

"I SAW ANOTHER ANGEL COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN"

If you could choose the one book that was the most important book Ellen White ever wrote, which would it be? This shouldn't be a hard question to answer if you have read widely in her writings. If you chose **The Great Controversy** you would be correct.

Now, I know there has been some debate over the years about Ellen White having written several different editions of **The Great Controversy** as it evolved over a period of nearly 60 years, and at the first writing in 1858 she said the devil tried to kill her in an effort to stop her from writing that volume, and so it must be pretty important, because she didn't say that about any of her other writings as far as I know.

Then in **Letter 56, 1911**, in reference to the 1911 edition, which was the last one, notice what she says, "The book *The Great Controversy*, I appreciate above silver or gold, and I greatly desire that it shall come before the people. While writing the manuscript of *The Great Controversy*, I was often conscious of the presence of the angels of God. And many times the scenes about which I was writing were presented to me anew in visions of the night, so that they were fresh and vivid in my mind."

"Silver and gold", "Presented to me anew", and the scenes were "fresh and vivid" in her mind, and I believe this is the reason for the updated 1911 edition of **The Great Controversy**. Not that there's anything wrong with the earlier volumes, I'm glad we have them, but neither is there anything wrong with following the Lord's directions to update in order to make it more appealing to the general public. And besides, had the brethren over a 150 years ago listened to the Holy Spirit, there would have been no need for any updating, because the Lord would have come, and I guess the same could be said for us today. Why are we still here if we have done what the Lord asked us to do? There's plenty of blame to go around, isn't there?

Now, we don't have time to discuss all the reasons why there are several editions and updates to **The Great Controversy**, and even to the **Testimonies** and other of her writings for that matter, but if you would like more information about this subject you can go to my website at gospel-workers.com and scroll down the Sermons page to April 2021 and listen to the sermon titled "Can the Spirit of Prophecy be Trusted." And just so you know, the answer is yes, and I think you'll agree with me once you listen. And so, that's all I'm going to say about that for now, but I do want to talk for a few minutes about **The Great Controversy** in another vain.

SERMON OF THE MONTH

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Pastor Jack Jones

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Here's the way **chapter 38** starts out on **page 603**. She begins by quoting from **Revelation 18:1, 2, 4** where it says, "I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lighted with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. . . And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

Friends, I believe we are living during the time portrayed in this particular chapter, because **chapter 39** deals with the time of trouble after probation closes, when Michael, or Christ, stands up. And so, today we're going to look at this other angel mentioned in **Revelation 18**, which many refer to as the fourth angel's message, although Ellen White nor any of the pioneers of our faith ever referred to it as such as far as I know, but we call it that today, why? Because it's the angel that follows the third.

Now, it could be that one of the reason inspiration doesn't call it the fourth angel is because this angel that follows the third is said "to give power and force to the third angel's message." You can read that in **Early Writings, page 277**. In other words, the third angel's message is the most important of all the messages and shouldn't be overshadowed by any of the other messages, or take a back seat in any way.

Now having said that, is it important that people be called out of Babylon? Of course it is, but it's necessary to experience the third angel's message first, why? Because **Selected Messages, book 3, page 372** says the third angel's message is a message of "justification by faith in verity", and if a person has not had that experience, coming out of Babylon will not save them. Does this make sense so far?

The third angel's message takes first place, because through the new birth experience a person becomes justified, or pardoned, and can then benefit from giving heed to the fourth angel's message. But again, that doesn't mean that separating from an apostate church is less important than being pardoned, but there's a specific order that needs to take place, because I know of more than one person who left their Babylonian church without experiencing the third angel's message and ended up rejecting the truth all together.

Let's face it, it can be lonely out there without a church family and the ability to fellowship with others we may have known for many years, and I think this is one of the main reasons people go back to the church they left, I've seen it many times. And so, it's supremely important that one knows Jesus intimately and knows all the reasons for leaving and is settled in their mind about why they left in the first place. And by the way, separating from an apostate church is something that has happened all through history; it's nothing new. And so we shouldn't feel singled out or abused somehow because God has given us a call out message, because He'll never ask us to do anything that is not for our own good.

Perhaps at some other time we'll look at the third angel's message in some detail, but for today what I would like to do is take a look at who this angel is that follows the third to see what we can learn.


