

ARE YOU ASKING FOR IT?

Greetings in the all-powerful name of Jesus, I am so glad you decided to join me today. I'd like to begin by talking to you about the early and latter rain of the Holy Spirit, the reason being, there seems to be a lot of confusion about this very important topic. Because you see, if we're confused about the meaning of these two separate and distinct rains and when and how they're received, we may very well miss out on their benefits, and if that's the case we will miss out on the preparation necessary to meet Jesus in peace when He comes.

In **Zechariah 10:1** we're admonished to, "Ask (ye) of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain."

So, in this verse we find that there's a certain time when the latter rain will be poured out, and we're supposed to do what? Ask for it! Is it time now to be asking? And if so, are you asking for it? Well yes, it is time, it has been for many years, but it has been delayed because God's people are not ready to receive it, plain and simple! And why aren't we ready? We'll see why in a few minutes.

In ***Testimonies to Ministers, page 508*** it says, "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. . . . 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."

"The perfecting latter rain," what does that mean? The dictionary says the word "perfecting" is a verb that means "a state where nothing remains to be done." Three of the strongest synonyms for the word "perfecting" are to "finish," "complete" and to "consummate," that's the endgame of the latter rain. And so, with that in mind, does the statement we just read mean that it's "the perfecting latter rain" that gives us the power to finally be able to resist temptation and overcome sin, or does it mean that the latter rain completes, or makes permanent what the early rain does as we cooperate with God in our own salvation? That question should be obvious to us just by the way I framed it, but more importantly it should be obvious if we are studying what inspiration says about it, but evidently many of us are not doing that, because we are still here on this planet instead of enjoying the companionship of Jesus and heavenly beings.

Now, if it was the time of the latter rain in 1851 when the statement we read was first penned, certainly it's time today, wouldn't you agree? In fact, it was the time of the latter

rain a few years before that, because the latter rain is associated with the giving of third angel's message, and that began right after the 1844 disappointment. But regardless, it's been time for a long time. But why have we not received it? One hundred seventy-five years ago we just read it was time, but obviously the latter rain has been withheld, why? Is God at fault? Obviously not! In **Luke 11:13** Jesus said God is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask than parents are to give good gifts to their children. In **Acts 5:32** the Bible also says God gives the Holy Spirit "to them that obey Him." So there are at least three conditions here in order to receive the latter rain. First of all it must be time, and we already read that it is. Secondly we must ask, and thirdly we must obey, very simple.

Now which one of the three conditions do you suppose is being more neglected, or misunderstood today? Perhaps all three, but especially for professed Christians I think it's the obey part, don't you? The few who truly love God and keep His commandments know that it's time and will be asking and obeying, but the many who are too caught up with the cares of this life are not thinking of such things, or if they are they don't understand what they're asking for, and it's going to turn out to be the greatest mistake of their lives.

And here's another thought. If it was the time of the latter rain as early as 1851, or a few years before, that means that Jesus could have come long ago, because according to inspiration, right after the latter rain is poured out, which could and should have happened by now, Jesus would have come. So again, what's holding things up? Since it's not God's fault, it must be ours, and it must be ours because of disobedience and rebellion or just plain ignorance. You see, we can ask for the latter rain all day long, but if we aren't being obedient to what we already know, will it ever come to us? No! Oh, it's going to come, because God has promised, and He always keeps His promise, but it won't come upon us if we are part of the careless multitude.

There are four verses in the Bible that speak of the early rain and the latter rain in the same verse, actually there are five, but I'm saving number five for last, but instead of using the words "early rain," in the Old Testament it's called the "former rain," which means it's the rain that comes before the latter rain. So in order to keep it simple, when the Bible uses the words "former rain," we should understand that it's speaking of the "early rain," or the one that comes first.

The first of the four verses is found in **Jeremiah 5:24** where it says, "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.” So here we see that the early rain and the latter rain each come in their season, that’s important, and has to do with a harvest.

When a farmer plants his seed, the early rain causes the seed to sprout and grow, and then at a later season the latter rain comes and finishes, or completes the process, and then there’s the harvest. So keep these things in mind, because there’s a spiritual application here that’s closely related to justification, which is forgiveness for sins that are past, and sanctification, which is living a life of holiness, and “holiness is wholeness for God.” *The Desire of Ages*, page 555.

The second verse is in **Hosea 6:3** where it says, “Then shall we know, *if* we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; **(in other words, the sun comes up gradually, doesn’t it? And the Lord unfolds the truth to our minds in the same way, otherwise we would be overwhelmed)** and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter *and* former rain unto the earth.”

