

# Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Last Days

## Introduction

Many illustrations in the Bible relate to the agrarian life of those ancient people. A word used over fifty times is “*harvest*.” It refers not only to crops but often represents the **people** who will be gathered up at the end of time (the “*harvest*”).

- *“Therefore said he unto them, The **harvest** truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the **harvest**, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2).*
- *“And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud [one] sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the **harvest** of the earth is ripe” (Revelation 14:14-15).*

Intriguingly, there are two different kinds of key harvests in Palestine. They, in turn, became prophetic symbols for the end of time.

- Righteous:
  1. Barley harvest – Spring – right at Passover time  
– 144,000 – those who finish the work
  2. Wheat harvest – Early summer – leading to the Feast of Weeks time  
– The great multitude that are converted
- Wicked:
  1. Grape harvest – Those who are separated and become subject to God’s wrath (Revelation 14:18-20).

For the harvest to sprout and, eventually, ripen it requires rain. ***The Bible uses rain as a symbol for the Holy Spirit.*** In the near east there were two seasons of rain. Each became a symbol for a special “pouring out of rain.” That represented the Holy Spirit, refreshing and maturing those two groups of God’s people!

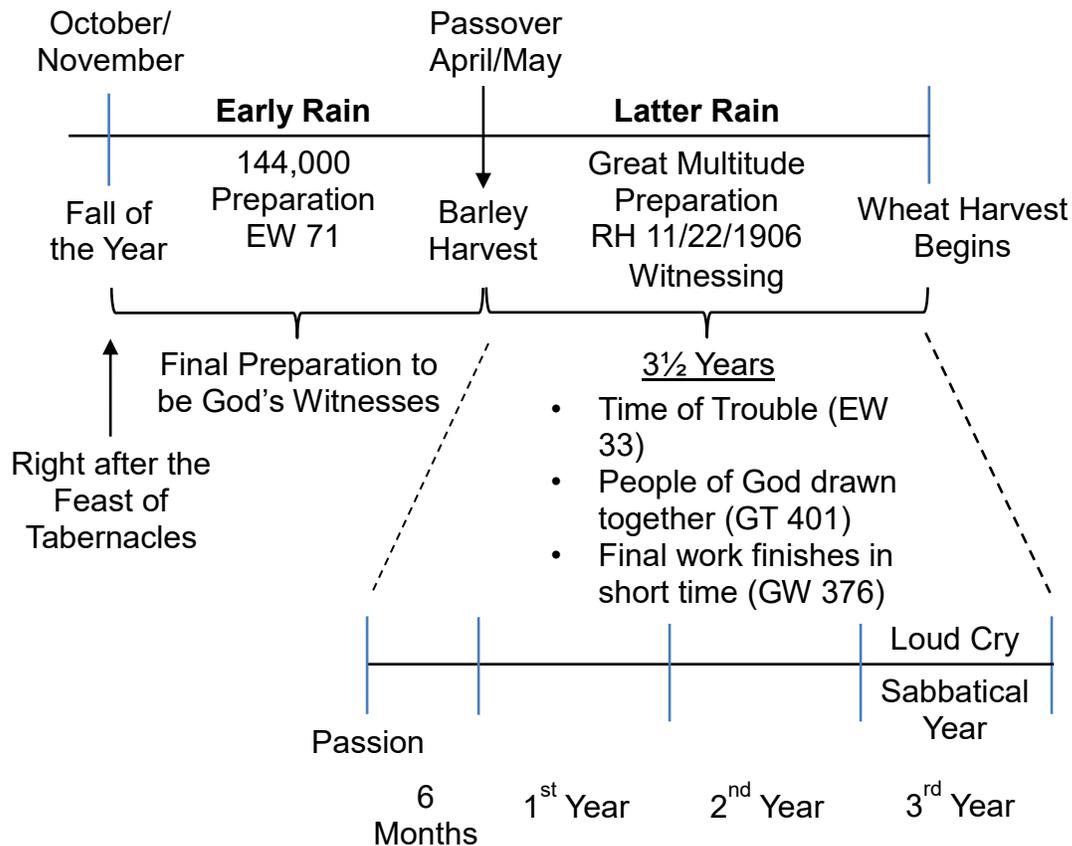
1. ***Early Rain*** – winter rains (October/November to February/March). It sprouted and brought to harvest the barley
2. ***Latter Rain*** – early summer rains (April/May to May/June). The wheat is already sprouted and is now ripened and brought to harvest.

