

THE KEY TO RECEIVING THE LATTER RAIN OF THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD

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Hosea 6:3 ... 'Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.'

Something which was necessary for a successful harvest of crops for the Israelites was the former and latter rain, which God had promised them, as Deuteronomy 11:14 confirms. The first, or former rain, was to prepare the earth for germination of the seed to grow. The second, or latter rain, was to prepare the crop to become fully ripe and ready for harvest. The literal promise may fitly represent the spiritual promise and outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The early rain to cause the seed of the gospel message to grow and spread over the earth. The latter rain to ripen the church ready for the final harvest of the earth.

But let us take a look at what we find in the book of Joel regarding this:

Joel 2:23 ... 'Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.'

The words '*former rain*' in the Hebrew can also mean *TEACHER*. And the word '*moderately*' in the Hebrew means *RIGHTEOUSNESS*. So if we restate that verse according to the Hebrew, it reads ... "*he hath given you a teacher of righteousness.*" Wow! And I believe the former and latter rain can also apply to our individual lives. In John 6:44 we are told that the Father draws people to Him, which the Father does through the Spirit. And Jesus said in John 16:12-13 that the Holy Spirit would **teach** us the truth. What truth according to the Hebrew in Joel 2 above and John 16:8-10? **Righteousness**.

John 16:8-10 ... 'And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.'

And where do we receive that '*instruction in righteousness*'? From the Word of God according to 2 Timothy 3:16. For the sword of the spirit is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17).

Now in John 16 above it says that the Holy Spirit would come and reprove ('convict') the whole world of sin and of righteousness. But what happens to crops in the ground if they reject or block the rain from watering them? What happens to the seed if it rejects or blocks the early rain? They die. Likewise will all who reject or block the Holy Spirit from instructing them in the ways of righteousness. But the seed that receives the early rain will sprout, and the plant that continues to receive the rain will keep growing. Then it is ready to receive the latter rain which brings about the completed crop ready for harvest.

James 5:7 ...'Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.'

So what must each of us do in order to receive the latter rain of the Holy Spirit, which will prepare us for the final conflict, fitting us for the final harvest and eternal life? We must continue to **RECEIVE 'instruction in righteousness'** which the the Holy Spirit and word of God brings. Remember, the early rain given moderately means 'teacher of righteousness.'

*Deuteronomy 32:1-2 ...'Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. **My doctrine shall drop as the rain**, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.'*

*Psalms 119:138,142,144,172 ...'Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful ... Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the **truth** ... The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live ... My tongue shall speak of thy word: for **all thy commandments are righteousness.**'*

So what must we do to be in a position to receive the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the latter rain? We must continually receive the teaching of righteousness, just as the seed and plant must receive of that rain to grow and be ready for the final ripening rain for harvest. Take a look at what was said concerning Christ in Hebrews:

*Hebrews 1:9 ...'Thou hast **loved righteousness, and hated iniquity**; THEREFORE God, even thy God, hath **anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.**'*

What is the 'oil of gladness'? Acts 10:37-38 confirms that Jesus was anointed "with the Holy Ghost and with power." Thus the anointing of the 'oil of gladness' is the anointing of the Holy Spirit. And WHY was Jesus anointed with the Holy Spirit above his fellows? Look at what Hebrews 1 says. Because Christ "**loved righteousness, and hated iniquity.**" The Greek word for 'iniquity' here is the same Greek word for 'transgression of the law' in 1 John 3:4. Thus Jesus "**loved righteousness and hated the transgression of the law.**" THEREFORE God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit above his fellows. Do you see what is vital for us to be partakers of the latter rain? Jesus didn't just simply KNOW about righteousness and hating sin against the law and character of God. He truly loved it and LIVED IT. He LIVED righteousness. He LIVED a life of NOT submitting to the sinful nature. THEREFORE God anointed him. This is **vital** for us to understand.

