

Introduction

It is a lamentable fact that the words of Jesus have not been handed down to us in the language with which they were originally given. Very few would suggest that the Greek records of his words contained in the canonical gospels are without editing by the evangelists who wrote them down. Yet, it is also true that in many cases care was taken to preserve the original Semitic words of Jesus in a slavishly literal way producing a Greek translation which, at times, reflects very poor Greek but beautifully preserves a Semitism. It seems self-apparent, therefore, that a more accurate understanding of the words of Jesus can be gained by reconstructing them into Hebrew and Aramaic.

One of the basic tenets of this thesis is that just such a situation exists with the Beatitudes in Matthew 5.3-10. Each beatitude will be reconstructed in both Hebrew and Aramaic with a view not only to assess the idioms contained in them but to see how they contribute to the structure of the Beatitudes as a whole.

The reason for offering reconstructions into both Hebrew and Aramaic is the fact that both remain a real possibility for the original words of Jesus. For the most part, idioms that exist in Hebrew also exist in Aramaic and vice versa. Only occasionally does it happen that a phrase exists which could not just as easily be rendered in either language.

It is the Greek text of Matthew 5.3-10 which is canonical. The words and idioms of this text must be what guides our faith and practice, not a supposed Hebrew or Aramaic original. But, one must read these Greek words with an understanding of the Jewish idioms and allusions that are represented. The goal is to take this Jewish understanding of the Greek text and translate it into English “reproducing the closest natural equivalent, first in meaning and secondly in style” (Nida 1959:107). Taking a peek, as it were, under the Greek blanket to see the Hebrew/Aramaic words of Jesus is essential to defining more accurately the significance of the Beatitudes.

In so far as a Hebrew or Aramaic word or idiom can be identified as underlying the Greek text it will be compared with its usage in the Old Testament, Dead Sea Scrolls, Targums, Rabbinic literature, and Syriac texts. The wording, grammar, and syntax of the Beatitudes will be investigated according to the latest knowledge of languages current in first-century Palestine. The rationalization is this: reconstructing the Beatitudes in specifically Jewish Hebrew and Aramaic idioms should lead to a greater understanding of what each beatitude means. Each chapter will deal not only with reconstructing wording which would have given rise to the Greek text but how this affects the meaning of each beatitude.

This process is not cut and dried and is extremely open to abuse. Care must be taken before making assumptions that a Hebrew or Aramaic word used in the Dead Sea Scrolls, for example, would mean exactly the same thing when issued from the mouth of Jesus. “A term may receive a new twist of meaning almost overnight, or have one particular nuance which is singular to a particular geographical area, or even to a particular sub-language within that geographical area” (Hurst 1986:72). Any given word can display regional differences in meaning. For instance, the Talmud (*Ned* 66b) tells of a Babylonian Jew who had communication problems with his Jerusalemite wife, with comical consequences. The man told his wife to take some lamps and break them on the head (lintel) of *the door* [*baba*]. She misunderstands and breaks them, instead, on the renowned Rabbi Babba ben Buta’s head! Thus, it must be accepted that the local dialects of any given language will never overlap perfectly.

This is not the extent of the problem. Supposing that a passage, such as the Beatitudes were preserved in an Aramaic speaking Jewish/Christian church and were written down, the words in literary form would not necessarily match the spoken form. Modern, Western exegetes generally don’t have a frame of reference for a situation where the way one writes is different than how one speaks even if it were the same language. A case can be made both for a scenario where Aramaic speech was written in Hebrew and vice versa. Lapidé (1974:169) notes that the textual discoveries at Murabba’at, Naḥal Heber, and on Maṣada, have shown that in the centuries immediately before and after Jesus

Hebrew was the primary language for recording religious topics. In fact, Safrai (1976:1019) notes that certain *midrash* statements are preserved in earlier collections in Aramaic but in Hebrew in other, later collections, making it unclear which is the original language.

Segal (1927:4-5) mentions the interplay of languages in Rabbinic texts, noting how a text in Aramaic suddenly switches to Hebrew when a parable is recounted, returning to Aramaic afterwards. Young (1986:41) suggests that this is to give the story “color” suggesting that “Aramaic speaking characters are meant to be depicted as simple people (sometimes animals) who are ignorant and do not know Hebrew.” Examples of this occurring in the Babylonian Talmud include *Baba Kama* 60b, *Taanit* 5b, and *Sotah* 40a.

