



REFLECTION, REPENTANCE, AND THE LATTER RAIN

It was a hot August day in 1879 and the Castle family home in Northern Michigan had not seen rain for a long time. The tinder dry pine forests and parched ground that surrounded them cried out for life giving water. Then one day, the family noticed smoke billowing above the horizon. It was the dreaded forest fire!

As fate would have it, the wind blew the fire right toward the Castle's home. The following morning the air was dense with smoke. In the distance, along the jagged silhouette of the nearest mountain range, orange and red spires of flames warned of the onrushing disaster. Darting in confused panic, wild animals wandered near the house while trying to escape the imminent threat.

It was then the Castle's seven year old son noted an old buck and little fawn who had come out of the forest. The buck was sniffing the air defiantly as the fawn stood by seemingly unafraid. It forcibly struck the young lad how trusting the fawn seemed in the presence of its father, and brought to the boy's mind that in the same way, people should trust their Heavenly Father.

With the courage of a general, the lad marched to his room, knelt down beside his quilt covered bed and prayed. "God, there is a great big fire in the woods here. It is getting hot, and we can't hardly see. Won't you send the wind from the other direction and add in some rain to put it out?"

Going downstairs, he cheerfully announced to his mother, "it's going to rain." "Why do you say that?" she asked. "The sky isn't even cloudy."

"Because I have asked Jesus, and Jesus will send the rain", announced the little boy with confidence. But as evening drew on, the fire came closer and cinders were now lighting little fires around the house. Father filled every possible barrel with water preparing for a great fight.

"Papa, it's going to rain" the son repeated. "Doesn't look that way to me," said his father. But the little boy in perfect trust, went to sleep that night knowing the rain would come.

About midnight, the sound of distant thunder rumbled through the smoky air. And then came the rain. It fell in torrents all night. God had answered the prayer of faith and sent the rain just in time.

The church today needs spiritual rain to quench the spiritual drought that is drying up the first love of God's people and wind to blow the fires of temptation in the other direction. Is spiritual rain on its way? Are we ready for it?

The Bible tells us in Joel 2:23:

"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain...."

When the Bible speaks of the former rain and the latter rain, to what is it referring?

In ancient Palestine, the early rain was synonymous with that which took place near the time of planting. These rains provided the necessary moisture to spring up the seedlings. The latter rain was associated with the time of harvest, the refreshing that would ripen the crops after the hot summer. As a result of the latter rain, the waiting harvest would be gathered in.

Like the literal rains that liven the earth, the Bible is also referring to the spiritual rain that liven the heart. This spiritual rain represents the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon God's waiting children. Like the literal rains of Palestine, there is both an early and latter Spiritual rain.

In a Spiritual sense, we think of the early rain as when the Spirit was poured upon Christ's waiting disciples in the upper room at Pentecost. What followed was men and women filled with the power of the Spirit of God going forth to spread His truth! The results were earth shattering! We find the story in Acts chapter 2.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."—Acts 2:1

Now, why were they "all with one accord?" What had brought them to this point?

Prior to their assembly, the disciples had encountered the worst experience of

their life, during which the faith of the little church was shaken. Christ had been tried, condemned and crucified. The disciples had not anticipated and were unprepared for such an event.

Why were they unprepared? Had Christ not told them of his approaching death? Christ had indeed shared what was about to take place, but the disciples were not listening. Instead, their minds were largely occupied with the thought of who would be the greatest in the kingdom they assumed would be set up on earth.

After the shaking of their faith and dashed hopes for some cabinet position in the new government, the disciples came together in the upper room to wait and pray as Christ had commanded. We can picture them, as with vivid awareness they realized how foolish they had been, wasting their time over misplaced priorities instead of doing their all for Christ.

At last they came together in the upper room to pray, study, and make things right with each other. It was only then that God could infuse His early church with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Power could not be applied to anything less than complete humility and willingness to contribute as God should direct.