Now here we see that the early and the latter rain is something that “shall come unto us,” personally, as the early and latter rain falls upon the earth. Remember when Jesus told the parable of the Sower and about the seed that fell upon the four different types of soil? In **Matthew 13** Jesus said some seed fell by the wayside and the birds came and ate it up, some fell upon stony places and got scorched by the sun and withered away, some fell among thorns and got choked out, and some fell upon good ground and produced an abundant crop. Then later on in **verse 19** Jesus likened the different types of soil to the different conditions of the heart that the gospel seed falls into. Hopefully our hearts are like the “good ground” so when the seed is sown it will spring up and bear an abundance of the fruit of the Spirit as the early rain falls upon our field. And remember also that Jesus said, “by their fruit you shall know” if a person has a saving relationship with the Me or not. And so, there are all kinds of analogies used in the Bible to direct our attention to the fact that the early and latter rain has to do with something that falls upon the individual if they “follow on to know the Lord.”

The third verse, the context being the coming of the Lord, is in **Joel 2:23** where it says, “Be glad then, ye children of Zion, **(which represents God’s people during both Old and New Testament times)** and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain **(how?)** moderately, **(in the Hebrew the word “moderately” means “according to righteousness.” So a better translation would be, “for he hath given you the former rain ‘according to righteousness,’ or we could say “in just measure,” or in just the right**

amount, and not necessarily sparingly) and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first *month*.”

Also you’ll notice that the word “*month*” is italicized in the King James version of the Bible, which means it was added by the translators and is not in the original Hebrew manuscript. Now, most of the time these added words are helpful, but occasionally they cause confusion. In this instance it’s best to leave out the word “*month*” at the end of the sentence, because the early rain and the latter rain don’t fall in the first month, but are separated by different seasons, as we read earlier in **Jeremiah 5:24**. The words “in the first,” leaving off the word “month” means that the latter rain will come like the early rain came at the first, “according to righteousness,” or in “just measure.”

In other words, God will make sure that the early and latter rain that falls upon our hearts will be “according to righteousness” which will be in just the right amount and at just the right time. The early rain coming first justifies us by faith and then causes us through sanctification to become like Christ in character, and if we are so fortunate as to receive it, the latter rain will then complete, or make permanent what the early rain has accomplished, which will then give us the ability to present the truth of the third angel’s message of **Revelation 14:9-12** with latter rain power to those who have never heard or understood the truth for this time just before human probation closes. The reason I say that is because right after the third angel’s message is given with latter rain power, which is the loud cry of the angel of **Revelation 18** that comes down from heaven having great power and lightens the earth with his glory, right after that the earth is reaped, which means that the loud cry of the third angel is the last message of mercy this world will ever hear, because if you read **Revelation 14:14** and onward, it speaks of the harvest of the earth, and when that happens it’s over. So we can see the sequence of events here that will take place in the very near future and how the latter rain will bring the great controversy to a close.

Listen to what it says in ***The Upward Look, page 283***, “We need not worry about the latter rain. **(So why are we so concerned about the latter rain this morning if that’s the case? Let’s read on)** All we have to do is to keep the vessel **(that’s us)** 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 **(of Revelation 18)** 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 seeking God, let me tell you, He is fitting you up **(He is what? Fitting you up)** all the time, giving you His grace.” And

that fitting up takes place through the process of sanctification under the early rain. And we'll come back to that thought in a few minutes.

Then the fourth verse that mentions both the early and latter rain in the same verse is in **James 5:7**, and we'll also include **verse 8** for context. James writes, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. **(Or until the Lord comes)** Behold, the husbandman **(or the farmer)** waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; **(just like the farmer)** stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Are you being patient, or are you ready to give up and throw in the towel when things go hard? Patience, you'll remember, is part of the third angel's message where the apostle John said, "here is the patience of the saints." The word patience in the Greek means "cheerful endurance," and the word "saint" means "to be holy," and the concordance says, "to be holy" means to be "physically pure, morally blameless, and ceremonially consecrated." That's quite a mouthful, isn't it? Are you "physically pure?" Are you following the health laws we've been given? Are you "morally blameless?" Are you keeping the Ten Commandments? And are you "ceremonially consecrated?" Is it your daily routine to pray and study God's word and dedicate your life to the Lord every morning? This is what it means to be a saint. And my dear friends, we must all be saints if we are going to receive the latter rain. And sainthood, if I may use that word, comes by receiving the benefits of the early rain all through life; it's Jesus "working in you both to will and to do according to His good pleasure." **Philippians 2:13**

