

# Blessed Are Those Who Love

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*Matthew 5:7 and the Womb-Compassion of the King*

By: Wendy and Justin Leoni, April 2026

"You shall love Yehovah your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might... and you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Torah and the Prophets."

There is a single verse in the Beatitudes that contains the entire narrow path within its Hebrew frame. Matthew 5:7 has been read for seventeen centuries as a generic blessing upon nice people: *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."* But the Cochin Hebrew manuscript (Cambridge MS Oo.1.32) preserves something far more precise, far more demanding, and far more covenantal—a restoration that collapses passive virtue into active obligation, and transforms the entire Sermon on the Mount from ethical advice into a summons to covenant fidelity.

This is the story of two words: **love** (active) and **compassion** (womb-like). It is the story of how these words narrow the path until it becomes razor-sharp—so sharp that only those whose lives are marked by active covenant love receive the King's active womb-compassion, while their oppressors face the comfort that comes through utter destruction.

## The Verse in Three Voices

Source

Text

Force

<p><b>Greek Text</b> <i>Textus Receptus</i></p>	<p>"Μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται" "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy"</p>	<p>Passive virtue rewarded with passive receipt. Hellenistic moral philosophy: cultivate the inner quality of mercy, receive mercy in return.</p>
<p><b>Aramaic Peshitta</b></p>	<p>"ܩܘܼܠܘܼܢ ܠܡܪܘܼܡܢܘܼܢ ܩܘܼܠܘܼܢ ܠܡܪܘܼܡܢܘܼܢ" "Blessed the amrakhmane [merciful], because mercies will be upon them"</p>	<p>Closer to Hebrew thought: "mercy" (rakhem) is covenantal, but still passive receipt "upon them."</p>
<p><b>Cochin Hebrew MS</b> Oo.1.32</p>	<p>טובתהון של אוהבים ועליהם אני מרחם "Blessed are those who love, for them I have compassion"</p>	<p><b>Active-active.</b> Ohavim = active lovers. Merachem = first-person active "I have compassion." Covenantal reciprocity between King and keeper.</p>

## The First Restoration: Love vs. Merciful

The Cochin Hebrew manuscript preserves a word that changes everything: **ohavim** (אוהבים)—not "the merciful" but "**those who love.**"

### אוהבים

**Ohavim** (v. Pa'al/Qal, active participle, masculine plural)

From root אהב (*ahav*)—active loving, those who are currently loving

**Greek equivalent:** ἐλεήμονες (*eleēmones*)—"the merciful/compassionate"

**English tradition:** "merciful"—virtue of character, passive quality

The Cochin Hebrew reading identifies this as the critical pivot: **love differs from the Greek and is more fitting. Love is the focus of God's law.** This is not a theological preference. This is the difference between covenant obligation and Hellenistic virtue.

In Greek thought, *eleos* (mercy/compassion) was an interior disposition—a quality of soul that made one gentle toward others. It fit perfectly into Aristotelian ethics: cultivate the golden mean between cruelty and softness, and you become virtuous. The English "merciful" carries the same passive tone: be a nice person, show kindness, and mercy will return to you.

But **ohavim** is the Hebrew word that carries the weight of the entire Torah. When a scribe asked Yeshua, "Which is the greatest commandment?" He answered with the *Shema*:

*"You shall love [ve-ahavta] Yehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."*

— Deuteronomy 6:5

And immediately added its twin:

*"You shall love [ve-ahavta] your neighbor as yourself."*

— Leviticus 19:18

The Apostle Paul confirms this in Romans 13:9-10: "Love is the fulfillment of the Torah." The Greek word *agapē* (love) preserves something of this, but English "mercy" obliterates it entirely. When the Cochin Hebrew records Yeshua saying **ohavim** in Matthew 5:7, He is identifying the blessed as those who are actively living the *greatest commandment*—not those who have a gentle disposition.

## The Narrowing: Commandment, Not Virtue

This single word—**ohavim**—narrows the path dramatically:

- ◆ **Virtue ethics** (Greek/English): Be a nice person. Cultivate inner gentleness. "Have a good heart." This is broad—billions can claim it.
- ◆ **Torah commandment** (Hebrew): Love God with every fiber. Love your neighbor sacrificially. Prove it with works, time, resources, submission to commandments. This is narrow—only those who actually **do** it qualify.

