

The Harvest Just Ahead



Sermon
By Derek Prince

Hello. This is Dick Leggatt, President of Derek Prince Ministries, and I am thrilled to be giving you the introduction to a very special message by Derek Prince. In general, it's great to bring Derek's material to people who are hungry for it all across the world, but every once in a while a very special message like this one will pop up and it's called "The Harvest Just Ahead."

Now there's a story behind this and I'm going to tell you. A friend of mine brought a box of tapes to me, and they were full of Derek Prince's tapes, and he said, "Check them out, Dick, and see if you can use any of these." And, lo and behold, right in the middle of a seminar on the Holy Spirit there was this message by Derek on the harvest.

Now it's not the best quality and it starts pretty abruptly, which is why I'm bringing this introduction to you for the message. As far as we can tell, it was presented in some kind of a university setting and, from what Derek mentions, it seems like it probably was sometime in the mid- to late-'70s. But right in the middle of the conference Derek gives this message, and it's unrelated to all the rest that took place in the seminar. Also, as you will hear late in the message Derek says that he is giving this totally extemporaneously. So this was a message that he felt impressed by the Lord to deliver to this audience. But I will tell you this, it is every bit as relevant to us today and so I'm thrilled to be able to bring it to you. Never before released message called "The Harvest Just Ahead."

What is God's solution? The first or former rain. The first great major outpouring of rain that heralds the beginning of the cold winter season. It's universal, it's heavy, it's dramatic, and it softens the soil so that the various processes that are going to lead up to next year's harvest can begin. After that, through the cold months—November, December, January, and February—rain will continue to fall but it will fall unpredictably, sporadically, in little outpourings here and there. There'll be no further major outpouring of rain until the end of the winter season. Now in the verse that I've read it says "the first month." But remember that when Israel came out of Egypt at the Passover season, that month became the first month of the year, and the Passover coincides more or less with Christian Easter. In other words, it's in March or April, and so at that season, right at the end of the winter, God sends the latter or the last rain. This is the close of the winter season and it's the greatest or heaviest, most universal

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outpouring of rain that takes place at any time in the year. After that, events move very rapidly into the process of gathering in the harvest. You will find everywhere in the Bible the rain is always associated with the harvest. In fact, the rain is given for the sake of the harvest. Right from Deuteronomy 11 onwards you find God always promises people that if they would obey Him, walk in His Word, He would send them the rain that they might gather in the harvest, because if the rain fails, the harvest necessarily must fail. If either former or latter rain failed in Israel there can be no harvest.

Now let's apply this prophetic to the pattern of church history. The church age began at Pentecost with the first rain, the former rain, the first great, dramatic outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And Peter identified it with Joel's prophecy, but you'll notice in his explanation he went on to the close of the age. He said, "There shall be signs in heaven above and on the earth beneath. Blood and fire and vapor of smoke before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord." So he took that prophecy right up to the close of this age. People say, "Well, isn't that strange! Because that was nearly two thousand years ago, and the age hasn't closed." But not really, because Peter was quoted from Joel, and Joel said it will come in two major outpourings—the former rain at the beginning of the church age and the latter rain to close the church age. What we are living in today is the latter rain—the last great, universal, the most heavy outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will ever come in the history of the human race. We are living in that day, and if that rain had not been given, the harvest could not be gathered in. The rain is given for the sake of the harvest.

What is the harvest? It's the ingathering of souls into the kingdom of God. I want to take a moment or two just to show you this. Bear this in mind, because this is— this is an answer to the question that we are going to deal with next. Really it's leading up to it. How can I become effective as a result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? The answer is by linking up with God's purpose. You see, there are two kinds of people who get the baptism of the Holy Spirit and there have been all through the years. Those that get it and keep it to themselves. They become, in many cases, super-spiritual, what I call "Little Bless-Me Clubs." They meet, prophesy at one another, lay hands on one another, have visions and revelations and say, "God bless you, brother. See you the same time next week." And you go back two years later and they've neither grown nor decreased—they're just the same, but they haven't grasped the purpose of God. The rain isn't given for the sake of the rain. The rain is given for the sake of the harvest. And there are other people with no better education, no better seminary training, that have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, turned the world upside down. Why? Because they realize what it was given for—the sake of the harvest, the ingathering of souls. This isn't given to make us super-spiritual. It's given us to gather in the harvest.

And, you see, all through the Bible the Scripture speaks about the harvest with great emphasis, and if we look on the various great festivals of the Mosaic Law and covenant, we find that every one had its corresponding event in the Christian era. I believe firmly that this applies to the harvest. I believe that the harvest is going to have its fulfillment. There's going to be a specific period in the history of the church which is the harvest period, and I believe it is directly linked to the latter rain and to another feature of the days in which we live, the population explosion, because as I understand it, the population of the earth is going to be doubling from now on about every thirty years. It's fantastic and I may have gotten the figures slightly wrong because I'm not good at figures. They make my head swim, but it is almost unbelievable. There are already well over three billion people in the earth and it won't be long before there'll be four billion and you know what. Everybody's warning us there won't be enough food to eat and there won't be enough land to live on and so on.

