lukan

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CD Cairo (Genizah text of the) Damascus (Document)

1QH Hôd yôt (*Thanksgiving Hymns*) from Qumran Cave 1

1QM Mil m h (*War Scroll*) from Qumran

form of the beatitude). In these contexts the expression serves as a comprehensive designation for all the blessings that are brought by the eschatological rule of God (cf. Schürmann, 330–31). Here the emphasis is on the contrast between such a rich inheritance and the deprivations of present poverty. Possession of the kingdom is primarily future, but perhaps not exclusively so (cf. 10:9, 11, 21–24).

**21** Hunger and weeping are not to be considered as separate conditions from poverty but as characteristic manifestations of poverty. The second Lukan beatitude corresponds to the fourth in Matthew's list (5:6). The Lukan connection between poverty and lack of food, as between riches and the pleasures of the table, suggests that Luke may have reordered the beatitudes (Dupont, *Béatitudes* 1:271–72; 3:47–55). Matthew has "hunger and thirst for righteousness." The "for righteousness" corresponds to Matthean interests and is likely to be his addition: after his narrowing to the attitudinal of the beatitude of the poor he uses the beatitude of the hungry to develop an aspect of the poor's openness to God. "Hunger" and "thirst" are found together in Isa 49:10 and 65:13, and it is possible that the former of these has influenced the Matthean text. As in v 20 the second person form is probably Lukan, as is the "now" (which Luke uses frequently: Luke fourteen times; Acts twenty-five times). Luke's third beatitude corresponds to Matthew's second (5:4). The arguments for the identification of the more original form are finely balanced. The Matthean form is more original if Luke is responsible for the formation of the woes (vv 24–26; as Dupont, *Béatitudes* 1:266–71). If the pairing of beatitudes and woes predates Luke, then the Lukan form is more original (as Schürmann, 331–32). The language of the beatitude seems to tip the scale in favor of the latter (see below). In any case the "now" will again be Lukan.

Poverty and hunger appear together in Isa 32:6–7; 58:7; Job 24:4–10; etc The assurance that the needs of the hungry will be satisfied echoes OT promise (Isa 49:10; 65:13; Jer 31:12, 25; Ezek 34:29; 36:29; Ps 107:36–41 cf. 1 Sam 2:5; Isa 55:1–2) and may link especially to Ps 22:27 [ET 26] or Ps 107:9. Despite its appropriateness there is no good reason to link here the motif of the eschatological banquet (as does Fitzmyer, 634; Isa 25:6–8; cf. Luke 12:37; 13:29; 14:14–15, 16–24). Luke's "now" tends to separate from the time of announcement the time for satisfaction of hunger. But Luke will not restrict the fulfillment to the remote eschatological future (cf. 9:17; Acts 2:45–46; 4:34–35).

The use of κλαίοντες, "weeping," here in connection with the afflictions of the poor is somewhat different from Luke's other uses of the word. Pss 125 [126]:6; 136 [137]:1 connect weeping with the affliction of the exile. Weeping and laughing are paired as opposites in Eccl 3:4 and more remotely in Ps 126:1–6. φελλ v, "to laugh," does not have here (or in v 25) the negative thrust of the LXX use of the word (with Dupont, *Béatitudes* 3:65–69). Laughter is the release of joy as tears are the release of sorrow. The thought is close to that of Ps 126, but the LXX there does not speak of laughing.

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ET English translation

LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

**22** The fourth beatitude is not at all of a piece with the previous three. Where they contemplate a *state* this beatitude addresses itself to the prospect of certain *events*. As is not the case with the earlier beatitudes, where causal factors in the affliction are quite out of sight, here there is interest both in the relational nature of the affliction and in the basis for the affliction in loyalty to Jesus. The beatitude is also formally different in its grammatical shape and its extended development. Coming at the end of the list and expanded in form, it invites treatment as the climax and clearest expression of the total thrust of the set of beatitudes.

