

ספר תהילים א | Tehillim / Psalms 1

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Walking in the counsel of God

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms* chapter 1. The first chapter of the book of Psalms serves as a preface to the entire collection of the five books of the Psalms. The author of this Psalm is speaking of the true blessedness of the righteous man and approaches the blessedness of the righteous by stating in a negative perspective what a righteous man will not do. א אֲשֶׁר־יֵהְיֶה אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא הִלָּךְ בְּעֵצַת רְשָׁעִים וּבְדַרְךְ חַטָּאִים לֹא יֵשֵׁב: *1:1* *How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!* (NASB) The Psalm examines the contrast of the peaceful way of the righteous with the desperation of the wicked. The righteous man does not allow himself to be influenced by the unrighteous and instead delights in spending time meditating upon the Word of God (the Torah) day and night. The blessedness of the righteous is analogized with the healthiness and fruitfulness of a tree that is nourished by rivers of water and whatever the righteous man puts his hand to he prospers (*Tehillim / Psalms 1:3*). The wicked on the other hand are not blessed. They are like chaff driven by the wind. In judgment they will not stand and though they may be in the midst of the congregation of the righteous they will not be blessed (*Tehillim / Psalms 1:4-5*). The Psalm concludes with a contrast between the two paths a man chooses to take, (i) the way of the righteous is known by God and is blessed and provided for and (ii) the way of the ungodly is destruction. In this week's study we will look at the meaning of the blessedness of the man (אֲשֶׁר־יֵהְיֶה אִישׁ) that walks in righteousness and Yeshua's words in *Mathew 5:1-12*. What is this blessedness that Yeshua referring to when he said "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, Blessed are those who mourn, Blessed are the gentle, Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, Blessed are the merciful, Blessed are the pure in heart, Blessed are the peacemakers, Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, and Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me?*" How can we understand the blessedness of these things according to the writings of the Tanach (Torah, Neviim, and Ketuvim).

עברית Hebrew	ארמי Aramaic	ελληνικός Greek
<p>ספר תהלים פרק א</p> <p>א אֲשֶׁר־יֵהְיֶה אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא הִלָּךְ בְּעֵצַת רְשָׁעִים וּבְדַרְךְ חַטָּאִים לֹא עָמַד וּבְמוֹשֵׁב לְצִידִים לֹא יֵשֵׁב: ב כִּי אִם־בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה חֲפָצוֹ וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ יִהְיֶה יוֹמָם וּלְיָלֵלָה: ג וְהָיָה כַּעֲצֵץ שָׂתוּל עַל־פְּלִיגֵי מַיִם אֲשֶׁר פָּרְיוֹ יִתֵּן בְּעֵתוֹ וְעֵלְהוּ לֹא יִבּוֹל וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲ־ שֶׂה יִצְלִיחַ</p>	<p>ספר טוביה פרק א</p> <p>א טוביה טוביה דגבר דלא הליך במלכת רשיעין ובאורחת חייבין לא קם ובסיעת ממיקני לא איס־ תחר: ב אילהן בנמוסא דיהוה רעותיה ובאוריתיה מרנין יומם יימ־ סולילי: ג ויהי כאילן חיי דנציב על טורופי מוי די אינביה מבשל בעידניה ואטרפוי לא נתרין וכל לובלבו דמלבלב מגרגר ומצלח:</p>	<p>ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 1</p> <p>1 μακαριος ανηρ ος ουκ επορευθη εν βουλη ασεβων και εν οδω αμαρτωλων ουκ εστη και επι καθεδραν λοιμων ουκ εκαθισεν 2 αλλ' η εν τω νομω κυριου το θελημα αυτου και εν τω νομω αυτου μελετησει ημερας και νυκτος 3 και εσται ως το ξυλον το πεφυτευμενον παρα τας διεξοδους των υδατων ο τον καρπον αυτου δωσει εν καιρω αυτου και το φυλλον αυτου ουκ απορρησεται και παντα οσα αν ποιη κατευοδωθησεται</p>