Related to the end of time, we have these Old Testament “rain” prophecies:

1. "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.... 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).
2. "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for **the day of the LORD cometh**, for it is nigh at hand; ... 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**" (Joel 2:1, 23).
3. "**Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field**" (Zechariah 10:1).

Joel explains further the symbolic meaning of this rain: "**And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; ... it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered**" (Joel 2:28, 32a).

Again, in prophecy "rain" represents the Holy Spirit. But why two rain showers?



“At no point in our experience can we dispense with the assistance of that which enables us to make the first start. The blessings received under the former rain are needful to us to the end.... As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain.—TM 507, 509” (1897).<sup>1</sup>

“The ripening of the grain represents the completion of the work of God's grace in the soul. By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

### **An Example of “Rain”**

The story of Pentecost is a wonderful picture of what it will be like at the end of the world when the gospel will reach every person.

- *“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. **And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance**” (Acts 2:1-4).*
- Peter said that Pentecost was a fulfillment of Joel’s rain (Acts 2:16-21). Yet, we know that the full picture of Joel is yet to occur.

That apostle-led evangelism was filled with signs and wonders, thousands of converts (even in one day) and people heard the message in their own language.

How effective was that *outpouring* of the Spirit?

- *“If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and **be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister**” (Colossians 1:23).*
- Why didn’t Jesus come then? There were other prophecies that God said needed to be fulfilled. His redemptive plan was not yet complete.
- The full manifestation of what Jesus means and who Satan really is must yet be seen (cf. Revelation 12).

That apostolic “rain” experience is a model of what will happen at the end of time. Prophecy often has a dual meaning (applied to the time it was given and at the end of time). One important Holy Spirit prophecy example:

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<sup>1</sup> *Last Day Events*, p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 506.

- *“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, **when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord**; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:19-21).*
- The words *“times of refreshing”* refer to another period in earth’s history when there will be a Pentecostal type of experience that finishes the gospel work.  
*“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14).*

That “early” or “former” apostolic rain is vital for us to experience today!

“There must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. Only those who are living up to the light they have will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.”<sup>3</sup>

“The latter rain, ripening earth's harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection.”<sup>4</sup>

### **Looking Deeper**

***Our model is the early rain (barley harvest) and the latter rain (wheat harvest).***

The promise: *“And I will give power”* (Revelation 11:3).

The messages to the individual seven churches ends with *“what the Spirit says to the seven churches”* (Revelation 2:17). The themes of the apocalyptic book come from Christ, the faithful Witness (Revelation 1:1-2).

- He symbolically enters the scene on behalf of earth’s final movements.
- The story of the power coming to His witnesses follows.

***That “rain” story, just before Christ comes, spans Revelation 10 and 11. Here is the prophecy!***

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<sup>3</sup> *Maranatha*, p. 219.

<sup>4</sup> *The Faith I Live By*, p. 333.

***“And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire” (Revelation 10:1).***

The “*I saw*” heralds a new visionary scene. John is on earth observing a “*mighty angel*” “*coming down,*” or ***descending*** from, heaven (cf. Revelation 5:2, 18:2).

- His attributes are similar to those of Christ, described elsewhere by John (Revelation 1:13-15, 14:14-16; Daniel 10:5-6)!

This picture is ***contrasted*** with the beast, or Satan’s minions, ***ascending*** from the bottomless pit (9:1-3, 11:7; cf. 17:8)! Both ***enter earth’s history at its final period.***

- Christ figuratively descends to help His people prepare and finish His work!
- He also comes to deliver a timing prophecy (unfolded shortly)!
- Satan symbolically ascends from hell to help his people prepare and finish his work (cf. 9:2)!

Christ descending is felt to be the beginning of an early rain experience. It is a picture of heaven’s presence approaching planet earth. ***Who actually represents Jesus before His Second Coming?***

- The Holy Spirit (John 15:26).
- In Revelation 11:3 is recorded the timing period that God’s witnesses will evangelize the world. In the next verse (vs 4) the prophecy suggests that they are being given a full complement of the Holy Spirit – the latter rain, from the symbols introduced in Zechariah 4:2-6.
- The descending of this “*angel*” again suggests an early rain experience!

