

The Early and the Latter Rains
(Deut. 11:14)

Rain, the condensed water from moisture in the atmosphere, is the stuff of life. It constitutes life for the all living things in this world. It not only supports life, but cleanses life. After a few days of rain, nature resounds beauty in its expression of life once again; the sky looks clearer and man rejoices with expectation of good crops. What a blessing rain really is! But we never stop to consider that rain is a conditional blessing. It would come for the nation of Israel upon their obedience to the Lord- to love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart and with your entire being (Deut. 11:13-14). God pictured the result of the rain through King David to the one who rules over men righteously, ruling in the fear of God; He dawns on them like the morning light when the sun rises on a cloudless morning, when the tender grass springs out of the earth through clear shining after rain (II Samuel 23:3,4). When the rain breaks through the sky with lightning flashing beautiful and fearful discharge of electricity, followed by thunder, we must know that our God is speaking to us. The Bible tells us in Psalm 29 that the voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders; the voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty; the voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the voice of the Lord splits and flashes forth forked lightning; and who can understand the thunders of His full magnificent power? Asked Job (Job 26: 14b). The rain with a storm can be to us a warning; it can be judgment. When the voice of the Lord thunders through the storm we better listen to consider the message of warning and be in awe of His power in the presence of a storm. But rain is also associated with blessings; Psalm 84:6 says, Passing through the Valley of Weeping, they make it a place of springs; the early **rain** also fills with blessings; in Psalm 148:8 says, sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praises with the harp or the lyre to our God! Who covers the heavens with clouds, who prepares rain for the earth, who makes grass to grow on the mountains, He gives to the beast his food, and to the young ravens that for which they cry.

What is the meaning of the early and latter rains we read in the Bible in reference to the people of Israel? The early rain was given to them during mid-October through November. It served to germinate the seeds and to nurture them to growth. The latter rain came in the month of March to April, before the spring harvests of barley and other grains and corresponded to the Jewish spring events of Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruit and Pentecost. YAHSHUA fulfilled these feasts as a Passover Lamb of God that took the sins of the world; the First Fruit, which is His resurrection and the coming of His Holy Spirit in the day of Pentecost. The summer and fall harvests are harvests of fruit in the feasts of Trumpets, Day of Atonement and the feast of Tabernacles. The feast of Trumpets is for us believers the return of our Lord YAHSHUA for His Bride; the Day of Atonement is the seven year tribulation time for the nation of Israel (time of Jacob's trouble, Jer. 30:7); the feast of Tabernacles is when YAHSHUA returns to restore Israel after the tribulation period to establish His millennium kingdom.

The eschatological image of rain illustrates the work of the Holy Spirit restoring the nation Israel: For I will pour water upon him who is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour My spirit upon your offspring, and My blessing upon your descendants (Isaiah 44:3); Neither will I hide My face any more from them, when I have poured out My Spirit upon the house of

Israel, says the Lord God (Ezek. 39:29); and until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is valued as a forest, then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness will abide in the fruitful field (Isa. 32:15-16). After God announces the early rain and the latter rain He says to Israel through the prophet Joel, And afterward I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see vision, even upon the menservants and upon the maidservants in those days will I pour out My Spirit (Joel 2:28-29). It happened partially in the day of Pentecost, and it will happen again when, before the return of Christ for His church, He will demonstrate His power among His people and this will be the latter rain. He will pour out His Spirit upon His church at the completion of His plan on earth.

YAHSHUA symbolized the Holy Spirit as water in John 7: 37-39a: Now on the final and most important day of the Feast, (Tabernacles) Jesus stood, and He cried in a loud voice, If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink! He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, From his innermost being shall flow springs and rivers of living water. But He was speaking here of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were afterward to receive. "The use of water symbolized the blessing of adequate rainfall for crops. YAHSHUA used this event as an opportunity to make a very public invitation on the last day of the feast for His people to accept Him as the Living Water" (John MacArthur). The Lord God is the fountain of living water, Who has been rejected by His people. He is the source of the early and the latter rains; there is no other source from which we receive living water. Israel was told that they had forsaken God, the Fountain of living waters, and they had hewn for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns which cannot hold water (Jer. 2:13). The invitation is still valid for all who is thirsty to come to YAHSHUA and drink from Him, the Fountain of living water! Many continue to reject Him preferring to hew broken cisterns, to continue thirsty, for those cisterns, like that of Israel's, cannot hold water to satisfy the spiritual thirst. The blessings of the early and latter rains can be yours when you come to YAHSHUA as your only source of living water to satisfy your spiritual thirst. Just like the Samaritan woman, who accepted His offer of living water, and not just for herself, but for many others she brought to YAHSHUA to receive living water! It is free for you, but it cost His life. If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink (John 7: 37a)!