

The Latter Rain



Restoration (Part 5)
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.

In my talks this week I've been showing you how, in the midst of all the tumult and confusion of our world situation today, God is ceaselessly working out His end-time purpose of restoration for His people; that is, for Israel and for the church. I've shown you how in each case, both for Israel and for the church, the process of restoration began about the turn of the present century and has been proceeding along parallel lines ever since.

Today I'm going to speak in greater detail about the ongoing restoration of the church. First of all, we always must bear in mind that the church was brought forth on the day of Pentecost by the power of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit had never come there would have been no church. The church, in a certain sense, is God's creation through the Holy Spirit and ever since then the church has depended on the Holy Spirit for its life. The measure of life within the church, at any given time, is always the measure of the Holy Spirit in the church. If the church stands in need of renewal and restoration, then only the Holy Spirit can restore and renew the church. There is no other source of life or of restoration for the church but the Holy Spirit.

Now, I pointed out yesterday that the key to understanding the work of the Holy Spirit within the church is found in Joel. Basically, this is what I said: The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is symbolized by the outpouring of natural rain. Just as with the natural rain in the land of Israel, in its normal climate, there are two major outpourings of rain. So, in God's provision for the church throughout its period of development until its completion and consummation, there are to be two major outpourings of the Holy Spirit corresponding, of course, to the early rain and the latter rain in the climate of Israel.

I went on to say that the early rain fell on the early church as recorded in Acts and perhaps for a century or so following. Then I stated that the latter rain is falling today on the church worldwide. Let me repeat that statement, it's so important. I want you to keep it in your mind. It's the key to understanding much of what's happening. The latter rain of the Holy Spirit is falling today on the church worldwide.

Now, there are three features common to each outpouring of the Holy Spirit: The early rain of the Holy Spirit, the beginning of church history, and now, the latter rain of the climax of church history. These are the three features that I see in common to each outpouring. First, each originated in the sovereign will of God. This, I think, is indicated in the fact that each was predicted in advance by God and each is the expression of a statement by God, "I will... I will." Secondly, each outpouring has produced results that man cannot duplicate, results on a higher level than could ever be achieved by mere human ability or organization or intellectual cleverness. And thirdly, each outpouring has included, or is including, the entire church. It's not restricted to one particular segment of the church or to one particular denomination of to one particular country, but it's an outpouring on the universal church worldwide.

Now, I gave an outline just the middle of this week giving some dates of the actual events of the restoration of Israel and now I'm going to give you just a few outstanding dates the restoration of the church and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church that we are witnessing today. First, somewhere in the 1890s, there was a supernatural and sovereign outpouring of the Holy Spirit in certain countries in or near the Middle East; specifically, Persia, Russia and Armenia. And there are descendants of those whose lives were totally changed by this outpouring in those countries living in the United States today. They are objective testimony to the fact of these outpourings in Persia, Russia and Armenia and the impact that they produced on history.

Then, shortly after 1900, significant moves of the Holy Spirit on the supernatural level began to take place in the United States, particularly in 1904, in what has come to be known as the Azuza Street Visitation in Los Angeles, California, to which nearly all the Pentecostal denominations in the United States today can trace their origin.

'Round about 1906, just as rain moves rapidly from place to place, this move of the Spirit was precipitated, like rain, almost simultaneously on Britain, Scandinavia, Germany and shortly after South Africa, India, China, and other nations in the Far East.

Then, around about World War I there was a tremendous outreach of missionary activity that owed its initiative to this outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Moving on to World War II, immediately the close of World War II, there was a tremendous move of mass evangelism with outstanding miracles of healing and deliverance taking place, vast crowds were gathered and whole nations were touched.

Then, in the mid-1950s, what we have come to call the old-line denominations such as the Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, and so on, were suddenly and sovereignly touched by this move of the Holy Spirit—both ministers and lay people.

In 1967, sovereignly, the Holy Spirit erupted in the Catholic Church in a new dimension and has moved with amazing rapidity through the Catholic Church in almost every country in the world in the past ten or twelve years.

Then, in the early 1970s, a sovereign move of the Spirit, somewhat similar, in the orthodox church, especially in the Middle East. However, it's hard to give reports because the reports are usually out of date even before they're published, the Spirit of God is moving with such rapidity.

As I near the close of my talk now on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the church in our day, I want to make one more important point. I want to show you the ultimate purpose of God in this outpouring. I want to say that God's purpose goes beyond the restoration of the church, although that is essential.