It occurs before the 1260 days. It is represented as an early rain experience of ripening the “*barley harvest*” – the “*144,000.*”

- John does not now fall down in the presence of divine glory as he did in Revelation 1.
- It is preparation time. It is an early Spirit-filled experience, as will be seen. The Holy Spirit and saints begin a unifying time!

“We may be sure that when the Holy Spirit is poured out, those who did not receive and appreciate the early rain will not see or understand the value of the latter rain.–TM 399 (1896).<sup>5</sup>

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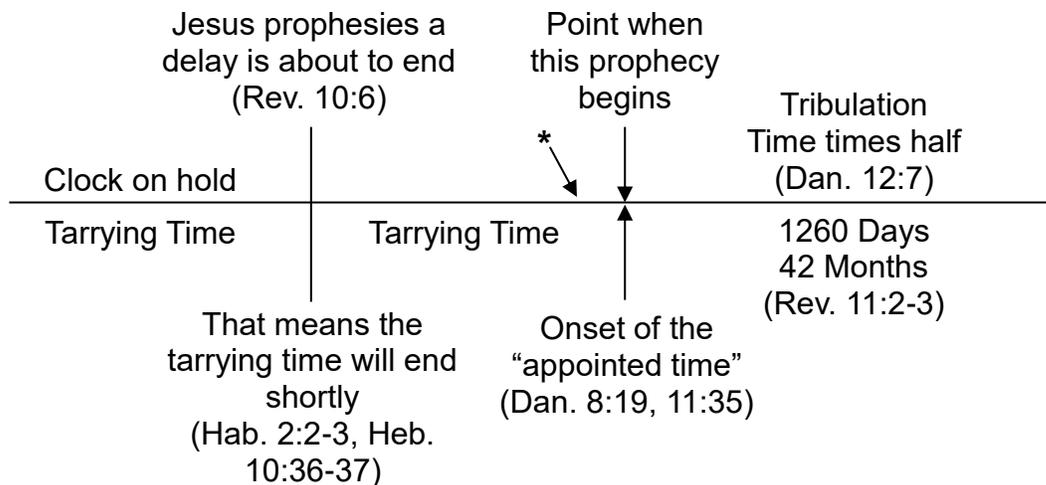
<sup>5</sup> *Last Day Events*, p. 195.

“The blessings received under the **former rain** are needful to us to the end.... If we do not progress, if we do not place ourselves in an attitude to receive both the former and the latter rain, we shall lose our souls, and the responsibility will lie at our own door.”<sup>6</sup>

Revelation 10 introduces us to an “early experience” required before the witnessing begins!

**“And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth.... And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer” (Revelation 10:2, 5-6).**

- A tarrying time is about to end!
- Note: The KJV does not have the word “delayed” in verse 6. More recent translations include the word, stating that *“there should be delay no longer.”*



\*The time of this prophecy becomes vitally important. It is when the early rain begins to be poured out to get God’s witnesses ready.

### **Focus – That Little Open Book**

**“And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again [actually, against], and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth” (Revelation 10:8).**

The “voice” that John originally heard was that of God the Father, asking him to seal up the seven-thunder narrative and not write it down (vs 4). John is in the presence of

<sup>6</sup> *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 507-508 (emphasis added).

Jesus, Who is holding the open book. He observed Christ's oath and message. Now God the Father gives John another command:

- *“Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth” (vs 8).*

We are reminded that the scroll remains open in Christ's hand. Its contents are available to any student, to the church<sup>7</sup> or even the whole world – for study.<sup>8</sup>

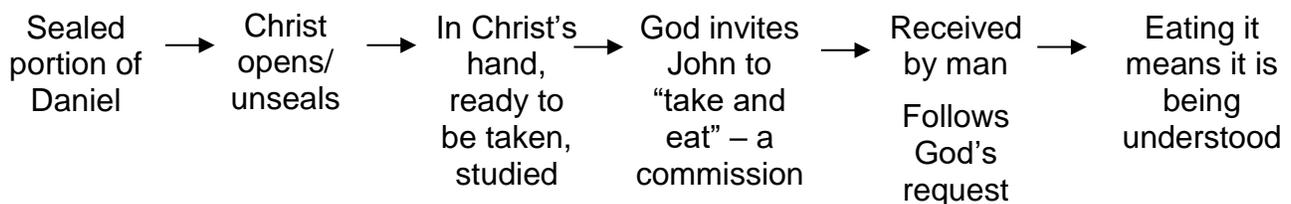
- The unsealed visions of Daniel (*ha hazon* portions) can now be understood.