*Matthew 5:6 ...'Blessed are they which do **hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.**'*

Do you see? Jesus LOVED righteousness and hated sin and was anointed by his Father in heaven. And Jesus promised to all who hungered and thirsted after righteousness that they will be filled. Filled with what? The Holy Spirit and righteousness. So what is the key to receiving the outpouring of the latter rain? To continually receive "*the former rain given moderately.*" **To receive the teaching of righteousness.** To seek after righteousness. To learn to love righteousness and hate sin. No man can truly receive the teaching of righteousness while wilfully rejecting even one of God's commandments. No man can truly receive the teaching of righteousness while cherishing even one sin. **We must RECEIVE the righteousness of Christ and walk in it.** Look at the gospel summary that the apostle Paul stated in Romans 8:

Romans 8:3-4 ...'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.'

This is the purpose of the gospel. That the righteousness of God's law might be fulfilled (lived out) in us. But to accomplish this, we must '*walk in the Spirit.*' We must DAILY RECEIVE the '*teacher of righteousness,*' putting off the sins of the flesh and walking in the Spirit of God. And as we do this, we will be ready to receive the final outpouring of the latter rain Spirit, just as a seed and plant which continually receives of the rain and is ready for the latter rain and harvest. Thus we will be ready for the final mark of the beast conflict, and will also have power to shine for God and be ready for the harvest at the return of Christ.

But let no man think that he will receive that anointing of the LORD while cherishing the world or any sin. Just knowing ABOUT righteousness is not enough. Just as knowing that physical exercise will make us fit without actually doing it, will do nothing for us. We need to truly LOVE and KNOW righteousness, **living and experiencing** it in our daily lives. RECEIVING the "*teacher of righteousness*" (former rain moderately), so that we will be able to receive the latter rain.

This all connects with the three angels messages of Revelation 14, which tells the world to "**fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come**" (Revelation 14:6-7). To fear God according to Proverbs 8:13 and Proverbs 16:6 is to hate and depart from evil (sin). Therefore to live in the fear of God is truly to hate sin and love righteousness. And remember why God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit above his fellows according to Hebrews 1:9? Because Jesus hated sin and loved righteousness. Thus, the 144,000 will also hate sin and love righteousness, because as Revelation 14:4 confirms, they "*follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth.*" And because they hate sin and love righteousness, not just knowing about it, but living it, they will receive the Holy Spirit above their fellows - the latter rain outpouring, fitting them for the final conflict and "*ripening*" them for the harvest.

And thus it will be said of the 144,000 who hate sin and love righteousness: "*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus*" (Revelation 14:12).

The 144,000 will be sealed with God the Father's name (character) according to Revelation 14:1. This is because they "*grieved not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption*" (Ephesians 4:30). They did not grieve the teacher of righteousness by cherishing the things of this world or any sin or continuing to reject or change any of God's

commandments like the Sabbath. So many are grieving the Spirit of Christ, the teacher of righteousness. So many belong to the Laodicean church, *"thinking they are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"* (Revelation 3:16-20), because they reject the righteousness of Christ in their daily lives by cherishing sin.

We are approaching the final days friends. And a time is coming soon when the *"teacher of righteousness"* will no longer plead with man. Let us make sure we are receiving the former rain, receiving Jesus Christ Himself, to teach us and lead us in the ways of righteousness. Let us make sure we are *"diligent to add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins"* (2 Peter 1:5-9).

This is the key to receiving the latter rain. To continually receive and allow the former rain (teacher of righteousness) to change us and help us grow in the righteousness of God. To hate sin and love righteousness. To hunger and thirst after righteousness. THEN, as Jesus promised, we SHALL be filled. And as the apostle Paul said in Ephesians 3:16-19, we will *"KNOW the love of Christ and be filled with all the fulness of God."*

But if God poured out His fulness upon a person who cherishes any sin, that person would be destroyed by the glory of God. Just as Jesus said, putting new wine in old wineskins will burst the skins and the bottle perish (Luke 5:37). Which is why, in His mercy, God withholds the latter rain until His people are ready. But if we continue to grieve the teacher of righteousness, we will be passed by! Oh friends! Let us make sure we are receiving the 'former rain moderately' (teaching of righteousness), putting away all sin, ready to receive the latter rain.

Isaiah 33:14-15 ... 'Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil.'

Hosea 10:12 ... 'Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.'