To be more scientific in the approach to reconstructing the Beatitudes into Hebrew and Aramaic a set of criteria is necessary. Casey, in *Aramaic Sources of Mark's Gospel*, established the point that a standardized procedure for finding the Aramaic substrata of such New Testament Greek texts is necessary (Casey 1998:107). Casey (2002:56) understands that the Dead Sea Scrolls offer the best source for the Aramaic vocabulary of Palestine in the first century. The same could be said for Hebrew as well (though the Hebrew of the DSS differs from both Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew at numerous points). Very few of those who tried to reconstruct the Beatitudes into Hebrew or Aramaic in the past had access to the Dead Sea Scrolls. Thus, many were often guilty of the kinds of translation technique Casey opposes.

Obviously, other Jewish and Christian literature need to be consulted and searched for parallel idioms and phrasing but, in instances where competing possibilities exist for a particular reconstruction the weight will be tilted in favour of evidence from Qumran. For the purposes of this investigation the reconstruction of each line of the Beatitudes will be assessed according to a list of criteria which have been adapted from those of Casey.

The chapters in the second half of this thesis dealing with each individual beatitude will put Casey's reasonable admonition into practice. A modified version of his list of criteria

(Casey 2002:60-63) will be employed and the research done on each beatitude will need to answer them:

1. To what degree does the phrasing of this beatitude show signs of having been translated literally from either Hebrew or Aramaic?
2. Are these words attested in the Dead Sea Scrolls? If not, what other evidence is there that will support the reconstruction?
3. Is the reconstruction idiomatic?
4. Interpret the reconstruction from a first-century Jewish perspective.
5. Seek to understand how the ancient translator arrived at his Greek from the reconstructed Hebrew or Aramaic.
6. Establish whether there is evidence of intentional editing.
7. What is the assessment of the research done.

The old adage used in textual criticism that *evidence must be weighed, not counted* is perfectly appropriate when applied to utilizing the reconstructions of earlier researchers.

Part One: The Greek Text of the Beatitudes

Chapter One

Background

The word *beatitude* comes to us from the Latin word *beatus* which means *happy* or to be *blissful* (Viviano 1992:53-54). It is the Latin translation of the Greek word μακάριος. It is this word which stands at the beginning of each verse in Matthew 5.3-11. The translation *blessed* is somewhat inaccurately applied to μακάριος. It is a Greek word meant to represent the Hebrew word **yrEv.a;**. Although μακάριος can mean *blessed*, the word **yrEv.a;** does not. *Blessed* would more properly be applied to the word %WrB'. Therefore μακάριος is more accurately rendered by such English phrases as *O, the happiness of* (Arndt & Gingrich 1957:487) or *You happy man* (Viviano 1992:53). On the other hand, the fact that the happiness in question is the result of God's activity on someone's behalf justifies the continued use of *blessed* in modern, English translations of the Beatitudes.

The use of beatitudes as a literary unit had undergone a number of developments before the first century. By the time of Sirach (c 180 BC) beatitudes were already being brought together in artistically designed groups (e g, 25.7-10) which were then used as a sort of program for living (Viviano 1992:54). Beatitudes then became, first of all, statements about those to whom God has given his favour. They also encapsulated divine judgements and were thus by their nature eschatological. The jump from being wisdom proclamations to eschatological promises for the end times took place before the Dead Sea Scrolls were written (Viviano 1992:54).

Eschatological beatitudes in Jewish literature always have reference to the future – specifically, *the days of the Messiah* or *the world to come* (Strack & Billerbeck 1926:189-215). The first and last beatitudes of Matthew, which both have an identical αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, proclaim the kingdom of heaven as a present experience.

Though the promises in the beatitudes in between are framed in the future tense the implication is that now that the kingdom of heaven has been inaugurated these are the things which will happen. Jesus pronounces in the present what should be future verdicts in the after-life (Betz 1995:96). This is not to say that they have no reference to future blessing. Jesus, however, seems to have made the distinction vague.

