

THE EARLY AND LATTER RAIN OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT

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1. God uses the pouring out of water as a symbol of pouring out of His Holy Spirit upon the Church. Isa. 44:3-5.
2. God causes the showers to come down in its time, they are called showers of blessing. Eze. 34:26.
3. All Christians must receive the God (the Spirit) as both the early and the latter rain. Hos. 6:3.
4. There is a promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Scripture. Joel. 2:28,29; Lk. 24:49.
5. This promise of the outpouring of the Spirit has a twofold application.
 - a. It was partially fulfilled on the day of Pentecost upon the disciples of Christ. Acts. 1:8; Acts. 2:1-4,14-18.
 - b. It is to be fully fulfilled in a future out pouring upon the Church. Jam. 5:7,8.
6. Concerning the early and latter rain of the Holy Spirit we are told in the Spirit of Prophecy.

“As the former rain was given, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the opening of the gospel, to cause the

upspringing of the precious seed, so the latter rain will be given at its close, for the ripening of the harvest.” Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, pg. 611-612.

“These scenes are to be repeated, and with greater power. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the former rain, but the latter rain will be more abundant. The Spirit awaits our demand and reception. Christ is again to be revealed in His fullness by the Holy Spirit's power.” Ellen G. White, Christ's Object Lessons, pg. 121.

[“It is true that in the time of the end, when God's work in the earth is closing, the earnest efforts put forth by consecrated believers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit are to be accompanied by special tokens of divine favor. Under the figure of the early and the latter rain, that falls in Eastern lands at seedtime and harvest, the Hebrew prophets foretold the bestowal of spiritual grace in extraordinary measure upon God's church. The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result. To the end of time the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church. But near the close of earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest "in the time of the latter rain." In response, "the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them

showers of rain." "He will cause to come down . . . the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain," Zechariah 10:1; Joel 2:23." Ellen G. White, The Acts of The Apostles, pg. 54-55.]

7. With regard to facts concerning the former and latter rain, we are told.

“In the East the former rain falls at the sowing time. It is necessary in order that the seed may germinate. Under the influence of the fertilizing showers, the tender shoot springs up. The latter rain, falling near the close of the season, ripens the grain and prepares it for the sickle. The Lord employs these operations of nature to represent the work of the Holy Spirit. As the dew and the rain are given first to cause the seed to germinate, and then to ripen the harvest, so the Holy Spirit is given to carry forward, from one stage to another, the process of spiritual growth. The ripening of the grain represents the completion of the work of God's grace in the soul. By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ. The latter rain, ripening earth's harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection.” Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pg. 506.

8. The early rain of the Holy Spirit must do its complete work in the Christian before he qualifies to receive the latter rain.

“But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection. There is to be "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." There must be a constant development of Christian virtue, a constant advancement in Christian experience. This we should seek with intensity of desire, that we may adorn the doctrine of Christ our Saviour.” Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pg. 506.

9. Thus we are told to work out our salvation. Phil. 2:12,13.

10. And we must grow in Grace and knowledge. 2 Pet. 3:18

11. We are given a roster on how to advance in the exemplification of Christian graces so that we should not be wanting in preparation for the latter rain. 2 Pet. 1:5-8.

The Spirit of Prophecy tells us that many have even failed to receive the early rain of the Spirit and hope to supply the lack with the latter rain. This will never happen. Inner cleansing
12. by Justification and sanctification is first necessary.

“Many have in a great measure failed to receive the former rain. They have not obtained all the benefits that God has thus provided for them. They expect that the lack will be supplied by the latter rain. When the richest

abundance of grace shall be bestowed, they intend to open their hearts to receive it. They are making a terrible mistake. The work that God has begun in the human heart in giving His light and knowledge must be continually going forward. Every individual must realize his own necessity. The heart must be emptied of every defilement and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit.”
Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pg. 507.

13. We are told that the work done by the apostles to receive the former rain must be repeated again, and to a greater extent if we of today hope to receive the latter rain.

“It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now. Then the human agent had only to ask for the blessing, and wait for the Lord to perfect the work concerning him. It is God who began the work, and He will finish His work, making man complete in Jesus Christ.” Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pg. 507.