First of all, it's important that we understand that the fourth angel is not a literal angel that comes down from heaven to lighten the earth with his glory any more than the third angel is a literal angel, and to prove that point I'll read you a statement that clearly tells us what these angels represent.

Testimonies for the Church, volume 1, page 76 says, "I was shown that the third angel, proclaiming the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, represents the people who receive this message and raise the voice of warning to the world." You didn't know that you are an angel, did you? But in this sense of the word you are just that.

So, we shouldn't be looking for a literal angel to come down from heaven to do the work that God has given us to do, but unfortunately there are many Seventh-day Adventists today that believe that fable, and with that kind of understanding the work will never be finished by those who are literally minded.

And here's the other thing we need to understand about the fourth angel's message; it's the third and fourth angel's messages combined that produce the loud cry of the third angel, which is the last message of mercy this world will ever hear.

Let me read that to you from ***Early Writings, pages 277***: "I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven, descending to the earth, and again ascending to heaven (sounds like Jacob's ladder, doesn't it? This means that the angels do have a part to play in these last days, but again, that does not negate the fact that God has commissioned us to proclaim the




message. Now let me start over) "I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven, descending to the earth, and again ascending to heaven preparing for the fulfillment of some important event. Then I saw another mighty angel commissioned to descend to the earth, to unite his voice with the third angel, and give power and force to his message. **(The fourth angel does what? Gives power and force to the third angel's message)** Great power and glory were imparted to the angel, and as he descended, the earth was lighted with his glory. The light which attended this angel penetrated everywhere, as he cried mightily, with a strong voice, 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.' The message of the fall of Babylon, as given by the second angel, is repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the churches since 1844 **(and unfortunately that would include the corruptions that have been entering the great Advent movement since 1844 as well)**. The work of this angel **(the fourth)** comes in at the right time to join in the last great work of the third angel's message as it (the third) swells to a loud cry. And the people of God are thus prepared to stand in the hour of temptation, which they are soon to meet. I saw a great light resting upon them, and they united to fearlessly proclaim the third angel's message."

Now, how is the third angel's message a "justification by faith in verity" message as we have been told? Have you ever thought about that? I thought the main thrust of the third angel's message is all about keeping the commandments! But we're not justified by obedience, are we? No! If we could be justified by keeping the commandments, then what would we need Jesus for?

The third angel's message starts out by saying, "here is the patience of **(who?)** the saints." How do we become a saint? Or we could say, how do we become holy, because "saint" and "holy" are the same in the Greek. Do we become holy by the works of the law? No! **Romans 3:20** says, "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." We become saints by accepting the sacrifice of Christ on the cross of Calvary, period! By accepting His sacrifice in our behalf, we receive pardon, or justification, and then with Christ living within, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to keep the commandments, or to live without continuing to commit sin.

And notice this, the fourth angel is not the only angel that comes down to aid in giving the message, because the quote goes on to say that "Angels **(plural)** were sent to aid the mighty angel from heaven."



Now let me ask, what is the definition of an angel? There are 203 references to the word angel in the Bible, and in both Hebrew and Greek it means “messenger of God, ambassador, and to dispatch as a deputy. It can also mean “prophet, priest, pastor, and teacher.” Can we be a messenger of God, or an ambassador, or a deputy dispatched to bring good news, or a teacher? Yes, of course. And so, with this understanding it becomes more plausible that the angel messages are actually messages given by people. We just read that “angels were sent to aid the mighty angel from heaven”, and if the third and fourth angel’s messages represents the people that deliver the message, who do you suppose these additional “angels” could be? Or should I say, who do you suppose these people could be? How about the eleventh hour workers? Notice what it says in **Youth Instructor, February 13, 1902**, “At the eleventh hour the Lord will call into His service many faithful workers. Self-sacrificing men and women will step into the places made vacant by apostasy and death. . . they will go forth into the Master’s service, moving steadily onward and upward, carrying the work forward to completion.”

And so, when people hear the loud cry, they will leave their apostate churches and take the place of those who will step into the places made vacant by apostasy and death. They will replace those who have not distinguished the voice of God or appreciated the movings of His Holy Spirit and will join with those who are giving that loud cry, and I don’t want to be replaced by these eleventh hour workers, do you? No! I want to work right alongside them to help swell the loud cry.

