

THE LATTER RAIN

Joel 2:21-23

²¹ Fear not, O land; Be glad and rejoice, For the LORD has done marvelous things! ²² Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field; For the open pastures are springing up, And the tree bears its fruit; The fig tree and the vine yield their strength. ²³ Be glad then, you children of Zion, And rejoice in the LORD your God; For He has given you the former rain faithfully, And He will cause the rain to come down for you— The former rain, And the latter rain in the first *month*

INTRO: Today the Spirit of the Lord has led us to minister on the topic “Rain”; in the Bible we not only study about rain but rain in its two seasons: “The Former Rain and the Latter Rain”. In the agricultural society it is not just the presence or absence of rain that important, but its timing as well. We have to understand that the majority of things in the Bible have a symbolic reference and that is what we will try and help you understand today.

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF RAIN

1. *It is a blessing*

- 1) Ps. 72:6 ⁶ He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing, Like showers *that* water the earth”
- 2) Ps. 84:6 ⁶ As they pass through the Valley of Baca, They make it a spring; The rain also covers it with pools.”

2. *They can be a punishment*

- 1) Dt. 11:17 ¹⁷ lest the LORD’s anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you”

3. *Too Much was a sign of punishment*

- 1) Ezra 10:9 ⁹ So all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered at Jerusalem within three days. It was the ninth month, on the twentieth of the month; and all the people sat in the open square of the house of God, trembling because of *this* matter and because of heavy rain”

4. *Reward for Worship and Obedience*

- 1) Dt. 28:12 ¹² The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.”

II. TWO MAIN SEASONS OF RAIN

1. *The Former Rain – Between October and November*

1) *The importance of needing the rain during this time*

- 2) They needed to soften the **dry ground** so that the winter grain may be **sown** before the continual rain season
 - (1) The importance of plowing the ground during this season
- 3) Sowing the seed during this season
 - (1) Without the **seed** there wouldn’t be anything to harvest
- 4) During this time the rains are frequent and heavy, dark foggy days are seldom.
 - (1) People have to rely on each other for encouragement

2. *The Latter Rain – Between March and April*

- 1) Mostly appreciated
 - (1) The moment it would **sprout** out of the ground
- 2) They ripen the fruit and mature it
- 3) This time is considered special by God

- (1) Job 29:23 ^{“23} They waited for me *as* for the rain, And they opened their mouth wide *as* for the spring rain.”
- 4) Was a sign of the harvest they will obtain
- (1) James 5:7-8 ^{“7} Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. ⁸ You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand”

III. THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. The Former Rain

- 1) We need to learn to be **“Sowers”**
- (1) Mat. 13:1-8
- Different ways to Evangelize
 - Most important is to do it
- 2) We need to learn how to **cultivate** the ground
- (1) 1 Cor 3:6 ^{“6} I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase”
- Some will plant the seed
 - Others will water it
 - Others will cultivate it
- 3) We need to learn how to be there in the gloomy moments
- (1) When it doesn’t look like it isn’t going to rain**
- Are we really going to grow?
- (2) When there isn’t any sun**
- Is the Spirit of God still with us?
- (3) When we are just waiting**
- Let us wait in rejoice

2. The Latter Rain

- 1) This tests our **faith**
- (1) Joel 2:21 “Fear not, O land; Be glad and rejoice, For the LORD ***has done*** marvelous things!”
- (2) Joel 2:23 “And ***He will cause*** the rain to come down for you— The former rain, And the latter rain in the first *month*”
- 2) We have to **see**: ^{“22} Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field; For the open pastures are springing up, And the tree bears its fruit; The fig tree and the vine yield their strength”
- (1) “Springing up”**
- New souls
- (2) “Our fruit”**
- The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit
 - Joel 2:28 ^{“28} “And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.”
 - The Gifts
 - 1 Cor 12:4 ^{“4} There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit”
 - The Ministries
 - 1 Cor. 12:5 ^{“5} There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord”
 - The Works
 - 1 Cor. 12:6 ^{“6} There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men”
- (3) “Yield their strength”**
- What does the future holds for “Pathway”?

CONCLUSION: Jer. 5:24 ²⁴ They do not say to themselves, 'Let us fear the LORD our God, who gives autumn and spring rains in season, who assures us of the regular weeks of harvest.' Job. 29:23 ²³ They waited for me as for showers and drank in my words as the spring rain.