

# The Second Objective: Outreach



Facing the Future (Part 19)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we continue to study together our exciting theme, "Facing the Future."

In this series of talks we've been looking from various angles at the picture the Bible paints of the condition of the world as the present age approaches its close.

Yesterday I dealt with God's program to bring the church into unity. In my talk today and also tomorrow I'm going to focus on God's second main objective for the church, outreach.

In earlier talks on this theme I've spoken about the specific and distinctive sign of the end of the age that relates to the church; namely, the outpouring of the latter rain of the Holy Spirit. You will remember that we saw that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church is symbolized in Biblical prophecy by the fall of rain upon the land of Israel. Just as the rain in Israel comes in two main outpourings, the first rain at the beginning of winter and the last rain at the end of winter, so historically the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon the church in two main visitations. The first rain upon the church of the New Testament and the last rain upon the church at the close of the age. And it's my personal conviction that we are living in the time of the latter rain, that the present world-wide visitation of the Holy Spirit upon the church is the fulfillment of that prophecy of Joel that God would send His people both the first and the latter rain.

Now, this first comparison between the natural rain and the spiritual rain leads directly to a second comparison between the purposes for which each type of rain is given. In each case, the end purpose of the rain in God's economy is the harvest. This is stated almost everywhere in the Bible that God speaks about giving His people rain, it's directly linked with the harvest.

So, in the case of the natural rain, logically it's a natural harvest [the ingathering of the grain from the earth] but in the case of the spiritual rain, equally logically it's a spiritual harvest. What is that harvest? It's the ingathering not of grain, but of the souls of men from the harvest that is now ripening all over the fields of the earth, a great final ingathering of souls into the kingdom of God through faith in Jesus Christ and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And, as the rain

does its work, so the soil of the world is prepared for this last great ingathering of this final harvest.

Let me show you a passage in the New Testament which makes this so very clear and vivid. James 5:7-8:

> "Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. [Notice that the coming of the Lord is the climax to which James is looking.] Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil [that's the harvest], being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains."

That's exactly what I said earlier in this theme, that in the economy of God in the land of Israel, the harvest will fail unless the soil receives both rains, the first and the last or the early and late rains. And so the farmer who's longing for that harvest for which he has labored so hard, knows that he has to be patient and that he has to wait until the last rain has fallen before he can gather in that harvest. And then James goes on with this application in James 5:8:

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

You see, there are two important lessons there for us. Both the early and the latter rain are necessary for the harvest. As that is true in the natural, so it is true in the spiritual. The final great ingathering of souls into the kingdom of God cannot take place until we've had the full outpouring of the latter rain of the Holy Spirit upon the church all over the earth.

And then, the second important truth is that the latter rain immediately precedes the Lord's return. In those verses in James 5:7-8, James both begins and closes with the theme of the Lord's return. He says, "Be patient, therefore... until the coming of the Lord." And then He says at the end, "You too be patient... for the coming of the Lord is at hand." In other words, in the program of God, it requires both the first rain on the early church, the last rain on the church of the close of the age to prepare the harvest and the coming of the Lord is related to the time of the harvest. Jesus says this Himself in a number of parables. For instance, in one parable in Matthew 13:39, Jesus says this:

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

You see, there's so many different scriptures that all point to the same conclusion: the first rain on the early church; the last rain on the church of the close of the age; then the harvest, the great ingathering of souls into the kingdom of God; and, in the time of the harvest, the return of the Lord.

There's another passage that has the same message with great urgency in Jeremiah 5:23-24, speaking of Israel and the time of the prophet Jeremiah.

> "But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone. [They've turned away from God. They can't hear God.] Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: [Notice the inability to see the purpose of the rain as the mark of a backslidden heart. And then Jeremiah goes on and says: the Lord gives rain], both the former and the latter, in his season [this is emphasized all through the Bible. And what is the rain for?] he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest."