For the third time it is noted that this angel is standing on the sea and the earth. It is a point in time when Christ's global authority is being expressed, is associated with that open book and is **antedating earth's last three and a half years** (11:2-3). It also precedes the judgment of the living (11:1). When might that be? We are in that time now (another study).

John is now to take possession of that scroll.

- This must be during a special “rain” experience. To imbibe the Word which has been sealed means that the Spirit's presence is there to help us understand that truth.

Sequence that is unfolding:



***“And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter” (Revelation 10:9-10).***

Just as Angel Jesus predicted:

- Eating it, enjoying its “taste” (its meaning) was wonderful.

<sup>7</sup> Osborne, Grant R.; *Revelation* (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, MI), p. 402.

<sup>8</sup> Beale, G. K.; *The New International Greek Testament Commentary; The Book of Revelation* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan – 1999), p. 548.

- When internalized, it brought bitter opposition and reproach (as seen from Ezekiel’s account – Ezekiel 2:8–3:3). The early sharing of this prophecy within the church, the body that should be preparing to give the end-time message, brings resistance that is a bitter experience.

What was in that book? Here it is:

“John sees the little book unsealed. Then Daniel's prophecies have their proper place in the first, second, and third angels' messages to be given to the world. The unsealing of the little book was the message in relation to time.”<sup>9</sup>

Will that message go with power? *“And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory”* (Revelation 18:1).

“I was pointed down to the time when the third angel’s message was closing. The power of God had rested upon His people; they had accomplished their work and were prepared for the trying hour before them. They had received the latter rain, or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and the living testimony had been revived. The last great warning had sounded everywhere, and it had stirred up and enraged the inhabitants of the earth who would not receive the message.”<sup>10</sup>

***“And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings”* (Revelation 10:11).**

The implication suggests that **both** Angel Jesus and God the Father ordered him to “prophesy” to those who have not yet responded to the gospel.<sup>11</sup> The imperative is global (11:9, 13:7, 14:6, 17:15)!

- It is a divine “must” to the remnant witnesses.<sup>12</sup>
- This command implies that that book can not only be understood but that power to witness will be given.

This type of “list” of people is mentioned seven times in Revelation. It alludes to nations in rebellion against God and His people (11:9, 13:7, 14:6, 17:15).<sup>13</sup>

- ***This will become their last warning.***

<sup>9</sup> *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 971.

<sup>10</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 279.

<sup>11</sup> Aune, David E.; *52B World Biblical Commentary; Revelation 6–16* (World Books; Publisher, Dallas, Texas; 1997), p. 575.

<sup>12</sup> Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 404.

<sup>13</sup> Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 405.



***This whole final process covers three and a half years.***

***“and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth” (Revelation 11:2b-3).***

God’s church will be persecuted for forty-two months. During this time the final “witnesses” will “prophesy” – they (the barley harvest, the 144,000) will finish the work.

**Immediately Preceding this Final Gospel Call – The Latter Rain!**

This equates with the time of the “first month” (Joel 2:1, 23) – but clearly more powerful. It is earth’s last chance.

“But near the close of earth’s harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest ‘in the time of the latter rain.’ In response, ‘the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain.’ ‘He will cause to come down ... the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain,” Zechariah 10:1; Joel 2:23.”<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Acts of the Apostles, p. 55.

### **“And I will give power unto my two witnesses,” (vs 3)**

This is a prophetic promise to those “*eating*” the “*little book*” and commissioned to “*prophesy again*” (10:10-11) that God will work with them. That’s the Latter Rain.

Why “*two witnesses*”?

- In Old Testament law, two witnesses were required to create a just defense (Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15).<sup>15</sup>
- Together (and they function as one) they form a valid legal representation to the little open book and the oath of Angel Jesus.
- Stunning – the time periods of that book (in Daniel 12) were also given by Christ in another divine oath (Daniel 12:7) when two witnesses were present (Daniel 12:5)! They are linked together with those here.<sup>16</sup>
- Stunning! Timing promises, validated by an oath, all refer to earth’s final years called the “time of the end.”

### **Sackcloth**

The witnesses are “clothed” in “sackcloth.”

