

# Word of the Kingdom Conference, 2024

Cornerstone Christian Fellowship

**Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2024**

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## **WE ARE BLESSED IF.....Part One**

**Heb 6:7** *For the earth [ground – NASB; soil – Amplified. NB Mt 13:23] which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; 8 but if it [earth, ground or soil] bears thorns and briars, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned. 9 But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. 10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

### **1. Introduction**

- i. By the grace of God, it is been 18 short years of continuous and exciting study of the word of the kingdom here at CCF. And I suspect this is the 12<sup>th</sup> WoK conference counting from the first one in 2006 [source CCF website].
  - a. This is something we MUST thank God so much for – not just because of the number of years we've been doing so BUT more importantly, the transformation [**Ro 12:1-2**] that God has continued to effect in us in the course of time as He continued to birth us from above with this truth - **Heb 6:7** *For the earth [ground – NASB; soil – Amplified. NB Mt 13:23] which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; 8 but if it [earth, ground or soil] bears thorns and briars, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned. 9 But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.*
  - b. The writer of the Hebrew letter is using metaphors drawing from Genesis – specifically, day three - **Ge 1:29** *And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. 30 "Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so.....and a*

commentary on it from Chapter Two - **2:5** *before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground;*

- c. The context of both the type and the antitype is very clear – it has to do with God's purpose for creating man [Genesis text- type] which as we have to know is the same purpose for redeeming man [Hebrews text – antitype]. We may recall some earlier passage in the book [Hebrews] clearly showing that rulership from the heavens in the coming age will happen through a readied or prepared firstborn sons - **Heb 2:5** *For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. 6 But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him? 7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. 8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory [preparing the many sons through the regular rain], to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

## 2. **Spiritual significance of the metaphors: The rain, the earth, the herb, the blessing, thorns and briars, the curse and burning.**

- i. This '**rain**' that regularly come upon or is drunk by the earth in the Hebrew text represents the truth, the Word of God [the word of the kingdom, the gospel of the Christ]. This is revealed early in the OT scriptures with regard to Israel – **De 32:2** *Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, as raindrops on the tender herb, and as showers on the grass*
- ii. The '**earth**', ground or soil in our case symbolizes the believer who is hearing the word of the kingdom. We have been drinking [receiving/hearing] this rain [this truth] on a regular basis for the last many years, months, weeks and days. Therefore, God through this Hebrew text is speaking to such a body of

believers as us – those hearing the word of the kingdom. What we read here should come to us both as an *encouragement* and a *warning*.

- a. **An encouragement**, because if we continue hearing this truth, believing this truth and obey it, it will bring a profit ['useful for those by whom it is cultivated']. We will bear fruitful that will remain in that coming day - when tested by fire and we will receive THE BLESSING – the opportunity to rule and reign with Christ in His coming kingdom [more of the BLESSING later in the lesson] – **2Ti 3:16** *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. What shall we say to then these things?* Let's remain persuaded this way .... God Has said it AND we MUST take/receive His Word - the Word of the Kingdom for what it is. We MUST be fully convinced that the Word of God, the gospel of the Christ, the Word of the Kingdom is the ONLY Word that has the power to PREPARE US for Christ's coming kingdom. It is the ONLY Word we have AND it is enough - **1Th 2:13** *For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. We can add to this God's counsel recorded by James in – Jas 5:7* *Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. 8 You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Like a farmer, we are to exercise patient endurance during this time of waiting for 'the precious fruit of the earth', that comes by receiving the early and the latter rain as we look forward to the coming of the Lord – and our appearance at His Judgment Seat with our hearts fully established in this truth.*
- b. **A warning**, because if we treat this truth casually [if we are careless with it, if we fail to believe it and obey it], only thorns and briars [**Ge 3:18**] can be seen in our lives [only works apart from faith to the saving of our souls can be seen in us], which has ONLY one outcome - loss of the opportunity to rule and reign with Christ [life for the age] in His coming kingdom – i.e., No BLESSING. Individuals presenting thorns and briars as fruits will attract rejection, their works will be consumed at the

judgment seat of Christ and that which is the opposite of the BLESSING i.e., the CURSE will be their portion. This is how God placed the diametrically opposed outcomes to Israel – keeping the kingdom [symbolized by the mountain] in view - **De 11:26** "Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: **27** "the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; **28** "and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known. **29** "Now it shall be, when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess, that you shall put the blessing on **Mount Gerizim** and the curse on **Mount Ebal**.