Now continuing on with **Early Writings, page 277**, “Angels were sent to aid the mighty angel from heaven, and I heard voices (**not angel voices, but people voices**) which seemed to sound everywhere, ‘Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.’ (**When do these sins reach unto heaven? We’ll find out in a minute**) This message seemed to be an addition to the third message, joining it as the midnight cry joined the second angel’s message in 1844. (**And what was the midnight cry? “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye (what?) out to meet Him.” Now listen carefully**) The glory of God rested upon the patient, waiting saints, and they fearlessly gave the last solemn warning (**who fearlessly gave the last solemn warning? “the patient, waiting saints”, which includes those eleventh hour workers, not literal angels**), they fearlessly gave the last solemn warning proclaiming the fall of Babylon and calling upon God’s people to come out of her that they might escape her fearful doom.” And at this point I’d like to say that the loud cry cannot go forth without the latter rain of the Holy Spirit, and we’ll talk more about that in a minute.

But before we do, *Signs of the Times, June 12, 1893*, asks this question, "When do her sins reach unto heaven? **(Answer)** When the law of God is finally made void by legislation." So what does this tell us? It tells us that the latter rain will be poured out around the time when a Sunday law is about to be passed and sometime afterward. And friends, it could happen soon the way things are going in this world.

So what, besides people, what does this other angel coming down from heaven to lighten the earth with his glory represent? I already mentioned it, but we don't have to guess, because in *Review and Herald, April 21, 1891*, it says, "The latter rain is to fall upon the people of God. A mighty angel is to come down from heaven, and the whole earth is to be lighted with His glory."

And here's one more inspired statement that will help put an exclamation point on it. *Gospel Workers, page 383*, "John says, 'I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lighted with his glory.' Then, as at the Pentecostal season **(that would be the early rain)**, the people will hear the truth spoken to them, every man in his own tongue. . . Thousands of voices will be imbued with the power to speak forth the wonderful truths of God's word. The stammering tongue will be loosed, and the timid will be made strong to bear courageous testimony to the truth. May the Lord help his people to cleanse the soul-temple from every defilement, and to maintain so close a connection with him that they may be partakers of the latter rain when it shall be poured out."

And so, without a doubt the angel that comes down from heaven to lighten the earth with His glory represents people that have received the latter rain of the Holy Spirit. The question is, do you want to be one of those people, and do I? If so, then we must "'cleanse the soul-temple from every defilement, and maintain so close a connection with Christ that **(we)** may be partakers of the latter rain when it shall be poured out.'"

What would you say is the main point of the fourth angel's message? "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, come out of her **(who?)** my people, that ye partake not of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Notice, God has people in Babylon that belong to Him, but what will happen to them if they don't leave when the call is given? They will then become as guilty as those who are not His people, because they will no longer be His people. They will become corporately accountable for "her sins and receive of her plagues."

Revelation 18:2 says Babylon is fallen, but where did she fall from? Couldn't we say that Babylon fell from God's favor as she rejected truth and accepted error? In these last days God will try everything possible to reach His people in the fallen churches, that would be the fallen Protestant churches for the most part, because the Catholic church fell many centuries ago (*The Great Controversy, page 383*). Now that's not to say that there will be no Catholics that heed the call, but by in large God is speaking to Protestants who forgot what they were protesting about, and those who refuse to leave will be forever lost. The loud cry is their last chance with no more chances to follow, because their probation will be forever closed.

Now let me ask you a question. What is the condition, or meaning of the term Babylon? Isn't it to be spiritually confused? The word "Babylon" and its derivatives "Babel" and "Balal" have two definitions, "Confusion" or "to confound" and "to mix", or "to mingle." Now let me ask you, what is the devil a master of? He's a master of mixing truth and error together, isn't he? Usually mostly truth and just enough poisonous error to kill his victim. And he does this so people will become confused about the things that are necessary in order to have a correct understanding of God's word in order to be saved.

Did he confuse Eve as the serpent conversed with her? He certainly did, and he's been doing it ever since. In **Genesis 11:7** God said, "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." The word "confound" in Hebrew is "Balal" which means "to mix" or "to mingle." And isn't that what God did to their language? The people building the tower of Babel got all confused as God mixed things up.