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

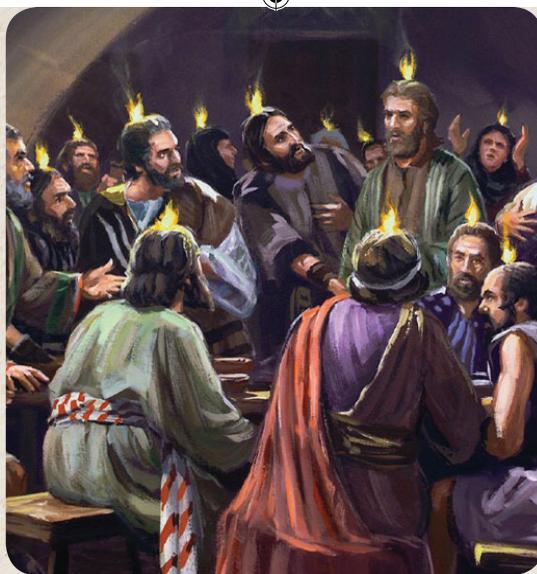
And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”—Acts 2: 2-4

What happened? They were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Have you ever been filled with the Holy Spirit? Have you ever had a sense of the joy and Holy Power that comes from that experience? It results in an absolute confidence in God and an ever looking to Him!

Then in verses 16-18, Peter goes on to quote Joel chapter 2 which refers to the



early and latter rain. What happened at Pentecost was a direct fulfillment of this old Testament text.

The purpose of the outpouring of God's Spirit upon the Apostolic church was to fill His people with the Divine power and energy required to take God's message of truth to a world dying in sin. This was the early rain, and incredible were the results.

Understanding the early rain in the outpouring at Pentecost helps us to understand the latter rain as that final outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon God's end-time people.

In this study, we will examine 5 basic facts of the Latter Rain as we near its soul drenching fulfillment - specifically focusing in on the personal reflection and repentance that must proceed it.

Fact #1 - The Latter rain, in its fullness, is associated with the Loud Cry Message of Revelation 18 and lightens the world with Heaven's final warning.

It is a message given to all people, warning them to come out of false worship, to separate from error and take their stand with and for Christ.

“And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.”—Revelation 18:1

This event is what is also known as the Loud Cry.

“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying; Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”—Revelation 18:4

Ellen White underscores the overwhelming extent of this worldwide movement and its ultimate success.

“During the loud cry, the church, aided by the providential interpositions of her exalted Lord, will diffuse the knowledge of salvation so abundantly that light will be communicated to every city and town. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of salvation. So abundantly will the renewing Spirit of God have crowned with success the intensely active agencies, that the light of present truth will be seen flashing everywhere.” *Review and Herald*, October 13, 1904

In scripture we find in poetic terms a similar encouragement.

“For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”—Habakkuk 2:14

Why is the warning message given with such startling power at this time? Like the last call for people to get on the ark before the flood, God gives the inhabitants of earth a final opportunity to separate from error and accept the truth as it is in Jesus.

Fact #2 – The Latter Rain comes in its fullness at the commencement of earth's early time of trouble.

In Joel we find this combining of Spiritual outpouring and turmoil.

“And...in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.”—Joel 2:29,30

The latter rain comes during the time of the outpouring of God's judgments still mixed with mercy. These judgments are designed to awaken the people and many will turn to the Lord as a result. God's people will be drawn together in their common cause, much like the upper room disciples prior to the day of Pentecost. It will truly be a time of deep prayer and heart searching.

This concept is further reinforced in the following quote:

“In the time of confusion and trouble



such as never was since there was a nation, the uplifted Savior will be presented to the people in all lands and in all places, that all who look may live.” *Testimonies For The Church, Volume 8, page 50.*

Notice that it is in this time of confusion and trouble (ie...early time of trouble), the uplifted Savior will be presented to the entire world. This is the time of the latter rain!

Those who look past the confusion and trouble of that time, are those who have their eye steady on Jesus, who know Him in a spiritually intimate way and who follow exactly what He says in His Word. They will be those who triumph in Christ during earth’s final crisis. Let’s pray to be part of that group!

Thanks to Jesus we have recent inspiration on these important subjects.

