

# Showers of Blessing

By Ken Wimer

sermonaudio.com

**Bible Text:** Isaiah 44:1-8

**Preached On:** Sunday, July 24, 2011

## Shreveport Grace Church

2970 Baird Road  
Shreveport, LA 71118

**Website:** [www.shrevegrace.org](http://www.shrevegrace.org)

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/shreveportgracech](http://www.sermonaudio.com/shreveportgracech)

If you will, look with me in our Bibles to Isaiah 44. We hear people talking all the time about God blessing our nation and, of course, everybody has their way of thinking as to how God ought to do that. We've all heard of people gathering together to pray for God's blessing on a nation and there are many that feel that if we can just get enough people praying, things will turn around and usually when they talk about things turning around, they're talking about economically. Things get a little bit tight and people start squealing and crying out for deliverance. But my question to you this morning would be: what is God's true blessing on a nation? When we ask for the Lord's blessing, what is it that we're asking for? I know this, that the Lord's people ask for something far different than what natural men or minds or even religious people are asking and here in Isaiah 44, we find the nature of true blessing. There is that song, that hymn that's in our hymnbooks, "Showers of blessing, mercy drops around us are falling." What are those showers of blessing? What is it that indeed is a mark of the Lord's blessing?

We'll read here in verses 1 through 8.

1 Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: 2 Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. 3 For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: 4 And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. 5 One shall say, I am the LORD'S; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel. 6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. 7 And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them. 8 Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.

So verse 3 is key to our understanding this particular portion of Scripture that I have entitled "Showers of Blessing." The Lord says, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." Could this be realized even if every one of us sat in stark poverty today? Absolutely. You see, personal wealth or prosperity has nothing to do with one's spiritual state before the Lord. When you see people driving that brand new Lincoln or Cadillac and whatever and on the front it says, "Blessed," that's their idea of blessing but guess what? That Cadillac is going to rust one day. The wheels are going to come off of it and then you've got to take that tag off and put it on something else for a while and if that's what blessing is, we're in trouble where we have to, like an idol, keep moving it ourselves from one thing to another, to mark it. That's what idolatry is.

But that's not the blessing that is spoken of here. There is a testimony of a woman of nobility back in the day that was put in prison for confession of Christ. It wasn't for any crimes that she had done but simply for having declared that Christ was her Lord and not bowing to the religious system of the day and she was put in prison. They would bring her morsels of bread that were mostly rotten, rotten milk and stale water to drink day in and day out and do you know what her testimony was? "All this and Christ too." You know, with Christ even a prison is a palace, but without Christ even a palace is a prison.

I believe this is what the Lord is showing Israel here. They were about to face a great judgment. The Lord was going to bring the nation of Babylon, that's the historic background of this particular portion, and take them away into captivity for 70 years. They would be removed from the land. That temple that had been built which Solomon had built and everybody looked to as being a glorious thing, the Lord would cause not one stone to remain upon another. Wipe it completely out. Yet we read here that in his time, that he would pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground. None of us would ever mark on a calendar, "I think today ought to be a drought." If we could, we would always have fertile days and just ideal temperatures and everything that you can think of as being some sort of utopia in this life but the Lord has not so ordered the steps of his children and I believe for one reason: lest we ever put any kind of confidence in the flesh and that we not get our roots too deep in this world. It's like that song says, "This world is not my home. I'm just a passing through. If heaven is not my home, O Lord, what would I do?"

Have you ever been so thirsty that you thought you would die? If your car ever broke down in the desert and things got a little bit tight, perhaps you would begin to ask that. I've never been in a situation to the point of death as far as thirst goes. The Lord has always provided a way to get a drink, but I can remember in my lifetime a situation where I was going back into a village that was way off the beaten path to preach and there had been a storm the night before and it was quite muddy in this one spot and I tried to drive my vehicle through it and it just went all the way down up to the doors in mud. So I got out and I walked. It was about two more miles to where I needed to be and that day I had not thought ahead. I thought they always offer you some Coke or something to drink when you get there but I hadn't anticipated a two mile walk in the heat. So when I got there after I had preached, I still had to deal with the vehicle and it was two miles

walking back and there were about 16 men from this particular village that walked with me. I'll never forget them, this was a Mazda pickup truck, me waist deep in this mud literally lifting this Mazda pickup and pushing it like a wheelbarrow out of this mud hole.