So here's what Babylon is: Babylon is any church that teaches a mixture of truth and error, especially when it comes to the gospel and the way of salvation, and that's as simple as I know how to make it. Babylon is not a dirty word, as some think, but it's simply used to designate a church that is teaching a mixture of truth and error. It's a warning to people that have become confused about how to be saved.

And here's another important point to consider: just because a church meets on the seventh-day Sabbath doesn't mean that they can't be a Babylonian church, because there are a myriad of ways that a church can mingle truth and error together and still meet together on the seventh day. I cannot count the number of times I've heard people say that when the Seventh-day Adventist church starts keeping Sunday, then they will be Babylon, and so they can't be Babylon at this time since they are not doing that, and the quote they use is found in *Selected Messages, book 2, page 68*. Let's read the whole thing and not

just certain parts, "The wine of Babylon (**or the false doctrine of Babylon**) is the exalting of the false and spurious sabbath above the Sabbath which the Lord Jehovah hath blessed and sanctified for the use of man, also [it is] the immortality of the soul. (**Now listen carefully because it doesn't stop there**) These kindred heresies (**or any lies related to the errors just mentioned**), and the rejection of the truth (in whatever form it takes), convert the church into Babylon."

Do you see now why I say that a seventh-day Sabbath keeping church can still be a Babylonian church? Oh, they may meet on the correct day, but if they're teaching errors that are related to the immortality of the soul, such as what the serpent said to Eve in the Garden about her being able to live forever even if she disobeyed God, or if they reject truth of any kind, they are part of "Babylon the great, the mother of harlots."

But you say, "I go to a little seventh-day Sabbath keeping church in the country where the pastor preaches the truth." And that may be true, but just know that when you place your tithes and offerings in the offering basket, you are supporting the corporation as a whole where many of the churches and pastors are not teaching the truth, but are teaching a mixture of truth and error, or those "kindred heresies" like the new theology of salvation in sin, or that Jesus had an unfallen human nature, or a church that's being all inclusive when it comes to the LGBTQ+ community. And if you don't think so, just scribble a short note on the offering envelope that says, "for the support of this local church and pastor only" and see what happens.

Do you know what the great controversy between Christ and Satan is all about? We should all understand that at its very core it's all about whether or not human beings who abide in Christ can actually live without committing sin? That's it! In ***Gospel Workers*, page 315** it says, "The only question asked in the judgment will be, have they been obedient to My commandments?" The fallen churches are not experiencing or teaching victory over all sin and character perfection in this life, and because of that it has led to all kinds of spiritual confusion and gross sins, and God says, Come out! God is giving His people a last chance here to separate from corporate sin before He destroys it.

In the context of the fourth angel's message, Babylon is a union of people who are guilty of corporate sin, even if they're not knowingly committing sin themselves, why? Because they're guilty through membership. Being part of the same corporate body they are guilty by association. You see, God has a people in Babylon who have experienced the essence of the third angel's message, which is what? Justification by faith in verity, and

because of that God calls them “My people.” They have been born again and are serving Him to the best of their ability. But when they hear the loud cry from those who have kept themselves separate from sin and sinners, which is God’s requirement for those who follow Him, and if you don’t believe me read ***Signs of the Times, July 22, 1880, par. 3.*** When they become informed that they have been ignorantly breaking the fourth commandment, they will realize that they must come out and join the ranks of those giving the loud cry as eleventh hour workers, and if they don’t, they will be partakers of her sins, and receive of her plagues.

So, we have a duty and responsibility, by power of the Holy Spirit through the sanctified human will to stop sinning. We also have a duty and responsibility to separate from those who say it can’t be done, because by beholding we become what? Changed. Friends, if this is not the true and correct message of the great Advent movement, then it’s all wrong and we should look for truth elsewhere, but it is the truth; I’m not ashamed of it, and I’m sticking with it, how about you?

Now, when **Revelation 18:1** says, “I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lighted with his glory”, what could the earth represent besides this planet? Could it be symbolic of the soil of the heart? Remember the parable of the Sower in **Matthew 13** when Jesus said some seed fell by the wayside, some in stony places, some among the thorns, and some in good ground? Now let’s put this together with the fourth angel’s message.