“I saw that...events come in order. War and rumors of war, sword, famine, and pestilence are first to shake the earth.” *Early Writings p. 41*

“I was shown the inhabitants of the earth in the utmost confusion. War, bloodshed, privation, want, famine, and pestilence were abroad in the land. As these things surrounded God’s people, they began to press together, and to cast aside their little difficulties.” {IT 268.1}

Notice God’s people press together when perplexities and trouble surround them. They cast aside their little difficulties.

Do we have little difficulties in the



church today? They may not seem little now but in the coming trouble, our current challenges will seem trite. Someday soon we may consider today’s challenges as the good old days.

Continuing with the quote:

“Self-dignity no longer controlled them; deep humility took its place. Suffering, perplexity, and privation caused reason to resume its throne, and the passionate and unreasonable man became sane, and acted with discretion and wisdom.” {IT 268.1}

“My attention was then called from the scene. There seemed to be a little time of peace. Once more the inhabitants of the earth were presented before me; and again everything was in the utmost confusion. Strife, war, and bloodshed, with famine and pestilence, raged everywhere.” {IT 268.2}

“Other nations were engaged in this war and confusion. War caused famine. Want and bloodshed caused pestilence. And then men’s hearts failed them for fear, “and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.” {IT 268.2}

Fact #3 – The Latter Rain is poured out after the troubles of earth shake God’s church to its very foundation.

Not only is the world shaken to its foundations by God’s judgments, God’s remnant people are also shaken. This is both a corporate and individual event.

“Now I want to say that night after night there is presented before me that all at once affliction and sorrow and distress will be brought upon our people.” *Ms 64-1910.*

“When the days come when the law of God is made void, and the church is sifted by the fiery trials that are to try all that live upon the earth, a great proportion of those who are supposed to be genuine will give heed to seducing spirits, and will turn traitors and betray sacred trusts. They will prove our very worst persecutors.” *6 BC 1065*

Prior to the early rain, a shaking among the disciples of Christ sent tremors to their very foundation of faith. When they

witnessed the betrayal of Jesus by one of their most highly respected and looked up to disciples, they were surprised and bewildered. But when they saw their Master tortured and crucified, they thought all was lost. It is a gross understatement to say a deep heart searching followed. They were devastated.

Likewise, prior to the outpouring of the latter rain, God’s people will again be surrounded by heart wrenching troubles, difficulties, afflictions and sorrows. Compounding these will be the betrayals of the faith by those whom we know and love.

God has a solution for the problems we face; different than we might think.

Consider what is recorded in the Book of Hosea.

“It is in my desire that I should chastise them; and the people shall be gathered against them...”–Hosea 10:10

“Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.”–Hosea 10:12

Chastisement is never fun. Our natural heart wants things to be all warm and fuzzy, but that is precisely why we are in the Laodicean condition. We are way too comfortable. God has to mix it up with our comfort zone to catch our attention and give us a chance to bottom out. It is when we are flat on our backs that we have the best opportunity for looking up.

God knows our frame. He knows what it will take to shake us out of our lethargy. In love He will do just that, and then bless us beyond measure when we finally turn to Him for help.

“Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.”–Hosea 6:1

Notice who it is that does the tearing and why? When the Lord shakes things up, He will then restore His people to the condition He wants and needs for the army of the Lord. This army will be comprised of soldiers altogether different than what we see today.

It is to the glory of God when He takes the simple farmer from the field and makes him the preacher, because it is evident, that it is not the ability of man that is doing the work, but the Spirit of God. From the humble tradesmen and women, from the bakery, the machine shop and the carpenter's bench an army of the Lord will go forth filled with the Holy Spirit and equipped for the high calling of finishing the work.

"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

—Hosea 6:3

"The days are fast approaching when there will be great perplexity and confusion. Satan, clothed in angel robes, will deceive, if possible, the very elect. Those who have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent will not then stand at the head of rank and file. Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock. In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged. They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them." 5T 80.1

Fact #4 – Though set apart for a holy purpose, the church has to a great degree failed to live up to this high calling of God. The shaking of the church, produces a repentance and drawing together of God's people unlike anything since apostolic times.

During the upcoming revival, God's people will again understand what it means to be set apart. In the Old Testament, Israel was set apart as God's holy people for the express purpose of reflecting His Holy character.