The fourth Lukan beatitude corresponds to the ninth in Matthew's list (5:11–12). Working from general redactional tendencies, Dupont (*Béatitudes* 1:228–43, 248) has argued convincingly that the Lukan form is more original in its reference to “hate,” “exclude” (Matthew has generalized this into “persecute”), and “Son of Man,” and that the impersonal form of the Matthean text is more original. Matthew will have added “falsely.” The situation is more complex with “cast out your name as evil,” but this difficult Greek (κβάλωσιν τ νομα μ ν ως πονηρόν) will not have been formulated by Luke.

Hatred against the disciples of Christ as such is also anticipated in 21:17 in a broadly eschatological context. The hatred of 6:27 is probably that experienced by Christians in a hostile environment. Isa 66:5 speaks of those who “hate you and exclude you for my name's sake,” and is likely to be echoed in the present text (Isa 66:5 also mentions “joy” in connection with those hated). The “exilic” (see at v 20) afflictions of the poor are climaxed in suffering borne for the sake of the Son of Man. Though Luke's “people” ( νθρωποι) is quite general, it is clear from v 23 with its “their fathers” that he has in mind hatred by fellow Jews.

The “hate” of the first “when” clause expands in a second “when” clause into the coordinated set “exclude,” “revile,” and “cast out your name as evil.” It is unlikely that we are dealing here with formal excommunication of Christians as such from the synagogue, although the ostracism, abuse, and slander of Jewish Christians by their fellow Jews did ultimately lead to that. For exclusion from the community cf. Isa 66:5; Ezra 10:8; 1QS 6.25; 7.1, 3, 5; 8.24; CD 9.23. The use of “revile” in the beatitude finds an echo in 1 Pet 4:14. That he has been reviled, derided, abused, etc, is a frequent complaint of the psalmist (cf. esp. Pss 69:7; 44:23). Jeremiah also received reproach and derision because of his identification with God and his word (Jer 15:15; 20:8).

κβάλωσιν τ νομα μ ν ς πονηρόν, “cast out your name as evil,” seems to reflect an underlying Semitic idiom. Deut 22:14, 19 offers the best point of comparison with its רע שם הוציא, *hō î šēm rā* (lit., “cast out an evil name” or “cast out a name [as] evil”). Luke may have obscured the idiom with his μ ν ς (“your,” “as”; this is the view of Black, *Aramaic Approach*, 97–98), or more likely we have reflected a slightly different idiom not otherwise attested. The “name” is here the good name, the reputation.

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1QS Serek hayyahad (*Rule of the Community, Manual of Discipline*)

Fitzmyer's suggestion (635; cf. Dupont, *Béatitudes* 3:81–82) that the name is that of “Christian” makes the following “for the sake of the Son of Man” redundant. Matthew's paraphrase “say every kind of evil against you” is accurate enough.

Blessedness attaches not to these unhappy experiences as such. They are the occasion of blessedness because at their base lies one's identification with the Son of Man. The value of suffering for the sake of Jesus also surfaces at 9:24; 21:17–19 and cf. 12:8–9; 18:29. It has been questioned whether this manner of speaking can be confidently traced back to Jesus. In some cases there is a second form which lacks the “for my sake” (e.g., Luke 17:33 cf. 9:24), and in these cases the shorter form has best claim to originality. However, despite Dupont's arguments (*Béatitudes* 2:359–65) Luke 12:11 should not be read as a variant form lacking the “for my sake” of the tradition in Mark 13:9 (Luke 12:11 can hardly begin an independently transmitted logion), and the equation of Mark 13:12–13 and Matt 10:35–36 by connecting both with Mic 7:2b, 6 is too speculative to place in question the “for my sake” of Mark 13:13. Beyond the issue of precise linguistic form, Mark 8:35 establishes with greatest confidence that Jesus did see people's eschatological future as determined by their readiness to be identified with himself (see Dupont, 368–77). Whether Jesus used “Son of Man” quite as in Luke 6:22 is open to question. On Luke's use of “Son of Man” see *Form/Structure/Setting* for 6:1–5; on the background see the excursus following 9:21–22.