In **Matthew 13:19** Jesus said, “When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown (**where?**) in his heart.” And so, the soil, or the earth represents the heart, and when the fourth angel lightens the earth, what is it doing? It’s sowing seeds of truth in the hearts of men and women who are still in Babylon, and the kind of soil the seed falls into matters, doesn’t it? Yes! There are many people in Babylon who’s hearts are “good ground” and have experienced the first half of the third angel’s message of justification by faith, but now they need to obey all the commandments and separate from those who have not and are not. From thousands of Spirit filled voices all over the world, the hearts of men will be lighted with the truth for these last days, and they will have to make a final decision for or against the loud cry of the third angel.

There’s something else that’s interesting about the fourth angel—it’s brought out in ***Early Writings, page 271*** where it says, “I heard those clothed with the armor (**and on page**

273 it says it's an armor of righteousness, and that would be Christ's righteousness, because we don't have any of our own) "I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth with great power (**that would be latter rain power**). It had effect. Many had been bound; some wives by their husbands, and some children by their parents. The honest who had been prevented from hearing the truth now eagerly laid hold upon it. All fear of their relatives was gone, and the truth alone was exalted to them. They had been hungering and thirsting for truth; it was dearer and more precious than life. (**Is that the way it is with you friend? We're told that we must be so settled into the truth that we cannot be moved, and that we would rather die than knowingly commit a wrong act**) I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered, 'It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel.'" Notice: the terms latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and the loud cry all seem to be synonymous, don't they?

And here's another thing, I don't think it would be wise to say that the latter rain applies exclusively to the future, because it began to fall in the past. Notice what it says in **Review and Herald, November 22, 1892**, "The time of test is just upon us, (**this was not long after the time when a Sunday law was being urged through the Blair amendment**) "The time of test is just upon us for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun (**which means the latter rain was beginning**) in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth."

This statement has reference to the righteousness by faith message preached by Elders Wagoner and Jones in 1888 and a few years afterward. Now let me read you something else that will show that the latter rain was involved in that righteousness by faith message, which was written during that time. In the **1888 Material, page 1478** it says, "Now, just now is our day of mercy and salvation. The Lord God who dwelleth in the holy place, sees every soul that shows contempt for the manifestations of his Holy Spirit. God has revealed himself again and again (**in other words, more than once**) in a most marked manner in Battle Creek. He has given a large measure of his Holy Spirit to the believers there. It has come unexpectedly at times, and there have been deep movings upon hearts and minds; a letting go of selfish purposes, . . . This blessing extended to large numbers, but why was not this sweet, holy working continued upon hearts and minds? Some felt annoyed at this outpouring, and their own natural dispositions were manifested. They said, (now listen) They said, this is only excitement; it is not the Holy Spirit, not showers from heaven of the latter rain. There were hearts full of unbelief, who did not drink in of

the Spirit, but who had bitterness in their souls.

“On many occasions the Holy Spirit did work, but those who resisted the Spirit of God at Minneapolis were waiting for a chance to travel over the same ground again, because their spirit was the same. Afterward, when they had evidence heaped upon evidence, some were convicted, but those who were not softened and subdued by the Holy Spirit's working, put their own interpretation upon every manifestation of the grace of God, and they have lost much. They pronounced in their heart and soul and words that this manifestation of the Holy Spirit was fanaticism and delusion. **(That's what they thought about the latter rain)** They stood like a rock, the waves of mercy flowing upon and around them, but beaten back by their hard and wicked hearts, which resisted the Holy Spirit's working. Had this been received, it would have made them wise unto salvation; holier men, prepared to do the work of God with sanctified ability. But all the universe of heaven witnessed the disgraceful treatment of Jesus Christ, represented by the Holy Spirit. Had Christ been before them, they would have treated him in a manner similar to that in which the Jews treated Christ.”

And friends, if we are of the same attitude today as many of the leaders were back then, we'll also say that the outpouring of the latter rain is fanaticism and delusion when it's poured out without measure. Is it any wonder that Ellen White warned that the latter rain may be falling on hearts all around us, but we may not discern or receive it? You can read that in *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, page 507.

Sounds to me like the latter rain could be available right now, doesn't it to you? Indeed. *Evangelism*, page 701 says, “The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the church is looked forward to as **[being something to be bestowed]** in the future, but it is the privilege of the church to have it now. Seek for it; pray for it; believe for it. We must have it, and heaven is waiting to bestow it.”