So we got it out on level ground and then started to try to start it and it would not start. We took the spark plugs out and put them back in and tried everything and it would not turn over. Thankfully, it was a manual shift and so we said, "Let's try to push start it." Now, you want some help when you're trying to push start a vehicle. Have 16 people that are used to working with machetes out in the field pushing you, that thing can get going pretty fast. But the problem was there was a hill. This mud hole was down between two hills so we had to push it uphill which was a challenge and then they all got out of the way and in reverse I'm trying to start this thing while it's backing back down the hill but get it started and hopefully not run right back into the mud hole again.

We worked on this thing for four hours. I say we, I was kind of sitting there in the driver's seat trying to run the gear shift, but you know, I got thirsty and they were used to just drinking water wherever it was found. The only water that was around there was this muddy old stream that was just flowing right underneath where I had gotten stuck. It was on a bridge. But, you know, I got thirsty enough where I said, "I don't care. I'll deal with the schistosoma and the worms later, I've got to have a drink." I went down there just like the rest of them and took my hand and started drinking until I quenched my thirst a little bit.

That's about as close as I can remember ever to really being to the point of exhaustion and yet this is the language that the Lord uses here in verse 3, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty." This isn't talking just about a nation. A lot of people read this and say, "Oh, that has to do with Israel and God making them prosperous again." This is individual, that in this people, among this people called Israel, the Lord would cause some, not everybody, but would cause some to know their thirst to such a point where the only solution and only remedy would be the Lord himself giving them water and floods upon the dry ground.

How would he do it? He said, "I will pour my spirit upon thy seed." That's something spiritual. It doesn't have to do with filling the bank account here but this has to do with needy sinners. God causing them to see just how great is their need and God himself being that remedy to that particular need. Does that describe anybody here today? I hope so. I hope and pray that as we gather together week in and week out that we come always together as needy sinners, starting with me. Unless the Lord is pleased to refresh our souls and give us of his spirit a desire for his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, we would die in our sin.

So as we consider this particular portion of Scripture in verses 1 and 2, I'd have you to consider those to whom this blessing is ordained. I believe it's very specific those to whom God has purposed this blessing. The word "blessing" is used there in verse 3, do you see that? "And my blessing upon thine offspring." It's an interesting word. It just literally means "happiness; that which brings joy." Not a temporal joy but an everlasting

joy. So who are those to whom God has purposed this blessing. Secondly, what is the nature of this blessing that he bestows on these? That's in verse 3. Verses 4 and 5, what are the effects of this blessing that God bestows? Then verses 6 through 8, clearly the one from whom these blessings flow. We sing what is called the doxology, "Praise God from whom," what? "All blessings flow."

So that's all here in this particular portion of the Scripture but let's look at verses 1 and 2, those to whom the blessing of God is ordained. It says here, "Yet now hear," notice the word, "O Jacob my servant; and," or even, "Israel, whom I have chosen." Those are two separate words for the same type of individual. We remember Jacob, don't we, when people accuse him of having stolen the birthright? His name means "a supplanter." And if you take a look at Jacob and Esau, Esau stuck close to home. Jacob is the one who fled. He was the schemer of the bunch and yet if you read over in Romans 9, which I would have you look there in Romans 9, what does the Lord have to say about these two brothers? This should give us some serious consideration as to why it is God blesses. Most people that you talk to today feel that God blesses them because of something they do. You've heard them say, "I must be living right. I went downtown and they say that you can't get good parking down there and I pulled up in front of the office building and guess what, the Lord had prepared a place for me. I parked my car right there in front and walked in." The other guy says, "Well, that's funny because I got a parking ticket." "Well, you must not be living right."