14. Even now we are to ask for the Holy Spirit as rain, but we are to ask for the latter rain in the time it is to come. Zech. 10:1.
15. But we must not neglect to do the cooperative work with God for our spiritual development as is needed under the early

rain of the Holy Spirit.

“But there must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.” Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pg. 507.

16. We need the blessings under the early rain as much as we need the blessings under the latter rain.

“At no point in our experience can we dispense with the assistance of that which enables us to make the first start. The blessings received under the former rain are needful to us to the end. Yet these alone will not suffice. While we cherish the blessing of the early rain, we must not, on the other hand, lose sight of the fact that without the latter rain, to fill out the ears and ripen the grain, the harvest will not be ready for the sickle, and the labor of the sower will have been in vain. Divine grace is needed at the beginning, divine grace at every step of advance, and divine grace alone can complete the work.” Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pg. 507-508.

17. We must not be negligent about our spiritual growth and advancement, we must seek constant connection with God for

success.

“There is no place for us to rest in a careless attitude. We must never forget the warnings of Christ, "Watch unto prayer," "Watch, . . . and pray always." A connection with the divine agency every moment is essential to our progress. We may have had a measure of the Spirit of God, but by prayer and faith we are continually to seek more of the Spirit. It will never do to cease our efforts. If we do not progress, if we do not place ourselves in an attitude to receive both the former and the latter rain, we shall lose our souls, and the responsibility will lie at our own door.” Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pg. 508.

18. It is while seeking God for the Holy Spirit that right spiritual attitudes will develop.

“As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain. If we pray for the blessing in faith, we shall receive it as God has promised.” Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pg. 509.

19. Here is an account again of the work we are to now do for ourselves that we may gain the latter rain.

“This is the work that the Lord would have every soul prepared to do at this time, when the four angels are holding the four winds, that they shall not blow until the

servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. There is no time now for self-pleasing. The lamps of the soul must be trimmed. They must be supplied with the oil of grace. Every precaution must be taken to prevent spiritual declension, lest the great day of the Lord overtake us as a thief in the night. Every witness for God is now to work intelligently in the lines which God has appointed. We should daily obtain a deep and living experience in the work of perfecting Christian character. We should daily receive the holy oil, that we may impart to others. All may be light bearers to the world if they will. We are to sink self out of sight in Jesus. We are to receive the word of the Lord in counsel and instruction, and gladly communicate it. There is now need of much prayer. Christ commands, "Pray without ceasing;" that is, keep the mind uplifted to God, the source of all power and efficiency." Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pg. 510-511.

20. Even walking long with God is not enough, we must follow God all the time even unto the end if we are to receive the latter rain.

“We may have long followed the narrow path, but it is not safe to take this as proof that we shall follow it to the end. If we have walked with God in fellowship of the Spirit, it is because we have sought Him daily by faith.” Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pg. 511.

“Everyone is to keep himself separate from the world,

which is full of iniquity. We are not to walk with God for a time, and then part from His company and walk in the sparks of our own kindling. There must be a firm continuance, a perseverance in acts of faith. We are to praise God; to show forth His glory in a righteous character. No one of us will gain the victory without persevering, untiring effort, proportionate to the value of the object which we seek, even eternal life.” Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pg. 511.

21. To give the final message to the world we need the latter rain, thus we must seek it.

“To us is committed the arduous, but happy, glorious work of revealing Christ to those who are in darkness. We are called to proclaim the special truths for this time. For all this the outpouring of the Spirit is essential. We should pray for it. The Lord expects us to ask Him. We have not been wholehearted in this work.” Ellen G. White, Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, pg. 511-512.

22. The latter rain will come suddenly, with much power.

“I saw the latter rain is coming suddenly, as the midnight cry and with ten times the power.” Ellen G. White, Letter, Spalding-Magan Collection, pg. 3.

23. Here are those who will not receive the latter rain.

“Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.” Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, pg. 214.

“I saw that none could share the "refreshing" unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Let all remember that God is holy and that none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence.” Ellen G. White, Early writings. pg. 71.

