

Sunday August 2nd 2015
It's Still Raining
Part One

1). Heb 6:7 *For the earth 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 bears thorns and briars, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.*

a). Our verses here from Hebrews Chapter 6 present a metaphor which deals with 'the earth', but in the sense of a piece of earth rather than the entire earth. This patch of earth receives rain leading to the production of vegetation; it is the same earth and the same rain throughout, however the type of vegetation which is produced is significantly different.

b). On the one hand our piece of earth, having received the rain, can produce herbs that are useful for those by whom it is cultivated which results in blessing from God.

c). Or, on the other hand, our piece of earth, having received the same rain, can produce thorns and briars, which are rejected by God, whose end is to be burned.

2). Now the writer of Hebrews draws on this metaphor from nature at this particular point in the Book to give clarity to that which he has already been saying within this Chapter.

a). So let's go and look at the context in which we find this scripture so that we will have no doubt as to what he is talking about -

Heb 6:1 ¶ Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits. 4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for

themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. 7 For the earth which drinks.....

b). These are hopefully familiar verses for us, verses that deal with those who are to leave the elementary principles of Christ and go on 'to perfection' and those who don't, those who in effect choose to turn back to perdition instead of going on – those then who hear the word of God in respect of their heavenly calling, their inheritance and a position of rulership in the Millennial Kingdom and then govern their lives accordingly –and those who hear exactly the same word, concerning exactly the same subject, but don't govern their lives accordingly.

3). And we will recall from our opening verses that the earth that bears the herbs is cultivated and this would clearly denote work being done by someone in order to produce an appropriate harvest.

a). This is the very thing we would expect to see concerning the salvation of the soul within the context of the 7th Day – A Day which is the overall subject of the Book of Hebrews - Heb 2:5 ¶ *For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.*

b). Jas 2:20 *But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?*

Mt 16:27 *"For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.*

c). So we see then that the earth that receives the rain pictures for us through the use of the metaphor the Christian who receives the word of the Kingdom beyond the point of his eternal salvation, who must then engage in work connected with the receiving of this word [pictured through cultivating the earth in the metaphor] who will then produce 'herbs' useful to the one doing the cultivating – all of this leading to blessing from God; a present process with a future fulfillment.

d). And again this is exactly what we have seen taught through the scriptures in recent weeks.

e). Remember that which the Lord says in - Mt 21:43 *"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.*

f). Joh 12:24 *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.*

g). Ru 2:17 ¶ *So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.*

h). Lu 19:13 *"So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.'*

4). Let's drop back for a moment to look at the type seen through Israel following their redemption from Egypt in order to gain an additional perspective on this. Now we know that although God's purpose for this first generation with regards to receiving their inheritance in the land of Canaan was irrevocable – that is, this inheritance would not be given to anyone else other than the seed of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, individual participation in the fulfillment of that purpose was not automatic but conditional – Ex 19:4 *'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. 5 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6 'And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'* *These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."*

a). Although all of Israel heard exactly the same words from God regarding that which was required of them to enter the land and receive their inheritance it was only Caleb and Joshua from the entire first generation 20 years old and above who were faithfully obedient to those words and received their inheritance.

b). And we should note that for the rest of that first generation their unfaithfulness was not somehow passive, rather, they consciously chose not to do what God had said – something which God calls rebellion.

c). And by such an action they chose to place themselves in dominion to Satan – the one whom they were supposed to ultimately replace.

5). Not only this, but at Christ's first advent we find a repeat performance by Israel, this time in relation to the Kingdom of the Heavens.

a). Mt 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

b). This was the message that Jesus came with and the purpose for which He had been sent - Lu 4:43 *but He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent."*

c). And from the evidence of scripture the entire redeemed generation alive at Christ's first advent heard exactly the same words, from the One who was born King of the Jews – the One who is, the Word made flesh –
Joh 18:20 *Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing.*

6). Some 120 did believe that which God had said and as a result are found gathered together in an upper room waiting for the day of Pentecost. The rest, who had heard exactly the same message but had chosen not to believe and had therefore forfeited their inheritance in the heavenly realm of the Kingdom are found gathered together in a climactic rejection of the messenger and the message – Joh 19:15 *But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"*

Ro 6:16 *Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?*

a). And again, this was a conscious choice on their part, and the consequence for that choice was inescapable – spoken from their own mouths
Mt 27:25 *And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children."*

7). And in the midst of this proclamation of the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens to an eternally redeemed people we have in past weeks studied another metaphor taken from nature which demonstrates the unfruitfulness of that nation – Mt 21:19 *And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." [for the age] Immediately the fig tree withered away.*

a). The fig tree we will remember is Israel, completely barren at the time of Christ's first coming – the season for fruit production, even now remaining yet future and subsequent to national repentance.

b). So despite having the 'rain' of the word, found in the scriptures which they possessed week by week and despite having the Word Himself in their midst, the 'Rain' now present on the 'earth' dispensing living water, the nation as a whole produced not fruit, but thorns and briars.

8). And then in relation to what would later become the re-offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens to Israel, by the church, following the events of Pentecost, the Lord had given another parable after the same fashion –
Lu 13:6 ¶ *He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7 "Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' 8 "But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. 9 'And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.'"*

a). The offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens is re-presented to Israel by the one new man, the church – beginning with Peter’s message preached on the day of Pentecost - this message is heard, pictured through the digging and the fertilizing of the tree, with two possible outcomes following – either the tree would produce fruit or it would be cut down.

b). And in relation to the Kingdom of the Heavens the latter of these two has been the outcome for Israel - Ac 28:25 *So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: "The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, 26 "saying, 'Go to this people and say: "Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not perceive; 27 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them." 28 "Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!" 29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.*

c). They heard the same word again and although there were individuals who received it national Israel produced only thorns and briars.

