

## THE FORMER AND THE LATTER RAIN

By Paul M Hanssen

The falling of the former and the latter rain is a season sent by God for the restoration of all things relating to His Kingdom and the completion of His Redemptive Purpose. It is a time of rebuilding, a time of reviving, and a time of refreshing. The falling of the former and latter rain is a time of the sowing of seed, the growth of the seed, and harvest of that which has been sown. Prophetically, the former and latter rains relate to both an overall move of God upon His people, but it also relates to one's personal experience and encounter with God. As with all prophetic Truth, past or future, each promise of God speaks into the believer's personal spiritual world. This lesson describes what I see as a universal outpouring of the rain of God's presence, power, Word, and Spirit, but it also relates to you and your personal walk with God and the completion of His Eternal Purpose in and through your life!

*Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth (Hosea 6:1-3).*

I believe, with every ounce of my being, that we are living in the days where we will witness the falling of the former and latter rain. God's remnant people have been through a time where God has **TORN (to pluck off and pull to pieces)** and He has **SMITTEN (to strike, to give wounds, and to kill)**. Isaiah's prophetic word begins with the prophet pleading with God's people to *return unto the LORD*. God dealt with His apostate people by tearing and smiting (as it were) for the purpose of gaining their attention in the hope of causing them to turn around from the path upon which they were traveling.

There would be no need of the restoring, reviving, and reinvigorating rains if famine did not exist in the land, if the ground were not dry, if the absence of life were not present, and if growth and the completion of God's purpose were not needed.

Isaiah continues his prophetic word by speaking of *two days* and a *third day*. The *two days* are cycles of times and seasons, and the *third day* speaks of reviving, resurrection, restoration, and completion. The people of God have been through cycles of God dealing with them due to the hardness of people's hearts, due to idolatry, due to the apostasy in the church, and due to the backslidden state they found themselves in – God has torn and smitten, however, another day cycle is coming, a new day, the third day, as it were – the day of the “new thing” (Isaiah 42:9, Isaiah 43:9). The third day is a day of reviving, it is the day of the new thing!

The scriptures give us many examples of the third day. Here are a few:

- Jesus rose from the dead on the third day (Acts 10:40)
- The Holy Ghost descended upon the 120 in the third hour of the day (Acts 2:15)
- The miracle at the marriage in Cana, Jesus' 1<sup>st</sup> public miracle, was on the third day (John 2:1)
- It was on the third day of creation that God commanded the earth to bring forth grass, herb yielding seed, and fruit trees - life (Genesis 1:11-13)
- It was on the third day of searching that Abraham saw MT Moriah where he would willingly offer His son to God (Genesis 22:4)
- The restored temple in the days of Ezra was completed on the third day of the month Adar (Ezra 6:15)

*And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. (Luke 13:32)*

Here, in the words that Jesus sent to Herod, He described the third day as the day of completion when His work would be *fulfilled and accomplished*. Are we seeing the rising of the sunrises of the third day upon us? It must come – it is coming!

Some of you are soon to come into your third day!!! What did the prophet say? *After* two days God would revive (quicken, repair, and give life), and *on* the third He would raise us up (to confirm, establish, and to accomplish). The *reviving* and the *raising* were practically simultaneous. Reviving was promised after the second day was complete, and the raising up was on the third day. This is how the former and the latter rain work – God promised they would fall in the first month. Both rains would fall simultaneously. This is miraculous.

*Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength. Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month (Joel 2:21-23).*

God has promised that in the end times, before His appearing, He will send the restoring, reviving, and maturing rains of both seed-sowing time and harvest time. The former rain fell *moderately* (in just measure, righteously) on the Day of Pentecost two-thousand years ago. However, in the end times the latter rain will fall along with the former rain; the rains will not fall in their regular way, time or season. Rather, they will both fall at once, in a prophetic first month, as a torrential downpour (rather than in scheduled or predicted seasons). There will be nothing moderate or measured when the former and latter fall.

