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## **The Latter Rain!**

**By David Wilkerson**

January 9, 1995 "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications:

"And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (Zechariah 12:9-10).

This prophecy from Zechariah is about a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will take place in the last days. A similar outpouring is described in Joel 2, which I believe to be Pentecost. That passage reads:

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

"And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit" (Joel 2:28-29).

This is exactly what happened on the day of Pentecost! The Holy Ghost came in like a flood as a spirit of prophecy, at the Upper Room in Jerusalem. Even poor servants and housemaids were gifted with prophetic utterances.

Yet this great outpouring also became a steady watering of the Holy Spirit that has lasted throughout the centuries. For nearly 2,000 years God has poured out His Spirit like showers on His people, daily watering His church and protecting it. Isaiah speaks of the church as:

"...A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day" (Isaiah 27:2-3).

There Is Much in God's Word About Two Rains - Two Outpourings! The two outpourings of the Spirit are referred to as the first (or former) rain and the last (or latter) rain:

"And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil" (Deuteronomy 11:13-14).

The planting and harvest seasons in Israel were just the opposite of ours. The first rains fell from October to the end of December, just before planting season. These rains softened the ground. And the last rains fell from March through April, just prior to harvest. Those rains ripened the harvest.

It is important to note that these two outpourings always had to do with the harvest: "...that thou mayest gather in..." (verse 14). And, beloved, if you want to judge any move of the Holy Spirit - to discern if it is of God or of flesh - then use this criterion: The Spirit's work is always focused on the harvest of souls!

It doesn't matter what kind of manifestations you see in any so-called revival. It is not a true

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movement of God unless it is focused on the harvest! The Holy-Ghost rains always fall to produce an ingathering of souls.

1. God poured out His Spirit in the former rain at Pentecost, to prepare the ground. This outpouring softened the ground for the gospel seed to be sown. Spirit-filled sowers were sent out from the Upper Room that day into all the world - to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

The church has now seen almost 2,000 years of sowing and growing - and it's harvest time! All who have died in Christ up to now represent the first fruits, or the early harvest. But Zechariah prophesies a final harvest - and that is the reason Jesus has not yet come. The Lord has been waiting patiently for His final, mighty harvest of the earth!

"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" (James 5:7).

2. Zechariah 12:10 is the promised latter rain that must precede the final harvest. The Lord is waiting patiently until His last rain is outpoured - because it will produce the final harvest!

In the early part of this century, a Pentecostal movement began in Canada called the "Latter Rain Movement." It lasted perhaps forty or fifty years. Today, only a few "Latter Rain" churches remain.

Yet those who were involved in that movement were convinced they were experiencing the Spirit's great, final outpouring. Many said, "This is it - we're seeing Zechariah 12:10 come to pass!" But the movement dissipated. And other such movements have come and gone also. Why? It is because they were not focused on the harvest!

Many so-called Holy-Ghost movements vanished quickly because they were man-centered - focusing on gifts, blessings, self-improvement, happiness. Dancing, laughing, roaring, barking or any other manifestation attributed to the Holy Ghost is all flesh unless it produces a brokenheartedness for the lost and unsaved. If it is truly of the Spirit, it will result in a hunger and inclination to reach a lost and dying world!

Jesus tied the harvest to lost souls when He said,

"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:38).

Any true outpouring of the Holy Spirit will focus on this prayer of Jesus. And the few revivals documented as genuine all were blessed with great harvests of souls. There is no true revival without great ingathering of lost souls!

Moreover, all the graces and ministries of the Holy Ghost in our lives as believers have to do with the last harvest. When the Holy Spirit convicts us, comforts us, teaches us, sanctifies us, leads us and shows us things to come, it is all meant to prepare us to gather in the harvest - to make us able laborers in His vineyard!

Consider what happened as a result of Joel 2:28. At Pentecost, 3,000 people were saved in one day -

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and souls were added daily afterward! These believers then were thrust out into all the world to witness Christ to the lost.

"Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest" (Isaiah 32:15).