Beyond having the character of God – they were to aggressively share God's character with the whole world. His love and Justice were to be taught to an ungodly world dying in sin. For this purpose, the Levites were set apart to care for the Sanctuary and support the priestly ministry which in turn were to instruct the people in righteousness.

Yet, Israel failed in living up to their high calling. Why? Their minds were elsewhere. Consider their words to the

prophet Samuel, saying, "give us a king, that we might be like all the other nations". (Paraphrase). In short, their minds were on the world.

So, like ancient Israel, the church itself is set apart as God's peculiar people to the world. Within the church the elders and deacons and deaconesses replace the ancient Levites as responsible for the church and the services of worship. Likewise, the priests, represent the ministry that is set apart to be shepherds over the flock.

As we approach the end of earth's history and prior to the outpouring of the latter rain, many in God's church are imitating the practices of the world. Again, we need to learn what it means to be set apart for holy use.

The story of Samson is the sad experience of one who was set apart but failed to live up to what it meant. What was he set apart to do? Deliver God's people from their enemies. This was to be accomplished by using the miraculous strength that empowered him as God's Spirit filled him for duty.

Samson's life work was to be a deliverer. In fulfilling such a mission, he would represent a type of Christ.

He was to reveal the character of God to his people and through the strength provided from above, deliver them from their captors. This would also teach the people the object lesson by depending on God's strength that they too could be victorious.

Yet, what did Samson actually do?

He failed. Why? He used his power to live a life of selfish indulgence. He shunned his responsibility to be a holy example of righteousness and spent his time imbibing the pleasures of life. This nearly destroyed his usefulness as one set aside to represent God.

The love of selfish indulgence became so much the controlling influence of Samson's life that he demanded his every whim and desire be fulfilled. This is most clearly displayed in his statement, "Get her for me for she pleases me well." Judge 14:3, referring to the Philistine woman he wished to marry.

Now, the principal of being set apart is to serve. Not what is best for me, but what is best for others. The spirit of self-sacrificing love comes with being set apart for a holy use.

What was Jesus set apart for? He was set apart to reveal the Father to us – His love, His justice and His character.

Christ lived an entire life of self-sacrificing love. His all-consuming motivation was to reveal the character of God; a character that always considers the needs of others first.

In the life of Jesus we see this principle in His constant ministry for others, forgetting about his own needs as He relieved theirs. He would gladly give his lunch to some hungry soul even if it meant He would go hungry. Though tired and worn, He would spend countless hours bringing hope and healing to those in discomfort and pain. His love was so complete that even his physical needs were often set aside, for the sake of relieving others distress.



Ultimately, He gave His life for us through His infinite sacrifice for sin. He was thus called to serve and give His life as ransom for many!

The Lord chronicled the story of Samson to stand as a warning to us. Rather than live up to the high calling of God, continually living a life of submission to the will of God, he lived as he pleased. There were times when he did that which the Lord commanded but he ultimately did what he wanted.

When Samson met Delilah, it didn't take long for him to come under her worldly influence. She continually prodded him to violate his agreement with the Lord. Through her, the devil was trying to separate Samson from the Source of his power by violating his sacred trust.

We know the story well: he gave in to the temptations of a beautiful woman. When we dally with what we should avoid, one of two things happen, we either fall or we separate from that which we should have avoided. There are no other options.



For Samson, giving in meant the eventual loss of his eyesight. And if that wasn't bad enough, he was now a forced slave in a Philistine jail. His time now spent grinding wheat like an ox, allowed him to reflect.

Then, during the next two years something happened in his mind and heart as he realized what a fool he'd been.

All the incredible opportunities the Lord gave to Samson played over and over in his mind. How he wished to turn back time and seize the moments he had wasted and follow the Lord instead of living for self-indulgence!

But what now? It seemed too late to fulfill what God had once set him aside to do.

But amazingly to Samson, God still heard his humble cry. Though it looked impossible, God could still use Samson one last time. And the opportunity came. The Philistines brought Samson out to make sport of him at one of their feasts. By God's design a plan formed in Samson's mind that day. "Take me over to the pillars" he asked the boy who led him. Thinking Samson must want to rest, the boy led him over to the center support columns. Pressing his palms against the massive granite stones he prayed to the Lord.