Many have attempted to predict what this prophetic season will look like. I believe, however, that no-one knows how the end-time move of God will appear. It will come when we least expect it, it will come in a way we have not known, it will come “out of season”, it will go against the mainstream theologies of the day – it will be a “new thing” attached to the old. It will tear down man’s ideas, idols, and religious forms. It will be a move of God, not a move of man.

The prophet Hosea states that “He”, the LORD, will come unto us as the rain, the former and the latter rain. The rain is HIM! ...and ***he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth (Hosea 6:3).***

- I read an article once where a Rabbi was recorded as saying “God didn’t choose Egypt with its Nile or Assyria with the Euphrates as his chosen land – no, he chose Israel without a sufficient natural water source, so that the Israelites would have to look up to the heavens to God for their life-giving water.” This is a powerful truth. Israel’s survival was threatened if there was no rain. God deliberately planted His people in a dry and barren land so that He alone would be looked to and depended upon as the only source of life. It MUST be about Him and our love for Him!

Many have described the former and latter rain as miracles, signs, wonders, and the gatherings of great multitudes. However, this focus is wrong. Yes, these things may happen, but they are not the sign of the rain. Great and miraculous things will happen in the end-times. Many of these things will be the cause of the further derailing of the church and leading God’s people away from what the Spirit of God desires to accomplish at the end. Signs and wonders will deceive many and lead people astray, why? because HE, the LORD, is not in the rain.

*And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:8-9).*

Paul is here speaking of the antichrist. The antichrist spirit is in the world today working under the guise, fashion, and appearance of “Christ”, *the anointed one*. This false anointing is prevalent within the church-world. That spirit also lurks within the stronghold of our hearts, within the citadel where God desires to establish His Kingdom.

The antichrist spirit operates after the *working of Satan with power, signs, and lying wonders*. Lying wonders are deceiving and false - they are “utterances” of untruths. This spirit has and will deceive many who believe that they are on a trajectory of truth because of the blessings, miracles, and signs that they experience. As a matter of fact, many spiritual leaders seek for signs and wonders to demonstrate to those around them that they are on the right track and are blessed of God. Yes, the Lord blesses, and He will continue to bless His Own. However, blessings and wondrous signs are not necessarily a sign of the rain or of God’s favor. God Himself is the rain. His presence is the rain! – We need to ask ourselves, *is He enough?* Is He the focus? Is He the reason? Is He the cause, the center, and the pivot around whom all things revolve? This is the rain! It must be about HIM!

Lying signs and wonders go hand in hand with false prophets and false teachers – wolves in sheep’s clothing (see *Deuteronomy 13:1-4*). God told the children of Israel that *the signs and wonders of false prophets were a test to know whether the people loved the LORD their God with all their heart and soul or not. Love for the LORD God is the antidote to deception!! (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).*

This former and latter rain is about HIM - ...and ***he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth (Hosea 6:3)***. It will fall in the form of HIS presence, power, glory, and splendor wherein anything can happen! When it is about Him it doesn't matter what He chooses to do or through whom He chooses to do it. When He is the rain, it doesn't matter how He chooses to manifest Himself. It will be a new thing, and yet an old thing, but it will be about HIM! It will not be about us. It won't be about feeding our feelings or desires. Yes, we will benefit from the rain both naturally and spiritually. ***However, the focus of the rain will not be upon the blessings, but rather upon the Blessor!*** In other words, the former and the latter rains will be a reviving of God's presence and power among His people where once again the saints of God look unto, long for, thirst after, and get lost in the presence of God.

*...and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month (Joel 2:23).*

The former and latter rains were seasonal rains. The former rains fell in October and November (the fall) which in Israel was the time of seed sowing. The latter rain fell in March and April (the spring) which is the time prior to harvest and before the hot, dry summer months. According to the Jewish calendar, the former rains fell in the month Tishri. Tishri is the first month of the Jewish *civil calendar*. The latter rain fell in the month of Nisan which is the first month of the *religious calendar*. Both months are referred to as the "*first month*" but for different reasons.