Now I believe God knew that and let me suggest to you this way, that if the program of Joel is carried out, if the church is purged of the fifth column, if the church is filled afresh with the Holy Spirit, with the divine unction and power, if the church is gathered out of its little corners and sects and from behind its little barriers and becomes one again in Jesus Christ, such a church could go forth into the world today in the power of the Holy Spirit and in a few years—let's say, for example, five years—more souls would be saved in the world than were saved in all the years since Jesus died until today. And this is what is going to happen. This is the harvest and it lies just ahead. The latter rain is given for the sake of the harvest, and I tell you today, people, God is already beginning to put His hand on people and say, "Now get ready. Get loosed. Get detached. Because when the harvest comes it's going to be so quick you'll just have to be ready to cast in the sickle and reap."

In the year 1948 or '49, when the latter rain, that (quote) "Latter Rain" (unquote) movement broke out in Canada—which was a real move of God—a young girl in the city of Edmonton or Calgary had a vision of this latter day revival, and she saw the last harvest. It was just like lightning that circled the earth and it was over, and this is how it's going to be. It's going to be as quick as that. See, God is warning His people all the time—it's coming quickly, it's coming

quickly. There's been a long, slow process of maturing and preparation, but when it comes, friend, if you're not ready you'll not even know it's happened. It's going to come so quickly.

Let me give you just a couple of Scriptures about the harvest. Jeremiah the 5th chapter, Jeremiah 5 verses 23 and 24.

> But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone. 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: He reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.

You see, it's a very terrible thing to reject what God is doing when He gives the rain. Those ministers and groups and churches that will not see what God is doing, that reject this move of the Holy Spirit, they have a "revolting and a rebellious heart," they are revolted and gone. I'm not saying this to attack anybody nor am I seeking to please anybody. Some people treat this present move of the Holy Spirit as if it's just an interesting alternative to the usual type of Sunday school picnic, or a change from cocktail parties.

I tell you what I believe. I believe this is God's last offer of mercy to the United States of America. And if the Christians of America do not respond to God, there's nothing ahead but desolation and judgment for this nation. I believe it's life or death, friends, and that's why I don't compromise when I preach about it. I believe it can be life. I believe God loves the United States, I believe He set this nation apart in destiny for something special, but I tremble to think what will happen to this nation if in the next few years they do not accept this divine visitation of the Holy Spirit.

Why did atheistic communism come to Russia? You know why? Because there was a visitation of the Holy Spirit in 1870 and 1880, and the Russian Christians rejected it. When they rejected the Holy Spirit, they created a spiritual vacuum which was automatically filled by the next most powerful spirit in the world, and that's the spirit of antichrist. The spirit of antichrist is at work everywhere in the United States and your campuses and colleges and in your churches and seminaries. And there is a fearful dramatic moment of climax where we've got to decide: Is it going to be Christ or antichrist? There isn't a third alternative.

Israel came to that place nineteen centuries ago: "Whither of the twain will I release unto you," Pilate said, "Jesus or Barabbas?" Israel didn't have a third choice. Fools that they were, they said, "Not this man [Jesus] but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was an agitator, a man of violence, a professional protester. Have you ever thought the two things that the Jewish people said—they said, "Not this man, but Barabbas." And then Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with your King Jesus?" And they said, "We have no king but Caesar." They denied the Lord as their King. And you read nineteen centuries of Jewish history, what do you read —Caesar and Barabbas ruling over the Jewish people. What they chose they got, and when God tells you to choose, you get what you choose, and you have to choose.

How many Caesars, how many emperors, how many kings, how many dictators have persecuted and oppressed the Jewish nation in nineteen centuries? How many times they took Barabbas, the professional agitator, the man of violence, the rabble-rouser and turned him against the Jews. You know Jewish history? Again and again and again. The last great example is Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Storm Troopers. Do you know what Hitler's philosophy was? It was based on the philosophy of a man named Spengler and his teaching was, "We need another Caesar."

To me, when I come to this point in my preaching, and I did not plan to come, I am ripped by the awful solemnity of choice. Nineteen centuries ago Israel made a choice, given them by God, and they got what they chose, exactly down to the minutest detail. Today the choice is America's. "Whither of the twain, Jesus or Barabbas?" Your country is filled with violence, riot, hatred, strife—it's ripe for Barabbas, but you have a choice, you have a choice. This is God's hour of choice. This is God's hour of visitation. This is not a little church parlor game. This is death or life. I believe it can be life. I absolutely believe that God desires to send to the United States of America the greatest revival in the history of this or any nation, and I haven't come to that belief by accident. I've prayed over it, meditated on it, fasted and sought God, and I'm convinced this afternoon that I speak to the truth from Almighty God. I'm not normally a particularly bold or self-assertive type of person, but I stand here this afternoon with a deep inner conviction that I'm speaking to you a message from God.