<p>ד לא-כֵן הִרְשָׁעִים פִּי אִם-כְּמִץ אֲשֶׁר-תִּדְפְּנוּ רוּחַ: הַ עַל-כֵּן לֹא- יִקְמוּ רְשָׁעִים בְּמִשְׁפָּט וְחַטָּאִים בְּעֵדוּת צְדִיקִים: וּ כְּ-יִוָּדַע יְהִנֶּה דְרָךְ צְדִיקִים וְדְרָךְ רְשָׁעִים תֵּאבֵד: א</p>	<p>ד לא היכנא רשיעי אילהין כמוזא כמוצא די תשקפיניה עלעולא זעפא: ה מטול היכנא כנלא יזכון יקומון רשיעי ביומא דינא רבא וחיביין בסיעת צדיקיא: ו מטול דגלי קדם יהוה אורח צדיקיא ואורחתהון דרשיעי תהובד:</p>	<p>4 ουχ ουτως οι ασεβεις ουχ ουτως αλλ' η ως ο χνους ον εκριπται ο ανεμος απο προσωπου της γης 5 δια τουτο ουκ αναστησονται ασεβεις εν κρισει ουδε αμαρτωλοι εν βουλη δικαιων 6 οτι γινωσκει κυριος οδον δικαιων και οδος ασεβων απολειται</p>
<p>Tehillim / Psalms 1 1:1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. 1:3 He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers. 1:4 The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away. 1:5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. 1:6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 1 1. Happy the man who has not walked in the council of the wicked, or stood in the paths of sinners, or taken a seat in the band of mockers. 2. Instead his pleasure is in the law of the Lord, and in his Torah he meditates day and night. 3. And he will be like a living tree planted by streams of water, whose fruit ripens in due course, and its leaves do not fall, and all its branches that grow ripen and flourish. 4. Not so the wicked; instead, they are like the chaff that the storm-wind will drive. 5. Therefore the wicked will not be acquitted in the great day, nor sinners in the band of the righteous, 6. Because the path of the righteous is manifest in the Lord's presence, but the paths of the wicked will perish. (EMC)</p>	<p>Tehillim / Psalms Chapter 1 1 Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the seat of evil men. 2 But his pleasure is in the law of the Lord; and in his law will he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be as a tree planted by the brooks of waters, which shall yield its fruit in its season, and its leaf shall not fall off; and whatsoever he shall do shall be prospered. 4 Not so the ungodly; —not so: but rather as the chaff which the wind scatters away from the face of the earth. 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not rise in judgment, nor sinners in the counsel of the just. 6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish.</p>

We begin the study by looking at two translations of the Hebrew text, the Targum Pseudo Jonathan (Aramaic translation) and the Septuagint (LXX, Greek translation). Reading through these translations on *Tehillim / Psalms 1* the first thing that immediately catches one's attention is the translation in English that show a contrast between the “Happy, good” (טובה טובה) man in Targum Pseudo Jonathan and the “blessed” (אַשְׁרֵי, μακαριος) man in the Septuagint. Looking at the word for blessing, the English language leaves us asking questions about what it means to be blessed, what kind of blessing is this man receiving who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the path of sinners, or sits in the seat of scoffers? Let's dig a little deeper into the meaning of the word for blessing according to the Hebrew Scriptures.

In the Hebrew bible, there are two words that are used to describe blessing, the word ברוך (baruch) and אַשְׁרֵי (ashrei). In the Torah, the language of “blessing” is given by the Hebrew word ברוך (baruch) “to bless.” The word ברוך (baruch) is derived from the root word ברך meaning “to kneel.” The word ברוך provides us with the Hebraic way of showing to bless someone is to kneel down and serve the one who is being blessed. How appropriately is God's use of this word to express to us the way in which He would bless all the peoples of this earth in the seed of Abraham by His Son who would come as a prophet, priest, and king in the role of a servant. The servant nature of ברוך is important to keep in mind while we ask the question what it means to be a blessing and to be blessed by God according to the Torah?