**23** Luke improves his text by switching to the more appropriate aorist imperative (χάρητε, “rejoice”), accommodates to Greek idiom with the singular for “heaven,” and removes the ambiguity of the Matthean text's το σ πρ μ ν (“who were before you”; are Jesus' addressees, therefore, prophets?). “In that day” will be his own touch: he uses the expression a number of times, and it corresponds to his addition of “now” in vv 21 and 22. σο γάρ, “for behold,” is also Lukan idiom (cf. at 1:44), as is most likely κατα τ α τά (“in the same way”; 6:26; 17:30; cf. Acts 14:1). Matthew will have changed the general “did” to his favored term “persecuted.” (cf. Dupont, *Béatitudes* 1:244–49.) “Leap for joy” is more difficult. Probably Matthew conformed the text to the established pairing (Tob 13:13; Rev 19:7; cf. 1 Pet 4:13; also the pairing in Hebrew of the equivalent נמש, *śāmah*, and ליל, *gîl*) of χαίρειν, “to rejoice,” and γαλλι σθαι, “to exult,” but Dupont argues that 1 Pet 1:6–8; 4:13 echo an early form of the beatitude that used γαλλι σθαι, and that Luke's use of σκιπτ ν, “to leap for joy,” is in line with his taste for more precise psychological terminology (245–46).

The development here in v 23 heightens further the already paradoxical nature of the Lukan beatitudes. The distinctive voice of Jesus seems to be reflected in this uncompromisingly extreme demand (cf. Schürmann, 334). There is already in pre-Christian Judaism a readiness to suffer gladly for the faith (2 Macc 6:30; 4 Macc 10:20; cf. Jdt 8:25–27; etc; 2 *Apoc. Bar.* 52.5–7 goes further but does not fit its present context and may betray Christian influence), much as a loyal subject might gladly give his life for his king. But here there is something more. Jesus calls for suffering to be faced with that exultant joy which is appropriate to the time of eschatological fulfillment (rejoicing in suffering does, however, appear in later rabbinic tradition: Sđabb. 886). Rejoicing in

suffering becomes a distinctive Christian motif (Acts 5:41; Rom 5:3–4; Heb 10:34; Jas 1:2, 12; 1 Pet 4:13). Luke’s “in that day” makes the paradox yet starker. Suffering for the sake of the Son of Man is a privilege accorded by God in this climactic period of the working of his saving purposes.

The sufferings accorded to the disciples of Jesus are anything but the reward of their wickedness, as no doubt they seemed to many onlookers and Jewish opponents of Christianity in the first century. On the contrary, suffering borne for the Son of Man has a great reward. Rejection may be one’s lot with one’s fellow Jews, but God’s approval is of much greater import. Similar imagery is used concerning treasure in heaven in 12:33; 18:22 and cf. 10:20. The image of reward or treasure already with God makes concrete the certainty with which the day of final judgment may be anticipated (cf. Dupont, *Béatitudes* 2:349). Far from being a mark of wickedness, rejection by the Jewish people was the classic fate of the true prophet of God (cf. 4:24; 13:33–34; 11:47–51; Acts 7:52). This motif is already present in the OT (1 Kgs 19:10, 14; Jer 2:30; Neh 9:26; 2 Chr 36:15–16) and stands behind 1 Thess 2:15. Luke’s “their fathers” corresponds to his use of “people” in v 22; it establishes no particular antithesis between church and synagogue (against Dupont, *Béatitudes* 3:38–39). Nor does the comparison with prophets necessarily suggest a prophetic role for disciples (as Fitzmyer, 636): prophets and disciples have in common a conformity to the divine will that does not find favor with those among whom they are placed.