The use of beatitudes to express blessing for both this age as well as the next seems to have been common. This can be seen in the rabbinic understanding of a beatitude found in Psalm 128.2: *When you eat the labour of your hands, happy are you and good shall come to you.*¹ The tannaitic rabbi, Ben Zoma, is quoted in Aboth 4.1 commenting on this, saying: *Happy are you in this world and good shall come to you in the world to come.*² This same interpretation takes place in Targum Jonathan when it translates Psalm 128.2 as: *When your hand rises you will eat your blessing in this world and good shall come to you in the world to come.*³

The Beatitudes are essential to the structure of the Sermon on the Mount. They are no mere decoration. Neither are they simply an introduction to the rest of the sermon. Betz has correctly stated that “in their present context, the Beatitudes are doctrinal statements; they are intended to be learned by heart and remembered” (1995:95). The Sermon on the Mount is central to the gospel of Matthew’s presentation of Jesus as the new Moses (or more properly, the fulfillment of the prophecy of Dt 18.15 that God will raise up a prophet like Moses; cf, Mt 17.5c). The Beatitudes of Matthew are not promises but are revelations of truth, which may or may not have been known by the hearers, and which demand a decision from the hearers to accept a call to a higher conduct (Betz 1995:96-97).

The fact that Matthew has positioned the Beatitudes at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount shows that they were understood to be the foundation principles of the kingdom of heaven. As such, the next section of the Sermon on the Mount gives

¹ %l' bAjw> ^yr<v.a; lkeaOt yKi ^yP,K; [;ygly>

² aB'h; ~l'A[l' %l' bAjw> hZ<h; ~l'A[B' ^yr<v.a;

³ ytea'D> am'l.[;l. %l' bj'w> !ydEh' am'l.[;B. %b'Wj IWkyTe ~Wra] %d?ya; tW[l'e

practical application to these principles. The promises proclaimed and demonstrated before the people give compelling motivation to accept the radical requirements of ethical behaviour demanded by the Beatitudes.

The likelihood that the Beatitudes (at least most of them) can be traced back to Jesus is very great. The quest before us, then, is to find out just what Jesus actually said and to ascertain what difference that will make to our understanding of the Beatitudes. The use of passives in the Beatitudes reflects circumlocution for divine activity. For instance, when those who mourn are comforted it is to be understood that it is God who will do the comforting. The use of circumlocution is a characteristic of the *ippsima vox* of Jesus (Jeremias 1971:14). In order to get to the beginning we must first start with the end. Unlike the Lord's Prayer which was quite literally translated into Greek and can thus be easily reconstructed in Hebrew and Aramaic the Beatitudes show signs of going through several stages of redaction. Like an archaeologist uncovering a site, layer by layer, let us examine the Beatitudes at each layer of their literary history. Many scholars have already done the main detective work over the years. This thesis represents a combination of their efforts plus some original research. It seems quite perverse that the contributions of many of the authors cited in this thesis have been noted by so many who have come after them yet without the latter making the obvious conclusions in order to establish the history of the text before us. Hopefully, this thesis will make a necessary contribution to the study of the Beatitudes through, not only acknowledging the efforts of others, but building on them and taking their theories forward towards a greater understanding of the Beatitudes.

Chapter Two

The last stage: The Beatitudes According to the Majority of Greek Manuscripts

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
3. Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
5. Blessed are the merciful,
for they will receive mercy.
6. Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.
8. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

I.2.1. Poetic Structure

Immediately apparent is how neatly this group of verses begins and ends with beatitudes that mention the kingdom of heaven. These eight verses can also be divided into two groups of four beatitudes. Each group may be considered a poetic component called a strophe. Each strophe ends with a beatitude (numbers 4 and 8) containing the word *righteousness*. This constitutes a literary design that deserves investigation (Betz 1995: 105). It is quite possible that the writer of Matthew found this group of eight beatitudes in his source and incorporated them into his Gospel.

I.2.2 Word Count

Di Lella has given additional confirmation of a purposeful, poetic structure in the Beatitudes (Plackal 1988:127). He noticed that a numerical pattern is present in the Greek text of these verses. Each strophe contains a beatitude with six words, one with eight words, one with ten words and one with twelve words.