Also *Review and Herald*, March 2, 1897, “We must pray that God will unseal the fountain of the water of life. And we must ourselves receive of the living water. Let us, with contrite hearts, pray most earnestly that now, in the time of the latter rain, the showers of grace may fall upon us. At every meeting we attend, our prayers should ascend that at this very time, God will impart warmth and moisture to our souls. As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain. If we pray for the blessing in faith, we shall receive it as God has promised.”

And how about this next quote where it says, "We have now come to the last days of the work of the third angel's message, when Satan will work with increasing power because he knows that his time is short. At the same time there will come to us through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, diversities of operations in the outpouring of the Spirit. This is the time of the latter rain." That was **Letter 230** written on **July 25, 1908**, to A. T. Jones, and if it was the time of the latter rain then, surely it's time now.

What are we to make of all these statements? We know for certain that the latter rain will be poured out in the future, there's no argument there, and we know it began to be poured out in the past, but what about now? Could it be possible that a few drops are falling here and there around the world even today like it did in 1888? I believe as we think this through we will have to conclude that it's very possible, and there are several reasons why I say this.

There are a couple references in the Spirit of Prophecy that state plainly that the final message of warning "swells" to a loud cry (**Early Writings, page 277**), and that it "increases in power till the whole earth is filled with the glory of God." (**Sons and Daughters of God, page 207**), and also that it continues to grow brighter till it lightens the earth (**Selected Messages, book 1, page 76**). However, I would like to say at this point that there's a big difference between an outpouring and a few drops or sprinkles here and there. A full out-pouring of the Holy Spirit in latter rain power has not yet occurred, ever! But a partial outpouring has, and I believe it's probable that it is today. As the latter rain swells and increases in power and grows brighter and brighter, that means that it doesn't come on all at once, but comes like the rain.

A few nights ago as I was lying in bed I could hear a little pitter patter on the roof as the rain began to fall, and as I continued to listen it increased until it became a real downpour, and according to the statements we already referred to, it seems clear enough that that's the way the latter rain will come. It will be infectious as one light ignites another until the whole earth is lighted with the glory of the Lord.

Notice what it says in **Spaulding and Megan, page 4**, "You are getting the coming of the Lord too far off. I saw the latter rain was coming as [suddenly as] the midnight cry, and with ten times the power." Why do you suppose the latter rain will have ten times the power? **Spiritual Gifts, volume 2, page 277** has the answer, "I have been shown that Satan has not been stupid and careless these many years, since his fall, but has been learning. He has grown more artful. His plans are laid deeper, and are more covered

with a religious garment to hide their deformity. The power of Satan now to tempt and deceive is (**guess what?**) ten-fold greater than it was in the days of the apostles. His power has increased, and it will increase, until it is taken away. His wrath and hate grow stronger as his time to work draws near its close."

So, even though Satan's power to tempt and deceive is ten-fold greater today than it was in the days of the apostles, that means that there's ten times the power available to resist the temptation to sin. And so, we are without excuse, because God has made every provision to keep us from falling if we will but surrender all to Him.

I'd liked to take a few minutes to do a little word study on the word "outpouring" as in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The word means, "to effuse." And "effuse" means "profuse; gushing; to pour forth largely." And "profuse" means "liberal to excess; extravagant; lavish; rich abundance." And "lavish" means "wasteful; wild; unrestrained." Are you beginning to get the picture? This is what the Lord wants to do and has not yet done with the latter rain on a global scale. However, I believe there is danger in looking to the future for something God wants to give us NOW, because if we think in terms of the future only, we're going to miss it!

Review and Herald, March 2, 1897, says, "Only those who are living up to the light they have, will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it. We should improve every opportunity of placing ourselves in the channel of blessing. Christ has said, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst.' The convocations of the church, as in campmeetings, the assemblies of the home church, and all occasions where there is personal labor for souls, are God's appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain."

Isn't that interesting? Even though we may not know in point of time when the latter rain will come gushing forth nonstop, we do know what condition must prevail among God's people before it comes. Notice what it says in **Review and Herald, July 21, 1896**, "The great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole earth with his glory (not just a little bit here and there, but the whole earth), will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it means to be laborers together with God. When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of his Spirit without measure." So, if we want to be

recipients of the latter rain, we must be found doing the things we just read about.

