

The Vine



Restoration (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we continue to look together at God's end-time purpose for His people.

Today I'm going to speak about the other tree—the vine, that is, the church. I'm going to show you how the restoration of the church has been proceeding parallel to that of Israel over almost exactly the same period of time.

Once again, we can turn to the book of Joel for a prophetic preview of the restoration of the church. Bear in mind that Joel's prophecy contains a kind of overall summary of God's intervention on behalf of His people at the close of this age.

First of all, we need to bear in mind the historical fact that the church was first brought forth in full manifestation on the day of Pentecost. This, I think, almost all theologians and historians would agree. The church came into being through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and immediately, when questioned about this, Peter, as the spokesman of God and of the church, quoted the prophet Joel. Here is what we read in Acts 2:15 & 17. The account of what happened immediately after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Peter says:

> "...this is that which was spoken of through the prophet Joel: [and he quotes Joel] 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'that I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.'" (NAS)

If we turn back to the passage in Joel which Peter was quoting we discover that it comes immediately after the promise of restoration. The promise of restoration, the central statement, is in Joel 2:25, that is the statement, "I will restore." The prophecy quoted by Peter is in verse 28 of that chapter.

Now, if we look in more detail at the promise of restoration in Joel 2 we find that it is presented again in typical prophetic symbolism as a promise of rain. Reading from verse 23 of Joel 2:

> "So rejoice, O sons of Zion, And be glad in the Lord your God; For He has given you the early rain for your vindication. And He has poured down for you the rain, The early and latter rain as before." (NAS)

Where that version says "as before," other versions say "in the first month," which I think is probably correct. Because, as a matter of actual fact, the latter rain in the land of Israel normally falls about the first month, or the Passover month, which is April. But we see that God has committed Himself here in context of restoration to give His people both the major outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as quoted in Joel or as given initially in Joel:

> "And it will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions."

So, putting all those passages of Scripture together we are led to three important conclusions. First, the outpoured rain is a prophetic symbol of the outpoured Spirit of God. Secondly, the outpoured Spirit is an essential part of restoration. That's only logical because it was the Holy Spirit that brought the church into being and it is only the Holy Spirit who can keep the church in being. And when the church needs renewal and restoration, it is the Holy Spirit who must provide that. The third conclusion is that the Spirit will come to the church in two main outpourings corresponding to the early rain and the latter rain in the climate of Israel.

To understand more fully the way God's Spirit has moved in church history, and is moving in the church today, we need to understand the pattern of rainfall in Israel, because the rain is a type of the Holy Spirit and the moving of the Holy Spirit in the church is represented by the way rain falls in Israel.

Let me try and make that a little more clear. In Israel there are two main seasons: the hot, dry season and the cooler season which is often wet, though not wet all through. The hot, dry season usually begins about the first month, that's the month of April, and continues through to October or November. And in most cases, from April to November no rain falls at all in Israel. It's very important to see that. Then, the winter months usually run from about November to about March. At the end of the dry season and the beginning of the winter months there is the early rain, the rain that starts off the winter. It usually falls about November. It's the end of the dry season and, in the economy of God, its purpose is to soften the soil so that agricultural work can begin afresh. Then follow the winter months. And during the winter months rain falls but it's sporadic and unpredictable—some here, some there—but there is no major overall, nationwide fall of rain normally in the winter months. Then comes the latter rain, round about April, the first month. It marks the end of the wet season, the beginning of the dry season again, and it's the heaviest outpouring of rain throughout the whole year. It's a heavy, universal outpouring of rain and, in the economy of God, its purpose is to germinate the seed that has been sown and to make the harvest possible.

Now, let's apply this very briefly and simply to church history. I believe that the moving of the Holy Spirit in church history corresponds to the way in which God ordained that rain should come to the land of Israel.

First of all, the early rain, the beginning of the winter season. I believe the early rain fell on the early church. It fell first on the day of Pentecost and it continued on the early church maybe for a century or so. After that, almost all historians agree, the Holy Spirit did not move in such a profound and universal way throughout the church for many, many centuries. There were moves of the Holy Spirit. There were times when New Testament scenes were reenacted all through the history of God's people but it was like the winter rains in Israel—it was sporadic, unpredictable, a little here, a little there, but not overall move affecting the whole church.

And then we come to the latter rain: the last great, overall, all-inclusive outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It's my personal conviction that the latter rain began to fall again upon the church about the turn of the century. It has certain distinctive features. It's worldwide, there's practically no country which hasn't been touched by it. It embraces all sections of the church, there's practically no denomination that hasn't been touched by it. And, in my understanding of God's end-time purposes, this latter rain will be the last and greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church of Jesus Christ.

Now, we've been talking about the set time for God to show favor upon His people. In my talk yesterday I showed you how this applied to the recent history of Israel. I showed you how we could perhaps date the current restoration of Israel to just about the turn of the present century. Perhaps 1897, or sometime just around then. And I showed you how successive stages of restoration have gone on in the history of Israel throughout this century. Certain very key dates, like 1948, 1967. Now, can you see the perfection of God's prophetic preview of this closing period of human history? The set time of restoration, the restoration promised to His two covenant people: the fig tree, Israel; the vine, the church. Just about the same time that a significant demonstration of God's intention to restore Israel was manifested in human history there were very significant demonstrations that God's

time had come for the latter rain—the last great, universal outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church.

Now, in my talk tomorrow I'm going to give you dates and facts that will substantiate what I have been saying today. But now our time is up for today so I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be speaking specifically about the latter rain of the Holy Spirit, the move of the Spirit that began about the turn of the present century and has now reached the proportions of a worldwide outpouring.

Radio Program

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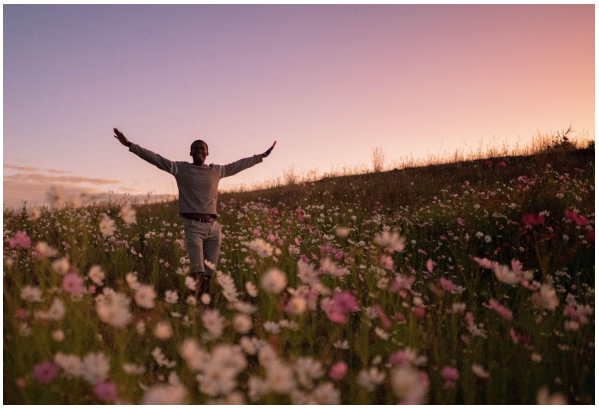

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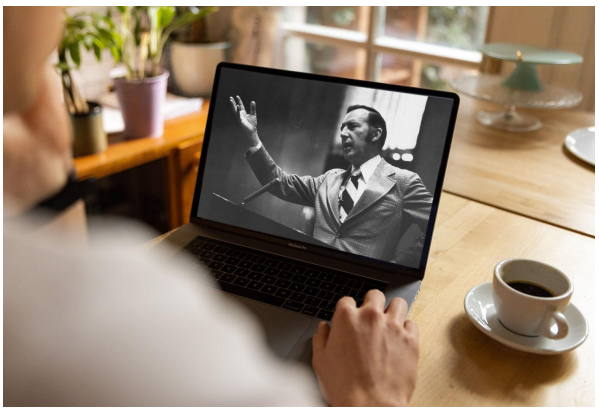

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