<i>Words</i>	<i>Text</i>
12	μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.
6	μακάριοι οἱ πειθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.
8	μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.
10	μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.
6	μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.
10	μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.
8	μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.
12	μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Puech (1991:96) affirms the importance of this contribution remarking that “*la régularité de ces chiffres, leur répartition et leur symétrie ou correspondance dans chaque strophe ne peuvent être accidentelles.*” All together the eight beatitudes contain seventy-two words. Anyone familiar with biblical numbers will recognize that this must be no coincidence (cf, Luke 10.1, 17). Manipulation of the wording to produce a certain number of words in each beatitude can be demonstrated from the fact that in verse six *righteousness* is written τὴν δικαιοσύνην (with the definite article) and in verse ten it is written δικαιοσύνης (without the definite article). In addition, though the third beatitude seems to be a virtual quotation of the Septuagint version of Psalm 37.11,⁴ a definite article has been added⁵ so as not to upset the word count (Puech 1991:96).

⁴ οἱ δὲ πραεῖς κληρονομήσουσιν γῆν

⁵ thus: τὴν γῆν

I.2.3 Chiastic Pattern

McEleney (1981:12) suggests that deliberate editing occurred at this stage to achieve a chiasmic pattern in the ὅτι clauses of the Beatitudes.

Matthew 5.3.	Inclusory formula:	ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.
4.	Divine passive:	ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.
5.	Future with object:	ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.
6.	Divine passive:	ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.
7.	Divine passive:	ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.
8.	Future with object:	ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.
9.	Divine passive:	ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.
10.	Inclusory formula:	ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

The Beatitudes, in the order in which we find them in most modern versions of the New Testament, represent the last stage of a number of revisions by several editors. Where obvious purposeful editing occurs the question which immediately presents itself is, what was the reading before it was edited?

Chapter Three

The Penultimate stage: Original Greek Matthew

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
3. Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
2. Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
5. Blessed are the merciful,
for they will receive mercy.
6. Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.
8. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

I.3.1 Switching the Order of the Second and Third Beatitudes

The version immediately preceding the version found in critical Greek texts had one major difference. Puech (1991:96) notes that word-count research confirms that the third beatitude would originally have been placed next to the first for reasons of symmetry. Tischendorf's edition of the Greek New Testament puts them in just that order. The critical apparatus of the third edition of the Greek New Testament published by the United Bible Societies gives an impressive array of witnesses that attest to the present order (the most important being **a**, B, C, W, Syr^{s, p, h, cp}). However, ancient witnesses to the switching of verses four and five are not few and carry significant weight. These are: D, 33, Syr^c, several versions of the Diatessaron, most of the Old Latin manuscripts, and

the majority of the church fathers (including all of the fathers from the East).

It is this stage which should be considered as the original version in the Gospel of Matthew. Hence, the person responsible for this version will be termed *OMatthew* (to distinguish the writer/editor from the name of the Gospel) in this thesis. The person responsible for the final redaction found in most modern bibles will be termed *RMatthew*.

I.3.2 Pi-Alliteration

Michaelis (1968:148) emphasized the fact that each of the subjects of the first strophe of four beatitudes begins with the letter π. This pi-alliteration in the first strophe may go back to the common source of both Matthew and Luke. Luke incorporates three of these four beatitudes in his own list, and though he has brought changes to their wording which remove alliteration as a unifying feature, he gives evidence which indicates that the original wording of the common beatitudes contained pi-alliteration.

Matthew 5

3 μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι
Blessed are the poor in spirit

ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν
οὐρανῶν
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven

5 μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς,
Blessed are the meek
ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.
for they will inherit the earth

4 μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες
Blessed are those who mourn,
ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται
for they will be comforted.

Luke 6

20 μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ
Blessed are the poor

ὅτι ὑμετέρα ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία
τοῦ θεοῦ
for yours is the kingdom of God.

21b μακάριοι οἱ κλαίοντες νῦν
Blessed are you how weep now,
ὅτι γελάσετε
for you will laugh.

6 μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν
δικαιοσύνην

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for
righteousness,*

ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται
for they will be satisfied.

