

Episode #438 Second Coming of the Holy Spirit 6 – The Latter Rain

I. While the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to this earth to be personally present for a thousand years is an extremely important event in God's future, prophetic calendar, yet the Bible also sets forth the great truth of the second coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:15, when God will pour out His Spirit on all flesh. We are considering this sending of the Spirit.

II. Before we leave this topic behind, we need to consider how this second sending of the Holy Spirit relates to the "latter rain" idea that many set forth, especially in the charismatic movement.

A. The idea that is set forth is that the "former rain" was the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and throughout the Acts period, while the "latter rain" is the pouring out of the Holy Spirit that is being experienced now by those in the charismatic and Pentecostal movements.

B. Is this what is taught by the "latter rain" in Scripture?

III. The "latter rain" occurs in eight passages in the Scriptures.

A. Deuteronomy 11:14. There were two rainy seasons in Israel that they needed to produce good crops. They would receive these if they would obey the LORD.

B. Proverbs 16:15. A cloud of the latter rain was good, since it was what was needed to bring in the crops. A farmer in Israel would be happy and relieved every time when he saw such a cloud forming.

C. Jeremiah 3:3. Since they had polluted Yahweh's land with harlotries and wickedness (verse 2), the showers and the latter rain have been withheld.

D. Jeremiah 5:24. Judah did not say in their inner beings that they should fear the LORD Who gave them their former and latter rains. For this reason they were being withheld from the land (verse 25).

E. Hosea 6:3. If there is a passage that may be talking about the charismatic idea of the "latter rain," it is this one. Yet there is nothing here to connect this to the Pentecostal or Charismatic movements, nor to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at all. We might as well say this is referring to the first and second comings of Jesus Christ. The reference is certainly not a clear one.

F. Joel 2:23. There is no particular reason to think that anything but the rain needed for their crops is being referred to here.

G. Zechariah 10:1. If this is symbolic for the Holy Spirit, that is not plain from the passage itself.

H. James 5:7. James is speaking of the time of the tribulation, and urging people to be patient until the Parousia of the Lord. He uses the farmer waiting patiently for the fruit of the earth until he receives the early and latter rains as an example. There is nothing here that seems to be symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

IV. Could the "latter rain" be the "second coming of the Holy Spirit" we have been talking about?

A. It is not clear in the Bible that the "latter rain" is connected with the Holy Spirit. It seems to literally be talking about rain in most of these passages.

B. Yet we know that God is a flow-er, and it is certainly true that in the government of God, He flows out to His people.

C. God flowing out could be described as a rain, and so it is possible that Pentecost was the "former rain," and the second coming of the Holy Spirit is the "latter rain."

- D. However, the second coming of the Holy Spirit is the Spirit being poured out upon “all flesh,” not just upon a few believers in the charismatic and Pentecostal movements. What exactly they are experiencing can be debated, but it is not the second coming of the Holy Spirit as we have seen it described in Scripture.
- E. And since the latter rain is upon the “children of Zion” (Joel 2:23), in other words Israelites, and since most in these movements are Gentiles, what they are experiencing today cannot be the “latter rain” for this reason either.
- F. If the “latter rain” is talking about something besides actual rain, it would be the second coming of the Holy Spirit that brings in the government of God, not anything that is happening today.

V. Conclusion: The second coming of the Holy Spirit as we have studied it out in Scripture is not the same as the idea of the “latter rain” of the Holy Spirit that is common among charismatics and Pentecostals. The second coming of the Holy Spirit is Him giving knowledge of the truth to all people upon earth at once, in order to begin His government upon earth. This has not happened yet, but it will happen someday. May God speed the day!