**24** Four woes balance the four beatitudes. Matthew’s sermon does not contain the woes. There are, however, a number of links between the woes and the Matthean sermon which have suggested to scholars either that Matthew knew the woes but chose not to use them (e.g., Bartsch, *TZ* 16 [1960] 10–11; Schürmann, 335–36), or that Luke is responsible for the woes but in producing them has been influenced in part by other Sermon on the Mount materials used by Matthew but not reproduced in Luke’s own sermon (e.g., Dupont, *Béatitudes* 1:299–342). Possible links include: (i) the emphatic “theirs”/“they” of Matthew’s beatitudes may echo the contrasting woes; (ii) the use of “consolation” in Luke 6:24 may not be independent of the use of the cognate verb in Matt 5:4; (iii) πέχειν, “to have received payment,” is found in Luke 6:24 and Matt 6:2, 5, 16; (iv) πένθειν, “to mourn,” is found in Luke 6:25 and Matt 5:4; (v) the “rich,” “full,” and “laughing” of the woes could correspond to the almsgiving, fasting, and prayer of Matt 6:2–18; (vi) Matthew has eight beatitudes (or nine?) while Luke has four beatitudes plus four woes. The case for linkage is suggestive but not overwhelming, and if there is dependence, the dependence could go either way. If, as argued above, the language of Luke 6:21b is more original than that of the Matthean counterpart, then it is most likely that the woes predate Luke and were present also in Matthew’s source. Jas 5:1 seems to reflect an awareness of the woes.

In general the woes closely follow the form of the corresponding beatitudes and provide an inverse formulation for the sentiment of the beatitudes. The second person

indicator (“you”), the absence of which in the opening clause of the first three beatitudes made for awkwardness, is supplied for the first three woes (in the third the textual witness is divided). The explanation given for the first woe is unrelated to that for the opening beatitude. As with the fourth beatitude, the fourth woe has a distinctive form, but the woe lacks the elaboration provided for the beatitude by vv 22b–23a.

Despite the second person address, those against whom the woes are directed are presumed absent (v 27 cf. v 18). The opening πλήν, “but,” may be a Lukan touch. ο αἰ, “woe,” is used in the LXX to translate various Hebrew interjections, but is rare in secular Greek and may ultimately be a Latinism (Dupont, *Béatitudes* 3:28–29). When beatitudes are spoken over those who are in a particularly advantageous situation, woes are for those whose situation is a miserable one (though they may not realize it). The Gospel of Luke provides a rich supply of comparative materials for clarifying how it is that the rich are seen to be in such an unfortunate situation (cf. esp. Luke 11:41; 12:13–34; 16:1–13, 19–31; 18:18–30; 19:1–10). Riches almost inescapably (18:25) ensnare those who possess them in a false set of values and loyalties which involve a foreshortened perspective in which love for the things of this world proves to be greater than desire for the kingdom of God (18:23). One cannot serve God and mammon (16:13). Whether one has little or much, the only proper attitude to mammon is an openhanded generosity which is rich in relation to the compassionate concerns of God (12:32–34; 16:9–12) and lays up treasure in heaven and not for oneself on earth (12:21). This is most difficult for those who have the greatest stake in, and find themselves most secure in relation to, material wellbeing in this world (cf. Dupont, *Béatitudes* 3:149–203; Seccombe, *Possessions*, 97–196). The Lukan woe is addressed to the rich whose loyalty is to their riches and who find contentment in the good life these are able to provide (12:15–21). Such people have little in common with afflicted Israel for whom salvation can come from God alone and who wait for the day of his favor with its good news for the poor (Isa 61:1–2) which will herald the long-awaited consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25). Such people have settled for the consolations that may be had from riches but will find that they have been shortchanged by this their choice (cf. 16:25).

**25** As did the corresponding beatitudes, the second and third woes express simple reversals. The second woe, however, does not use the verb provided by the corresponding beatitude. Instead the perfect participle μπεπλησμένοι continues the theme of consolation already drawn in full: the woe is pronounced upon those who have had their fill now (Luke provides a “now” for the woes that correspond to the beatitudes of v 21). There is no thought of excess (cf. 1:53; Acts 14:17), but only of the contentment and satisfaction of the rich in the foreshortened perspective of their lives. Their coming hunger will be as real as the present hunger of the poor.

The third woe is kept from being a simple inverse of the corresponding beatitude only by the doubling of the verb in the second clause (the verbs form a conventional pair [2 Sam 19:2; 2 Esdr 18:9 [Neh 8:9]; Mark 16:10; Jas 4:9; Rev 18:11, 15, 19]), which allows for an identification of the inner state that stands behind the tears. Again, the laughter is that of those who feel quite happy with their present lot in life. Theirs is a fool’s paradise.