"Oh Lord", Samson pled, "I am so sorry for slighting your Spirit and going my own way. But right now, if you would give me just one more chance, grant me strength to fulfill Your will and destroy the enemies of Israel." (paraphrase)

Judges tells it this way:

"And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once O God.... And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood..."

...And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people... So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life." -Judges 16:28-30

God answered Samson's prayer of repentance and poured out His Spirit upon him one last time. This resulted in the work he did in the end, being greater than that accomplished in all his previous life.

Likewise, at the end of time, God's people will also realize their world is at an end. The time of trouble has started, and the work God would have them do has been left undone. Like Samson's repentance, many of God's people will exclaim, "if only I had one more chance, I would do the work God would have me to do."

In reflection and repentance, they plead with God for the power of the Spirit and the privilege to make Him known one last time and God hears their prayer and pours out His Spirit upon them, and like Samson, the work the church accomplishes in the end is greater than all its prior existence.

To further understand the meaning of being set apart, let's turn to the book of Malachi. Here, the Lord is speaking to Israel, to the Levites, and particularly to the Priests. He starts off reminding them that they are His chosen people, but that the priests have despised His name.

The question is then brought up by the priests, "Wherein have we despised thy name?" Malachi 1:6

And the Lord answers them...

"Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee?"

And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts." -Malachi 1:7,8

Though they were called to minister to the people on behalf of the Lord, the inner workings and affections of the heart were not with the Lord. Their actions showed they really didn't care about the worship of God - at least not in comparison with caring about themselves. Thus, in choosing a lamb to sacrifice, they would select the worst of the flock to use for an offering, while reserving the best for themselves.

In simple terms the Lord was saying, "You don't understand what a love relationship is about." When we love someone, we want to give them the best, not the worst!

Though they were the ministers of God, self was the controlling influence in their lives.

"...And ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD."

—Malachi 1:13

What is the result of a lackluster priesthood, a corrupted ministry? Though not necessarily in doctrine, corruption of the heart brings about a state that is worse than heathen. Haggai addresses this condition:

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways."—Haggai 1:7

"Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little... Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house."—Haggai 1:9

By giving us relationships God intended to teach that we always put the other person first. In our relationship with God, we are to put Him first. In His relationship with us He always puts us first. His every thought and motive are to bless others.

Sometimes what He does for and to us seems like anything but a blessing but He knows what is best, difficult though it seems at times. His thoughts and actions toward us are only to build us up and make us a happy, healthy, and holy people.

"Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land... and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil"
—Haggai 1:10,11

Why was Israel lacking the success that God wanted to give them? Because their hearts really weren't with Him, their hearts were with themselves. As a result, a lack of rain would be upon them until

they repented and put the work of the Lord ahead of their own interests.

What is the answer to this problem?

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple..."

But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness."

—Malachi 3:1-3

Do we see pride and self-will rearing their ugly heads in God's church today? At times, do we see divisions of opinion that are un-Christ-like? Is there a lack of spirituality and power to do the work of God? The answer is obvious.

These things will exist until there is a sweeping change in the condition of Laodicea. When this occurs there will be a church in form similar to what took place in apostolic times. The unction of the Holy Spirit will lead and no man will be seeking the highest place. Christ and Him crucified will be the theme on every lip and those who remain will have their highest concern that the character of God is properly revealed in the life and proclaimed in every land.

Though we now see strife in our church regarding who has authority and power, the time is fast

approaching when the Lord Himself will correct matters within His church and within His ministry. He has ultimate responsibility and a loving concern for all who are called by His name.

This is a terrible ordeal but He will do what must be done to show us how vain is human authority. What means will God employ to bring about the needed change? He will come through the agency of His Spirit and refine His ministry that they may, in their one last opportunity in time, lead the flock in paths of righteousness.

Before such a comprehensive Revival must come a deep heartfelt repentance. And before repentance must come a reflection time as actuated by the Spirit. When all these things are accomplished, the church (leaders and members alike) will seek with all their hearts to receive the imprint of His Divine Nature and character. Only then will there be one last outpouring of the Holy Spirit to finish the work.