So what have we learned so far? We've learned that the early rain falls at the sowing-time, which is necessary for the seed to germinate and continue to grow all through life. Then the latter rain, falling near the close of the season prepares us for the harvest, and as we've seen, the Lord employs these operations of nature to represent the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. Just as the early and latter rain are given to first cause the seed to sprout and grow, and then to ripen the harvest, so the Holy Spirit carries forward, from one stage to another, the process of spiritual growth, and the ripening of the grain represents the completion **(or the "perfecting" as we read earlier)** of the work of God's grace in the soul. **(You can read that in Testimonies to Ministers, page 506)**

But here's the point we don't want to miss, because unless the early rain falls first, there can be no life; the seed will never spring up, and if it doesn't spring up, or if it springs up

and then dies for lack of water nutrients, the perfecting latter rain can't do its job of preparing the plant for the harvest.

Notice this very clear quote from *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 **(the latter rain)** 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." **(And that my friends includes both justification and sanctification, our title and our fitness for heaven before the latter rain is given)**

"At no point in our experience can we dispense with the assistance of that which enables us to make the first start. The blessings received under the former rain **(or the early rain)** are needful to us to the end. Yet these alone will not suffice. While we cherish the blessing of the early rain, we must not, on the other hand, lose sight of the fact that without the latter rain, to fill out the ears and ripen the grain, the harvest will not be ready for the sickle, and the labor of the Sower will have been in vain. Divine grace is needed at the beginning, divine grace at every step of advance, and divine grace alone can complete the work. . . If we do not progress, if we do not place ourselves in an attitude to receive both the former and the latter rain, we shall lose our souls, and the responsibility will lie at our own door."

Now, according to what we just read, the latter rain does something to mature the crop, or to "complete the work," but that doesn't mean it gives us the ability to stop sinning, because as we have seen, "cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit" is the work of the early rain.

So it's very clear here that we need the early rain experience, not just at the beginning, but all through life so the latter rain can then finalize, or complete, or consummate the lifelong experience the early rain has produced.

Now, please allow the Holy Spirit drive this point home a little further by listening to what it says in *Review and Herald, March 2, 1897*, "Many have in a great measure failed to receive the former rain. They have not obtained all the benefits that God has thus provided for them. They expect that the lack 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 it's not the function of the latter rain to supply the benefits given by the early rain, namely victory over sin. The latter rain is not the power to stop sinning, it's what seals us with the seal of God. It's given to finalize what the early rain has accomplished. It goes on)** The work that God has begun in the human heart **(through justification)** in giving his light and knowledge, must be continually going forward. **(Through sanctification, the work of a lifetime)** Every individual must realize his own necessity. The heart must be emptied of every defilement, and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now. Then the human agent had only to ask for the blessing, and wait for the Lord to perfect the work concerning him. It is God who began the work, and he will finish his work, making man complete in Jesus Christ. But there must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. 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." Now that's kind of scary, isn't it?

In **Mark 4:28** Jesus said, "the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." In other words, there has to be a steady and constant development and advancement in our Christian experience under the early rain or we won't get the latter rain.

Let me give you an example: one day Grandpa was out in the garden planting corn while his granddaughter was there watching. When Grandpa opened the package and poured out the corn seed in his hand the granddaughter looked at those dried shriveled up yellow things and said, "Grandpa, what's that?" And Grandpa said, "that's corn." Then about a week later when the granddaughter was visiting again, that corn had sprouted up and was about an inch high, and she said, "Grandpa, what's that?" And Grandpa said, "that's corn." And this process repeated itself every week or so until the stalks were as tall as grandpa, and the little Girl said, "Grandpa, what's that?" And grandpa said, that's corn." I think you get the point, at each stage of development the corn looked different, but it was perfect corn at each stage, and that's the way God's plan is for us. At each stage of Christian growth we can be perfect in Christ, and that's God's desire for each one of us as

individuals, and it all starts when the Holy Spirit plants the seed and waters it with the early rain.

Now here's where the problem comes in, because many professed Christians don't understand what the early rain is for, and as a result they fail to receive the benefits it offers, thinking that whatever they might lack in the way of victory over sin and character defects will be supplied by the latter rain when it comes. And I want to tell you my dear friends, as we read a moment ago, if that's your understanding you are making a terrible mistake that will cost you dearly in the end, because the latter rain doesn't change anybody, it simply makes permanent what's already there; it seals us for eternity! Notice what the apostle Paul writes in **Ephesians 4:30**. He says, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are **(what?)** sealed unto the day of redemption." In other words, the Holy Spirit seals what we have become in character under the showers of the early rain.