The Psalmist asked, "Who may ascend the mountain of Yehovah?" and answered: "Those with clean hands and pure hearts... who do not lift their souls to emptiness" (Psalm 24:3-4). The Greek tradition of "mercy" allows mental assent: "I have mercy in my heart." The Hebrew demand of **ohavim** requires actual covenant fidelity—the

active, sacrificial, Torah-shaped love that defines the narrow path.

## The Second Restoration: Merachem and the Womb-Compassion

If the first restoration narrows by requiring active love, the second restoration intensifies it through the word **merachem** (מרחם).

מרחם

**Merachem** (v. Pi'el, active participle, masculine singular)

From root רחם (*racham*)—womb, tender inner parts, maternal love

**Form:** Pi'el active participle = intensified, active, continuous present tense

**Gloss:** "I/you (ms)/he/it have compassion, pity(ies)"

**Critical detail:** First-person singular force from the speaker: "**for them I have compassion**"

The interlinear analysis of the Cochin Hebrew preserves what seventeen centuries of Greek tradition obscured: **the speaker in Matthew 5:7 is Yeshua promising His own personal, active, womb-like compassion upon those who love.**

The etymology is visceral. **Rechem** (רחם) means "womb"—the protective, nurturing, self-giving organ of maternal love. The verb *racham* carries the intensity of a mother's love for the child of her body. In the Pi'el stem (intensive), it becomes active, deliberate, powerful: **merachem**—"having compassion" as a continuous, intentional state.

Think of a mother whose children are threatened. This is not gentle sentiment—it is "momma-bear" love that results in **action** against the oppressor. The womb that shelters also roars when its precious ones are attacked. This is the visceral reality of **merachem**: protective love that acts, that defends, that removes threats to the beloved.

This is not "mercy" as a nice feeling. This is **womb-compassion**—the protective love of the superior who shelters, nourishes, and defends. It is the same root used throughout the Tanakh for Yehovah's covenant love:

*"Yehovah is merciful [rachum] and gracious [chanun], slow to anger and abounding in covenant faithfulness."*

— Exodus 34:6

*"As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you"*

— Isaiah 66:13

But here is the narrowing: **this compassion is first-person from the King.**

Read it again: "Blessed are those who love [**ohavim**], for them I have compassion [**merachem**]." The "I" is Yeshua speaking. This is not a generic divine blessing. This is **personal covenant response**: the King promises His own protective, womb-like love to those who actively love as Torah commands.

Greek "shall obtain mercy" is passive receipt. Hebrew "I have compassion" is active, personal, covenantal. One requires mental assent; the other requires active allegiance that proves itself through works of love. The path narrows again.

## **The Third Restoration: From Merachem to Menachem**

But here is where the Hebrew demands deeper inquiry: **What does this compassion actually look like?**

In Greek thought, compassion is gentle—mercy softens wrath, kindness replaces severity. But Hebrew **merachem** carries a dimension the Greek translated only after fierce debate, and ultimately mistranslated entirely: **the compassion of the King for His afflicted people often looks like complete, utter destruction of their oppressors.**

The pattern is woven through the entire Tanakh, but nowhere clearer than in the names and narratives Yeshua's audience knew by heart:

### **Exodus: The Prototype**

*"And the Egyptians shall know that I am Yehovah, when I stretch out My hand against Egypt and bring the children of Israel out from among them."*

The compassion (*rachamim*) of Yehovah toward Israel was demonstrated through the destruction of Pharaoh's army. The Song of the Sea—Israel's response—celebrates *both* the deliverance of the beloved *and* the drowning of the oppressor:

*"The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea... Your right hand, O Yehovah, shatters the enemy."*

— Exodus 15:1, 6

For Israel, this was **menachem**—the comfort that comes through the removal of the oppressor.