What does it mean to be blessed according to the Scriptures of the Hebrew Bible? Studying the Hebrew Scriptures, there are two ways for understanding a blessing, (i) to be a blessing to others and (ii) to receive a blessing from someone and thereby being “blessed.” In other words, one is either

the source of the blessing or the receiver of the blessing. The most common word for blessing is written as ברוך meaning “to bless” and this word is used extensively in Parashat Lech Lecha (*Bereshit / Genesis 12:1-17:27*) where the Lord God calls on Avraham to go out from his land from his father’s house, and from his people (*12:3*) to a land that He will show him. The Lord promises to bless Avraham and make him into a great nation (וגוים) and that those who bless him the Lord will bless, and those who curse him the Lord will curse (וגוים). In the Torah, there are six other places where God reaffirms (confirms) His covenant with Avraham using the language of “blessing” (ברוך), these are found in *Bereshit / Genesis 15:18-21, 17:1-8, 18:18, 22:18, 26:4, and 28:14*. Comparing these texts with *Bereshit / Genesis 12:3* it is interesting to note that there are minor differences in the words used to make the covenant blessing of Avraham’s seed.

פרשת לך לך ספר בראשית פרק יב פסוק ג

ג וְאַבְרָהָם מְבָרְכִיהָ וּמְקַלְלָהָ אֲדָר וּנְבָרְכוּ בָהּ כָּל מְשֻׁפָּחַת הָאֲדָמָה:

פרשת וירא ספר בראשית פרק יח פסוק יח

יח וְאַבְרָהָם הָיוּ יְהִיָּה לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְעַצוֹם וּנְבָרְכוּ-בּו כָּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ:

פרשת וירא ספר בראשית פרק כב פסוק יח

יח וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בְּזֶרְעֵךָ כָּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ עֲקֵב אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקָלִי:

פרשת תולדת ספר בראשית פרק כו פסוק ד

ד וְהִרְבִּיתִי אֶת-זֶרְעֵךָ כְּכּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְנִתְמַי לְזֶרְעֵךָ אֶת כָּל-הָאֲרָצוֹת הָאֵל וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בְּזֶרְעֵךָ כָּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ:

פרשת ויצא ספר בראשית פרק כח פסוק יד

יד וְהָיָה זֶרְעֵךָ כְּעֵפֶר הָאָרֶץ וּפְרָצְתָּ יָמָה וְקִדְמָה וְצַפְנָה וְנִגְבָּה וּנְבָרְכוּ בָהּ כָּל-מְשֻׁפָּחַת הָאֲדָמָה וּבְזֶרְעֵךָ:

In *Bereshit / Genesis 12:3* it states that “in you all the families (מְשֻׁפָּחַת) of the earth shall be blessed,” whereas in *Bereshit / Genesis 18:18* it says “and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed.” (וּנְבָרְכוּ-) (בו כל גוויי הארץ). The Targum Onkelos says “all the peoples of the earth will be blessed” (וּיְתַבְּרְכוּן בְּדִילֵיהָ) (כל עממי ארעא). *Bereshit 22:18* says “and in your descendants (וְעַצוֹם) all the nations of the earth will be blessed.” *Bereshit 26:4* states “by your seed (בְּזֶרְעֵךָ) all the nations of the earth shall be blessed and *Bereshit 28:14* states that “in you (בָּהּ) shall all the families (מְשֻׁפָּחַת) of the earth be blessed, even in your seed (וּבְזֶרְעֵךָ).” What is the significance of the change in wording from מְשֻׁפָּחַת (families), to גוויי (nations) in Hebrew, and עממי (people) in Aramaic? The covenantal promise to Avraham and the reaffirmation of the covenant reveals to us conclusively that all of the people of the earth, all the nations, all families, whether Jewish or non-Jewish are included in this promise that God is going to bless the peoples of this earth in and through Avraham and his seed. Examining these verses in *Bereshit / Genesis 15:17-18, 18:18, 22:18, and 28:14* more closely, it is interesting that the Hebrew verb patterns found within these covenant blessings reveal to us how God is going to bless all the nations of the earth. Looking at the word for blessing (ברך) it is interesting to observe that we find the word ברך alternating between the Niphal (נפעל) and Hiphil (הפעיל) verb patterns. The Niphal verb is a simple passive or reflexive verbal stem used to express