I will not compromise about divine truth because I'm going to have to answer to God one day for what I say. There are many places in the Bible where God tells men and women to choose. The 30th chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses said:

> Behold I call heaven and earth to record against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life that both thou and thy seed may live.

Do you know what gripped me? The thought that God lets man choose and God has set this simple choice—you can have life and blessing, or you can have death and cursing. And Moses said, "I advise you, choose life." You know what I've done? I've chosen life, and I've chosen blessing, and I'm as absolutely convinced that I'll get what I choose as Israel got what they chose when they made the wrong choice.

Joshua said about one generation later, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." Notice the choice was not whether. Lot's of people think, "I can choose if I'll serve God or the devil or please myself." You don't have that choice. The choice is whether you will serve God or the devil. It's as simple as that. You say, "Brother Prince, I don't know whom I'm serving." Then you're serving the devil. Those that serve God walk in the light and they know whom they're serving.

Elijah came to Israel a few generations later and he said, "If the Lord be God, serve Him. But if Baal be god, serve him, but serve somebody and make your minds up and do it quickly." And I do believe for the Christians of America the time has come to make your mind up. "My denomination doesn't teach this." You know what I say—I could care less. "The church doesn't preach it." Is the church going to save you in the day of wrath and desolation? Will you build your faith on that flimsy foundation? Friend, be honest. The church as we understand it—(quote) "church, institution,"—you don't even respect it yourself. "Well, I don't believe in it, but I stay here for the sake of my children." Well, that's good. So, what's not good enough for you is good enough for your children. Tell your children that and see if they believe. Believe me—they're too smart. They'll not be fooled. They're less likely to be fooled than you are as a matter of fact.

What does God ask? He asks that we sell out to Him. He asks that we commit ourselves to Him without reservation, to do His will, to serve Him, believe and preach His Word. I'm not saying you've got to go and throw a stone through a church window. No. I'm not saying you have to leave or join anything, but I'm saying God wants you without reservations, without strings attached, He wants you for His purposes. There's one simple condition to be in this last great move of God. We don't need to complicate it, it's simple. It is this—it's total, unreserved commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. That's all that's required. All the rest will follow from that.

Now those of you that know me, and there are quite a number of you here—and I could show you my note outline. There's not one sentence of what I've said on that outline. Now I tell you this because I'm a pretty determined type of person. I know what I mean to say and usually I can say it, and I'm forced to the conclusion that God had me say today what I have said to you. And in the light of that I have the obligation and the responsibility to bring you to a place of choice.

I told God sometime back, I said, "God, with Your help I'll stop delivering religious lectures." And when I preach on a thing I'll always give people an opportunity to experience what I preach on if it's practical. And I have to tell you today, friends, that I'm going to give you an opportunity. The time is not late. I haven't preached long. I am a Britisher and yet I just believe—I don't know why God chose this. I wouldn't have done it if I'd been God. I believe God sent me to tell the American Christians it's time to wake up. If you lose, friends, you don't lose because you have to, you lose by default. You can win. The Christians of the United States do not need to lose the spiritual battle. They can win it. And if you win it your country will be saved, your land will be healed, and if you lose it, it will be to your everlasting discredit. Don't misunderstand me. I don't attack any denomination, any section of the church. Really I could care less to tell you the truth. That's not the point. The point is: What place does Jesus Christ have in your life? The church has got one Lord—it's Jesus. It's got one Head—it's Jesus. It's not a many-headed monster. There's a lot of many-headed monsters foretold in prophecy for the end of this age, but the church is not one of them. In fact almost every humanly sponsored organization that appears on the scene of history at the close of this age according to prophecy has got a lot of different heads, but that's not the church of Jesus Christ. It has just one head.

Let me tell you this. As far as I'm concerned I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, spirit, soul and body for time and eternity. He redeemed me by His blood when He died on the cross and I have given myself to Him. Can you say the same? And if you cannot, would you make that decision today? The harvest lies ahead. I don't tell you exactly when. It's already beginning to ripen in certain areas of the earth—Indonesia, South America, even in east Africa when I was there some years back. I had to tell the African people, I said, "The harvest is right on your door, and God's going to need workers by the hundreds to cast in the sickle of His

word and reap." The time has come to reap for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

You turn on in Jeremiah from the 5th chapter there to the 8th and look at that 8th chapter and the 20th verse.