Please understand! The purpose of the latter rain is not to cleanse us of our sins or to give us victory over our sins. It's the early rain that has to do with both justification and sanctification, or forgiveness and holiness, and in that respect it's actually more important to us than the latter rain, because that's what we need to become like Christ in character and thus prepared for the finishing touch that seals us to be able to go through the time of trouble. Again, when the latter rain falls, it doesn't change us, it simply makes permanent what's already there; it seals us, and what is the seal of God? It's the Sabbath! The final generation that receives the latter rain will be sealed with the seal of God, and those who haven't received the early rain and all the benefits it offers will not receive the latter rain, but will receive something else, and that something else will be the mark of the beast.

The sad truth is, millions of Seventh-day Adventists are praying and waiting for the latter rain to give them what they have neglected to receive from the early rain, which again is power to overcome all sin and character defects, and they will be left without the seal of God because they believed the falsehoods that Seventh-day Adventist ministers have taught them over the past 70 years, since at least the mid-1950s when the evangelicals Barnhouse and Martin came along and convinced church leaders that they couldn't be a viable Christian church unless they gave up some of their peculiar ideas and join the ecumenical movement. What were some of these ideas? Salvation in sin was a big part of it, and salvation in sin is the main deception in the devil's playbook, which Sister White called the alpha and omega apostasy within Adventism, and it's been taught for decades in a variety of ways: like the fable that Jesus had an unfallen human nature and therefore

we can't resist temptation like He did because we have a sinful human nature. That is a lie! Another lie, which we've been talking about all morning, is that when we receive the latter rain, then we will be able to stop sinning and have the power to witness to Sunday keepers. That is a lie! Another one I've heard many times over the past 50 years is that when Jesus comes He's going to wave a magic wand over us and change our character. That is a lie! It seems like I remember reading in **2 Peter 1:4** that we are to have faith to believe the precious promises in God's word and partake of the divine nature and thus be able to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. And doesn't **Jude 1:24** say that God is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy? Yes, and this takes place under the showers of the early rain.

In ***Faith and Works, page 43*** it says, "None who have had the light of truth will enter the city of God as commandment-breakers. His law lies at the foundation of His government in earth and in heaven. If they have knowingly trampled upon and despised His law on the earth, they will not be taken to heaven to do the same work there; there is no change of character when Christ comes."

If you were to ask people who have these various mistaken idea, they would probably tell you that they intend to open their hearts to receive the latter rain when it comes, just like we read, but friends, it will be too late for that victory and character change, because again, that's not the function of the latter rain. How can the latter rain bring their seed to perfection when they haven't even had the early rain to cause the seed to sprout? Or maybe they did receive it and it sprouted, but their heart was like the seed that fell by the wayside and the devil's birds came and ate it up, or like the stony ground hearers, or the seed that got choked out by the thorns.

You see, the work that the Holy Spirit begins in the human heart by planting and watering the seed at the time of the early rain has to be continually going forward. It's just like the example I gave about grandpa's corn. We have to cooperate with God by continually receiving the Sonshine, that's S-O-N-shine, and the nutrients found within God's word and incorporate them into our lives on a daily basis, because what happens to a plant that doesn't receive the proper moisture and nutrients all along the growth process? It withers and dies, doesn't it? And if that's the case, what good would the latter rain do? When the latter rain comes, the plant will have never sprouted, or if it did it died because one rain shower isn't enough to stay alive through the heat of the day. The latter rain will be good only for the seed that sprouted and continually feeds on the early rain, but for the ones that dry out, it has no benefit.

Think about the outpouring of the early rain that came upon the church at Pentecost. As you read the account in **Acts 2** it was by confession and forsaking of sin and by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the same work, only more so, has to be done before the latter rain is poured out.

We've already noticed that only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. That's a Biblical principle. Unless we are daily making progress, like the corn Grandpa planted, not only will we not receive the latter rain, but we won't even recognize when it comes. Sad but true.

In ***Review and Herald, March 2, 1897***, it says the latter rain "may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it." Think about the midnight cry during the Advent movement back in the early to mid-1800s. The people who rejected it back then had to know that something out of the ordinary was happening, how could they not? The problem was they didn't attribute it to the working of the Holy Spirit, and even though it was falling on hearts all around them, they didn't recognize it as such and therefore failed to receive that message.