9). Then in the Matthew 13 parables we have a parable which forms part of a sequence of parables outlining the history of the Church in this dispensation, which also draws from nature after a similar fashion to those we have already looked at - Mt 13:18 *"Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom,*

a). Those sown into the world are Christians who hear, ‘the Word of the Kingdom’

b). The type of ground in which each finds himself is determined not by their physical placement but by each individual's response to the Word of the Kingdom which they hear.

c). Those who we find by the wayside in this parable do not understand the Word of the Kingdom to begin with.

d). Those found in the stony places are those who have no root, who have not become established in the word of the Kingdom and stumble when persecution comes because of it.

e). Those found amongst the thorns are those overcome by the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches.

f). And those found in good ground, hear the Word of the Kingdom, understand it and produce fruit accordingly – some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

10). So as we see here in our outline of the Parable of the Sower the first group, not having understood the word of the Kingdom, is in no position to produce fruit – the second and third groups are in a position to produce fruit, but fail to do so - it is only the fourth group, those associated with the good ground who produce fruit, and it will only be those from this group who will be found worthy at the Judgment Seat. And we can add more detail to this by comparing scripture with scripture – Joh 15:1 ¶ *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.*

a). The key to producing fruit then, in relation to having heard the Word of the Kingdom is shown here as abiding in Christ.

b). Now abiding in Christ cannot refer to our positional standing in Christ as this is something that comes automatically with eternal salvation – this would be the condition shown by 'every branch in Me' from v2 – but as we see from this same verse those who are positionally in Christ are capable of not bearing fruit - just as we see in the Parable of the Sower.

c). To abide in Christ as seen in John Chapter 15 must be understood as a continual action beyond the point of our eternal salvation and would be accomplished by abiding, staying, in the Word. It is the same thought as being continually filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5:18 and letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom from Colossians Chapter 3 and of course having the extra supply of oil from the parable of the 10 virgins –
Joh 6:63 *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*

d). 2Ti 3:16 *All Scripture is God breathed, 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.*

11). Then in conjunction with this let's remember the type seen through Orpah and Ruth - Ru 1:14 *Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. 15 And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." 16 But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God.*

a). It is Ruth who clings to Naomi, who is a type of Israel and by extension the word of God given to Israel, who is then able to glean in the harvest and find favor with the kinsman redeemer, resulting in marriage and a redeemed inheritance – not Orpah; even though the same Naomi, presenting the same options, was present with both.

12). And we see exactly the same thing with respect to Abraham and Lot - 2Pe 2:7 ¶ *and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked*

a). Lot we see here is described as 'righteous' which can only be a reference to his being eternally saved.

b). But we also know that Lot's focus was on the cities of the plain rather than the hill country where his uncle dwelt - Ge 13:10 ¶ *And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere*

c). Lot's association with the plain rather than the hill country causes him to become, what Hebrews calls - Heb 5:11....*dull of hearing.*

d). Following Lot's capture and subsequent rescue after Abraham's battle with the four kings, he, Lot, would have been present when Abraham is

met by Melchizedek and would have heard that which Melchizedek spoke concerning the promise to Abraham with regards to both realms of God's kingdom – the heavens and the earth.

e). From Abraham, who hears Melchizedek's words, there comes an act of faith – he gave him a tenth of the spoils.

f). From Lot, however, who hears exactly the same words there is no response at all, although he was in a position, being righteous, to understand spiritual truth and respond accordingly.

g). Not only this, but following the meeting with Melchizedek, having heard that which was said to his uncle, we find Lot not just associated with the cities of the plain, but now in the gate of Sodom itself, demonstrating his complete assimilation into the affairs of that place.

h). And when the warning is given to him about the judgment about to be brought to pass on the cities of the plain along with clear instructions for his escape - Ge 19:17 *So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he [the angel] said, "Escape for your life! [your soul] Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountain, lest you be destroyed."*

i). Lot would not hear because he had become dull of hearing – Ge 19:18 *Then Lot said to them, "Please, no, my lords! 19 "Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die. 20 "See now, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one; please let me escape there (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live."*

Lu 9:59 *Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." 60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God." 61 And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house." 62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*

j). Despite his attempt to avoid it Lot ends up on the mountain he was originally told to go to - Ge 19:30 ¶ *Then Lot went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters were with him; for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar. And he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave.*

k). However, he is not standing on the top of the mountain before the Lord as Abraham, but hidden in a cave, in a place of darkness and shame.

l). So here again is a picture of the 'earth', on this occasion Abraham and Lot, receiving 'rain', but with two completely different outcomes following.

13). So as we read in - Heb 4:1 ¶ *Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.*

We need to ask ourselves the question, 'Am I going to come short of His rest, even though I have heard the word of the coming of His Kingdom and have been given the warning to flee to the mountain?

a). We must continue to be watchful and consistent in our proper preparation so that we are not deceived by the deceitfulness of sin, that like Lot we don't even recognize the danger we are in?

b). We all continue to receive the 'rain' week by week and day by day – it's the same 'rain' – but what matters is what we are producing as a result of receiving it.

14). Let's remember as we close for today that there are only 2 possible outcomes for us, dependent on what we produce in response to the Word – Re 3:21 *"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.*

Or

Heb 6:4 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.*

15). We will continue with this next week – if the Lord is willing.