

***Sabbath School Today***  
**With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

***The Holy Spirit and Spirituality***  
**Lesson 8. The Holy Spirit and the Gifts of the Spirit**

The Holy Spirit has been hindered from manifesting the fullness of His gifts because to a large degree the sanctuary/justification by faith message brought to the church during the 1888 era has been displaced by an evangelical version of righteousness by faith. The Holy Spirit cannot operate at “full capacity” if His church is unwilling to cooperate with its Teacher of Righteousness. The Latter Rain proportions of the Spirit’s outpouring will bring reformation and revival to the Laodicean Church. Thus far in the church’s history this has not occurred despite a plethora of programs and baptisms in certain quarters.

The ultimate objective of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to prepare a people for translation at Jesus’ second coming. It is the Spirit-indited “third angel’s message in verity” that does just this. What will the gifts of the Spirit look like when unleashed in Latter Rain efficiency?

Rather than speculate on what we will do with the church, or how the world may re-shape it into another image, let us ask what the Lord says He will do. He is the Head of the church. Not all the demons in hell can stop what He purposes to do.

He will send revival and reformation. As surely as His character is love, He will visit His people: “The times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19). “In visions of the night, representations passed before me of a great reformatory movement among God’s people. ... A spirit of intercession was seen, even as was manifested before the great Day of Pentecost. ... Hearts were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest. ... The world seemed to be lightened with the heavenly influence. ... there seemed to be a reformation such as we witnessed in 1844.” [1]

He will accomplish this objective through a special message. “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations; and then shall the end come” (Matt. 24:14; the gospel is “truth,” Gal. 2:5, 14). “Amid the confusing cries, ‘Lo, here is Christ! Lo, there is Christ!’ will be borne a special testimony, a special message of truth appropriate for this time, which message is to be received, believed, and acted upon.” [2] As surely as day follows night, such a message will come. Repentance for the 1888-era rejection of such a message will bring a whole-hearted acceptance of its renewal.

This message will be the outpouring of the latter rain. It will bring spiritual refreshment and prepare the church for the final issue of the mark of the beast: “Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former rain

[faithfully], and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain. ... I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten" (Joel 2:23-25). "I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth with great power. ... All fear of their relatives was gone, and the truth alone was exalted to them. ... 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.'" [3]

The latter rain will be a clearer revelation of the gospel of righteousness by faith than we have yet discerned. The meaning of the Hebrew phrase in Joel 2:23 is "a teacher of righteousness," linking the latter rain to the message of righteousness by faith. Here is the key truth that is almost totally overlooked today—the initial showers of the latter rain were manifested in the "most precious message" of righteousness by faith which the Lord sent to this people in 1888. [4] Further showers of the latter rain must include a recovery of that message, because Heaven's intent can never be defeated.

This true gospel revelation will be so powerful that it will polarize the church into those accepting it and those rejecting it. Thus the final shaking will result from the "straight testimony" of pure gospel truth, as opposed to every semblance of legalism. "'Yet gleanings shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three [olives] in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof,' saith the Lord God of Israel" (Isa. 17:6). The brilliant light of the gospel that is to lighten the earth with glory will cause the "covetous ones [to become] separated from the company of believers." [5]

With this recovery of the pure gospel of Christ, the shaken and purified Seventh-day Adventist Church will be ready to bear a final witness to the world. Through God's providence this will become the loud cry of the angel of Revelation 18: "I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory" (vs. 1). This final message will be of grace, grace which much more abounds than all the abounding sin that hell can devise in the last days.

The great "angel" of Revelation 18:1-4 will proclaim the message that will "lighten the earth with glory" (vss. 1-4). The message will at last be demonstrated as "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). Servants of God, endowed with power from on high with their faces lighted up, and shining with holy consecration, will go forth to proclaim the message from heaven. A compelling power will move the honest in heart. God will be in the work, and every saint will be fearless of consequences and follow the convictions of his own conscience and unite with those who keep all the commandments of God. Fear of relatives or of economic distress will be powerless. A large number will take their stand in preparation for the coming of Christ.

When the earth is lightened with the glory of the message that "began" in 1888, the honest will surmount every obstacle to press in and find fellowship with those who hold the "third angel's message in verity." This of course will be a change from our "evangelism" of so long; why the difference? Ellen White explains: "I heard those clothed with the armor [of Christ's righteousness] speak forth the truth with great 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. 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.'" [6]

The re-sent "Elijah the prophet" will arrive "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn ... hearts" (Mal. 4:5, 6). The work of the Lord will be finely tuned, precisely balanced, powerful, so that what God's people have wanted to see for two millennia will come.

The climax of world history will be "the marriage of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:7). This glorious climax of the gospel will prepare the church to grow up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, prepared to be His Bride. Christ's agenda for this church includes that spiritual growth and maturity—the fruition of His final ministry in the Most Holy Apartment. "I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying 'Alleluia: For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready'" (vss. 6, 7).

The factor that makes her ready, which has never been fully effective previously, is a true understanding of righteousness by faith. The next verse reads: "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints," made possible only by a clearer, brighter, more mature faith.

This is Christ's agenda for His church. She is to accomplish the task appointed for her by the One who died for her. His vindication requires that she overcome even as He overcame. This scenario is the much better good news that must emerge.

—Paul E. Penno

#### **Endnotes (Ellen G. White):**

[1] *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 126.

[2] *Review and Herald*, Oct. 13, 1904.

[3] *Early Writings*, p. 271.

[4] *Special Testimonies*, Series A, No. 6, p. 19.

[5] *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 126.

[6] *Early Writings*, p. 271.

#### **Notes:**

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

<https://youtu.be/i7Euxxkbrhs>

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