Now it's true, as far as the Christian church as a whole is concerned, that the early rain came at Pentecost and the latter rain will come in the near future when God has a church that's ready to receive it, but we need to understand that "from the beginning faithful souls have constituted the church on earth." (**Acts of the Apostles, page 11**) Therefore all faithful souls from the beginning must receive the early rain in preparation of receiving the latter rain should it come in their lifetime. However, even though all souls must receive the early rain, not all will receive the latter rain, because the latter rain comes only upon the final generation of faithful souls. Again, it's the early rain that prepares the character and the latter rain that seals us when God sees that we are never going to change our mind; when He sees that we've come to the place where we would rather die than knowingly commit a wrong act; when He sees that we are so settled into the truth that we cannot be moved. When God has a people like that, things will happen and the end will come. This is where ***Christ's Object Lessons, page 69*** comes in where it says, "Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church (**Which is accomplished under the early rain**). When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."

Never forget it, my friends, we will always need the early rain experience that enabled us to make the first start, because the latter rain doesn't replace it, and we're going to need that early rain to the very end. Yet that alone is not enough for the final generation. While we are to cherish the blessing of the early rain, we must not lose sight of the fact that without the sealing latter rain, the harvest won't be ready to harvest, which means that the labor of the Sower will have been in vain. And so, divine grace is not only needed at the beginning, but it's needed at every step of the way. In Christian life there is no resting place this side of heaven. If we don't make progress in this life under the early rain, which prepares us for the latter rain, we will lose our souls, and we will have no one to blame but ourselves.

Earlier we read in **Zechariah 10:1** that we are to "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain." In other words, we can't be satisfied with the fact that the latter rain will fall, we have to ask for it and through faith believe it will be given when the time comes. And the other thing we need to realize is that the growth and perfection of the seed doesn't rest with us, but with God alone, because He's the only One that can cause growth and ripen the harvest. So what's our part? It's very simple, our co-operation is required. God's work for us demands the action and the exercise of our faith and the power of choice. While Jesus was here, He made it clear that unless He has the whole heart, we cannot be His disciple, and only disciples will receive the latter rain.

The constant communication of the Holy Spirit to every individual that makes up God's church is represented by what it says in **Zechariah 4:1-6**. Let's go there. Zechariah writes, "The angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, and said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: and two olive-trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. **(Zechariah was given a vision of the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, wasn't he?)** So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, what are these, my Lord? Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

Zerubbabel was governor of Judea and he oversaw the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, and evidently he was troubled by the resistance of the surrounding country

that they were not going to make it easy for that project to be accomplished. But the Lord, speaking through Zechariah, assured him that the project would be successful, not by human power, but by the power of the Holy Spirit, and as Christians we can, through faith, have the same kind of success and assurance in building our character temple. In **verse 9** the Lord told Zechariah, “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.”

Do you think that was an encouragement to Zechariah and Zerubbabel? You bet it was, and what’s the lesson for us? It’s that we can be encouraged as well when we come up to what seems to be an insurmountable problem and when it seems like the whole world is against us. But if the Lord is behind it, which He is, it will get done. By faith it will get done. Our character will be perfected.

When Zechariah was given the vision of the candlestick portion in the Holy Place of the sanctuary, I’m sure he understood that the oil that fed the candlesticks and gave light to the sanctuary was to be continually burning; that that flame must never be allowed to go out, because it represented the work of the Holy Spirit, and the lesson for us is that we are never to allow the Holy Spirit to be quenched in our lives, because it’s the early rain of the Holy Spirit that will restore the image of God in fallen sinful human beings. And so, if a person says they have received the early rain by accepting Christ into their lives but there’s no continued growth taking place, then something is wrong. This is where we need to examine our own hearts to see if we be in the faith.

In **Revelation 7:1-3** it says there are four angels holding the four winds of strife that they should not blow upon the earth, and one day soon they’re going to let those winds go, but that’s not going to happen until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads, and that sealing is determined by whether or not we have received the early rain first, because that’s what gets us started in our walk with Jesus, and it continues to fall all through life in order that we might continue to grow. And when the growth process gets to the point where our characters perfectly reflect the character of Christ, then the latter rain will acknowledge that fact by sealing us. And once that stamp of approval has been given, we will never change. At that point then, the Sunday/Sabbath issue will have already come to the forefront and those who have received the “perfecting latter rain” are sealed, then there will be one grand final push to enlighten those who have not had the opportunity to see the importance of the fourth commandment and many of them will join in that effort as the third angel’s message swells to a loud cry. The word “swells” indicates that

the loud cry expands as more and more people accept the sealing message of the third angel and in turn receive the latter rain, perhaps the early and latter rain if they're not already Christians, and they will join the little company who are standing in the light.