simple action with either a passive or reflexive voice. In other words, whatever a verb means in the Qal stem, it becomes passive or reflexive in the Niphal stem. The Hiphil stem is causative/active voice used to express causative action in an active voice. For example, מלך means “he was king” or “he reigned” in the Qal stem whereas the Hiphil form is written המליך and means “he caused to reign” or “he made someone king.” In the Hebrew text we find that blessing (ברך) is written in the Niphal stem in *Bereshit / Genesis 12:3* וַיְבָרֶכְנוּ, and *Bereshit 18:18* וַיְבָרְכֵנוּ, and changes to the Hiphil stem in *Bereshit 22:18* וַיְהַבְרֶכְנוּ, and *Bereshit 26:4* וַיְהַבְרֶכְנוּ, and switches back to the Niphal stem in *Bereshit 28:14* וַיְבָרֶכְנוּ. In these verses, the JPS translation takes the Niphal to conform to the Hiphil while the KJV and NASB make the Hiphil conform to the Niphal and translate all the five passages as passive. The NIV takes the Niphal to be passive and the Hiphil to be reflexive translating the phrase as passive 3 times and reflexive 2 times.” The Targum Onkelos takes the Niphal in *Bereshit 12:3* as passive as does the LXX, Latin Vulgate, and Samaritan Pentateuch. The importance on understanding these differences in the verbal forms is related to interpretation of these scriptures in light of the kind of blessing God is going to give unto the nations. Studying the different verbal forms of ברך (blessing) in these verses, we find a greater number of Niphal occurrences (three) than the Hiphil (two) indicating that God will bless the nations (Niphal) or cause the nations to be blessed (Hiphil) in this seed of Avraham. So these verses of the covenantal blessing are to be interpreted as the nations of the earth will “be blessed” and not to mean that the nations would “bless themselves” or “evoke a blessing in Avraham’s name.” The understanding these passages is dependent upon the nature of the covenant that God is making with Avraham and his children. In the seed of Avraham the Lord would bring His Messiah and in His Messiah God would cause all the nations of the earth to be blessed. These verses indicate that it is through this seed of Abraham that the blessing will pass to all the nations of the earth. It is in the way of servant blessing the Lord God will ברוך (baruch) “bless” all the nations by the giving His son the Messiah. The meaning of blessing in the word ברוך (baruch) “to bless” is that of love and that of a servant heart. Therefore, when we are being a blessing to the Lord we are to serve Him with all of heart, mind, and soul (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:4-12*).