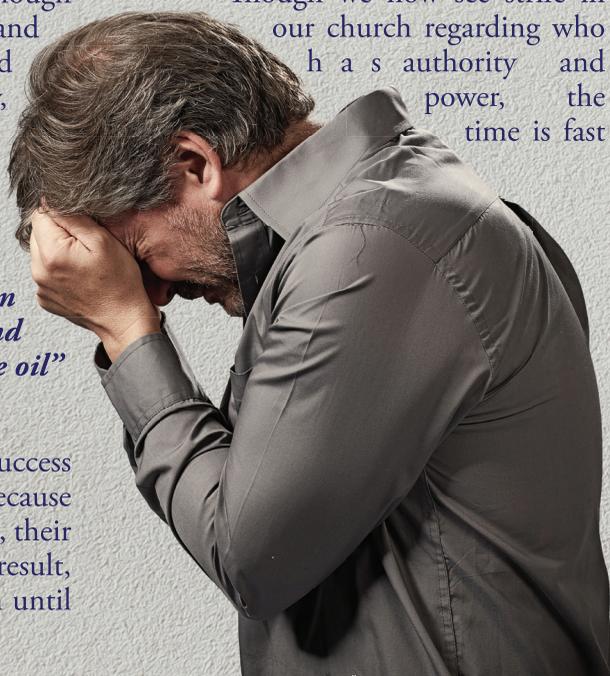
Through the Holy Spirit the bride will be made ready and then the message will at long last be the gospel the world has been waiting to hear.

"The last message of warning and mercy is to lighten the whole earth with its glory. As surely as this message shall be proclaimed in all the earth, so surely shall be fulfilled the prophecy given through Malachi..." *Southern Watchmen*, January 10, 1905

The Book of Malachi is also a last day prophecy. Surprised? Mrs. Ellen G. White had a unique dream that reveals the condition of our church in what appears to be a time of distress. She does not say exactly what the change of world or church conditions were to be but something has brought the church to a condition of humility and reflection.

We will be considering this sobering story found in *Review and Herald*, February 4, 1902 and starting in paragraph 13.

"In the night season I was in my dreams in a large meeting, with ministers, their wives, and their children. I wondered that the company present was mostly made up of ministers and their families.



The prophecy of Malachi was brought before them in connection with Daniel, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Zechariah. The teaching of these books was carefully investigated.

The building of the temple, and the temple service, were considered. There was close searching of the Scriptures in regard to the sacred character of all that appertained to the temple service. Through the prophets, God has given a delineation of what will come to pass in the last days of this earth's history; and the Jewish economy is full of instruction for us.

All these things were closely studied by the company before me in my dream. Scripture was compared with scripture, and application was made of the word of God to our own time. After a diligent searching of the Scriptures, there was a period of silence. A very solemn impression was made upon the people.

The deep moving of the Spirit of God was manifest among us. All were troubled, all seemed to be convicted, burdened, and distressed, as they saw their own life and character represented in the word of God, and the Holy Spirit was making the application to their hearts.

Conscience was aroused. The record of past days was making its disclosure of the vanity of human inventions. The Holy Spirit brought all things to their remembrance.

As they reviewed their past history, there were revealed defects of character that ought to have been discerned and corrected. They saw how through the grace of Christ the character should have been transformed. The workers had known the sorrow of defeat in the work entrusted to their hands, when they should have had victory.

The Holy Spirit presented before them Him whom they had offended. They saw that God will not only reveal himself as a God of mercy and forgiveness and long forbearance, but by terrible things in righteousness He will make it manifest that He is not a man that He should lie.

Words were spoken by One, saying, "The hidden, inner life will be revealed. As if reflected in a mirror, all the inward

working of the character will be made manifest. The Lord would have you examine your own lives, and see how vain is human glory." *Review and Herald*, February 4, 1902

It's interesting that this dream was written in the context of what it means to be set apart for Holy use and especially points us to be faithful stewards.

The time is near when the outlook for the church will appear bleak and only those who have on the robe of Christ's righteousness will be prepared to stand and be used in the final movement.