24. Here are those who will receive the latter rain.

“Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation.” Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1, pg. 187-188.

25. An enlightened people is necessary to receive the latter rain.

“The great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole earth with His glory, will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it

means to be laborers together with God. When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure;" Ellen G. White, Christian Service, pg. 253.

26. The latter rain helps God's people to pass through the time of trouble.

"As the third message swells to a loud cry, and as great power and glory attend the closing work, the faithful people of God will partake of that glory. It is the latter rain which revives and strengthens them to pass through the time of trouble. Their faces will shine with the glory of that light which attends the third angel." Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1, pg. 353.

27. Our final warning to receive the latter rain goes like this.

"The refreshing or power of God comes only on those who have prepared themselves for it by doing the work which God bids them, namely, cleansing themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1, pg. 619.

28. In summary, this is the purpose of the early rain.

- a. To convert us.
- b. To give us complete unbroken victory over sin.

- c. To teach us all we need to know about God, His will for us, and ourselves.
- d. To cleanse us of every hereditary and cultivated tendency to evil, and from all bad habits.
- e. To bring us to full maturity of character.
- f. To prepare us to receive the seal of God and the latter rain.
- g. To prepare us for the time of trouble before probation closes.

29. In summary, this is the purpose of the latter rain.

- a. To fully ripen Christian character to full maturity.
- b. To seal God's people.
- c. To fit God's people to give the Loud Cry.
- d. To prepare God's people for the second coming of Jesus.
- e. To prepare God's people for the time of trouble after probation closes.
- f. To prepare God's people for translation.

30. We need the latter rain to be in Christ and endure the time of

the seven last plagues.

“At that time the "latter rain," or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out.” Ellen G. White, Early writings. pg. 86.

31. We need the latter rain to compel many to accept the truth of the loud cry of the third angel.

“I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth with great power. It had effect. Many had been bound; some wives by their husbands, and some children by their parents. The honest who had been prevented from hearing the truth now eagerly laid hold upon it. All fear of their relatives was gone, and the truth alone was exalted to them. They had been hungering and thirsting for truth; it was dearer and more precious than life. 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.” Ellen G. White, Early writings. pg. 271.

32. Thus the warning is that the soul need to be purified for the latter rain. This one must seek.

“Today you are to have your vessel purified, that it may be ready for the heavenly dew, ready for the showers of the latter rain; for the latter rain will come, and the blessing

of God will fill every soul that is purified from every defilement. It is our work today to yield our souls to Christ, that we may be fitted for the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord--fitted for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.” Ellen G. White, Evangelism, pg. 702.

33. There are indeed three things we must deal with to ensure we are purified and remain so from every defilement.
- a. Habits (as infirmities).
 - b. Temptations from external sources.
 - c. Evil angels.
34. Weakness of the flesh here is the weakness that is in the mind, and that is habits that are wrong. We are told of continuous faith-directed actions to deal with wrong habits. Rom. 6:19.
35. As we pray to deal with our infirmities (which also includes bad habits), the Holy Spirit helps us. Rom. 8:26.
36. Since we have been made free from sin within by the new birth, temptation cannot come from within. (1 Jn. 3:9; Rom. 6:6,7,18).
37. Temptation from within is sin already. Rom. 7:5; Jam. 1:14.

Temptation can only come from external sources to appeal to 38. the mind. Matt. 22:18; Lk. 8:13; Jam. 1:2,12; 2 Pet.

2:9.

39. Temptation to sin can also come from infirmities or bodily weakness (not habits), but we do not have to sin. Heb. 4:15.
40. We do not have to sin because of temptation, thus it comes from without. 1 Cor. 10:13.
41. Watching unto prayer deals with these temptations. Matt. 26:41.
42. We fight against wicked spirits (evil angels). Eph. 6:11,12.
43. Satan and his evil angels can also tempt us, thus we have to fight against these evil spirits. 1 Cor. 7:5; 1 Thess. 3:5; Jam. 4:7.
44. Thus we are to establish our hearts for the coming latter rain at the end of time. Jam. 5:7,8.

Fin.

