

THE EARLY AND THE LATTER RAIN

BIBLE TEXT : Joel 2:21-32; Acts 2:1-47

LESSON 66 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Joel 2:21-32

²¹ Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things.

²² Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength.

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*.

²⁴ And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil.

²⁵ And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

²⁶ And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.

²⁷ And ye shall know that I *am* in the midst of Israel, and *that* I *am* the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

²⁸ And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out 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:

²⁹ And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

³⁰ And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

³¹ The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

³² And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Prophecy of Joel

1 A time of praise and rejoicing shall come, Joel 2:21, 23, 26; Acts 2:46, 47

2 The promise of the former and the latter rain is the cause for rejoicing, Joel 2:23

3 It shall be a time of boldness — "My people shall never be ashamed," Joel 2:26, 27;

Acts 4:13 ¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

Acts 14:3 ³ Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

4 There shall be a generous outpouring of the Spirit of God, Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:4

II The Day of Pentecost

1 "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel," Acts 2:16

2 Sanctification had made them of one accord, Acts 2:1;

John 17:11-23 ¹¹ And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are*.

¹² While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

¹³ And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

¹⁴ I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

¹⁵ I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

¹⁷ Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

¹⁸ As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

²⁰ Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

²¹ That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

²² And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

²³ I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Hebrews 2:11 ¹¹ For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

3 The Holy Ghost is given, with the evidence of speaking in tongues, Acts 2:2-13

4 Under the anointing of the Holy Ghost, Peter preaches with boldness, Acts 2:14-36

5 Holy Ghost conviction brings three thousand souls to repentance, Acts 2:37-47

6 The Holy Ghost continues to be outpoured and the same evidence follows,

Acts 10:46 ⁴⁶ For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

Acts 2:1-47

¹ And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

³ And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁵ And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

⁶ Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

⁷ And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

⁸ And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

⁹ Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

¹⁰ Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

¹¹ Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

¹² And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

¹³ Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

¹⁴ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

¹⁵ For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day.

¹⁶ But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

¹⁷ And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

¹⁸ And on my servants and on my

Acts 19:6 ⁶ And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

III The Early and the Latter Rain

1 The natural early rain came at seedtime, Joel 2:23

Deuteronomy 11:14 ¹⁴ 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.

Hosea 6:3 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.

2 The latter rain came just before harvest, Joel 2:23;

Jeremiah 5:24 ²⁴ 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.

3 The spiritual Latter Rain fell in the first month — "Abib" of the Jewish calendar, our April, 1906, Joel 2:23: Acts 2:39

James 5:7 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.

NOTES:

Natural and Spiritual

In chapter 2, verses 21-27, Joel is speaking of the natural blessings God pours out; but the spiritual is exemplified by the natural. Many times in the ministry of Christ upon earth He took some of the natural things round about Him to illustrate the beauties of spiritual blessings. In Palestine the early rain was for the purpose of preparing the soil for the seed; the latter rain was for the purpose of bringing forth the ripening of the harvest. The promise of these rains referred both to the natural and the spiritual blessings that God was to pour out upon His people.

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out 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).

Something New

We can see that there was to be a distinctly different manifestation from any that had before taken place in God's dealings with His people. **In** olden times there were only certain ones designated to spiritual offices. The priests had to be born into the family of Aaron in order to fulfill the office and they served in their regular order. Prophets were definitely called of God. But God here designated a time in which He would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. Sons and daughters, manservants and maidservants should all prophesy, or proclaim the truths of the Gospel and the knowledge of God. This was to be a glorious time! In Acts 2:16 we read that Peter on the Day of Pentecost stood up and proclaimed, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel."

With One Accord

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1). This verse reveals a very important truth We are told in Hebrews 2:11, "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." They see eye to eye, and are of one mind and heart and of one accord in the Gospel. Only sanctified people are truly and genuinely of

handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

¹⁹ And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

²⁰ The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:

²¹ And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

²² Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

²³ Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

²⁴ Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

²⁵ For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

²⁶ Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

²⁷ Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

²⁸ Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

²⁹ Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

³⁰ Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

³¹ He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

³² This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

³³ Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

³⁴ For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

one accord. Jesus prayed for His disciples that they might be sanctified and made one. (See John 17.) That prayer had been answered — they were already sanctified wholly. They were all in one accord and in one place.

There are, some who accept the doctrine of sanctification, but they have called sanctification the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The Scriptures tell us that sanctification is the purging, cleansing, purifying work that takes place in the life after salvation. It is a definite, instantaneous experience in which the inbred sin is destroyed. Just as salvation instantly transforms the life, forgives and removes the outward acts of sin, so sanctification removes the "Adamic nature," or inbred sin.

Power

The coming of the baptism of the Holy Ghost was the fulfilling of the promise that *Jesus* gave His disciples when He said, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you " Power! Power is the essential — steam. What would be the use of machinery, equipment, polished shafts, without motive power? Did you ever see a new locomotive standing on the track? There it stands in perfect condition — the gears, the shafts, the pistons, and everything polished to the last degree — but no water in the boiler, no fire in the firebox. Put water in the boiler and fire into the firebox, and soon the old steam gage goes around to two hundred fifty, three hundred pounds or more, and the locomotive not only moves out but it moves everything that is attached to it. If we get the power from on High, we will not only move ourselves but we will move that with which **we** come in contact. May God give us that power today!

