

## Holy Spirit Outpouring

It is not uncommon to have Joel 2:23 quoted in support of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days. In this short article we shall look at the verse in context as we seek to discover its real meaning.

The 'latter rain' referenced in the verse is not the time before the Second Coming, it *is* the time of the Second Coming. This we can see when we look at the context of the chapter. For example Joel 2:15 says <sup>15</sup> *Blow a trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly,* <sup>16</sup> *Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and the nursing infants. Let the bridegroom come out of his room And the bride out of her bridal chamber.* (All quotes from New American Standard Version).

What does this mean? Trumpets are important in the New Testament. For example 'The dead will be raised at the last trumpet' (1 Corinthians 15:52), 'A trumpet blast will be heard at the second coming' (1 Thessalonians 4:16). 'Proclaim a fast' refers to the Day of Atonement, the only required fast in the Torah, where sin is covered. This symbolizes the Judgement Day. The coming of the bride and bridegroom in the next verse is the marriage supper of the Lamb, where Jesus marries the church. So we can see from this that Joel 2 is not referring to a time right before Christ returns, but when he returns.

With this in mind let's look again at Joel 2:23 *So rejoice, O sons of Zion, And be glad in the LORD your God; For He has given you the early rain for your vindication. And He has poured down for you the rain, The early and latter rain as before.* The first reference to rain is associated with the first century while the second reference to rain is linked to the return of Jesus. But what exactly does the word 'rain' actually mean?

To understand 'rain' we must realize that the Bible defines all the symbols it uses. Look at the following as examples of symbology.

Matthew 13:38 *and the **field** is the **world**; and as for the **good seed**, these are the **sons of the kingdom**; and the **tares** are the sons of the **evil one**;*  
John 15:5 *I am the **vine**, you are the **branches**; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.*  
John 10:7 *So Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the **door** of the sheep.*

There is no reference to rain symbolizing the Holy Spirit, rather it symbolizes 'teaching'. Let's look at the Old and New Testament for examples. Deuteronomy 32:2 "Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, As the droplets on the fresh grass And as the showers on the herb. In the early church, the spring rain (teaching) symbolizes the new covenant. In the current age in which we live we do not see the teaching clearly – 1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. The teaching will be clear when Jesus returns and we have the autumn rain.

So we can see from the above that Joel 2:23 is not about Holy Spirit gifts being present prior to Christ's return, it is about teaching brought to light **when** he returns.

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