**26** As with the beatitudes, the fourth woe is distinctive in form. The woes are not, however, as heavily end-weighted as were the beatitudes, since there is nothing corresponding to the development in vv 22b–23a. Not being spoken well of but being spoken well of by *all* is the danger signal. False prophets gained general approval (Isa 30:9–11; Mic 2:11; Jer 5:31; 23:16–17) because they represented nothing that would unsettle the status quo. Though Luke in general sets great store upon good public reputation (cf. Dupont, *Béatitudes* 3:89–94), he must ultimately limit its validity as a test of truth: truth lies with the persecuted rather than with those who gain public recognition (Schürmann, 338). Schürmann (*BZ*, ns, 10 [1966] 57–81) sees the woes as directed primarily at false teachers in the church who offer a spurious way of salvation, but this is to make altogether too much of the comparison with false prophets: the beatitudes are not only or primarily for the true Christian teachers! Dupont (*Béatitudes* 3:38–40, 55–64, 78–97) makes a better case for seeing reflected the dispute between church and synagogue. But even he recognizes that the rich should not be identified with the unbelieving Jews *simpliciter*. And it is better to say that Luke is concerned (elsewhere) to explain in part the unbelief of Jews (esp. the Pharisees) by suggesting that they were implicated in that state of mind which troubled the rich and kept them from the kingdom of God (see esp. 16:14–15).

### ***Explanation***

The crowds came to hear and to be healed (v 18). Having met the healing needs of the crowds, Jesus now addresses his disciples, but in the hearing of all the gathered people: the boundary line between the two groups is permeable and Jesus speaks for the benefit of disciples and would-be disciples.

Jesus' opening words are a commendation of the good fortune of the poor, in a cryptic sentence that has occasioned much controversy. How are we to understand the poverty of these poor? It seems best neither to spiritualize away the reference to actual poverty, nor to make the whole thing a matter of economic justice for the proletariat.

Luke provides an important clue as to how the poor are here to be understood by setting over against them as their opposite the rich of the first woe (v 24) and by incorporating into his Gospel a variety of material on the rich. It is clear (see below) that the rich who are castigated are the literal rich but that they are addressed not merely in relation to their material prosperity but more pointedly as those whose material prosperity has warped their personal orientation to God and their fellows (as it almost always does). The literal poor have freedom from that state of mind which ensnares the rich in the limited perspectives of this world, lulls them into a foolish self-confidence, and insinuates to them that their material prosperity has its goal simply in their own rich enjoyment of the good things of life.

The Jewish background can also be helpful. In the OT the weak and the afflicted are objects of God's special care (e.g., Deut 10:17–18; Pss 19:17–18; 68:5–6), and part of the hope for a future intervention of God involved the meeting of the needs of the disadvantaged and the destitute (e.g., Ps 132:15; Ezek 34:15–16; Isa 35:5–6). The exile of the sixth century B.C. reduced all of God's people to the status of the afflicted, and in such a context of national disaster God's promise to champion the cause of the poor and afflicted addressed the situation of all (e.g., Isa 49:13; Ezek 34:29; Mic 4:6–7). Despite the sixth-century restoration an important strand of Jewish thought regarded the situation in subsequent centuries as still that of exile (e.g., Dan 9:24, Sir 36; cf. Neh 9:32–37), and the people involved saw themselves as the poor to whom God's promises applied (esp. the Qumran community: 1QH 18.12–15). Patiently bearing the affliction and poverty that God had decreed for the exiles, those at Qumran felt that they had learned the lesson of the exile, and they gloried in their powerlessness apart from God. It is in something like this context of thought that Jesus speaks of the good fortune of the poor. Jesus' preaching is good news for these poor (Luke 4:18; 7:22), because it inaugurates the time for the fulfillment of God's promises. (We should note that there is no glorifying of poverty as such involved in the beatitudes. To be poor, hungry, and weeping is not at all the ideal Christian state [cf. Acts 2:43–47; 4:34].)