Our own mind and our own strength are absolutely useless until we receive the enduement of the Spirit's power; then all our talents, our genius, all that we have will work in perfect harmony and accord with the Spirit of God. The same Peter who had denied his Lord, but had found his way back to God, after the outpouring of the Spirit preached that wonderful sermon with the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven. Three thousand souls were converted.

For Us Today

Some have declared that the baptism is not for us today; that it was only for the establishment of the early Church. Peter preached that "the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). That includes everyone down **to** the present day who will meet God's conditions.

The Evidence

Others say that we may receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost **but** that the evidence of speaking in tongues is nonessential. We read that on the Day of Pentecost they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

It was the evidence of speaking in tongues that proved to the Jews that God had poured out His Spirit also upon the Gentiles of Cornelius' household (Acts 10:44 - *While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word Acts 10:44 ⁴⁴*). God is still baptizing believers today and the same evidence is given — the speaking in tongues.

There is a definite distinction between the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the Bible evidence of speaking in tongues, and the diversified gifts of the Spirit. There are diversities of gifts, of course. "Tongues" is one gift, healing another, prophecy another. Teaching is another, evangelism another, faith another, and so on. But there is a distinction between those gifts designated in Corinthians by Paul and the speaking in tongues on

³⁵ Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

³⁶ Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

³⁷ Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

³⁸ Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

³⁹ For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

⁴⁰ And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

⁴¹ Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

⁴² And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

⁴³ And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

⁴⁴ And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

⁴⁵ And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.

⁴⁶ And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

⁴⁷ Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

the Day of Pentecost. If not, the hundred and twenty believers **in** the upper room would have had different kinds of gifts. When the Comforter came and the baptism was poured out upon them, they all received the same evidence

All Were Jews

Some claim that speaking in tongues was necessary to make the men from the various countries — Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, Libya, Egypt — understand the message. Acts 2:5 tells us that they were all Jews, and, as such undoubtedly understood their mother tongue. Therefore the different languages spoken were for a sign and were not essential for making the Jews understand. Peter's sermon and explanation were not in many languages, but in one. The people heard it and understood it.

Fanatics

There are many fanatics who have brought reproach upon the Latter Rain Gospel by false tongues and manifestations. People lay themselves open to such false tongues and manifestations when they seek for the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire without first having been sanctified wholly. The devil has always had a counterfeit for those who are not willing to obey all the Word of God. However, the true baptism stands in spite of the devil's counterfeit.

The Early Rain

True to the prophecy of Joel, God poured out His Spirit on all flesh in the days of the Apostles. This was the spiritual Early Rain that God had promised. The Day of Pentecost was the beginning, or seedtime, of the Christian Church. God poured out His Spirit, and the disciples went everywhere preaching the Gospel. The Church was established and flourished for a time' then there came a "falling away" and a spiritual drouth.

The Latter Rain

Before the second coming of the Lord and the harvest time it was necessary that the Church be revived. God had promised the Latter Rain.

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coining 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).

In April, 1906, there were many true children of God in Los Angeles, California, in many of the churches, praying for the outpouring of the

Spirit and for a world-wide revival. A minister coming from the Welsh revival to Los Angeles at that time stirred these people to pray. There were praying bands in the different churches there, and probably all over the world at that time, praying for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, as well as for a revival. But there was one little company of sanctified people who had appointed a ten-day tarrying meeting for the baptism of the Holy Ghost. They were in one accord, and they expected that when they received the Pentecost experience they would receive the sign of speaking in tongues, as in Acts 2:4. The Lord put His seal upon this company.

Joel prophesied that the Latter Rain would be given in the first month. The Jewish first month is "Abib," or our April.

On the 9th of April, 1906, the power fell in a cottage meeting on Bonnie Brae Street where the little company was assembled. A number received the baptism of the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave utterance. The mighty power of God was manifested. This was noised abroad. Hungry souls came until the cottages could not hold them. Then they rented for a meeting place an old barnlike building on Azusa Street; it was humble, but it was the place where the Holy Ghost

was received.

God is still baptizing believers in the same way. The Early and the Latter Rains have been given. The harvest time is upon us. The Husbandman who has waited long for the precious fruit of the earth will not wait much longer. Jesus is coming soon!

QUESTIONS

- 1 What preparation is necessary in order to be a candidate for the baptism of the Holy Ghost?
- 2 Give Scriptural proof that speaking in tongues is one of the evidences of receiving the baptism.
- 3 Is speaking in tongues positive proof of receiving the baptism?
- 4 What passage of Scripture lets us know that the baptism is for us today?
- 5 When was the spiritual Early Rain? Latter Rain?
- 6 What is meant by "the latter rain in the first month"?
- 7 How does Joel compare chronologically with other Old Testament writers?
- 8 Is the evidence of speaking in tongues on receiving the baptism the same as the gift of tongues?
- 9 For what purposes were the natural early and latter rains given?
- 10 How many were converted on the Day of Pentecost?
- 11 How many received the baptism on the Day of Pentecost?