Testimonies for the Church, volume 1, page 187 says, "Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation." And so, the latter rain not only gives power to proclaim the loud cry of the third angel and rises to every emergency to resist temptation, but it also fits us for translation.

Now, we just read that the latter rain will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it means to be laborers together with God, and that when we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ then it will be poured out. So how do we know from the Bible point of view that this is the correct sequence before one receives the latter rain? Notice what Luke records Peter as saying in **Acts 3:19**, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

"The times of refreshing" is the latter rain, and what must happen before it's given? Repentance and conversion, so that when it comes our sins may be blotted out. This means that the latter rain does not change character, but fixes it; that the latter rain is not given to enable us to overcome sin; this is what the early rain is for. The early rain results in conversion and victory over sin, and the outpouring of the latter rain makes conversion and victory permanent, or seals us.

Now, we're talking about the final outpouring here that lightens the whole world and not just a local situation like what happened in 1888, because some of those men that received the beginning of the latter rain back then, I believe, eventually lost their way.

So, just to reiterate, the latter rain does not give us victory over all sin, this is the work of the early rain, that's why God tells us the following in *Testimonies to Ministers, page 507*, "Many have in a great measure failed to receive the former rain (**or early rain**). They have not obtained all the benefits that God has thus provided for them. (**the benefits being victory over all sin**) They expect that the lack (**of victory over sin**) will be supplied by the latter rain. When the richest abundance of grace shall be bestowed, they intend to open their hearts to receive it. They are making a terrible mistake." Why? Because victory over sin comes before the latter rain.

Now, just to be sure, let me read you one more short statement, because in the mouth of

two or three witnesses a thing is established. ***Evangelism, page 702***, "The latter rain will come, and the blessing of God will fill every soul that is purified from every defilement."

And so, the preparation necessary for the latter rain is cleansing from all sin under the early rain. In other words, unless we have been born again, and are living the sanctified life, we will not receive the latter rain, plain and simple! In fact, we will not even realize that it has come until it is too late.


Those who didn't receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost realized something was happening, didn't they? But some mocked and said, "these men are full of new wine." They didn't understand that it was an outpouring of the early rain of the Holy Spirit, and neither will those who do not obtain all the benefits of the early rain attribute the latter rain to the Holy Spirit. Instead they will call it fanaticism, just like what the prophet said happened when the latter rain began to be poured out in 1888.

Testimonies to Ministers, page 399, "We may be sure that when the Holy Spirit is poured out, those who did not receive and appreciate the early rain (which is the new birth experience and victory over sin) will not see or understand the value of the latter rain."

Now, let me read you one more, because this really needs to sink in. ***Testimonies for the Church, volume 1, page 619***, "I was shown that if God's people make no efforts on their part, but wait for the refreshing to come upon them and remove their wrongs and correct their errors; if they depend upon that to cleanse them from filthiness of the flesh and spirit and fit them to engage in the loud cry of the third angel, they will be found wanting. The refreshing or power of God comes only on those who have prepared themselves for it by doing the work which God bids them, namely, cleansing themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Also in the context of the latter rain, notice what it says in ***Acts of the Apostles, page 54***, "In the time of the end (**when?**) "In the time of the end when God's work in the earth is closing, the earnest efforts put forth by consecrated believers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit are to be accompanied by special tokens of divine favor."

That would be some of the special tokens that took place like at Pentecost. When is this going to happen? She says, "In the time of the end." According to the time prophecies of Daniel, when did the time of the end begin? In 1798. The 1260 years of papal supremacy began in 538 A.D., and terminated in 1798 when the pope was taken



captive by Napoleon's general Berthier. In other words, any time after 1798 it would be appropriate to begin praying for the latter rain. But it wasn't until 90 years later in 1888 that the latter rain began to be poured out, but because it was rejected and called fanaticism, the leaders back then frustrated the purposes of God and the light that was to be brought by the angel of **Revelation 18**, as it joined the third angel's message, was effectively extinguished, until finally, just three years later in 1901, Ellen White wrote these sad words in **Letter 184**, "We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination (or because of an unwillingness to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit) many more years, as did the children of Israel; but for Christ's sake His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequences of their own wrong course of action." And we have been here many more years, haven't we? 136 more years to be exact.