The scripture verses we are looking at this week say אֲשֶׁר־יֵאֱמָר לֹא הָלַךְ בְּעֵצַת רְשָׁעִים “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked” in *Tehillim / Psalms 1:1* utilizes the Hebrew word אֲשֶׁר־יֵאֱמָר. The word אֲשֶׁר־יֵאֱמָר is derived from the root word אָשַׁר meaning “happy one” according to BDB lexicon. Performing a word search on the word אֲשֶׁר־יֵאֱמָר this word occurs 40 times in the Tanach, 2 times in *1 Kings*, 2 times in *Isaiah*, 28 times in *Psalms*, 4 times in *Proverbs*, 2 times in *Job*, once in *Daniel*, and once in *2 Chronicles*. It is interesting to note that the word אֲשֶׁר־יֵאֱמָר is not used in the text of the Torah and is never used of God. This word appears to be the application of blessing in ones life, living for the Lord and not in the counsel of the wicked or in the path of sinners, or in the seat of scoffers such a man is blessed by not doing these things. The Aramaic translation (Targum Pseudo Jonathan) says טוביה טובויה דגבר “good is the man,” it is interesting that the word טוב is used for translation meaning “good,” hence the translation “good is the man.” Also note that this word is repeated for emphasis and the second word is written in the plural construct form to indicate that this man is good in the sense of calling someone blessed, that goodness has been given unto him. Sokoloff’s dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic states that the word טוב is a reference to the “best thing, goodness,” “the choice product” (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:11*), it is also used as a reference to “separation of the choice part from it” referring to the best parts of the Korban (sacrifice) that was given to God upon the altar (*Bamidbar / Numbers 18:30, Vayikra / Leviticus 2:2, 16, 6:8*), the “best dew and rain” (*Bereshit / Genesis 49:25*), “the best wheat and wine” (*Bamidbar / Numbers 18:12, Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:11, 32:14, 33:13*), and “the best produce of the land” (*Bereshit / Genesis 27:28, 43:11, 45:18*). The blessing of goodness as it is used according to the Aramaic Scriptures, such a man who

4 has the goodness of God is happy. For example, “Happy am I for my portion in this world, happy is

the villager whose king is his wedding attendant, happy is he who has gold in his house or in his caravan” (Bavli Yoma 41d). The Greek translation (LXX) uses the word μακάριος meaning “blessed, happy” is in agreement with the Aramaic translation of the Hebrew text.

Studying the blessedness of the man (אֲשֶׁר-יִהְיֶה צְדָקָתוֹ) that walks in righteousness from *Tehillim / Psalms 1*, it is interesting that Yeshua’s words in *Mathew 5:1-12*, while teaching on the mount of olives, Yeshua used the same word אֲשֶׁר meaning “happy one” while referring to those who are poor in spirit, who mourn, who hunger and thirst for righteousness, who are merciful and pure in heart, who are peacemakers, and who are persecuted for his sake. What is this blessedness (אֲשֶׁר) that Yeshua is referring too? While speaking these words, was he thinking on *Tehillim / Psalms 1*? Bellow is a summary of the sermon on the mount from *Matthew 5:1-11*.

Summary of Matthew 5

1. The Blessedness / Goodness (Beatitudes, *Matthew 5:1-11*)

a. **μακάριοι** οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. 5:3 *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (NASB)*

אשרי עניי רוח כי להם מלכות השמים:

b. **μακάριοι** οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται. 5:4 *Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (NASB)*

אשרי האבלים כי הם ינחמו:

c. **μακάριοι** οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν. 5:5 *Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. (NASB)*

אשרי הענווים כי המה יירשו הארץ:

d. **μακάριοι** οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται. 5:6 *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. (NASB)*

אשרי הרעבים והצמאים לצדקה כי הם ישבעו:

e. **μακάριοι** οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται. 5:7 *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. (NASB)*

אשרי הרחמנים כי הם ירחמו:

f. **μακάριοι** οἱ καθарοὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται. 5:8 *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (NASB)*

אשרי ברי לבב כי הם יחזו את האלהים:

g. **μακάριοι** οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται. 5:9 *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (NASB)*

אשרי רדפי שלום כי בני אלהים יקראו:

h. **μακάριοι** οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. 5:10 *Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (NASB)*

i. **μακάριοί** ἐστε ὅταν ὀνειδίσωσιν ὑμᾶς καὶ διώξωσιν καὶ εἴπωσιν πᾶν πονηρὸν καθ' ὑμῶν [ψευδόμενοι] ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ: 5:11 *Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. (NASB)*