It should also be noted that the Spirit of God was bringing conviction to this group of ministers. God was still striving with them. We should also be praying for those in leadership positions.

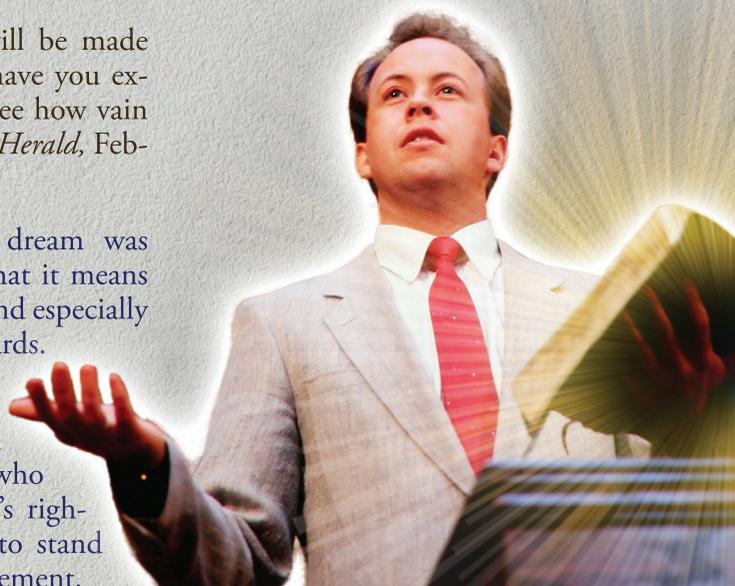
We all stand guilty before God for slighting His pleading love and messages of warning. Even righteous Daniel included himself in his prayer to God as he pled for mercy and deliverance. There is no place for pointing fingers. The only pointing should be to Jesus. He is our example. He should be our only lingering focus. Men will fail but Jesus never fails.

This vision also points us to the type of repentance that must come to God's people prior to their receiving the latter rain. The church, both laity and ministry must be converted and united, like the disciples in the upper room and it will be the Spirit of God that brings this about. This will be initiated by, what we often call, the straight testimony (the deep convictions of the Spirit upon the human heart). Only then will they be prepared to plead for the Spirit, one last time, to finish the work of God on earth.

*"Unto me men gave ear, and waited,
and kept silence at my counsel."
-Job 29:21*

*"And they waited for me as for
the rain; and they opened their mouth
wide as for the latter rain."
-Job 29:23*

Fact# 5 - As a result of the Latter Rain, God's people arise as an army with banners and quickly finish their work on earth.



Consider also the following vision concerning the painful ordeal of transformation and subsequent empowerment:

"My attention was then turned to the company I had seen, who were mightily shaken. I was shown those whom I had before seen weeping and praying in agony of spirit. The company of guardian angels around them had been doubled, and they were clothed with an armor from their head to their feet.

Their countenances expressed the severe conflict which they had endured, the agonizing struggle they had passed through. Yet their features, marked with severe internal anguish, now shone with the light and glory of heaven.

The numbers of this company had lessened. Some had been shaken out and left by the way. The careless and indifferent, who did not join those who prized victory and salvation enough to perseveringly plead and agonize for it, did not obtain it, and they were left behind in darkness and their places were immediately filled by others taking hold of the truth and coming into the ranks.

I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth with great power. It had effect.

I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered, it is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel." *Early Writings* 270-271

Is it your desire to hear the straight testimony today, to hear from the Spirit

of God what is needed in your life to be the vessel purified and prepared for the outpouring of the latter rain? Make the decision today, that nothing be allowed to stand between you and God and give yourself fully and completely into His loving arms. No compromise, no love of the world, no denying Christ in word or deed or action, but a full and complete surrender to the Spirit of God each and every day. This is needed to prepare us to receive the Latter Rain.

*A certain man was working as an evangelist in China in an early part of the last century and had come to an area unreached by Christianity. In this particular locality, there had been a two-year drought. As a result, food was scarce and if it continued much longer the entire community would be forced to relocate to survive. Coming into this land of Buddha, the evangelist approached a man who looked educated and asked in the polite Chinese way: "where can I find a location to hold a public meeting? I would like to speak to the people."