21a μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες νῦν

Blessed are you who hunger now,

ὅτι χορτασθήσεθε
for you will be satisfied

The first of these common beatitudes is almost exactly the same. The words αὐτῶν ... τῶν οὐρανῶν are, for all practical purposes, synonymous with ὑμετέρα ... τοῦ θεοῦ. The only real difference of substance is the addition in Matthew of τῷ πνεύματι.

In the second common beatitude Luke has κλαίοντες instead of the πειθοῦντες of Matthew. Luke, however shows knowledge of πειθοῦντες being connected to this beatitude because of the presence in the corresponding woe (vs 25) of πειθήσετε (used in combination with κλαύσετε).

All together, *OMatthew* uses six words which begin with the letter π: πτωχοί, πνεύματι, πειθοῦντες, παρακληθήσονται, πράξεις, and πεινῶντες. To this list διψῶντες could be appended also because of the dominant pi-type sound it contains. This would give a total of seven words. Betz criticized this contribution saying that Michaelis “left unclear whether such alliteration is intentional, and what its purpose may be” (1995:109). This is a trifle unfair, for Michaelis does suggest a purpose. She conjectured that the pi-alliteration is present as an attempt to mirror a poetic assonance contained in the original Semitic source (Plackal 1988:25). She gave theoretical reconstructions of a few of the Beatitudes as well as other sayings of Jesus to demonstrate such assonance would have been typical of his way of speaking.

Puech (1991:98) notes, in addition, that the double pi-alliteration of the first stich [πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι] is paralleled by a double delta-alliteration in the last stich [δεδιωγμένοι ἔνεκεν δικαιοσύνης] as well as a pi-alliteration mixed with a double delta-alliteration in the last stich of the first strophe [πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην].

I.3.3 Parallelism

An extremely common feature of ancient Jewish poetry is parallelism (Burney 1925:15). Those who comment on the poetic parallelism present in the Beatitudes consistently mention that the first and the third should be paired together. The switch in position of the third beatitude (*blessed are the meek*) with the second (*blessed are those who mourn*) could also be argued for poetic reasons. Putting the first and third beatitudes together allows the first strophe to be much more poetic.

3. μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, <i>blessed are the poor in spirit</i>	ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν <i>for theirs is the kingdom of heaven</i>
5. μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, <i>blessed are the meek</i>	ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν <i>for they shall inherit the earth</i>
4. μακάριοι οἱ πειθοῦντες, <i>blessed are those who mourn</i>	ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται <i>for they shall be comforted</i>
6. μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, <i>blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness sake</i>	ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται <i>for they shall be satisfied</i>

The first pair is not, as Guelich (1976:424) claims, merely redundancy but poetic parallelism of thought. This is made the more clear by the contrast of the first of this pair ending with *heaven* and the other ending with *earth*, which Puech (1991:98) calls “*se répendent logiquement,*” as in Genesis 1.1 or Matthew 6.10.

As an eight-membered group the Beatitudes, at this stage, must have been viewed as four pairs of parallel sayings.

*Blessed are the poor in spirit:
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are the meek:
for they shall inherit the earth.*

Blessed are they that mourn:

*Blessed are those who hunger
and thirst for righteousness:*

for they shall be comforted.

for they shall be filled.

*Blessed are the merciful:
for they shall obtain mercy.*

*Blessed are the pure in heart:
for they shall see God.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers:
for they shall be called the children of God.*

*Blessed are those persecuted for
righteousness' sake:
for theirs is the kingdom of
heaven.*

Putting the third beatitude next to the first also affects the structure regarding the word count of each strophe. It allows the first and last beatitudes, which each has twelve words, to be juxtaposed to a beatitude with eight words. It also allows for each beatitude with six words to then be followed by one with ten words.

Parallelism as a feature had obviously been minimized or entirely forgotten when the final editor took the second and third beatitudes and placed them in their present position. Perhaps the displacement of the third from its former place in parallelism with the first to its present position came about because the words τὴν γῆν rhyme with τὴν δικαιοσύνην. An ancient editor may have thought that putting the third and fourth beatitudes together sounded better. The first and last beatitudes, which both end with the words ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, are juxtaposed to the second and seventh beatitudes which end with the words παρακληθήσονται and κληθήσονται respectively. The words *comforted* and *called* are worlds apart semantically in English. This obscures the forceful impact so noticeable when looking at the Beatitudes in Greek. Certainly, ancient Jewish Christians would have appreciated the poetic harmony and acknowledged a connection, both lexically and theologically. The use of the words παρακληθήσονται and κληθήσονται in the second and penultimate beatitudes is so beautiful that it seems clear this must have been their original position. This leads us to another, deeper layer of tradition.