> The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

When the harvest is past and the summer has ended there is no more salvation. Then it's closed. What about it? What are you living for? What does life mean to you? Paul said, "For me to live is Christ." That's enough. You don't need Christ plus. Christ said, "I am the resurrection and the life. I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly." When you are committed to Jesus Christ life is rich, it's full, it's exciting, it's fascinating. I'm not a stranger to a university. I grew up in the university and I was a professor in a university and I could have been a professor today. I don't criticize university professors, but I made a choice. When the Lord called me to preach the gospel, I said, "Yes!" And in the eyes of the world I gave up an excellent position with tremendous possibilities, academic distinctions, but I'll tell you if I had to make the same choice again I'd do the same. My life has been full. It's been rich. It's been wonderful. I'm not sorry that I dedicated my life to Jesus Christ. I'm only sorry for the times I wasn't fully dedicated, that's all.

I believe this afternoon we should have a dedication service for those that want to make a total dedication of their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen, this doesn't mean you're never going to sin again, you're never going to have problems, you're never going to fail, but it means that you have made a commitment.

A young couple get married. They profess their love and their dedication to one another, it doesn't mean they may never have a quarrel, never have an upset, never have a misunderstanding. But nevertheless they've made a commitment which overrides all those if they stay by it. And this is what I'm talking about—a commitment to Jesus Christ, the Lord of the harvest, to be a laborer in the harvest fields. I don't say you've got to go and resign your job next day, sell your furniture, give up your home. I'm not talking in terms of that. I'm telling you that when you commit to Jesus Christ, He'll tell you the next move—not Brother Prince, nor the mission board, but the Lord.

I know people on the mission field that were too old. No mission board would have ever passed them, but the Lord called them, and He sent them, and He financed them. I'll tell you another thing, good friends, your denomination may have treated you well, but the Lord will treat you just as well and I might say just a little better too. Don't be afraid to give up the car allowance, the manse, the pension scheme, and all the rest, because if you're out of the will of God they're just nothing but millstones around your neck. If you're in the will of God stay there.

Let's pray. I'd like everybody for a moment just to be quiet as in the presence of God. You're here this afternoon and you are somewhat perplexed, confused, uncertain. There's not that deep, settled peace and stability in your Christian experience. The reason is a lack of total commitment. In the light of what I've said here this afternoon you would like to make a definite commitment to Jesus Christ, that you're going to Him for the rest of time and for all eternity, and your life is going to be at His disposal for Him to use for His glory by the Holy Spirit the way He wants. If that's your desire, wherever you are in the auditorium, would you stand to your feet right now? Thank You, Lord. Praise Your name; praise Your name.

Now I do thank God for this response. I believe you're sincere. I don't believe I've misrepresented this choice to you. That's the way it is. I love the slogan of the young people of America, the say, "Tell it the way it is." I think every full gospel creature should jump for joy at that challenge—tell it the way it is. We've got no right to tell it any other way.

Now I want to pray for you, and when I've prayed for you that are standing, then you just turn loose and let the Lord come in, worship Him, praise Him, jump, dance, skip, sing, shout, do anything you like, but get set free.

Father, in the name of Jesus, I love You this afternoon and I thank You for these wonderful Christian people that have stood to their feet to consecrate their lives to Jesus Christ. Lord, I take my authority as a believer in Jesus Christ and I loose them now from every bond, from every fetter, everything that would hold them back from this commitment to Jesus. I declare them loosed in the name of Jesus and I put them into Your hand, Lord. I put them at Your disposal. You are the Lord of the harvest, You are the Head over all things to the church which is Your body, and these are Your members. Lord, let them know from this moment onwards that they've come under Your control and that You are going to bless them and strengthen them and use them. Lord, we pray for the harvest. You said, "Ask ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into the harvest," and, Lord, I pray for these that according to Your will as You see fit in each circumstance and situation and need, You will thrust them forth into the

harvest field to be laborers for You, Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Lift your hands up and praise God. Thank You, Lord. Praise Your name.

(Derek speaking in tongues.)

Bless the Lord, bless the Lord, and all that is within me bless His name. Hallelujah.

"Behold I give unto you power, unto you I give power. Not unto a past generation, not unto a future generation, but unto you who are here this afternoon, I give power according to My word to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy. And I require you to be endued with power. I require you to be filled with My divine dynamite. I require servants that are faithful and obedient, that do not run their own errands and go their own ways and deliver their own messages, but those that will stand before Me, the Lord of Hosts, and hear My voice and speak My word. For if you will speak My word you will turn this people away from their sins and you will deliver them from their destructions, but if you will speak your dreams and if you will speak your own thoughts and man's wisdom, then this people shall surely perish. But I will require it at the hands of My witnesses, yea I will require it at the hands of the preachers, I will require it at the hands of the ministers of this generation that have not declared the truth of God unto a people that needed to hear not man's wisdom, not human institutions, not doctrinal denominational theories, but My word saith the Lord."

Sermon

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