- iii. The same metaphors [rain, earth, food] are used for the same reason with regard to God's firstborn son – Israel, [earthly kingdom in the coming age] whom God will thoroughly prepare [albeit through tribulation] to function as He designed in - **Isa 55: 8** "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. **9** "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. **10** "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, **11** So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. **12** "For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. **13** Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."
- 1) When God restores Israel in the land He promised them, during the Millennial Kingdom, His return to them is likened to the latter and former rain – and this will make it possible for the nation to function as God intended from the beginning – at the head of nations on the earth, within the Theocracy - **Ho 6:1** Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn,

but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. **2** After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight. **3** Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, Like the latter and former rain to the earth.

iv. **It is now time to spend some time on THE BLESSING.**

a. As we think of THE BLESSING or BEING BLESSED which is dependent on how we respond to the 'rain' that we drink regularly, I don't know whether it carries the weight God places on it when He uses it to His children. I would like us to do a quick glance of **THE BLESSING** in the scripture to see the emphasis assigned to it.

- 1) First mention principle - it suffices to note the Hebrew word for blessing comes up for the first time in scripture in a context of fruitfulness – **Ge 1:21** *So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22* *And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."* **And the first time this word is used with regard to man** [which would be of special interest to us], the context is still fruitfulness with RULERSHIP in view - **Ge 1:28** *Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*
- 2) Following the flood God blessed Noah. The context is fruitfulness with the RULERSHIP in view - **Ge 9:1** *So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. 2* *"And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. 3* *"Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.*
- 3) When God called Abraham and blessed him, fruitfulness with RULERSHIP is still in view - **Ge 12:3** *I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed".....14:19*

*And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth. And as we think of the nation of Israel [coming from the loins of Abraham] being blessed – with her being at the head over the nations, rulership from both realms is in view **Ge 22:17** "blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. **18** "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."*

- 4) AND drawing from Deuteronomy, we see blessings and curses [taken as opposite blessings] – placed side by side - **De 28:1** "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. **2** "And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God..... **13** "And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them. If we consider for a minute the portion of this chapter describing Israel's blessing in the Land, the first verse [v1] and verse [13], we will see very clearly the emphasis of the blessing – it is RULERSHIP. The Lord will set the nation at the head of gentile nations [not servitude status – tail, her present predicament due to her unbelief] - high above all the gentile nations of the earth ... completely in line with what God told Abraham.
- 5) I hope noticed the condition set in scripture for this blessing [RULERSHIP] for Israel [which is the same for us] – *"if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth"*
- 6) And concerning Esau [type of an unfaithful believer], we see this - **Heb 12:16** *lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. **17** For you know that afterward, when he wanted*

to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

- 7) And in the case of Rebekah, the blessing spoken upon her has rulership [possess the gates] - **Ge 24:58** Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go." **59** So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. **60** And they blessed Rebekah and said to her: "Our sister, may you become the mother of thousands of ten thousands; and may your descendants possess the gates of those who hate them."
- 8) And in the case of Ruth, Boaz speaks this to her – with rulership in sharp focus - **Ru 3:10** Then he said, "Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. And following her marriage to Boaz, we read this - **Ru 4:14** Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel! **15** "And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him." **16** Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him. **17** Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "There is a son born to Naomi." And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.
- 9) **And coming over to the NT.** When Jesus used this word in the gospel for the first time according to Matthew, it was in what we call the sermon on the mount which is a **kingdom discourse** - **Mt 5:3** "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heavens.....and speaking to His disciples regarding the kingdom of the heavens, the Lord calls them BLESSED - **Mt 13:16** "But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; **17** "for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