אשריכם אם יחרפו וירדפו אתכם וידברו בשקר עליכם כל רע בעבורי:

This section of Scripture from *Matthew 5:1-12* become known as the “beatitudes” (*blessing; bliss, absolute happiness*) as a result of the repeated use of the word “*blessed*” (μακάριος, makarios), which reflects the Hebrew word אֲשֶׁרֵי (ashrei). This way of speaking is found throughout *Tehillim / Psalms* and *Mishley / Proverbs* (see *Tehillim / Psalms 1:1, 2:12, 32:1-2, 33:12, 34:8, 40:4, 41:1, 65:4, 84:4-5, 12, 89:15, 94:12, 106:3, 112:1, 119:1-2, 127:5, 128:1, 137:8-9, 144:15, 146:5, Mishley / Proverbs 3:13, 8:34, and 28:14*). Studying *Matthew 1-4* we learn that Matthew has laid out his Gospel beginning with the genealogy of Yeshua and then followed by the testimony given by John the baptizer where John says that Yeshua is the one who comes that was spoken of by Moshe, the promised Messiah who would “*baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.*” Yeshua is presented in Matthew’s Gospel in chapters 1-4 as the Son of God and as the One in whom the Father is pleased. Following having informed the reader about who Yeshua is, Matthew then writes the sermon on the mount. It is only after we are aware of who Yeshua is that we are able to listen to and hear his words as he spoke to the people while sitting on the mount. Note that the frequency of the word אֲשֶׁרֵי (ashrei) used in the Scriptures is very high in *Tehillim / Psalms* and *Mishley / Proverbs*. The Psalms and Proverbs contain many life application scriptures. This blessedness that Yeshua is speaking of, is it related to life application? If we consider that Yeshua is thinking on the Psalms, these nine sayings Yeshua gives us (beatitudes) might be laid out in a chiastic structure similar to the way many of the Psalms are laid out. If Yeshua was laying out these sayings in a chiastic arrangement then the major emphasis is placed upon “*showing mercy,*” being at the center of the structure along with the following categories,

Chiasm

chiasmus (from the , chiázō, "to shape like the letter X") is the figure of speech in which two or more clauses are related to each other through a reversal of structures in order to make a larger point; that is, the clauses display inverted parallelism. Chiasmus was particularly popular both in Greek and in Latin literature, where it was used to articulate balance or order within a text. As a popular example, many long and complex chiasmi have been found in Shakespeare and the Greek and Hebrew texts of the Bible.

Catagories:

1. The Poor in spirit = those persecuted as disciples of Yeshua
2. Those who mourn = persecuted for righteousness
3. Those who are gentle = peacemakers
4. Those who hunger & thirst after righteousness = pure in heart

The Chiastic Structure of the Beatitudes

Those poor in spirit —> kingdom of heaven
 Those who mourn —> comforted
 Those who are gentle —> inherit the earth
 Those who hunger & thirst after righteousness —> satisfied
 Those who show mercy —> shown mercy
 Those pure in heart —> see God
 Those who are peacemakers —> called sons of God
 Those persecuted for the sake of righteousness —> kingdom of heaven
 Those persecuted as disciples of Yeshua —> great reward in heaven

Looking at the Greek text of the Gospel of Matthew, the use of μακάριοι, makarios “blessed” draws our attention since this is the same word that is used in the LXX from *Tehillim / Psalms 1*. As mentioned earlier there are two words that are used throughout the Tanach for blessing ברוך (baruch) and אֲשֶׁרִי (ashrei). Searching through the Tanach, wherever אֲשֶׁרִי (ashrei) is written it is always translated with the Greek μακάριοι (makarios). On the other hand ברוך (baruch) is translated with the Greek words ευφλογητος (eulogetos) or εulogeω (eulogeo). By the use of the word μακάριοι by Matthew indicates that Yeshua was referring to אֲשֶׁרִי “blessed” and not ברוך “to be blessed.” Mentioned earlier, the word אֲשֶׁרִי (ashrei) is never used of God and is always used of the blessing that comes upon a person who lives righteously. Therefore the major component of this “blessing” that is found in our text is that it encompasses the divine action toward one who obeyed God and acted in accordance with His prescribed commandments.