Tishri and Nisan are the two months of the year when six of the seven feasts of Israel were celebrated; three feasts were celebrated during the month of Nisan and three feasts were celebrated during the month of Tishri. According to Joel's prophecy, the former and latter rains will fall in the *first month*. In other words, the two seasons (the two months of the year referred as "the first month") will miraculously come together into one season. Both seasonal rains will fall at the same time, out of season.

I love how God does things! I love how He takes the "guesswork" and "man's carnal predictions" out of the picture and confuses the wisdom of the wise as He governs and holds all things in His own hands. Many have predicted, prophesied, and theologically taught how and when the rain would fall. Many of these predictions are based upon "previous rains". However, the falling of the former and latter rain will be different. It will be a *new thing* that is unheard of and unknown and yet heard of and known. In other words, God will bring forth from Himself both the old and new, the former and the latter, and the known and the unknown. Those who are looking for Him, those who go out to meet Him, they who hunger and thirst after Him, and they to whom God's call is sent, will know this rain.

As stated, the former rains would fall in the season before the seed was sown in the earth (in the fall), and the latter rain would fall closer to harvest time (in the spring) to ripen and fatten (complete) the fruit.

- **Former Rain** – autumn rain falls in the month of Tishri – October/November (The first month of the civil year. The civil year is for administrative purposes)

- **Latter Rain** – fall rain falls in the month of Nisan - March/April (the first month of the religious or ecclesiastical year – the new year of the feasts. The religious year is for observing the laws and ways of God and the beginning of the seven feasts).

The feasts that were celebrated in the time of the latter rain: (The Spring Feasts)

- **PASSOVER** (Leviticus 23:5) – The Cross
- **UNLEAVENED BREAD** (Leviticus 23:6) – The Grave
- **FIRSTFRUITS** (Leviticus 23:10) – Resurrection & Ascension

In between the first three feasts of the first month, and the final three feasts of the second first month, was the celebration of weeks, Pentecost.

- **PENTECOST** (Leviticus 23:16) – The Falling of the Holy Ghost (month of Sivan)

The final three feasts were celebrated in the time of the former rain: (The Fall Feasts)

- **FEAST OF TRUMPETS** (Leviticus 23:24) – The Resurrection & Rapture of the Saints
- **DAY OF ATONEMENT** (Leviticus 23:27) – Second Coming of Jesus – atonement of Israel and cleansing of the earth
- **FEAST OF TABERNACLES** (Leviticus 23:34) – Millenium – The Kingdom Established

Four of the seven feasts have been fulfilled by the Lord Jesus, namely the Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, and Feast of Weeks. The final three feasts have yet to be fulfilled: Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Tabernacles. However, for the believer, all seven feasts will come together in one glorious fulfillment at the end when God sends both rains in the “first month” – the fall and the spring seasons combined. At that time the saints of God will experience the presence and glory of God in new dimensions as the God’s Kingdom comes and God’s will among His people is accomplished.

#### THE FRUITFULNESS OF THE RAIN

*Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. (James 5:7)*

The end-time fruitfulness of the remnant people of God depends on the falling of the former and latter rain. The fruitfulness cannot be accomplished without the rain. The Father, the husbandman, has waited a long time for the fruit to be manifest, the fruit of His Son’s likeness.

Both rains will fall in the end. All the spiritual fulfillment of the feasts will take place. Seed time and harvest will be instantaneous. God is going to do a quick work within the hearts and spirits of people. The final ingathering of the called and the chosen will take place during this season as the planting and the fruitfulness of the planting will be quick and miraculous. All seven feasts will

be fulfilled at the end. Then, as far as the prophetic calendar is concerned the three final feasts, the feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feasts of Tabernacles will literally be fulfilled at the end of the New Testament era and the beginning of the seventh day, the millennium.

