

***Sabbath School Today***  
**With the 1888 Message Dynamic**  
***The Holy Spirit and Spirituality***  
**Lesson 1. The Spirit and the Word**

We are thrilled with the biblical topic of study for this new year on the Holy Spirit. Our quarterly has adequately covered the Spirit's role in revelation, inspiration, and illumination with respect to the Bible. A vital function of the Spirit is as a Teacher. Our question is: What is the role of the Holy Spirit in revealing the present truth of the gospel in the 1888 message? Has the church received the gospel; or, has righteousness by faith in light of our unique cleansing of the sanctuary truth been placed on hold?

What we need to clearly understand is that the church is teaching righteousness by faith, but it's the evangelical understanding of justification. Does Jesus straighten out crooked people with merely a legal pardon? Does believing in Jesus correct an auditing problem regarding the sinner's heavenly accounts? Evangelicals teach that by believing one is legally justified and sins are forgiven. Then, distinct from this launching of the Christian life is sanctification, which is never completed until the second coming. Thus justification and sanctification are separated. Should Seventh-day Adventists teach what non-Adventists teach about righteousness by faith? Is this what is being taught?

What was resisted in 1888 and beyond to this day is the "latter rain." It is significant that in these twelve lessons on the Holy Spirit there is not one devoted to the "latter rain." What the church needs most is little understood if not entirely neglected.

The latter rain from the 1888 perspective is the clearest gospel finally understood in the end-times. "Great truths that have lain unheeded and unseen since the day of Pentecost, are to shine from God's word in their native purity. To those who truly love God the Holy Spirit will reveal truths that have faded from the mind, and will also reveal truths that are entirely new." [1]

"The truth of the gospel" is an understanding of justification by faith which is consistent with and parallel to the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary truth. What Jones and Waggoner presented joined justification and sanctification as one. In other words, an appreciation of Christ's love in justifying all the world on His cross, becomes the great motivator for faith to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in Christian character perfection. Justification accomplished at the cross produces justification by faith, which in turn prepares one for the second coming.

Ellen White confirms that this "latter rain" perception of the gospel was opposed in the 1888 era. There was "opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord's message through Brethren [E. J.] Waggoner and [A. T.] Jones. By exciting that opposition Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit [latter rain] that God longed to impart to them. The enemy prevented

them from obtaining that efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost [early rain]. The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory [Rev. 18:1] was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world.” [2]

We are in search of what the Holy Spirit is teaching us regarding the good news in light of the “latter rain.” The word “justification” or “righteousness” means to straighten out that which is crooked. What is the heart-changing good news that can change the alienation and resistance that God’s people have toward Him? What is our at-one-ment with the message?

What is “the latter rain” of the Holy Spirit? There are some simple, clear facts that will at least begin to clear up our perplexity:

The story of the “former rain” (see Joel 2:23) will help explain what is the “latter rain.” It was at Pentecost that God’s true people (those who believed in Christ) received the outpouring of God’s true Holy Spirit. Now, after two millennia, we expect the gift of the Holy Spirit to be given again as the complement of the “former” blessing.

The “former rain” was the *light of truth* that was given as a gift—it was the perception of the truth that God’s professed people had rejected, murdered, and crucified the Lord of glory. That blessing was not a loud noise so much as it was bright light: Peter proclaimed that those people present there had crucified the Messiah, the Son of God. “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart” (Acts 2:36, 37).

The latter rain will therefore be a gift of the Holy Spirit that will bring the true and ultimate conviction of sin that only He can bring to human hearts: the guilt of the crucifixion of Christ is our sin. But that is a truth that we don’t comprehend clearly, as yet. When God’s people do grasp that reality, there will come the greatest repentance of the ages (Zech. 12:10-13:1). [3] It will become the “final” experience of reconciliation with Christ, something known as “the final atonement.”

This will make possible a movement, a second “Pentecost,” a message to be proclaimed worldwide that will “lighten the earth with glory,” and prepare a people for Christ’s return.

You ask if the latter rain is falling now. According to what we read in Scripture, when the latter rain comes and when it is accepted, the work will be finished in that same generation. Our leaders for over a century have been saying that the latter rain is falling, present tense; yet the work has not been finished and most of those leaders are already dead. Large baptisms are not a sign of the latter rain.

The latter rain prepares the grain for the harvest. While it is true that the Lord may be working in ways we do not recognize, it is also true that “in a great degree” the latter

rain and the loud cry was resisted and rejected in the years following 1888. [4] The important question is, Will the Lord renew the outpouring of the latter rain when there is no repentance for rejecting it when He sent it? Will He send the Jews a new Messiah when they do not repent of His sending them One 2000 years ago?

The promise is “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 2:23). “The former rain” at Pentecost is identified with a “teacher of righteousness” (see margin, KJV). Thus the early rain was clearly specified as a message of righteousness by faith. “The latter rain” promised is parallel to “the former rain”—a message of righteousness.

“While Christ is in the sanctuary. ... the ‘latter rain,’ or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel. ...” [5] The Holy Spirit is our Teacher of righteousness.

—Paul E. Penno

#### **Endnotes:**

[1] *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 473.

[2] *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 234, 235.

[3] “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for [his] only [son], and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for [his] firstborn. . . . In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness” (Zech. 12:10; 13:1).

[4] *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 234, 235.

[5] Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, pp. 85, 86.

#### **Notes:**

Pastor Paul Penno’s video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://youtu.be/CMAAHd6CxBU>

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