

PREPARING FOR RAIN

Revelation 18:1-5

1) Review

a) The Three Angels' Messages

- i) 1st angel – a call to faithfulness – “worship Him...”
- ii) 2nd angel – a warning against the errors of Babylon
- iii) 3rd angel – urgency to build character in harmony w/Commandments

In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. **To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world.** On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow **nothing else** to absorb their attention. {9T 19.1}

b) The Other Angel

The light that Christ revealed to His servant the prophet is for us. In His revelation are given the three angels' messages, **and a description of the angel that was to come down from heaven with great power, lightening the earth with his glory...** The world is to be warned by the proclamation of this message. If we blanket it, if we hide our light under a bushel, if we so circumscribe ourselves that we cannot reach the people, we are answerable to God for our failure to warn the world. {19MR 41.2}

2) The Promise of the Spirit

a) “Wait for the Promise of the Father...” (Ac. 1:4-8)

The Holy Spirit was **the highest of all gifts** that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a **regenerating agent**, and without this **the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail.** The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with **no modified energy**, but in the **fullness of divine power.** {DA 671}

- b) And what is the book of Acts known for? It's called Acts of the Apostles, but could be better named *Acts of the Holy Spirit!* In it, we witness the fulfillment of Christ's promise in the early church (Ac. 2:1; 4:22; 8:17; 10:44)

3) The Early and the Latter Rain (Deut. 11:13-17)

- a) The **early rain** was the autumn rain which came at the time of planting the winter crops. In a land dependent upon rain, the seed would not sprout unless the rain fell *in its season* (v. 14; Lev. 26:4).

- i) The early rain fell at Pentecost, and is prominently showcased in the New Testament Church.

(1) "Born of the Spirit" (Jn. 3:3-5)

(2) Another helper ("comforter," *par.* – Jn. 14:15-18)

(a) the "Spirit of truth" who "leads into truth" (Jn. 16:13)

The Comforter is called "the Spirit of truth." His work is to **define** and **maintain** the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and **thus** He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is **through false theories and traditions** that Satan gains his power over the mind. By **directing men to false standards**, he misshapes the character. **Through the Scriptures** the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. **Thus** He exposes error, and **expels it** from the soul. {DA 671.1}

(3) Life in the Spirit (Rom. 8:1-9; Gal. 5:16)

- b) The early rain is still available to us today.

The lapse of time has wrought **no change** in Christ's parting promise to send the Holy Spirit as His representative. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If the fulfillment of the promise is not seen as it might be, it is because **the promise is not appreciated** as it should be. **If all were willing, all would be filled** with the Spirit. {AA 50}

- i) We don't experience the power of it because we don't ask for it; we don't ask for it because we don't realize our need. We have developed a very humanistic theology that doesn't require divine power.

Wherever the need of the Holy Spirit is **a matter little thought of**, there is seen spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. **Whenever minor matters occupy the attention**, the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in infinite plenitude. {AA 50}

ii) And thus we have learned to do without the Spirit's power

The **reason** why there is **so little** of the Spirit of God manifested is that ministers **learn to do without it**. {1T 383}

c) The **latter rain** came in the spring to bring the **harvest** to maturity. **If the crop failed to receive the early rain, the latter rain would accomplish nothing.**

i) The parable of the 10 virgins

(1) The extra oil represents the Latter Rain

Near the close of earth's harvest, **a special bestowal** of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is **likened** to the **falling of the latter rain**.... Unless [God's people] **keep their lamps trimmed and burning**, they will fail of receiving added grace in times of special need. {AA 55.2}

There must be **no neglect** of the grace represented by the **former rain**. Only those who are **living up to the light they have** will receive greater light. Unless we are **daily** advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we **shall not recognize** the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not **discern or receive it**. {TM 507}

Christian life is more than many take it to be. It does not consist **wholly** in gentleness, patience, meekness, and kindness. **These graces are essential**; but there is need also of courage, force, energy, and perseverance.... Some who engage in missionary service are weak, nerveless, spiritless, easily discouraged. **They lack push**. They have not those positive traits of character that give power to do something--the spirit and energy that kindle enthusiasm. Those who would win success must be courageous and hopeful. They should cultivate not only the passive but **the active virtues**. While they are to give the soft answer that turns away wrath, they must possess the courage of a hero to resist evil. With the charity that endures all things,

they need the force of character that will make their influence a positive power. Some have no firmness of character. Their plans and purposes have no definite form and consistency. They are **of but little practical use** in the world. This weakness, indecision, and inefficiency should be overcome. There is in true Christian character an **indomitableness** that cannot be molded or subdued by adverse circumstances. We must have moral backbone, an integrity **that cannot be flattered, bribed, or terrified.** {MH 497, 8}

4) Loud Cry of the 3rd Angel

a) “...and the earth was illuminated with his glory” (Rev. 18:1f)

The angel who **unites** in the **proclamation of the third angel's message** is to lighten the whole earth with his glory. A work of world-wide extent and **unwonted [unprecedented] power** is here foretold. The advent movement of 1840-44 was a glorious manifestation of the power of God; the first angel's message was carried to every missionary station in the world, and in some countries there was the greatest religious interest which has been witnessed in any land since the Reformation of the sixteenth century; but **these are to be exceeded** by the mighty movement under the last warning of the third angel. {GC 611.1}

The great work of the gospel is **not to close with less manifestation of the power of God** than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are **again to be fulfilled** in the latter rain at its close.... Servants of God, with their **faces lighted up** and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. **Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers...** The message will be carried not so much by argument as by **the deep conviction of the Spirit of God.** The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will **spring up and bear fruit.** The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence, yet many whose minds were impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience. Now the **rays of light penetrate** everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and **the honest children of God sever the**

bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, **a large number** take their stand upon the Lord's side. {GC 612.2}

A Peanut-butter-and-crackers existence