Isaiah is saying here, "When the Holy Ghost comes, He produces fruit for the harvest. Lost souls are won in abundance!"

A Mighty, End-Time Outpouring Is Promised Upon the House of David!"...And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications..." (Zechariah 12:10).

The church has always had grace and supplication. But this verse is talking about a mighty infusion. It signifies something unusual, mighty, glorious!

Now, I need to state here that I do not believe in replacement theology. In other words, I don't believe the New-Testament church is to replace Israel in all the prophetic references of the Old Testament. Rather, I believe many of these prophecies have dual applications.

I also believe that God is going to pour out His Spirit upon the Jews in the last hour. There will be a revelation of Jesus Christ to Israel and to all Jews. For example, I believe Ezekiel 39:22-29 prophesies an outpouring of the Spirit upon the Jews after a great attempt by Israel's enemies to destroy her.

Zechariah 12:10, however, is a prophecy spoken directly to the church of Jesus Christ. It speaks of the house of David - and that means the church. You see, Christ is the seed of David's house. And that house is comprised of all believers in Christ, both Jewish and Gentile.

Indeed, there is a new Israel, a body of believers today that includes all nations and tongues. And this new body is made of faith and not of flesh:

"For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (Galatians 4:25-26).

Paul elsewhere warns Gentile believers not to be boastful or proud that they have been grafted into His body. They are never to disparage God's work among the Jews. On the other hand, it is also absolute blasphemy to rebuild all the walls that the Cross tore down. Jesus broke down every wall between all people:

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then ye are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (3:28-29).

No one is of Abraham's seed simply because he was born a Jew. No - we are heirs of the promise because of our belief in Jesus. All nationalities are made one in Him. Indeed, we are the Jerusalem from above, the house of David of the last days. And we have the promise of a latter-rain outpouring of the Holy Ghost!

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There Are Two Qualifications Propheesied About This Last Outpouring. The Bible says the Holy Ghost will be poured out as "...the spirit of grace and of supplications..." (Zechariah 12:10). Whenever the Spirit falls, these two things are always evident: a spirit of grace and a spirit of supplication.

The book of Titus tells us that grace is given to us as power over sin, to enable us to live sober, holy lives:

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13).

There has been a marvelous measure of this grace in God's people ever since Pentecost. The Holy Ghost has sent conviction of sin on all nations, teaching believers of every race and tongue how to forsake ungodliness and worldly lusts. The result has been a people who live soberly and righteously in this present world and who long for the coming of Jesus.

Yet, when the Spirit's latter rain comes, we are going to witness an even greater grace. God is going to pour out on us a spirit of grace that will establish us in the truth of our justification. The Lord will have a secure people who never doubt their salvation!

Under this outpouring, the Spirit will move on ministers worldwide who have been lukewarm, in compromise. God will smite these men with the conviction of His grace. The Spirit will show them, "The world is coming apart, and soon you will stand before Me. So you'd better start speaking to the hearts of these people. You'd better have My anointing when you stand in the pulpit!"

This is a convicting spirit of grace that leads to repentance, producing godliness and righteousness in God's house. Of course, God's grace has been manifested to His church for 2,000 years. We have known the doctrine of justification by faith. We have been sustained by grace. And wherever true grace has been preached, it has always been accompanied by a call for repentance and holy living.

Yet I believe Zechariah 12:10 prophesies that in the very last hour, the Holy Ghost will fall mightily on God's people with a spirit of grace that turns them completely from all worldliness. It will produce in them a cry for purity of heart!

Ministers will wake up to true "grace preaching" - the kind that convicts people of every hidden thing in their lives. And we are going to witness a convicting, sin-exposing, repentance preaching beyond anything ever seen in history. All unrighteousness, ungodliness and foolishness will be exposed. And those in God's house will feel a "pressure" to do right!

A few weeks ago I received a phone call from a dear brother in the Lord who heads a certain ministry. The leaders of this ministry had been gathering to seek the Lord - and soon the Holy Ghost began exposing homosexuals and lying spirits in their midst. Several team members were dismissed. This brother told me, "Now that the Holy Spirit has come down, there is a pressure to do right."