"I am the local school teacher," replied the man. "You may use my school and I will inform the town." In those days, a stranger coming with something to address to the people was a treat and everyone in the surrounding area showed up:

men, women, and children. The local elders and officials sat right up front to hear everything that this curious stranger said.

"I have come to teach you about the great Creator-God", said the evangelist. "He created all things and by Him all things have life." The people had not heard this before, that the great Creator-God loves all people and has filled the earth with His blessings. The evangelist went on to describe the beauty, power and love of the God of the Bible. In rapt attention the people listened with wonder at these new teachings.

With child-like excitement someone interrupted the speaker and asked, "What does this Creator-God look like? Can we see Him?" The evangelist explained, "We cannot see God, but we can know that He is there." Another asked, "Can we hear Him? Will He speak to us?" "Yes", said the evangelist, sometimes He speaks to our minds and sometimes He speaks in a voice."

Then the question was asked, "Can the Creator-God send rain?"

Why "Yes", said the evangelist and he went on to tell the story of Ahab, Elijah and Mount Carmel. When he was finished, the local leaders said; "we will do

just that. We will ask the Creator-God to send us rain for our famished land. Will you ask Him for us?"

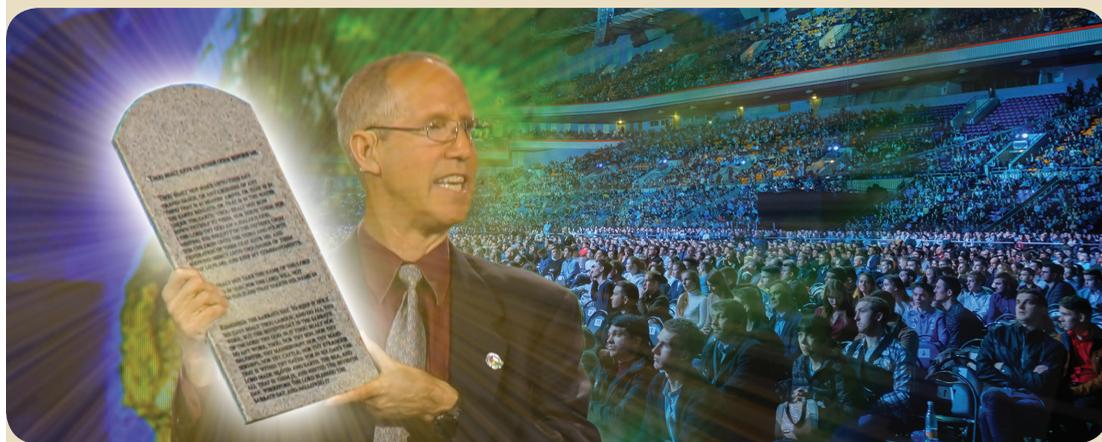
The evangelist's faith was put to a major test. Here was the entire community pleading with him to ask the Creator-God to send rain upon the parched land they loved so much and didn't want to leave. Their faith was so simple and yet so pure: like that of a trusting child.

He gathered the people together and prayed, the earnest and sincere prayer of faith. When finished, he looked out at the sky, it was as blue as ever, and the air was just as dusty. Stepping out from the school he looked all around, and there in the distance he saw it, a small, dark cloud. Pointing to the distant cloud he told the people with great confidence, "See, the rain is coming."

The elders looked at this small cloud and said, "Is that cloud going to bring us rain?" "Yes", said the evangelist. As they watched, the cloud grew larger and the wind began to blow through the dusty streets and dry grass. Putting on his backpack the evangelist said, "I must go before the rain comes. I need to reach the next village before nightfall."

The evangelist had not reached the next village before the rain hit: it came down in torrents. Then as he stood under a shelter near the road, he realized that as the rains had come in answer to his prayer, so they would result in a great harvest for the Lord.

The same spiritual rain will come in answer to our prayers, but it will come in answer to the prayer of faith, the faith of a unified people and the faith that lays hold upon the Lord and will not let go. Do you want to have that kind of faith today?



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