That's kind of the attitude that people have but is that why God blesses or doesn't bless? Based on anything in us? Look here in Romans 9. It says in verse 8, first of all, "That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God." So again, don't read this back in Isaiah 44 where it speaks of Jacob and Israel as meaning the physical descendants of Jacob or Israel because not all them were the children of God. "But the children of the promise are counted for the seed." There are those that among the children of men, God has purposed and promised to save by his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Here in Isaiah they are called the chosen, whom I have chosen. Twice that word is used.

Who are they? It says here in verse 9 of Romans 9, "For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac," not look here in verse 11, "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil." So it's not God looking to see what's good or evil in a person in order to decide what to do with them. "That the purpose of God according to," what? "Election might stand." Back here in Isaiah 44, it's the word "chosen." The same thing. Underline the next three words, "not of works, but of him that calleth. It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."

Well, that answers the question those to whom the blessings of God are, what? Ordained. If you're the Lord's here this morning, it's not for anything in you. You're nothing but a Jacob. There is a reason why the Lord put that word there, "Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant," lest anybody be puffed up in pride thinking that somehow they're a little smarter than the next guy. They're not. You need a doctor to tell you how your heart is here, you know it. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it? You'll hear people say, "I know my heart." Do you? Given the same opportunity as that chainsaw murderer, you'd do the same thing were it not for God keeping you in his mercy.

We're nothing but Jacobs but he says, "and Israel." "Israel" means "prince with God." You say, "How can the same person be called Jacob and Israel?" Well, that was the name that the Lord gave him because of what he purposed to do with him, raise him up. We're Jacobs by nature and yet our title in Christ is Israel, prince with God. You say, "How is that so?" Well, in the substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ came, lived, died, rose again and is sitting on high and just like the high priests of old that bore the names of the children of Israel on that breastplate, everyone that he represents lived that law, obeyed it and died the death of that law in him and when he rose, they rose. When he ascended on high, Paul said what in Ephesians 2? "We have been seated together with him in the heavenlies." That's the only way we can bear that name Israel. But lest we ever get cocky thinking somehow it had something to do with us, remember we're nothing but Jacobs. It's to Jacob that he purposed this mercy and purposed to blot out his sin. It was according to that covenant that he made with his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that they're his.

So that's the ones to whom the blessings of God are ordained. It's a particular blessing to be called the Lord's. I know it's a popular name today, everybody taking the name Christian. I do a lot of interviews interviewing people to hire and somehow they feel like putting the name Christian in there sometimes will help them get hired. They don't know that oftentimes that turns me around the other way because people can take and put a fish on their vehicle and somehow that identify them as being the Lord's but a fish magnet on your vehicle doesn't identify you to be the Lord's. Just because you wear the t-shirt doesn't say you're the Lord's. This is a particular grace whereby God purposed to save sinners and chose them in his Son. You think about it, sent his Son to bear the sin debt. Pay that debt. He spared not his own Son but delivered him up. That's an amazing thing. An amazing privilege.

But secondly over here in verse 3 of Isaiah 44, we've seen those to whom these blessings are ordained but what's the nature of these blessings that he bestows? I've already given it away in the introduction, it's spiritual in nature. When he says there, "I will pour my spirit," who is talking but the Lord? Who is it that determines salvation? It's the Lord. Who is it that draws sinners to himself but the Lord? As we're born in this world, we're born dead and that's what's described here, "for I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon," what? "The dry ground." Were it not for the Spirit of God taking dead hearts and mine particularly, and causing me to know of Christ, I would be just as dead as the next person.

My religious upbringing isn't what has me standing here today talking to you. I grew up in profession. I did the ceremonial stuff, getting down on my knees beside my bed, praying a prayer and holding God to account. I say it to my shame but that's what I was told to do. Read John 3:16 back to God and he has to save you if you put your name in there. That's how I was taught. Now I shudder to think about it. Who am I to take God's word and throw it back in his face and say, "You've got to save me"? It wasn't until years later that the Lord broke my heart and showed me that I was a lost sinner and it's exactly what he has to do with anyone sitting in this room or hearing this message. Until he does, you haven't known dry ground.