The majority of the English translations of the bible translate this as “blessed,” however some translate as “happy” such as Young’s literal translation. In addition to this, the Aramaic translation uses the word טוביה טוביה “happy” or “good” and studying the various uses of this word in the Targum Onkelos and Pseudo-Jonathan, we find that the טוביה “happiness” of the man is much more than simply being happy, the Beatitudes themselves show that one may be “blessed” even in the state of mourning. Therefore, this “blessing” encompasses the idea of a heart and conscience at peace before the Lord God Almighty. It captures the sense that one exists under the protection of God regardless of our circumstances.

Looking at the chiastic structure, the poor in spirit may be related to those who are persecuted as disciples of Yeshua, their reward is great in heaven and their names are written in heaven. Those who have complete reliance upon God will obtain the kingdom of heaven. Those who are poor in spirit realize that they do not achieve entrance into heaven by their own strength or by material wealth and not even because of their lack of wealth. The One who reigns in their hearts will give them peace and right standing before the Lord God Almighty and await a future expectation of the Messiah upon the clouds. Here Yeshua is teaching us about our absolute reliance upon the Lord God Almighty for entrance into His kingdom, happy and blessed are those who completely place their trust in the Lord. Yeshua is telling us that the kingdom of heaven is a gift from God to those who admit their own spiritual poverty and believe upon Yeshua for their salvation.

The next indentation in the chiastic structure is those who mourn. Based upon the layout of the structure, those who mourn do so because they are persecuted for righteousness sake. Now mourning as a result of persecution draws a parallel with *Isaiah 61:1-3* where comforting is found for those who mourn. In *Isaiah 61*, Israel is being oppressed by her enemies and the same is true for us who believe in Yeshua the Messiah and walk in the righteousness of our Lord and Savior. We will be persecuted even unto death. What Yeshua is trying to say is not an exhortation to mourn in order to be blessed. The mourning comes as a result of evil people persecuting God’s people.

ספר ישעיה פרק סא

Book of Isaiah Chapter 61

א רוח אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה עָלַי יַעַן מָשַׁח יְהוָה אֹתִי לְבַשֵּׁר
 עֲנָוִים שְׁלַחֲנִי לְחַבֵּשׁ לְנִשְׁבְּרֵי-לֵב לְקַרְא לְשׁוֹבוֹיִם
 דְּרוֹר וְלְאֲסוּרִים פְּקֻחַ-קוֹחַ: ב לְקַרְא שְׁנַת-רְצוֹן
 לַיהוָה וַיּוֹם נָקָם לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ לְנַחֵם כָּל-אֲבֵלִים: ג
 לְשׁוֹם | לְאֲבֵלֵי צִיּוֹן לְתַת לָהֶם פָּאֵר תַּחַת אֶפְרַיִם
 שֶׁמֶן שְׂשׂוֹן תַּחַת אֵבֶל מִעֵטָה תִּהְיֶה תַּחַת רוּחַ כְּהָה
 יִקְרָא לָהֶם אֵילֵי הַצְּדָק מִטַּע יְהוָה לְהַתְּפַאֵר:

61:1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners;
 61:2 To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,
 61:3 To grant those who mourn in Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified. (NASB)

The blessing will ultimately come when the Lord will validate the way of walking in righteousness by punishing the wicked as it says in *Tehillim / Psalms 1* the path of the wicked is destruction. The blessing that is promised to those who mourn will be that they will be “comforted.” It is in and through God’s Messiah that comfort will come. In fact, Yeshua said that he will send the “comforter” to us, God’s Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts. The Word of God that has also been given as an encouragement to all of those who mourn because of this fallen world, the pain that we go through in life, and because of the persecution that comes our way because of our faith in the Lord, the word of God helps us to continue to trust and obey the Lord God. We who place our trust in God, he will comfort us.