Chapter Four

Level Three: Seven Beatitudes

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst,
for they will be filled.
5. Blessed are the merciful,
for they will receive mercy.
6. Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.
8. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

I.4.1 Evidence for the Third Beatitude Being an Addition

Dodd, in his form-critical study of the Beatitudes, concluded that there may originally have only been seven beatitudes (Plackal 1988:21). He suggests that the third beatitude may have been an addition based on the fact that, first of all, it is an almost verbatim rendering of the LXX version of Psalm 37.11, and that the manuscript tradition does not consistently place it in the same position (Plackal 1988:21). Guelich (1976:424-426) also felt that the third beatitude was an addition, put in before the final version of Matthew, but after completion of the tradition Matthew received. As mentioned above, the removal of the third beatitude once more allows the first and last beatitudes, to be juxtaposed to beatitudes which end with the words παρακληθήσονται and κληθήσονται respectively, which seems to have been their natural position.

McEleney supplies evidence which makes this theory even more convincing by noting a pattern in the μακάριοι clauses. If the third beatitude is removed and at the same time the

fourth beatitude is read *blessed are those who hunger and thirst* then an alternating pattern of five and three words in the first member of each beatitude emerges (McEleney 1981:12).

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 3 μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι,
ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. | (5 words) |
| 4 μακάριοι οἱ πειθοῦντες,
ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται. | (3 words) |
| 6 μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες,
ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται. | (5 words) |
| 7 μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες,
ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται. | (3 words) |
| 8 μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ,
ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται. | (5 words) |
| 9 μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί,
ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται. | (3 words) |
| 10 μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης,
ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. | (5 words) |

This indicates that a stage in the formation of the Beatitudes in Greek existed where both the third beatitude of the *meek* and the τὴν δικαιοσύνην of the fourth beatitude had not yet been added. At the same time it indicates that the words τῷ πνεύματι of the first beatitude were present at this stage.

McEleney (1981:11) suggests that this list of seven beatitudes was the original because of Matthew's love of the number seven (e.g., seven petitions in the Lord's Prayer in Mt 6.9-13; seven parables in Mt 13.4-53; seven woes in Mt 23.13-36) and that the eighth (*blessed are the meek*) was added by a post-Matthew redactor. More likely, however, is the possibility that these seven beatitudes existed in a Greek source and that *OMatthew* incorporated them into his Gospel and, on his own, added the third beatitude and τὴν δικαιοσύνην.

I.4.2 Rhyme

One of the characteristics of the Beatitudes at this stage is the deliberate use of rhyme as a poetic feature. It should be seen as no coincidence that all the five middle beatitudes have ὅτι clauses which rhyme with each other. It is not just a matter of each ending with a future passive and therefore rhymes on that account because verse eight is an exception. The word ὀψονταί functions as the normal future active indicative of ὀράω. Because it is deponent in its future form it appears like a passive and, conveniently, rhymes with the future passives in verses four, six, seven, and nine. This deliberate structure was later ignored by *OMatthew* who inserted the third beatitude which does not contain this feature.

It must also be noted that the μακάριοι clauses of verses four and six would rhyme with each other if the words τὴν δικαιοσύνην were missing. This also witnesses to the idea that these words were added at a later time. Luke's version of this clause (6.21a) is *blessed are those who hunger now*. It precedes his version of the second beatitude, namely, *blessed are those who weep now for you will laugh*. The addition of the word *now* [νῦν] in each of these beatitudes is not necessary to create a rhyme as both *those who hunger*⁶ and *those who weep*⁷ rhyme already. In any event, the evidence, supported by Luke, that the second beatitude was originally *blessed are those who hunger and thirst* or even just *blessed are those who hunger* is certainly amply encouraged by taking note of the rhyme which ensues as a result.

With all this in mind, why would *OMatthew* add the third beatitude and the words τὴν δικαιοσύνην in the fourth beatitude? One possibility is that by doing so an allusion to Psalm 37 is formed. The former is obviously a reference to Psalm 37.11. The latter allows the fourth beatitude to become a reference to Psalm 37.17-19 which speaks of the *righteous* who, *in days of hunger, will be filled*. Apparently, *OMatthew* thought that the Beatitudes should be interpreted in terms of Psalm 37.

⁶ πεινώτες

⁷ κλαίοντες

This is not the only place that the word *righteousness* has been added by *OMatthew*. Matthew 6.33 says: *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well* (NIV). The textual apparatus of the fourth edition of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament gives this present reading a grade of *C*. Among the witnesses which speak only of seeking the kingdom and do not include a reference to *righteousness* are: The Coptic versions (Sahidic and Boharic), the Ethiopic (ro, pp), Georgian B, 119, 245, 482, 1646, 1184, 1187, Justin and Aphraates (:21). The parallel version of Luke (12.31) says: πλὴν ζητεῖτε βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ταῦτα προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν.⁸

Clearly, a poetic structure exists in the Beatitudes which points to deliberate editing and redaction. In order to achieve this a literal rendering of the original beatitudes as given by Jesus would have had to be sacrificed.

⁸ *But seek his kingdom and these things will be given to you as well* (NIV).

Chapter Five

Pre-Matthaen version

Was there ever a Greek version of the Beatitudes which was not so full of the careful poetic editing the last three stages exhibit? The evidence, such as does exist only shows that various traditions of the words of Jesus existed among a wide range of early Christian(?) communities. Thus, as witnesses to a pre-Matthaen version of the Beatitudes these examples are extremely open to criticism, not to mention alternate interpretations.

I.5.1 Blessed are the Poor

We have noted that in each of the previous stages the words τῷ πνεύματι in the first beatitude are necessary for poetic reasons. The question then is, was there a time in the transmission of the Beatitudes in Greek in which these words did not appear. The answer is *yes!* The first, and most important witness is, of course, Luke. His version of the first beatitude says *blessed are the poor for yours is the kingdom of God* [μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ ὅτι ὑμετέρα ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ]. One cannot immediately assume that Luke's version is the correct one. However, it has been noted that in cases like this Luke often preserves a form which is more Palestinian than Matthew (Hurst 1986:75).

I.5.1.1 Evidence from Polycarp

One of the earliest Patristic references to the Beatitudes comes from Polycarp who gives a conflated quotation of two of them:

but remembering what the Lord taught when he said, "Judge not that ye be not judged, forgive and it shall be forgiven unto you, be merciful that ye may obtain mercy, with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again," and, "Blessed are the poor, and they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of God" (Phil 2.3).

Though Polycarp merges the first and eighth beatitudes into one the fact that he uses the term *kingdom of God* rather than *kingdom of heaven* is telling. It shows that *poor* (rather

than *poor in spirit*) is likely the result of the influence of Luke 6.20 and not evidence that he is aware of a pre-Matthean Greek version of the Beatitudes which does not contain the words τῷ πνεύματι.

I.5.1.2 Evidence from the Pseudo-Clementine Literature

Of greater value is the quotation from a Jewish Christian gospel among the Pseudo-Clementine works (*PsClem Rec* 1, 61, 2) which defends the first beatitude while giving a variant reading: μακαρίζω τοὺς πτωχοὺς (Friedrich 1968:914). A bit later (2, 28, 3), Jesus himself is said to have blessed *the poor* (not *poor in spirit*) and promised them *the kingdom of heaven* (Betz 1995:115). These quotes certainly show that, at least in some sectors, τῷ πνεύματι was either not associated with the first beatitude or was considered superfluous for interpretation. That *the poor* are seen in a spiritual, rather than literal sense is affirmed by the fact that in another passage (*Hom* 15, 10, 4) the first beatitude is said not to refer to those who actually are πτωχοί or πένητες but to the πιστοὶ πένητες (Friedrich 1968:913). Quispel declares that the Judeo-Christians (Ebionites) exalted the poor and therefore “*les Clémentines, en ceci héritiers légitimes de la communauté de Jérusalem, nous transmettent que Jésus a béni les pauvres (non les pauvres d’esprit), puisque à cause de cette pauvreté ils recevront le Royaume des Cieux*” (1975:103). He immediately goes on to say that *c’est donc d’abord avec la tradition et la conception des chrétiens juifs que “Thomas” déclare: Heureux les pauvres, car à vous est le Royaume des cieux* (Quispel 1975:103).