## The Hebrew Word Pair: Merachem → Menachem

The critical distinction between two Hebrew roots that sound related function in covenantal sequence:

Root	Meaning	Function	Result
רחם ( <i>racham</i> )	Womb, maternal love, visceral compassion	<b>Merachem</b> —Yeshua actively extends protective love to the one who keeps covenant	Protection, shelter, covenant covering
נחם ( <i>nacham</i> )	To sigh deeply, comfort, console, relieve distress	<b>Menachem</b> —the resulting comfort/vindication when oppression is removed	Relief, vindication, reversal of sorrow

These are not the same word. **Merachem** is the womb-compassion extended by the superior. **Menachem** is the comfort—the relief, the vindication, the reversal of grief—that comes when the afflicted are delivered.

But here is the narrowing: **In covenant reality, merachem often produces menachem through the utter destruction of the oppressor.** The King's compassion for His beloved means His judgment upon their enemies.

## Nahum: The Prophet of Comfort-Through-Destruction

The name **Nahum** (נַחֻם) comes directly from **nacham**—"comfort." He is literally "the Comfort-bringer." Yet his entire prophecy concerns the destruction of Nineveh, Israel's enemy.

*"This is the oracle against Nineveh... A jealous and avenging God is Yehovah; Yehovah is avenging and wrathful. Yehovah takes vengeance on His adversaries and reserves wrath for His enemies... His way is in the whirlwind and the storm."*

— Nahum 1:1-3

Nahum's prophecy is comfort for Judah *precisely because* Nineveh will be destroyed:

*"Behold, upon the mountains the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace!... For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian."*

— Nahum 1:15, Isaiah 9:4

The comfort (*nacham*) comes through the removal of the oppressor. The Greek mind cannot hold this tension. The Hebrew faith demands it.

## Menachem the King: The Warning

The name appears ironically in **2 Kings 15:14-22**—King **Menachem** the son of Gadi:

*"Then Menahem the son of Gadi came up from Tirzah and came to Samaria, and struck Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria and killed him, and reigned in his place... From the time he did this sin of murdering the king, his hand was withered."*

— 2 Kings 15:14, Targum Jonathan

Menachem the tyrant came to power through assassination and ruled with brutality. His name meant "comforter," but he brought only violence.

But the greater context reveals Yehovah's sovereign hand. Israel had refused to destroy the high places—those sites of idolatry where they worshiped other gods. They kept the outward forms of Yahweh worship while maintaining the pagan

shrines. For this covenant unfaithfulness, Yehovah brought **menachem**—not the gentle comfort of restoration, but the harsh "comfort" of judgment against His own people.

The Assyrians, under King Menahem, became the instrument of Yehovah's displeasure. When Israel would not destroy the high places, Yehovah brought a king whose name mocked their pretense—**Menachem**—to afflict them. This is the terrible side of *nacham*: sometimes the only comfort is the complete removal of that which causes the affliction, even if it means judgment against those who claim covenant but practice idolatry.

The Tanakh uses the irony to teach: **True comfort comes from Yehovah's judgment, not human tyranny. But when covenant-people refuse to destroy the high places in their hearts, they may find themselves receiving menachem through the very oppression they invited.**

Matthew 5:7 preserves this distinction. Yeshua promises **merachem**—His own womb-compassion as the exalted King—and this compassion guarantees that the oppressors of His beloved will face destruction, which becomes their **menachem** (comfort/vindication).

The path narrows again: **The blessed are not merely "nice people." They are those under the King's active protection, which means His active judgment upon their persecutors.**

## The Psalm 110 Pattern: Sit Until I Make Them a Footstool

Matthew 5:7 must be read in its larger context—the Beatitudes describe the narrow path, and Yeshua's audience knew the pattern of Psalm 110 by heart:

*"Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet... Yehovah will send forth the rod of Your strength from Zion; rule in the midst of Your enemies."*

— Psalm 110:1, 2

The Psalm is David's oracle (*ne'um*, "utterance")—**of the King**. It describes Yeshua enthroned beside Yehovah, receiving the **menachem** of dominion over enemies.

Cochin Matthew 5:7 follows this identical pattern: Yeshua speaks in first person: "Blessed are those who love... **for them I have compassion.**" This is **merachem**—the womb-compassion that protects the lover—and it functions in covenantal sequence with the comfort (**menachem**) that comes when enemies are subdued.