Dry ground is something that unless the Lord sends rain...they're talking right now about the drought that goes across the United States all the way down into Haiti, Dominican Republic. The other day I was in Lafayette and got a USA Today on my hotel room handle, so I took it off and opened it up to the middle page, a big old map of the United States all red and kind of amber, auburn color. Just drought. They're saying over in Texas now some cracks that are growing two feet wide in some of the soil. People that have lived there for years say they've never seen anything like it in their lifetime. Some going all the way back to 1800s. It's the Lord sovereignly doing his work with his world. It's a reminder that anything we have in this life, it's temporary. It's borrowed. When we die, we're not going to take it with us. People act like it's their property but it's not. It's the Lord's. But if that picture of drought, in and of itself, could help you see just what your nature is before a holy God, that unless he is pleased by his Spirit to give you life and to cause you to thirst and hunger after Christ and his grace and mercy and plead nothing but your sin before a holy God, you will die in your sin.

If you go over to Hebrews 6 and you think about the number of people that may have heard in their lifetime a message like this, you know, sometimes people can get a little whooped up. They run. When something is not quite right, they run to a place of worship and they'll ask people to pray for them and they'll start to turn over a new leaf and start reading their Bible more. Most of them, really what they turn to is fig leaves. They start trying to be nice again. "I've got to be nice to my neighbor." That works for a while until the neighbor is not nice back and then all of a sudden it's, grrr. Nothing's changed. You still are what you are.

Here in Hebrews 6, the author writes about people that have tasted of the things of Christ in the sense of having heard of them, having seen them perhaps in others, and yet fall away. You notice here in verse 1 of Hebrews 6, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." That word means maturity. When he says "leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ," he's speaking to some that he is saying we shouldn't have to keep going back to A, B, C. That's something you learn in kindergarten and yet, you notice the title of the book, Hebrews. This was written to some Jews that some Judaizers had come along and said, "It's alright to talk of the things of Christ but do you know what? We need to keep that law." It's like people we run in today, "It's alright. You can believe in Christ but you'd still better keep Saturday as the Sabbath." You run into something like that. They still require something for you to do.

He says, "Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works." The writer is saying, "We shouldn't have to, for those of you that have been taught of Christ, we shouldn't have to go back again and review the very foundation which is repentance from dead works." What he's calling dead works is what most people in religion call good works today: going to church, praying, reading your Bible. And doing it in anticipation of some sort of blessing from God. That's to be repented of. People get upset when you tell them that. "You mean my getting up early in the morning and praying doesn't mean anything to God?"

And it says, or even "of faith toward God." Repentance from dead works is equivalent to faith towards God. If faith is towards God and there you could put Christ, then there is no going back to works as any kind of basis for either gaining or maintaining salvation. It's to be repented of.

Or, it says in verse 2, "Of the doctrine of baptisms." Here it's referring back to the old law. It's the word "washings" where they used to take the sacrifices and wash them and prepare them to offer. Why are those no longer necessary? Well, it's been done. It's been put away. Christ fulfilled it.

"And of laying on of hands." There it's talking about what the priests used to do when they would lay hands on the sacrifices. The writer to the Hebrews is saying, "That's all done away with. Why do you have some coming and wanting to reinstitute these things?"

"And of resurrection of the dead." You see, that was a big thing too. Some were saying there is no resurrection. That's convenient. That means you can live however you want to and you die as an animal. Some would prefer to believe that in their depravity and yet how wrong they are.

"And of eternal judgment." He says, "And this we will do, if God permit." In other words, we can move on, not away from Christ but to deeper instruction concerning Christ which, when you read the book of Hebrews, you find from here forward that's all it is. It's just, "Let's take a look again at Christ and who he is and what he accomplished." You can study him all your lifetime and never exhaust what this book here tells of him.

But of the others you see in verse 4, "it is impossible for those who were once enlightened." That is not the word for regenerated. It talks about people like yourselves that come and sit and listen to a clear Gospel message and it's like a lightbulb comes on, "Oh, I've got it." Someone says, "I've got it. I see what you're saying." They've been enlightened but not regenerated. That enlightening will not last long. Unless the Spirit has been poured, as it reads here, "upon that seed." It's like a seed, you can take it and put it in the ground but unless it dies and it is watered, it will not grow.