So, denominational leaders took a wrong course over 100 years ago and there is no evidence that there has been a course correction since that time. How do we know that? The best evidence we have that this is true is that we are still here. We're still here! Poor Sister White; she must have felt like Moses with two million grumbling children, right on very borders of the Promised Land but not allowed cross over.

Friends, once again we are on very borders Heavenly Canaan, and unless we learn by experience how to submit our wills to God and allow the Holy Spirit work in us; unless we understand that God requires perfect obedience before the latter rain is poured out, God's work in our hearts and characters will be incomplete, and when probation closes it will be too late then to allow the early rain to do its cleansing work.

Have you ever wondered whether or not everyone who receives the latter rain will be filled to the same degree? **Review and Herald, May 5, 1896**, says, "The measure of the Holy Spirit we receive, will be proportioned to the measure of our desire and the faith exercised for it, and the use we shall make of the light and knowledge that shall be given to us. We shall be entrusted with the Holy Spirit according to our capacity to receive and our ability to impart it to others."

So, the latter rain is not something magical that happens to us. We are preparing now, while the early rain is falling, for a large or small capacity to receive. The tragedy is, some are making no preparation at all, because they're waiting for the latter rain to do for them what it is not designed to do.

Early Writings, page 71, "I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of refreshing and the latter rain to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the need for preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God."

So, what is the latter rain for? First of all, there are several things that the latter rain accomplishes, we just read one: "To fit them to live in the sight of a Holy God." The latter rain also brings God's people to full and complete maturity of character. I did not say it brings us to full and complete victory over sin, that must be accomplished during the early rain which is falling now. I said full and complete maturity of character; there's a difference.

Even though we may have victory over all sin, there is still a need of character development, or maturity and a sealing work that must take place, because there are still rough times ahead, and God has to prepare us for it, and that is somehow accomplished by the latter rain. It prepares us to go through the time of trouble and the seven last plagues, and it seals us for the garner.

Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, page 216 says, "What are you doing, brethren, in the great work of preparation? Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth—these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth (**National Sunday Law**) and the stamp is impressed (**the seal of God**), their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity. Now is the time of preparation. The Seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. All who receive the seal must be without spot before God—candidates for heaven."

I want to close with two more short statements that will end this subject on a positive note, because I think it's important that we do that. I don't want anyone going away from our study today thinking there's no hope for me, or that the way of salvation is too hard. Yes we are living in the last days; yes God requires perfect obedience; no, it isn't going to be easy, but God has made ample provision through the sacrifice of His Son and the

outpouring of His Spirit in early and latter rain power that we might be conquerors together with Christ.

In *Selected Messages, book 1, page 192* it says, "I have no specific time of which to speak when the outpouring of the Holy Spirit will take place—when the mighty angel will come down from heaven and unite with the third angel in closing up the work for this world. My message is that our only safety is in being ready for the heavenly refreshing, having our lamps trimmed and burning."

What is the lamp? It's God's word. The trimming? Bible study. And the burning? A desire to tell others about what a precious friend we've found in Jesus.

And then *Upward Look, page 283*, "We need not worry about the latter rain; all we have to do is keep the vessel clean and right side up and prepared for the reception of the heavenly rain and keep praying. Let the latter rain come into my vessel. Let the light of the glorious angel which unites with the third angel, shine upon me; give me a part in the work; let me sound the proclamation; let me be a colaborer with Jesus Christ. Thus let me tell you, He is fitting you up all the time, giving you His grace. You need not be worried. You need not be thinking that there is a special time coming when you are to be crucified; the time to be crucified is just now. Every day, every hour, self is to die; self is to be crucified, and then, when the time comes that the test shall come to God's people in earnest, the everlasting arms are around you. The angels of God make a wall of fire around about and deliver you. . . . It is now that we are to empty and thoroughly cleanse the vessel of its impurity. It is now that we are to be made holy unto God. This is our work, this very moment. You are not to wait for any special period for a wonderful work to be done: it is today, I give myself to God today. . . . Are you ready to make the surrender now? You are to put away your sin right now when you see it. . . . Do not make leeway [that] you are going to overcome by degrees; you are going to try little by little to give up sin. Now, while it is called today, heed the invitation, and harden not your hearts."