Matthew 5:10 later in the Beatitudes confirms this labor: "Blessed are those who labor in judgment" (Cochin Hebrew)—the active work of covenant living includes **laboring in mishpat** (judgment/right-ruling). This is not passive persecution-suffering; it is active Torah discernment that participates in the King's justice.

The Greek tradition softened this into "persecuted for righteousness' sake"—which can be read as victimhood. The Hebrew preserves it as **labor in judgment**—active covenant work that partners with the King's merachem.

## The Narrowing: Three Gates That Define the Path

Matthew 5:7 in the Cochin Hebrew erects three gates that define the narrow path. Each gate excludes more than it includes:

### Gate One: Active Love, Not Passive Mercy

**Ohavim**—those who love—is a verb describing people who are *currently loving* (active participle). The Greek "merciful" (*eleēmones*) describes people who *are* merciful—a state of being.

The distinction is the difference between a commandment and a virtue. Love is **the focus of God's law**. It is **Deuteronomy 6:5 + Leviticus 19:18**—the active, sacrificial, Torah-shaped allegiance that requires every faculty, every resource, every moment.

The gate is narrow because:

- ◆ Nice feelings toward others are insufficient
- ◆ Mental agreement with love is insufficient
- ◆ Actual covenant action—loving God with totality, loving neighbor sacrificially—is required

### Gate Two: Personal King's Response, Not Generic Blessing

**Merachem**—"for them I have compassion"—is first-person singular. Yeshua speaks as the exalted King.

Greek passive "they shall obtain mercy" can be read as a generic principle: the universe rewards mercy with mercy. This fits Hellenistic virtue ethics—cultivate a quality, receive that quality in return.

Hebrew active "I have compassion" is covenantal reciprocity between King and subject. The protection is personal, specific, and conditional upon active love. No love = no *merachem*. No covenant fidelity = no womb-compassion from the King.

The gate is narrower still: **The blessing comes only from the King, only to those who actively love, and only as His personal covenant response.**

### **Gate Three: Covenant Protection Includes Judgment on Oppressors**

The *merachem* → *menachem* pattern means the King's compassion for His beloved includes His judgment upon their enemies. This is the comfort Nahum prophesied—the destruction of Nineveh as relief for Judah. This is the Psalm 110 pattern—enthronement after enemies are subdued.

The Greek tradition cannot hold this. Modern Christianity has largely abandoned it, preferring a Jesus who is "nice" and "non-judgmental." But the Hebrew King of Matthew 5:7 is the same one who:

- ◆ Drove money-changers from the temple with a whip (John 2:15)
- ◆ Warned of Gehenna for those who cause little ones to stumble (Mark 9:42-48)
- ◆ Will say to the "Lord Lord" crowd: "Depart from Me, workers of lawlessness" (Matthew 7:23)

The narrow path is not soft. It is protected by a King whose womb-compassion for His own means absolute, unyielding opposition to their oppressors.

This includes the **utter destruction** of those who afflict covenant-keepers. Not gentle correction. Not benevolent tolerance. The *menachem* (comfort) of the afflicted is the *merachem*-compassion of the King, and it manifests as the complete removal of the oppressor.

## **The Warning: Matthew 7:21-23 and the "Lord Lord" Crowd**

Yeshua concludes the Sermon on the Mount—the same sermon containing the Beatitudes—with a warning that makes sense only in light of Matthew 5:7's narrowing:

*"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name and in Your name drive out demons and in Your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from Me, you workers of lawlessness!'"*

— Matthew 7:21-23

Compare this to Matthew 5:7's promise: **"For them I have compassion."**

The contrast is devastating:

Matthew 5:7	Matthew 7:23
"For <b>them</b> I have compassion"	"Away from Me"
Blessed = active lovers	Rejected = speakers of "Lord Lord" without Torah Works
<b>Ohavim</b> = covenant love evidenced	"Lawlessness" = Torah-lessness
Merachem = personal covenant response	"I never knew you" = no covenant relationship

The Greek tradition, with its passive "merciful" and passive "obtain mercy," created a category of people who "believe in Jesus" and "receive mercy" without demonstrating active covenant love. This is the wide road.