His phrase struck me, and I couldn't shake it off: a pressure to do right. When the Holy Ghost comes down and exposes sin, Christians who have been lukewarm or in compromise become convicted. Those who don't yield to the Spirit's dealings ultimately become blind, unwilling to surrender. And, eventually, the pressure to live righteously drives them out the door. Beloved, the pressure to forsake

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sin and to do right is going to get hot and heavy in God's last-day church!

God's Spirit Will Also Pour Out a Spirit of Supplication! The word supplication is never used in the Bible except to denote a cry or prayer that is vocalized. In other words, it is not private or merely a meditation. Supplication has to do with the voice!

The Hebrew word for "supplication" signifies "an olive branch wrapped with wool, or some kind of cloth, waved by a supplicant seeking peace or surrender." These were called "branches of supplication." Simply put, they were flags of surrender. They signified a cry of total, unconditional surrender.

Picture a battle-weary soldier, ragged and worn, tired and overwhelmed, stuck in a foxhole of self-will. He is all alone, weary and haggard, and he has come to the end of himself. So he breaks a branch off a tree. He ties his white undershirt to the end, lifts it, waves it and crawls out of his foxhole, crying, "I surrender - I give up!"

That is supplication! It says, "I surrender - I can't fight this battle anymore. I'm lost and despairing."

You see, supplication is not just calling on God to do what you want. It is not begging or pleading with Him to assist you in your plans. On the contrary, it is a total giving up of your will and your way!

For centuries Christians have called on God while full of self-will, begging and crying, "Oh God, send me here, send me there, give me this, give me that..." Ministers have prayed and pled, "Oh God, bless my ministry, bless my projects. Send money and workers for my program!"

But in the last days the Holy Ghost is going to fall with great power to produce a sense of spiritual bankruptcy. We will wake up to the fact that even with all our money, brains, programs, ministries and plans, we haven't even touched this world. (The truth is, we have lost ground. The church has become weak and pitiful!)

I once preached, "All God requires is a heartfelt cry, a desperate calling upon His name." But the Holy Spirit has shown me it takes much more than this to touch His heart.

Malachi speaks of God's people "...covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out..." (Malachi 2:13). Yet the Lord did not receive or hear their cries - because the men of Israel were dealing treacherously with their wives. They were divorcing them and pursuing other women.

These people didn't come before the Lord with a flag of surrender in hand, weeping and crying out, "Oh God, my sin has overwhelmed me! I'm tired of fighting it on my own, tired of resisting the Holy Ghost. Deliver me!" If they had done this, God would have heard them and delivered them.

There has to be a surrender! Our cries must be accompanied by a willingness to surrender our sin - to give up everything in our life that is unlike Jesus Christ.

Daniel's prayer demonstrates what supplication is all about:

"Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline thine ear, and

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hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies" (Daniel 9:17-18).

This is a cry of surrender - of absolute helplessness! Daniel was saying, "Oh God, we've sinned against You - and we can't do anything about it! We're helpless, hopeless. We've rejected You and hurt You. And now we appeal to Your mercy. We surrender. We give it all over to You. Hear our supplication!"

When the Holy Ghost Pours Out a Spirit of Supplication, We Will See Praying Such as the World Has Never Known! A missionary spoke to our church recently of great awakenings around the world. In every case, the "spirit of prayer" is tied to the last harvest. In Vietnam, China, Siberia, the Amazon, among the Zulus in Africa, God's people are praying with fire and fervency - weeping and crying out to God at the top of their voice, seeking His face, dealing with sin and turning to righteousness. Some prayer meetings last from six in the evening until noon the next day.

You can't manufacture this kind of inclination to pray. It is the result of the spirit of supplication! God is doing what He promised in Zechariah 12:10. And these believers are already experiencing it!