In the context of the latter rain, the ***Review and Herald, March 2, 1897***, says the following, "The dispensation in which we are now living is to be, to those that ask, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Ask for His blessing. It is time we were more intense in our devotion. To us is committed the arduous, but happy, glorious work of revealing Christ to those who are in darkness. We are called to proclaim the special truths for this time. For all this the outpouring of the Spirit is essential. We should pray for it. The Lord expects us to ask him. We have not been whole hearted in this work. . . What we need is the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit of God. . . Pray without ceasing, and watch by working in accordance with your prayers. As you pray, believe, trust in God. It is the time of the latter rain, when the Lord will give largely of His Spirit. Be fervent in prayer, and watch in the Spirit."

Before we close I would like to hit on one more point, because it's very encouraging and something special to look forward to. First off, I don't think we realize how powerful the latter rain is going to be. You may remember reading about the things that happened during the midnight cry that went out just prior to October 22, 1844, and about the things that took place at Pentecost. God worked marvelously during the mid-night cry and at Pentecost, and I've often thought how wonderful it would have been to be alive at either of these two events, but you know what? The latter rain is going to be many times more powerful than the midnight cry and Pentecost put together, because our loving God in heaven wants to give everyone living in these last days one last opportunity to be saved by giving people the information they need to make an intelligent decision for or against the truth and thereby choose their eternal destiny.

Listen to this statement in ***Review and Herald, July 20, 1886***, "It is with an earnest longing that I look forward to the time when the events of the day of Pentecost shall be repeated with even greater power than on that occasion. John says, 'I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.' Then, as at the Pentecostal season, the people will hear the truth spoken to them, every man in his own tongue. God can breathe new life into every soul that sincerely desires to serve Him, and can touch the lips with a live coal from off the altar, and cause them to become eloquent with His praise. Thousands of voices will be imbued with the power to speak forth the wonderful truths of God's word. The stammering tongue will be unloosed, 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 such a close connection with Him that they may be partakers of the latter rain when it shall be poured out.” And so, again we see here that the soul temple must be cleansed from every defilement before we receive the latter rain, because it’s eternally important that we keep these things straight in our minds.

Also notice what it says about the midnight cry in *Spaulding and Megan, pages 3, 4*, “The latter rain is coming on those that are pure **(the latter rain doesn’t make us pure but is given because we are pure)**. . . None receive the latter rain but those who are doing all they can. . . 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.”

And in *The Great Controversy, page 400*, speaking of the midnight cry it says, “Like a tidal wave the movement swept over the land. From city to city, from village to village, and into remote country places it went, until the waiting people of God were fully aroused.”

When I think of a tidal wave, I think of a tsunami. You probably saw the news when a tsunami hit Japan a few years ago, and I want to tell you my friends, that no one can survive a tsunami except those that move to higher ground, and that higher ground is found in Jesus Christ. If you haven’t already, I invite you to do that before it’s too late, because we know that the last movements in this old world will be rapid ones, so please don’t procrastinate, because the handwriting is already on the wall.

It should be quite clear to you by now that the latter rain only comes upon those who have complete victory over sin and will be permanently sealed in that position. In *Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, page 214* it says, “Not all who profess to keep the Sabbath will be sealed **(It takes more than a profession, doesn’t it?)**. There are many even among those who teach the truth to others who will not receive the seal of God in their foreheads. . . **(And I think I read this next part before, but it bears repeating)** Not one of us **(not you, not me, not anyone)** will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul-temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost.”

We see clearly here in this statement that the Sabbath and the latter rain and the sealing of God’s people are inseparable, and only those who have not one spot or stain upon them and no character defects in their characters will be ready to receive the perfecting latter rain, and I want to be one of them, who about you?

Well, what more can I say? I'd like to close by reading a few verses in the book of **Deuteronomy**. The context is God's promise that Israel was about to inherit the land of Canaan, the promised land. And please don't let it be lost upon you so that you fail to realize the spiritual significance that God has promised His faithful today that they will inherit the heavenly Canaan someday soon, and the conditions are the same. **Deuteronomy 18:13-17**. Here's that fifth verse I was talking about. Here's what God inspired Moses to write: "It shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give *you* the rain of your land in his due season (**and remember, our heart is the land**), the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full. Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; and *then* the LORD'S wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and *lest* ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you."