

Rain: The Former, the Latter, and the Reviving

Jerry E. Smith, Ed.D.

Deut 11:10-17 The land you are entering to take over is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you planted your seed and irrigated it by foot as in a vegetable garden. But the land you are crossing the Jordan to take possession of is a land of mountains and valleys that drinks rain from heaven. It is a land the LORD your God cares for; the eyes of the LORD your God are continually on it from the beginning of the year to its end.

So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today — to love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul — then I will send rain on your land in its season, **the early rain and the latter rain**, that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.

God went on to say, “Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them. Then the LORD's anger will burn against you, and he will shut the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the good land the LORD is giving you.

As the rabbi's taught: “God didn't choose Egypt with its Nile or Assyria with the Euphrates for his chosen land – no, he chose Israel, a dry land without a sufficient natural water source. The Israelites would have to look up to heaven, to Him, their Supernatural Source, for life-giving water.”

Rain is so important in Israel that life would cease without it. The rains that begin in the **Fall** are known as the early (yo-reh) rains. The root of yo-reh is to shoot toward a target. So, the early (yo-reh) rains are showers shot down from God to soften up the ground, preparing it for the first round of planting. These rains arrive after a hot, dry summer and are celebrated. It's time for singing in the rain!

In the **Spring**, the Israelites depend on the latter rains which are necessary for producing an abundant harvest. It is a harder rain called (mal-koshe) which means to gather the crop. The early (yo-reh) rain comes after a hot dry summer and prepares the ground to be cultivated and planted. It launches the growing season. Then, the latter (mal-koshe) rain comes to boost the crop toward an abundant harvest.

As the time of the early and latter rains approach, the Israelites began to call out to God for rain from heaven. They besought the Lord for rain(s).

What meaneth all this? As you know, God uses natural Israel and its people to teach and illustrate spiritual principles. Jesus did this continually: “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground...”

Therefore, if God ordained two outpourings of natural rain in Israel, would it not follow that He will manifest two outpourings of Holy Spirit rain on planet earth?”

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Just as natural rain pours down from the sky and causes the dry barren land to produce a harvest of crops, spiritual rain pours down from God and brings life to dead humanity, revives believers, and produces a spiritual harvest.

“It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. Also, on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days” (Joel 2:28-29).

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter stood up, after being soaked with Holy Spirit rain, and said, “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16). Pentecost was the early rain. The Spirit of God poured forth upon the disciples gathered in Jerusalem and, from there, flowed forth upon all flesh. That outpouring filled the disciples with Holy Spirit wind (breath), fire, zeal, and power. It produced a harvest of souls, launched the church, produced the book of Acts, and turned the world upside down. You are fruit of that great outpouring.

If Israel was to seek and trust God for two rains, should we (the church) expect and seek Him for another outpouring of Holy Spirit rain, a latter rain that would produce a harvest greater than that of Pentecost?

Joel also said, “Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God; for He has given you the former rain faithfully, and **He will cause the rain to come down for you — The former rain and the latter rain** in the first month. The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil” (Joel 2:23-24).

James 5:7-8 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until **it receives the early and latter rain**. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

The words of James would indicate that the latter rain will arrive when “the coming of the Lord is at hand.” I believe the pestilence of coronavirus is prophesying to us. It is saying, “The coming of the Lord is at hand.”

Is there going to be a latter outpouring of Holy Spirit rain, a harder rain than Pentecost, that will overflow our threshing floors wheat, our vats with new wine and oil”

What do you believe?

If there is to be such a latter outpouring, what is our responsibility regarding it?

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Perhaps as the days get darker and message carried by the true followers of Jesus are considered more and more “unacceptable,” God will send a “latter day downpour of Holy Spirit rain to re-ignite, re-fire, re-vive, and re-empower His church and vindicate their gospel message.

Surprisingly, or not, there is another word for rain. It is “geshem.”

Ps 68:9 You shed abroad a plentiful rain (geshem), O God; You confirmed Your inheritance when it was parched.

Geshem means to fulfill or realize something, to make something come into being that was not. It is a rain which causes invisible buried seeds to spring to life and produce a harvest.

The Geshem rain is now available. It is available to those who are thirsty and will call it forth in faith. It for those who will extend the faith of Abraham “who considered not his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform” (Rom 4:16-22).

Hosea 6:3 “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 (geshem), as the latter (mal-koshe) and former (yo-reh) rain unto the earth.”

Isaiah 44:3 “For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants”

Ps 63:1 O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.

Rev 22:17 Jesus says, “Let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.”