- 10) It is on the heels of this statement that the Lord spoke the parable of the sower to bring the point home in - **Mt 13:18** *"Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom.....*
- a. In this parable, the Lord is speaking to those hearing the word of the kingdom [receiving the rain]. The **earth, ground** or **soil** represent the believer receiving the word of the kingdom. And depending on the believer's attitude towards the Word of the kingdom he or she can produce good fruit [herbs] – that which is associated with the BLESSING or bad fruit [thorns and briars] – that which is associated with the CURSE. There is no middle ground. **Truth be told, what we produce is connected to what we love. We will not surprise ourselves into the kingdom, WE WILL BE THERE BECAUSE WE LOVE IT.** This truth is illustrated in the parable of the sower. Let's do a brief overview on the parable of the sower with **Heb 6:6-9** in view.
- b. **A love of hardness - Mt 13:19** *"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom [rain], and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. The rain falls on such ground BUT no drinking happens. Their hearts are hardened towards this truth. They debate with this truth instead of believing it. There is no interest to change - they hang on to [they love] the Laodicean brief system [i.e., Leaven]. The devil gets the chance to steal the truth - No fruit worthy of entering the kingdom can occur. As a result, No BLESSING – they miss the kingdom if no change of heart occurs. They only produce that which is associated with a CURSE - thorns and briars. This may not appear to be the case in the eyes of man BUT without this truth, it is IMPOSSIBLE to produce fruit worthy of entering the kingdom of the heavens. And once the enemy succeeds in snatching this truth from such a type Christian, he stops his attack on him or her as the pursuit of the kingdom of the heavens for such a believer is in effect out of question.*
- c. **A love of shallowness/laziness - Mt 13:20** *"But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 "yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. This is a believer who receives/hears the word of the kingdom*



[rain] BUT lacks a firm foundation upon which to stand revealed when inevitable tribulation and persecution come on the account of what he has heard and believed [the word of the kingdom]. This person lacks the requisite firm foundation upon which to stand because they did not develop the essential discipline like that of the Bereans – going back to what they are taught and see things for themselves. **This is a love of laziness.** As a result, he gets offended when the trouble comes, rejects that which he has heard and believed. He continues in the Laodicean leaven he was socialized in before he started to hear the word of the kingdom leading to production of that which is associated with a CURSE - thorns and briars for No fruit worthy of entering the kingdom can occur without the word of the kingdom. As a result, No BLESSING – they miss the kingdom if no change of heart occurs.

- d. **A love of thorns [love of this world] - Mt 13:22** "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. This is a believer who receives/hears the word of the kingdom [rain] BUT the world and its offerings [the 'glories' of this world], distracts them [**Mt 4:8; 1 Joh 2:16**] from the pursuit of the kingdom. The possessions, the positions and power of this world become more attractive to such believers than the praise, honor and glory which will be revealed in us 'at the appearing of Jesus Christ' [**Ro 8:17; 2 Co 4:17; 1 Pe 1:7**]. The narrow path into we have been called seemingly becomes very limiting and unattractive and the broad path is embraced as more accommodating and inclusive. All these choices become a fertile place for the production of thorns and briars whose end is to be burned.

The remedy to this is very clear, the command of scripture is plain - **1Jo 2:15** *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

- e. **The love of the Kingdom, the love of the BLESSING - Mt 13:23** *"But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."* The word of the kingdom [the rain] falls on good ground AND because of the love of the kingdom, this word is believed, understood and acted on – we can go back to Ruth for this - **Ru 3:3** *"Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 "Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do." 5 And she said to her, "All that you say to me I will do."*
- f. **Conclusion.** The lovers of the kingdom, will produce fruit emanating from the Spirit – works of faith to the saving of the soul. These are ones the writer of the Hebrew letter is persuaded about as follows - **Heb 6:9** *But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. 10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

### **We are blessed**