There's a principle in all Scripture that rain is given for the sake of harvest. This is true in the natural, it's true in the spiritual. Let me give you just two passages—one from the Old, and one from the New Testament. Jeremiah 5:23 & 24. God says of Israel:

> "But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; they have turned aside and departed. They do not say in their heart, let us now fear the Lord our God who gives rain in its season, both the early rain and the latter rain, who keeps for us the appointed weeks of the harvest."

Note that it's a mark of stubbornness and rebelliousness not to see the hand of God in the giving of rain. Notice also, again it's emphasized that the rain comes in two major outpourings—the early rain and the latter rain—and notice that the ultimate purpose of the rain is that the harvest may be gathered in. Bear that always in mind. Throughout Scripture rain is given for the sake of harvest.

This principle is carried over into the New Testament. In James 5:7 & 8:

> "Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early

> and late rains. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand."

Notice, again, the farmer does not gather in the harvest until he's received both the early and the latter rain; and this is directly related to the coming of the Lord. In other words, the coming of the Lord is in some way associated with the period of the latter rain, which agrees with what I said earlier this week; that it's in the period of the restoration of all things that we can look for the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ. But the emphasis of what I'm saying right now is this: that rain ultimately is always for the sake of harvest. In Matthew 13:39 Jesus says:

> "The harvest is the consummation of the age."

Now, there are various ways of looking at the harvest. The harvest is the result of much work, much sowing, much labor, much sacrifice, much planning and it's something that essentially is positive in its significance. I believe that the harvest, in this sense, is the last great ingathering of souls from all nations all over the world into God's kingdom. And I want you to see this, this is my point now: God's final purpose is not just to bless His people but to make His people a blessing. God sees the agony and confusion of our modern world. He's not indifferent. He's concerned. But what is He doing? He's working in a very systematic and methodical way. He's, first of all, giving new life to His church through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. But He's giving new life to His church that the church may in turn bring new life to this confused and dying world of ours. It's a repetition of the situation in Jesus' own day when He looked out on the multitudes and said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers [to gather in the harvest] are few." That's true today. The harvest is plentiful and God is preparing the workers. He's making everything ready and one key in His preparation is the latter rain of the Holy Spirit without which the harvest cannot be gathered in.

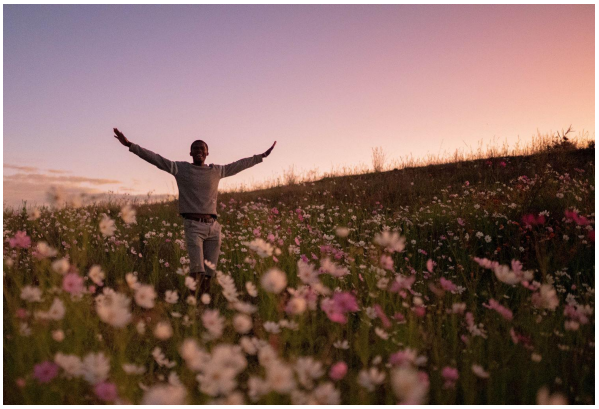
All right, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. Next week I'll be dealing in detail with the restoration of the church. I'll be explaining, in a practical way, just what it requires and how it can come about. Then the following week I plan to speak about the restoration of Israel. But stay tuned now for some important announcements. In particular, how you may obtain my book, Shaping History through Prayer and Fasting. This book explains how you and I, as believers, have both the privilege and responsibility to cooperate with God in working out His great end-time plan. The announcement that follows will tell you how you may obtain this book.

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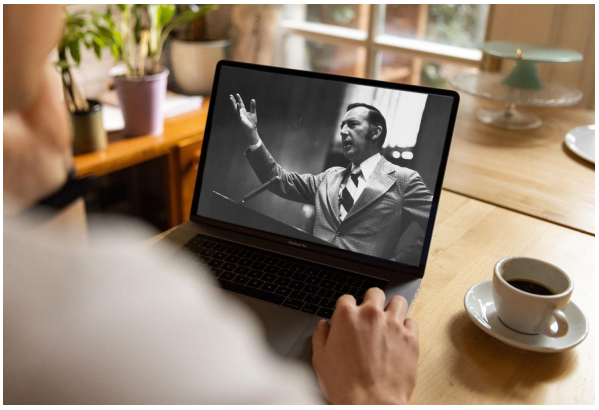
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