"And have tasted of the heavenly gift." Tasted is different than eating, isn't it? If I invite you over for a meal and you take some on your plate and you kind of taste it a little bit and put your fork down and I'm looking at you thinking, "Come on, man. Eat." "Naw, that's fine, I tasted it." It means there's no appetite. There's no interest. You tasted it but

there is no partaking. Christ said, "My body is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed." When you think about the body and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, that's his person and his work, what he came to accomplish and when we open this book, that's what we want to hear. That's the sheep's food. The sheep's food is Christ's body. Tell me about who he is and his blood. Tell me about what he did. That's water to a thirsty soul. That's what will quench. Nothing less will do.

But here, they have tasted, they were made partakes in that they saw the Spirit working and moving in others. "I was there. I saw it." Some were there on the day of Pentecost. They saw the moving of the Spirit. "They have tasted," verse 5, "the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come." But it says, "If they shall fall away," in other words in that there is no true work of the Spirit, so fall away they will. Something is going to come and like the wind take them on down the road. "If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." You have to tie that back up with verse 4, "it is impossible." In other words, if the Lord should give a sinner over to their own reprobate mind, no matter how much they know in their mind of these things concerning Christ and salvation and his blood and how it is he saves sinners and yet in themselves, that seed not be made to take root, they shall fall away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance.

We tend to put them on our prayer lists, don't we. We think, "We'll get them." When they leave, "Let's get together and pray for them. This is a person that's needy." Maybe not, that's why they left. If they were needy, they wouldn't have left. If they truly saw themselves to be that needy sinner, don't you suppose they would have stayed right there and cried out to the Lord for mercy? So it's really the Lord just giving them up to their own reprobate mind.

It says the reason here, "seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." It's what people do when they exchange a word of Christ and his glory that gives him all the glory for running down the road and sitting under a message that gives them a little bit, just a little bit of respect. You know, that's why most people can endure long sitting under a message that gives Christ all the glory. You see it on signs sometimes in places of worship out on the marquee, "Welcome here, where everybody is somebody." That kind of makes you feel good, like I'm going to go in there and be somebody. But imagine if we put out on our sign what Scripture really says, "Welcome sinner, where everybody is nobody and Christ is all." But that's why I'm here. That's why we meet right here, because everybody is nobody except for the grace of God, what he has been pleased to make us in his Son and Christ is all.

You know, verse 7 is telltale. If something is by nature a thistle, can you make it a flower? If a person is by nature a goat, can you transform them into a sheep? No. They are what they are. You notice how in verse 7 it fits with Isaiah 44, "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God." There is the word blessing. What if the whole earth was just nothing but rock and thistle, do you think farmers would dedicate their lives to it? No, it's with the hope that when we go out here and sow this seed, God



having made that soil fertile and God blessing the seed, when it's sown, it will produce and I can say that with all surety.

I'm not trying to be a doomsday person here, otherwise I wouldn't be preaching. I believe the Lord has his sheep. I believe that there are those yet to hear, some of you sitting right here being among them, that need Christ. You're thirsty and here's the water. He's the water of life and when you drink of that water and are drawn to it by his Spirit and hunger and thirst after his righteousness, you're filled. And when you're filled, don't you say, "I'll be back"? But that's the Lord. That's his choosing. That's those that he has given that grace to.

But look at verse 8, "But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected." In other words, no matter how much rain you pour on it, it's still a thistle. It's still dead. I've got some plants around my house I ought to just take a shovel and just go ahead and take them out of there. They're dead. But when I empty the water in the dog's bowl, I throw it over on there thinking, "Okay, let's give it one more shot here." Come on, three years of this? Dead long ago.

That's exactly the picture of those that might be even describing some here, have sat and heard and tasted and yet your heart is just as hard as it's ever been. Unless God is pleased to grant you his Spirit to enter into Christ, that's how you'll die. You'll die in your sin.

Well, I've bitten off more than I can chew. I told you we'd talk about the blessings that God has ordained. We've looked at that, the nature of the blessings so we'll save for next time the effects of these blessings and then the one from whom all blessings flow.