The prospect for these poor is the possession of the kingdom of God. When the kingdom of God is spoken of as something that may be possessed (as also in 12:31–32 and 18:16–17), it serves as a comprehensive designation for all the blessings to be brought by the end-time rule of God. Such a rich inheritance contrasts sharply with the deprivations of present poverty.

The hunger and weeping of the second and third beatitudes are to be seen as characteristic manifestations of poverty. The assurance that the needs of the hungry will be met echoes OT promises and may link especially to Ps 22:26 or 107:9. Despite Luke's "now," which tends to separate the time of satisfaction of hunger from the time of announcement, Luke will not restrict the fulfillment to the remote end-time future (9:17; Acts 2:45–46; 4:34–35). Weeping turned to laughter is like Ps 126. Laughter is the release of joy as tears are the release of sorrow.

The form and content of the fourth beatitude are rather different. Coming at the end of the list and being much longer, it attracts to itself greater importance. Part of this beatitude seems to be based on Isa 66:5. The "exile" afflictions of the poor are climaxed in suffering borne for the sake of the Son of Man (cf. 9:24; 21:17–19). Jesus anticipated ostracism, abuse, and slander of Jewish Christians by their fellow Jews. "Cast out your name as evil" seems to reflect a Semitic idiom and has in mind the spreading abroad of a bad report defaming the name of a person.

The call to rejoice in such affliction (v 23) heightens the paradoxical nature of Jesus' teaching in these beatitudes. Though there is some Jewish parallel, rejoicing in suffering is to become a distinctively Christian motif (e.g., Acts 5:41; Rom 5:3–4; Heb 10:34). Suffering for the sake of the Son of Man is a privilege accorded by God in this climactic period of the working of his saving purposes. Such suffering may look to a bystander

like a reward for wickedness, but the situation is quite the opposite: suffering borne for the sake of the Son of Man has a great reward. The image of a reward or treasure already with God (cf. 12:33; 18:22) makes concrete the certainty with which the final judgment may be anticipated. Rejection may be one's lot with one's fellow Jews, but God's approval is of much greater importance. The great prophets had a similar experience (e.g., 1 Kgs 19:10, 14; Jer 2:30; Neh 9:26).

The beatitudes addressed to present disciples are balanced by woes addressed to absent Jews who have disregarded the ministry of Jesus (despite the second person address they are absent [cf. v 27]). In general the woes closely follow the form of the corresponding beatitudes and provide an inverse formulation for the sentiment of the beatitudes. Where beatitudes are spoken over those who are in a particularly advantageous situation, woes are for those whose situation is a miserable one (though they may not know it).

The woes are declared upon the rich. Riches almost inescapably (18:25) ensnare those who possess them in a false set of values and loyalties which involve a foreshortened perspective in which love for the things of this world proves to be greater than the desire for the kingdom of God (18:23). One cannot serve God and mammon (16:13). The only proper attitude to mammon is an openhanded generosity which is rich in relation to the compassionate concerns of God (12:32–34; 16:9–12) and lays up treasure in heaven and not for oneself on earth (12:21). This for the most part is beyond those who have the greatest stake in, and find themselves most secure in relation to, material well-being in this world. Such people have settled for the consolations that may be had from riches, but they will find that they have been shortchanged by their choice (cf. 16:25). Now the rich are well filled, but their coming hunger will be as real as that of the poor all around them. Now laughter expresses their happiness with their present lot in life, but they live in a fool's paradise and laughter will give way to tears.

As with the beatitudes the fourth woe is distinctive in form and content. Though Luke in general sets great store upon good public recognition, its validity as a test of truth must ultimately be limited: truth lies with the persecuted rather than with those who gain broad public recognition. False prophets gained general approval (e.g., Isa 30:9–11; Mic 2:11; Jer 5:31) because they represented nothing that would unsettle the status quo. The successful rich are much the same.

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<sup>1</sup>Nolland, J. 2002. *Vol. 35A: Word Biblical Commentary : Luke 1:1-9:20*. Word Biblical Commentary . Word, Incorporated: Dallas