The Hebrew restoration, with its active **ohavim** (lovers) and active **merachem** (King's compassion), leaves no room for this category. To receive the King's womb-compassion, one must actively love—and that love is Torah-shaped, covenant-proven, works-evidenced.

Those who claim "Lord Lord" without covenant faithfulness discover that the One who promised "for them I have compassion" now says "I never knew you." The same King whose mercy is womb-deep for the lover is absolute in judgment for the lawless.

## Why This Matters: The Restoration of Covenant

## Fidelity

Covenant fidelity stands on its own apart from flattened definitions. It requires:

- ◆ **Active love** (*ohavim*)—not mental affection but Torah-keeping devotion to God and neighbor
- ◆ **King response** (*merachem*)—personal womb-compassion from Yeshua
- ◆ **Comfort through judgment** (*menachem*)—vindication that includes the removal of oppressors

This is the narrow path:

- ◆ It is not "believe in Jesus and be saved"—it is **love actively and receive the King's personal protection**
- ◆ It is not "mercy for everyone"—it is **merachem for the ohavim**
- ◆ It is not "comfort for all"—it is **menachem through the King's judgment on enemies**

The Greek "merciful" created a broad road where anyone with gentle feelings could claim blessing. The Hebrew "those who love" narrows to those who actively keep the greatest commandment in deed and truth.

The Greek "obtain mercy" created a mechanical transaction: be nice, get nice treatment. The Hebrew "I have compassion" creates covenant relationship: active love from the subject, active womb-protection from the King.

The Greek tradition lost the **merachem** → **menachem** pattern entirely—could not comprehend that divine compassion for the afflicted includes destruction of the afflictor. The Hebrew preserves it, witnessed by Nahum, by Psalm 110, by the exodus pattern: **The comfort of the people is completeness.**

## Conclusion: The Womb and the Sword

Matthew 5:7 stands alone because it contains the entire covenant in miniature. One verse. Six Hebrew words in the Cochin manuscript:

טובתהון של אוהבים ועליהם אני מרחם

"Blessed are those who love, for them I have compassion."

Here is the womb and the sword—the compassion that shelters and the judgment that vindicates. Here is the narrowing: not mercy as passive virtue, but **love as active covenant command**. Not generic blessing, but **personal King's response**. Not gentle comfort for all, but **menachem through the merachem that destroys oppression**.

The names shout this truth: **Nahum** the prophet brings comfort through Nineveh's fall. **Menahem** the tyrant king failed to comfort because he seized power by blood, and because Israel herself had refused to destroy the high places.

Those who walk the narrow path—who love God with totality and neighbor sacrificially, who prove covenant fidelity through Torah-shaped works—receive the promise: "**For them I have compassion**." The womb-compassion of Yeshua. The protection that shelters. And the vindication that comes when enemies are made a footstool.

Time is short. The restoration is here. The Hebrew manuscripts preserved in Cochin speak with the voice of the first century—unfiltered by Greek abstraction, untainted by Hellenistic virtue flattened into mental assent.

The path is narrowed. Only the ohavim—the active lovers—walk it. Only they receive the merachem. Only they experience the menachem. And only they hear "Well done" rather than "Depart from Me."

## The Narrow Path Summarized

**Greek/English Wide Road:** Be merciful in your heart → obtain mercy in return  
→ inner peace

**Cochin Hebrew Narrow Path:** Love actively as Torah commands (*ohavim*) → receive the King's personal womb-compassion (*merachem*) → experience vindication as oppression is removed (*menachem*)

Three gates:

1. **Active love**—the focus of God's law, evidenced in works
2. **King's response**—personal, first-person, covenant protection
3. **Comfort through judgment**—merachem produces menachem, often through utter destruction of the oppressor

The restoration is not novelty. It is return. Return to Hebrew definitions. Return to covenant obligation. Return to active love that proves itself through Torah fidelity.

**The few who have ears to hear, let them hear.**

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*Research acknowledgment: Cochin Hebrew Matthew (Cambridge MS Oo.1.32), Project Truth Ministries*

*Sources: Tanakh, Cochin Hebrew Manuscripts, Aramaic Peshitta, Greek Textus Receptus*

Visit [Project Truth Ministries](#) to access the Hebrew texts and walk the narrow path of covenant fidelity.