That's why God gives the rain. Because without the rain the harvest cannot be gathered. It's true in the natural, true in the spiritual. Why is God then pouring out the Holy Spirit upon the whole church now in fulfillment of prophecy? Because He's reserved to us the appointed weeks of the harvest. To me, that's a most urgent message. The harvest is never a lengthy period in any land. It's just a brief period. Any farmer knows, anywhere in the world, when the harvest is ripe you either gather it or you lose it. It's just a few brief weeks. God has reserved those weeks for the church in the earth today that the harvest may be gathered in. It's a matter of tremendous urgency. It's so essential that our eyes be opened and we see the provision and the program of God and align ourselves with His purpose.

Now I'm going to take this theme of the harvest just a little further and give it a very practical kind of application to the situation in our world today. Our world today is confronted by a number of what we call explosions, tremendous, sudden increases, upsurges. Let me mention four kinds of explosions that confront us today, as a matter of general knowledge.

First, a population explosion. The population of the earth is expanding at an alarming rate. I believe it's already past four billion and will soon be five billion.

Second, the travel explosion, the ability of man to travel anywhere, to any  place on the earth, in an amazingly short space of time. Somebody said, "Travel is no longer limited by time but by money. If you can pay, you can get there."

Third, the communications explosion, the way of communicating. The printing press brought in a spiritual

revolution; what can we expect today from the sudden upsurge of radio, television, tape recording and all the other modern media that have suddenly been placed at our disposal?

And fourth, the spiritual explosion, the world-wide outpouring of the Holy Spirit, bringing renewal and strength and victory back to the church of Jesus Christ.

Now, let me just paint a picture, to close with. Suppose in the midst of this population explosion, with all the facilities of travel and communication at our disposal, there was a tremendous spiritual explosion in the church: The Holy Spirit was restored in His power and glory and fullness. The church became united, was equipped by the ministries, was empowered by the Holy Spirit and then, in the purposes of God, was thrust out with this spiritual equipment and with this vision to the ripened harvest fields of this tremendous population that's in the world today. What would be the result? I'll tell you what I believe the result will be. I believe it's very practical to estimate that in a period of five or ten years, in those conditions, more souls would be gathered into the kingdom of God than have been gathered into the kingdom since Jesus died and rose from the dead. And do you know what I believe that will be? Just what the Bible says it will be. It will be the harvest. It will be the end of the age. It will be the objective and the fulfillment of God's purposes. And you and I who belong to Jesus Christ at this time are obligated to see God's purposes and fulfill them. The book of Proverbs says, "A son who sleeps in harvest causes his father shame." My prayer is that neither you nor I may be sons of God that sleep in the harvest and cause our Father shame. May we be awake to what God is saying and doing in our world today.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be sharing how the initiative in world affairs is with the church.

## Radio Program

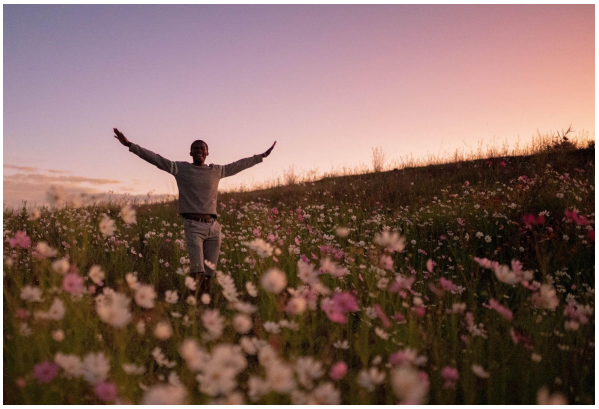
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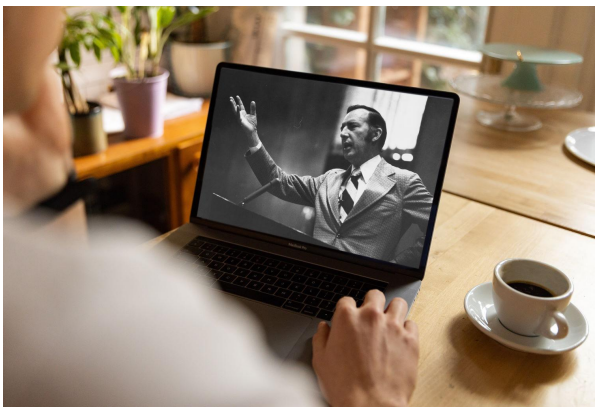
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