However, allow me to share one more overlooked key and requirement that God gave His people if they desired to experience the former and latter rain.

*But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. And 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, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil (Deuteronomy 11:11-14).*

Everybody wants the rain, but how many are willing to hearken to the commands of God? How many *set their hearts to love* the LORD their God? How many dedicate themselves to serve Him with all their heart and all their soul? This is the prelude to the falling of the rains. Why does God require this? He requires that man turn to Him and look to Him only so that he does not fall in love with that which the rain produces; so man will not make idols out of the fruitfulness of the rain. Rather, man's focus will be on the one they love and in knowing Him

Take note: sandwiched in between "hearkening" and "serving" we find LOVE for the LORD our God. Love is the bridge that connects hearing God's commands and fulfilling His commands in submissive service and worship unto Him.

### **HEARKEN**

To listen carefully with the intent of obeying

### **LOVE**

To have affection for

### **SERVE**

To dress – Worship, to be a bond servant

Love is the key to see the falling of the former and the latter rain. Yes, we can *diligently listen*, and we can even *attempt to obey and serve*; however, only love for the LORD your God will connect the hearing of the ear with the hand of serving/worship and bind them together with unflinching commitment, consistent and continuous obedient reverence, adoration, and holy worship unto the LORD God.

*Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine (Ezekiel 16:8).*

Israel's journey from Egypt to Zion was to them as if they were being led from one season to another season. There were seasons of trials, seasons of warfare, seasons of overcoming giants, seasons of patience, seasons of gain and seasons of loss, seasons of great change, and the season of 15 judges – these and many more seasons took place over a period of 430+ years (from Egypt to Zion, David). But then, finally, came the *much-awaited season*; a season Israel had longed for; a season they had fought for, and a season they even attempted to implement under their own carnal works (they chose a king called Saul for the purpose of entering the much-awaited **kingdom season**. The name **Saul means TO REQUEST AND DEMAND**). The flesh cannot establish the Kingdom of God with carnal requests and demands. You can name and claim, decree and declare all you want, but this will not bring you closer to the Kingdom of God. However, LOVE for the Lord your God draws you closer to Him. LOVE for the Lord God establishes a place for the throne of God. Israel failed in their first attempt to see “God’s kingdom come”. They failed because they attempted to establish the Kingdom with carnal demands – namely Saul. They failed because the kingdom cannot be established without a key ingredient - **LOVE**.

Israel finally came to a *time and season* that God called **THE TIME OF LOVE!** (Ezekiel 16:8). It was at the beginning of this season that God raised up a king called David. The Hebrew root word for *David is dode* which means *love, a lover, and to boil with passion*.

- It was through love that Zion was conquered.
- It was through love that the glory of God returned to Israel.
- It was through love that the vision of the Temple of Solomon was brought to birth.
- It was through love that the kingdom of God was established in Zion.
- It was through love that a habitation for God’s glory presence was raised.
- God used David to introduce and fulfill the time of love; a time when the price was paid to bring back the Ark and the glory of God.
- Love and a boiling passion for God stood up during a time of national chaos and despair and love fulfilled all of God’s will.

*And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will (Acts 13:22).*

Divine love seeks to fulfill all of the will of God. Divine love desires to hear God’s heartbeat. Divine love obeys the commands of God. Divine love has no personal agenda. Divine love longs for the Kingdom of God.

*I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. (Proverbs 8:17)*

*He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. (John 14:21)*

*Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. (John 14:23)*

*Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? (James 2:5)*

As we begin to understand the truths that have been shared in this lesson, should it not provoke us to seek to understand and to be filled with the divine love of God, and a love for God? Always remember, love is not an emotion or feeling. Rather, it is a choice and a commitment!

The time of love is also the beginning of the falling of the former and latter rain.

*Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the later rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field. (Zechariah 10:1)*

Love Him, then ask!