Not long ago we called for weeks of prayer at Times Square Church. And now we also have experienced a small taste of this outpouring of the Spirit. Indeed, there is a measure of fire and diligence in prayer throughout this nation. But we have not yet experienced the outpouring of the spirit of supplication!

Last July 18, I started a prayer journal. My first entry read: "A week ago, July 11, the Holy Spirit called me to a year of prayer - and I mean intense prayer. I will keep this journal to prevent me from letting up on my commitment."

But for the past thirty days I have not written a word in that prayer journal. It has been a great test in my life! I have been interrupted constantly. I have never found it so difficult to stay disciplined in prayer.

God is showing me through this that even the desire and inclination to pray must come from the Holy Spirit. Now my dilemma is this: God has promised to pour out a spirit of supplication on His church, and I don't want to miss out on it. I want to be a part of the genuine move of God. So, how can I make sure I am poured out upon with this spirit?

The answer is in Zechariah 10:1:

"Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field" (Zechariah 10:1).

We have to ask the Lord for this spirit of supplication! Bright clouds in this verse means "lightning, thunderstorms." God has promised to give us showers! He is telling us in Zechariah, "Ask, and I will give you this burden from heaven. But you must seek it from Me!"

Isn't it time we started asking the Lord, "Oh God, pour your Holy Spirit on me, that I may learn to pray! Open up the fountain. Let me be a part of Your final harvest!"

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Once His spirit of supplication showers down upon you, you will find yourself praying for holiness, godliness, purity. You will intercede for your lost loved ones and weep over this dying world. But you have to ask the Holy Spirit to do it in you - and trust Him to do it!

This Last Outpouring - The Latter Rain of Grace And Supplication - Is Going to Bring God's People to Their Knees! I see in Zechariah's prophesy a new vision of the Cross of Jesus:

"...and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him..." (Zechariah 12:10).

Right now, the Holy Spirit is doing just that in Israel. Multitudes of Jews gather at the Wailing Wall, weeping for their Messiah to come. But one day soon God will remove the veil - and they will know Jesus for who He is, and weep over having pierced Him! They will long for Him, mourning over their blindness and rejection of His Cross.

Yet, there is another application of this verse that has to do with the church. You see, there is soon coming a very personal dealing by the Holy Ghost. The church of Jesus Christ has so blunted sin - so whitewashed and overlooked it - that when the Spirit comes down with the spirit of prayer, He will bring a purging as well. There will be weeping, mourning, brokenness - a reality of how our sins grieve the heart of God!

The Holy Ghost is going to move this way not just in congregations, but in families and in every individual believer:

"And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart..." (Zechariah 12:12).

I ask you: What greater gift could God give His church just before He comes than a powerful, convicting message against sin? He will bring such piercing conviction that we will not be able to tolerate any unholy or unclean thing in us!

In summary, here are the qualifications and marks of the latter-rain outpouring of the Spirit. If any so-called movement of the Spirit doesn't measure up to these, you can know it is of the flesh:

1. A focus on the final harvest of souls.
2. A spirit of grace leading to repentance and godliness.
3. A spirit of supplication resulting in surrender and an urgency to pray in the Spirit.
4. A yearning for Jesus, and a mourning, brokenness and weeping with godly sorrow for sin. Only after such dealings of the Spirit will come the true blessing of joy!

Dear saint, it is possible to miss out on all that the Spirit has promised. Even in the midst of His rain, you can end up in a desert - dry, withered, empty. All you have to do is join the Laodicean crowd - to remain lukewarm and be satisfied with halfhearted service to the Lord. And the rain that comes to ripen the last-day harvest will only water the thorns and thistles in you:

"For the earth which drinketh in the rain...bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed,

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receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected..." (Hebrews 6:7-8).

I don't want to miss out on God's last outpouring! I have been praying for Him to include me, and I urge you to do the same. Pray with me now:

"Lord, I don't have the discipline needed for Your holy work. You have to give it to me! Give me Your burden for lost souls. Put Your weeping Spirit in me. You are my only hope - so I surrender and turn totally to You. I'll do anything You tell me. And I will depend on You for everything!"

Amen!

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