Yeshua goes on to say those who are gentle will inherit the earth, the chiasm structure shows a parallel to those who are peacemakers who will be called the sons of God. The Greek word used for “gentle” (πραεῖς) has the meaning to be “humble, meek, gentle, and submissive.” These qualities of gentleness show to be a response of faith and maturity, faith that God controls the events of life. A peacemaker provides us with further meaning on what it means to be gentle. A peacemaker does not have within his heart pride to overpower someone but by trusting in God one seeks to make peace with all men.

The next chiasm is those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, they will be satisfied, and the parallel is those who are pure in heart will see God. In these scriptures, one’s soul is that which is thirsting and hungering for righteousness. This does not eliminate the possibility of physical hunger and thirst, but Yeshua is focusing our attention upon one’s desire for righteousness, this desire should fill up one’s entire life. Just as we seek to find food and drink for our bodies in this world, we also are to seek after righteousness to give food and drink for our souls. This is like the tree that is planted near streams of waters in *Tehillim / Psalms 1:3* that sates
 ג וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ שָׁתוּל עַל-פְּלִגֵּי מַיִם אֲשֶׁר פִּרְיוֹ | יִתֵּן בְּעֵתוֹ וְעֵלְהוּ לֹא יִבּוֹל וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-
 1:3 יַעֲשֶׂה יַצְלִיחַ He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; (NASB) If we follow the Lord God and His righteous ways all of our lives we will be planted firmly in the ground and will not be moved. The Scripture says we are to set our hearts upon the word of God and to meditate upon His ways day and night. The Psalmist writes “My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God” (*Tehillim / Psalms 42:2*, ג צַמְאַה נַפְשִׁי |) indicating that this is something that comes from within. This righteousness is something that is obtained, the emphasis in *Tehillim / Psalms 1* and here in the Beatitudes, is not that those who hunger or thirst for righteousness will be given righteousness but that righteousness is the character of those who are true followers after God. Yeshua states that having a hunger and a thirst for righteousness, one is aware of his or her need for more of God’s righteousness. This righteousness must continually be sought after whereas the counsel of the wicked, the path of the sinner, and the seat of scoffers must be continually fled from. Faith in God and a longing for His righteousness will lead to a love for His Torah. Upon having faith in Yeshua, the Spirit of God moves within us and leads us to strive

love and follow His Words and take to heart the words of our Master Yeshua the Messiah, truly blessed and happy are those who love the Lord and seek to be pleasing in His eyes.

Heavenly Father,

As we study Your Word, we see the importance of seeking You according to Your Righteous ways. Yeshua spoke of the blessedness of being a child of God that whether we mourn or are persecuted we are happy in You because of Your love for us. We realize that first and foremost, You in the fullness of Your mercy and grace have provided for us atonement according to Your Word in Yeshua the Messiah. The atonement that You have provided is an absolute necessity for us to receive forgiveness. Help us to accept, embrace, and believe with all our hearts, our minds, and our strength the gift You have provided in Yeshua. Help us to effectively proclaim the life, death, and glorious bodily resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah. Help us to draw near to You in righteousness and in truth. We believe that Yeshua is the way, the truth, and the life. Please forgive us of my sins, have mercy upon us Lord. Cleanse us from all sin Lord in Yeshua's name. We want to grow and to be filled with all of You Lord. Help us to live according to Your will as it is laid out according to the Scriptures. Sanctify us in Your Holy Word Lord and in Your Son Yeshua. Help me to sanctify you Lord in our hearts, in our lives, and in all that we do. Thank You Lord for everything You have done for us. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the praise forever and ever.

In Yeshua's (Jesus') Name I pray! Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever