

# LAST DAYS AND THE LATTER RAIN

## BIBLE TEXT : James 4:1-10; 5:1-9.

LESSON 451 Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:8).

### BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

#### James 4:1-10

<sup>1</sup> From whence *come* wars and fightings among you? *come they* not hence, *even* of your lusts that war in your members?

<sup>2</sup> Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

<sup>3</sup> Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts.

<sup>4</sup> Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

<sup>5</sup> Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

<sup>6</sup> But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

<sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

<sup>8</sup> Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded.

<sup>9</sup> Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness.

<sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

#### James 5:1-20

<sup>1</sup> Go to now, *ye* rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon *you*.

<sup>2</sup> Your riches are corrupted, and

### Bible References:

#### Notes:

The Apostle James, just as the Apostle Paul, wrote his letters to the Christians to warn them of sin and temptations that would come to them to try to turn them from trusting in Jesus. He encouraged them to live to please Jesus, so that when they are called into eternity, they would be ready.

Jesus is coming again to take His Bride out of this world. Only the pure and holy children of God, who have prepared themselves in this life to go to Heaven will be worthy to be the Bride. James believed that Jesus was coming again, but he knew that certain things must happen first: the spiritual Early Rain had already fallen, but the Latter Rain, also, must first fall before the Lord would come.

#### **The Early Rain**

James, in telling about Jesus' coming again, used the illustration of harvest. The man who plants grain does not expect to harvest a crop right away -- not in the next week, or maybe even the next month. In the land where James lived, the grain was planted in the fall of the year, and the rain would fall to make the seed sprout. This was called the early rain.

In describing the Church, the early rain refers to the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost. It happened 50 days after Christ was crucified. He had risen from the dead, and after walking on earth for 40 days, had ascended into Heaven. But before He left, He told His followers to "wait for the promise of the Father, . . . ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:4, 5).

On the day the Holy Ghost came, Peter stood and explained to the people what had happened. They heard the 120 who had been baptised with the Holy Ghost, speaking in many languages. Peter proclaimed that what had happened to them was what Joel had prophesied about when he said: "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" (Joel 2:23). This was the "former rain," or "early rain."

The early rain continued to fall for years to come, while the early Church was being established. The "crop" was being planted. Then came the waiting period. The Husbandman, Jesus, had long patience.

#### **The Latter Rain**

Before the grain harvest in Palestine, there was another rain, called the latter rain, to bring the crop to maturity. The husbandman waited until after this latter rain had fallen, then prepared to harvest his crop.

The spiritual Latter Rain began to fall in April of 1906; April corresponds with the month Abib, the first month of the Jewish religious calendar. It was for the purpose of preparing the Church for the coming of Jesus. We are living in this Latter Rain period, and the harvest is almost ready. We must be alert, waiting for the coming of the Lord. Now is the time for us to "stablish" our hearts, be sure that we are living as the Bible teaches, so that we

your garments are moth-eaten.

<sup>3</sup> Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

<sup>4</sup> Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

<sup>5</sup> Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

<sup>6</sup> Ye have condemned *and* killed the just; *and* he doth not resist you.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

<sup>9</sup> Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

<sup>10</sup> Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

<sup>11</sup> Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

<sup>12</sup> But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and *your nay,*

will hear the Trumpet sound when Jesus comes for His Bride.

### **Delaying His Coming**

People who are expecting the coming of Jesus at any moment are living to please Jesus, obeying His commandments. But some are saying, "The Lord delays His coming." Maybe they do not say it in that many words, but by their actions they show that they do not think He will come soon.

Jesus spoke of some who were not expecting Jesus to come. He said that if that servant would say in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming," he would be careless about his actions. He would "begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken." God would send judgment upon such a one. "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 24:48-51).

Some of the people to whom James was writing must have given up the idea of the coming of Jesus, because there was trouble among them. He asked: "From whence come wars and fightings among you?" They were fighting because they were selfish. Each wanted his own way; he wanted everything for himself and did not want to give to others. God's law is: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Romans 12:10). The child of God is trying to help others, not trying to get everything for himself. God has promised to provide for our needs if we ask Him. "God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

### **Covetousness**

Many times in God's Word we are warned against covetousness. To covet means to want something very much that we cannot have, or should not have; or to want what another has. God names covetousness among some of the worst sins. We are told: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

The Bride of Christ is interested in the things the Bridegroom, Jesus, is interested in. She wants the things He wants to give. People who have learned to submit their whole will to the Lord, and to be content with the things He gives, have found glorious happiness. Jesus made man in the first place, and knows what makes him happy. And that is not worldly pleasure.

In Matthew 5 we are told some of the things that make people happy. "Blessed [or happy] are the poor in spirit." Why? "For theirs is the kingdom of heaven." We who are children of God are not looking to the things of this world to satisfy, but have our hearts set on that heavenly City, "which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11: 10).

Happy are the "meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Happy are the "merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." They will not be condemned to the lake of fire with those who say, "The Lord delayeth His coming." "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." So we see that those who are quarrelling and fighting among themselves are not the children of God.

### **Looking Back**

If after one has been saved, he turns again to worldly amusements, and has a desire for the foolishness and sins that the devil dangles before him, he becomes an enemy of Jesus. He should love Jesus above everybody and everything. If he wants something else more than Jesus and service for Jesus, he is not true to his Beloved. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world

nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

<sup>13</sup> Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

<sup>14</sup> Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

<sup>15</sup> And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

<sup>16</sup> Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

<sup>17</sup> Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

<sup>18</sup> And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

<sup>19</sup> Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

<sup>20</sup> Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). The enemy cannot be the Bride of Christ. Jesus said of His disciples: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). So we can live in this sinful world, and yet not be partaker of the evil in it. The children of God stand out among the worldly throng as being different. They have no interest in the evils of the world: theatres, dancing, worldly immodest dress, alcoholic liquor, television shows, cigarettes. If you have a desire for these allurements of Satan, you will not be the Bride of Christ.

Satan will come to all of us to tempt us to commit sin, but we can overcome him. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). But in order to have power to resist him, we must submit ourselves to the will of God; then He gives the grace we need.

If you are tempted to partake of worldly amusements, ask the Lord to help you to overcome. Ask Him to show you the glories of Heaven, the eternal happiness He has waiting for you. Then the things of this world will look very cheap.

### **Drawing Nigh**

The way to feel the Lord close to us is for us to go to Him. When we draw nigh to Him, He will quickly come to us. He always meets us more than half-way. But we first must turn to Him. Jesus cannot save anyone against his will. Jesus holds out His arms and says, "Come unto me." He pleads with sinners to turn from their wicked ways, so that they will not have to go to hell. "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die?" (Ezekiel 33:11). Jesus knows how horrible hell is, that those fires will never be put out. The one who goes to hell will never have an opportunity to escape. So Jesus calls again and again, "Come!" "Come!" "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psalm 51:17). That is the way to come to Jesus: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:10).

### **The Love of Money**

In our generation it seems people become richer and richer. In spite of all that God says in His Word about loving the Lord more than the things of this world, people think riches will make them happy. So they hoard wealth -- and many are so much disappointed that money did not make them happy, that they commit suicide. In one recent year, 17 millionaires committed suicide in the United States. The Bible says: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15).

The way to be happy is to give -- not grab. "Give, and it shall be given unto you" (Luke 6:38). "Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil" (Luke 6:35). "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard" (Proverbs 21:13). Giving makes people happy.

When the day of judgment comes, the rich men who have not given their heart to the Lord will have nothing to offer to God. He will not want their money. He says to them: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you" (James 5:1). Their gold and silver will do them no good. That which is so precious to them in this life they will throw to the moles and bats. Some do not pay full wages to the people who work for them. The Lord is noticing all the oppressors, those who hold people down to low wages when they should pay more. He

will yet reward His people who trust in Him, and pour out judgment upon those who have loved themselves more than others, and have worked to get everything for themselves, not giving to others.

"Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door" (James 5:9). At any moment He may come to bring the world into judgment. May we be ready to meet Him in peace!

### **QUESTIONS**

1. When did the early rains and the latter rains fall in Palestine?
2. How are the early and latter rains compared with spiritual things?
3. What did the husbandman wait for before he harvested his crop?
4. What do people often do who say, "The Lord delays His coming"?
5. Who are the happy people? Quote the Beatitudes.
6. What does the Bible say about covetousness?
7. How can we overcome sin?
8. How can we come to the Lord?
9. What is God's message to the rich men when they will stand in the judgment?