

A serene sunset over a body of water with a wooden pier on the right side. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, with the sun low on the horizon. The water is dark with gentle ripples. The pier is made of dark wood and has a chain railing. In the background, there are dark hills or mountains.

MATTHEW 5:1-16
MESSIAH ON A MISSION (PART 7)

ALREADY, NOT YET

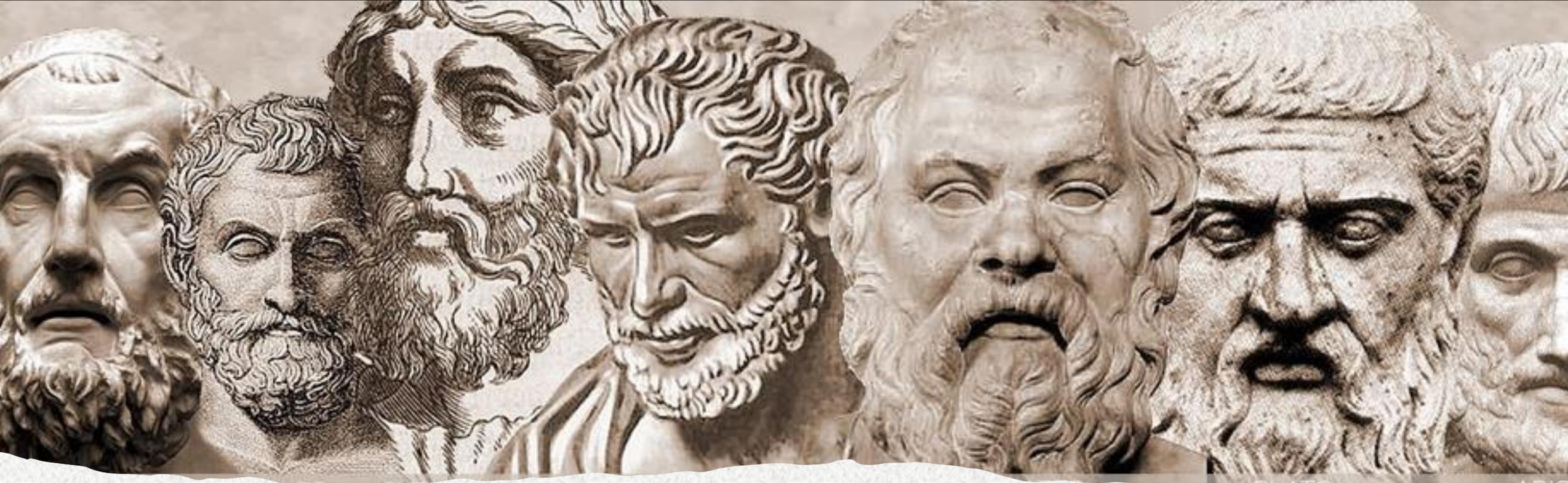


What is the Purpose of the Passage?

To reveal God's kingdom as a reversal of the situation

To show God's kingdom upholds countercultural values

To introduce to hearers that Jesus' followers in the world have a covenantal identity



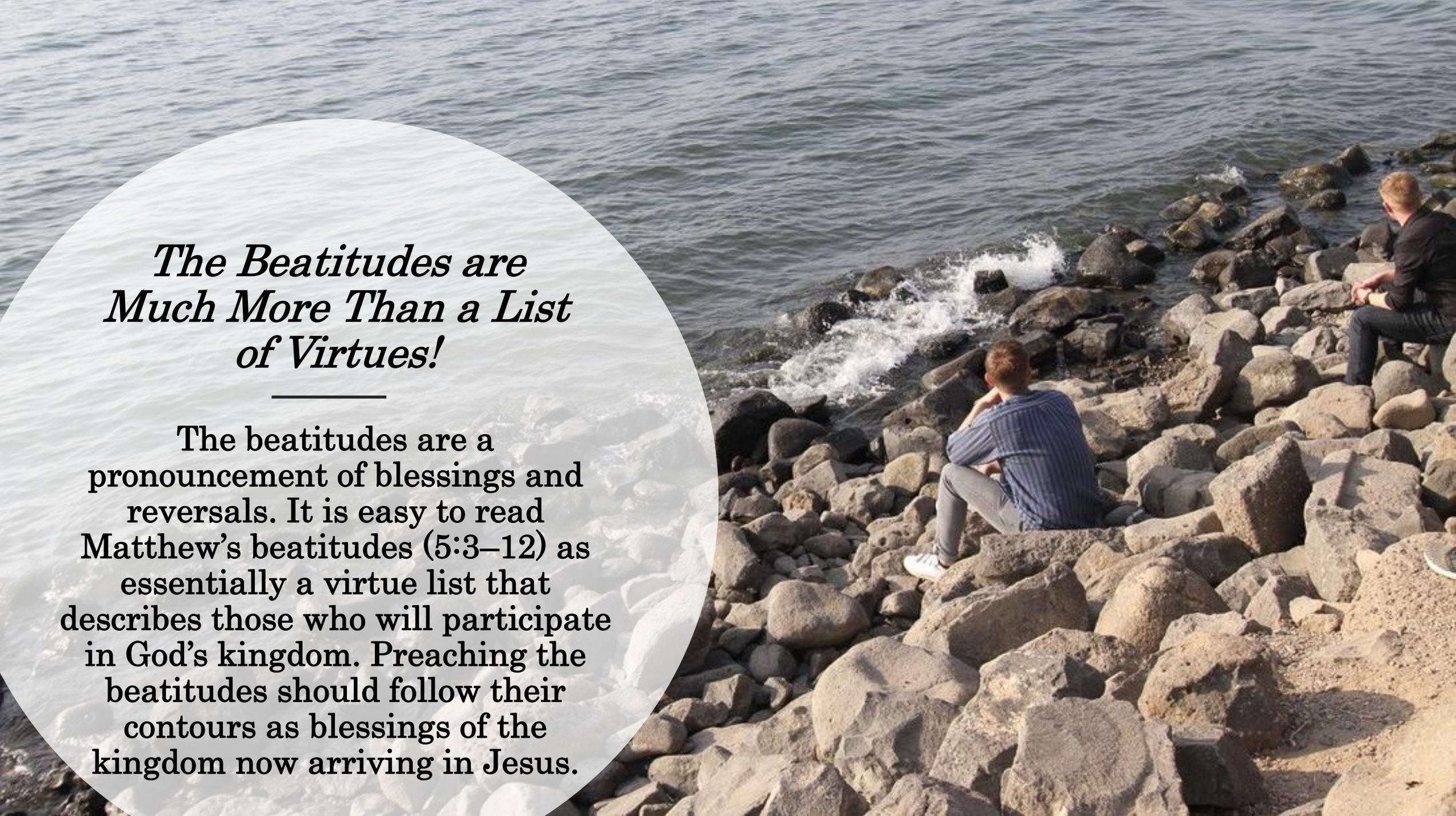
Moral Bankruptcy

When Jesus preached this incredible sermon, the Greek philosophers had been long gone, leaving the world as morally bankrupt as they had found it. The religions of the East had likewise had their day. Those who studied the philosophy of these paragons of ethics were left groping in utter darkness, hoping for some utopian realization or a better deal in some fancied future incarnation. These philosophers presented a utopian ideal and left the world in a form of frustrated dystopian moralism. They only focused on how things “ought to be” as opposed to the fundamental concern of “Who we are.”

Jesus' Teachings Are Spiritual

“Who, that has read half-a-dozen pages successively of any part of the Talmud, can feel otherwise than by turns shocked, pained, amused, or astounded? There is here wit and logic, quickness and readiness, earnestness and zeal, but by the side of it terrible profanity, uncleanness, superstition, and folly. Taken as a whole, it is not only utterly unspiritual, but anti-spiritual... It is so utterly and immeasurably unlike the New Testament, that it is not easy to determine which, as the case may be, is greater, the ignorance or the presumption of those who put them side by side.” (Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 363.)





*The Beatitudes are
Much More Than a List
of Virtues!*

The beatitudes are a pronouncement of blessings and reversals. It is easy to read Matthew's beatitudes (5:3–12) as essentially a virtue list that describes those who will participate in God's kingdom. Preaching the beatitudes should follow their contours as blessings of the kingdom now arriving in Jesus.

“THE KINGDOM IS ALREADY HERE, BUT NOT YET FULLY REALIZED”

The beatitudes also provide a clear introduction of the kingdom as “already and not yet.” The promise arising from the first and the last beatitudes is clearly cast in the present: “theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” So, we can preach the kingdom arriving in Jesus. And the rest of the beatitudes are cast in the future tense: “they will be comforted.” We should teach that there is still a day to come when God will bring the consummation of the kingdom.

*A NEW IDENTITY THAT
CREATES A NEW
MORALITY*

—

*NOT A NEW MORALITY
THAT RECREATES A NEW
MAN!*



Jesus' followers find their identity and mission in covenantal relationship with God. It is important to notice that 5:13–16 continues the emphasis of the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount on “what is” rather than “what ought to be.” Those who follow Jesus, in line with faithful Israel, are declared to be salt and light for the world. Too often we see these passages as only moralizing lists — But God is calling us to be *Someone* else and not just *Something* else. These passages are obviously about *WHO* you are as opposed to *WHAT* you do!