I.5.1.3 Evidence from the Gospel of Thomas

The *Gospel of Thomas* is not a purely Gnostic, independent Gospel, but a witness of a Jewish-Christian Gospel tradition (Quispel 1975:150). It contains thirteen beatitudes, several of which have parallels in the Sermon on the Mount (Wansbrough 1991:227). Grant and Freedman suggest that Thomas’ *Blessed are the poor for to you is the kingdom of heaven* (54) is another case of combining the readings of Matthew 5.3 with Luke 6.20 (1960:163). Davies and Allison demure, saying that this reading represents an independent tradition (1988:441-42).

The *Gospel of Thomas* contains several points of agreement with the Pseudo-Clementine

writings. For instance, they both suggest the primacy of James as the successor of the Lord (*GTh* 12; *PsClem Rec* 1.43) and both imply that the Pharisees are the legitimate heirs of Moses with regard to Torah interpretation (*GTh* 39; *PsClem Hom* 3.18.3), both of which are aspects of the Jewish-Christian gospel tradition (Quispel 1975:116). It has long been explained that the difference between Matthew's *poor in spirit* and Luke's *poor* is one of emphasis; Matthew emphasizes the spiritual (Jewish) meaning of the word *poor* while Luke emphasizes Jesus' commitment to the physically poor (Young 1995:92). It is therefore suggested that Luke has misinterpreted Jesus. Lindsey, for example, says, "It is obvious that no Jew in the period supposed with the editor of Luke's version that Jesus was talking about the literally poor" (1973:xxiv). This is not necessarily true.

I.5.1.4 Evidence from the Epistle of James

Since it has been shown that the Beatitudes belong to a pre-synoptic tradition and were presumably part of early Christian preaching it would be natural to find direct or indirect allusions to them among other passages from the New Testament. The Epistle of James shows awareness of a beatitude for the poor. James 2.5 says that *God has chosen the poor⁹ in this world to be rich in faith and to inherit a kingdom he promised to those who love him*. The word *poor* is used here in its most literal sense, yet at the same time, it is also used in a spiritual sense. There is no indication that James is aware of the additional words: *in spirit* (see §II.3.1.2.3.c).

Unlike Polycarp, James uses the word *kingdom* only and so does not give a clue as to whether or not he is influenced here by the version used by Matthew or Luke. James, however, is aware of the Beatitudes of Matthew. Compare two other examples:

Matthew	James
5.7 <i>Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.</i> (NIV)	2.13 <i>because judgement without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgement!</i> (NIV)
5.9 <i>Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God.</i> (NIV)	3.18 <i>Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.</i> (NIV)

⁹ πτωχούς

In fact, James is very familiar with the entire Sermon on the Mount. He gives so many allusions to it that it is safe to say that his letter is predicated on the notion that those who read it are also familiar with the Sermon on the Mount, though not necessarily the Gospel of Matthew (Davies 1964:403).

It may be thought that as Polycarp conflates the first and eighth beatitudes, James seems, at first, to conflate the first and third by saying that the poor *inherit* the kingdom. The third beatitude is a reference to Psalm 37.11 and may, quite likely, have been added to explain the first beatitude. James, on the other hand, is alluding to Proverbs 8.21. Though the English translations of both Psalm 37.11 and Proverbs 8.21 promise an inheritance, different Hebrew words are used. The former employs **vr:y"** and the latter **lx;n"**. This, incidentally, gives evidence that the words $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega\upsilon\upsilon$ $\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota\nu$ $\acute{\eta}$ $\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ $\tau\omega\upsilon\upsilon$ $\omicron\upsilon\rho\alpha\nu\omega\upsilon\upsilon$ in the first beatitude represent the original phrasing of Jesus. Somehow these words were understood to convey that the poor in spirit would inherit the kingdom but the vagueness of $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega\upsilon\upsilon$ $\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota\nu$ necessitated that an explicit biblical promise of inheritance be joined by way of explanation.