- This symbolizes mourning (cf. Ezra 9:3-4).
- But – why are they sad? Is it from the bitterness of persecution following eating the unsealed portion of Daniel? Perhaps – but there is more.

The judicial setting of the two witnesses, the judgment scene noted in 11:1, and with this imagery coming at the time of their witnessing or “prophesying again,” all suggest that they are ***sighing and crying over the sins of the world*** (Ezekiel 9:4)<sup>17</sup> (cf. II Kings 1:8, Mark 1:6, Joel 1:8, Amos 8:10).

Thus, sackcloth:

- ***For the prophet***, preacher, evangelist, represents sadness over the sins of the people – “the garb of mourning.”<sup>18</sup> The rejection and persecution is additive.
- ***For the people***, represents repentance and promise to give up sin – “the garb of penitence.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 575.

<sup>16</sup> Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 420.

<sup>17</sup> Beale, *op. cit.*, p. 576.

<sup>18</sup> Mounce, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

However, God's witnesses know that this is the last call to repent and come to the foot of the Cross.

The source of their power is now identified:

***“These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth” (Revelation 11:4).***

Zechariah saw, in an angel-directed vision, a golden candlestick with seven lamps. Golden oil (vs 12) came from two olive trees into a bowl that, in turn, fed those seven lamps (Zechariah 4:1-6).

- The angel also noted that those two olive trees were “two anointed ones” that stand by the “*Lord of the whole earth*” (Zechariah 4:14) (without explanation).
- He had heard these words:  
*“This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power [human], but **by my spirit**, saith the LORD of hosts”* (Zechariah 4:6).
- The “two olive trees” represent the “immediate source” of the “holy oil” or the Holy Spirit. The oil then goes to the candlesticks to produce light. Revelation started out with seven candles, but here only two are left.

Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, and Joshua, the High Priest, were “set aside” to represent the Spirit-led restoration of God's people – just like those two candlesticks.

- These two leaders were witnesses of God's cleansing power and mission.
- That power originated with those two olive trees to bring light to His people (the Holy Spirit) –
- Then this amazing promise: *“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. And **many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people:** and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee”* (Zechariah 2:10-11).

Thus, we have a fascinating association here in Revelation between two heavenly anointed beings (commissioned for a specific task but never defined) that administer or direct the oil (the Holy Spirit) to two “candleholders” to provide a full complement of light.

The stunning “oil,” or Holy Spirit, is flowing out to God's two witnesses. This is the “*latter rain*” experience that begins at the appointed time. It is like a Pentecost experience a thousand times over. Revelation 11:5 and 6 clearly reveal that nothing will stop the work of this final call. Then will be the most encouraging evangelistic outreach in history.

***“And when they shall have finished their testimony,” (Revelation 11:7a).***

“Then, as at the Pentecostal season, the people will hear the truth spoken to them, every man in his own tongue. God can breathe new life into every soul that sincerely desires to serve him, and can touch the lips with a live coal from off the altar, and cause them to become eloquent with his praise. Thousands of voices will be imbued with the power to speak forth the wonderful truths of God’s word. The stammering tongue will be loosed, and the timid will be made strong to bear courageous testimony to the truth. May the Lord help his people to cleanse the soul-temple from every defilement, and to maintain so close a connection with him that they may be partakers of the latter rain when it shall be poured out.”<sup>20</sup>

The message of God’s last evangelists is summed up by “their testimony” (vs 7a). That testimony is also “their prophecy” (Revelation 10:11).

- This mission ends at the termination of the 1260 days (called the “appointed time” in Daniel 8:19, 11:35; cf. Revelation 11:3).
- God will not permit Satan to experience a “temporary triumph” over the global spread of the gospel until that witnessing is completed.<sup>21</sup>

This final work moves forward under severe persecution (attested to by the fifth Seal). But that mission will succeed. The concept in that Seal reveals that the horrors don’t stop “until the number (of the martyred saints) is complete” (Revelation 6:11).<sup>22</sup>

- They maintain their “conquering perseverance” (first Seal imagery – Revelation 6:1-2) even to death.
- *“And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death”* (Revelation 12:11).

### **The Prophecies of the Last Manifestations and Power**

Peter’s famous words to the men of Judah and all those in Jerusalem:

- *“But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams”* (Acts 2:16-17).
- This was likely 31 – 32 A.D. The “end” was coming in 70 A.D., when Jerusalem was sacked.

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<sup>20</sup> *Gospel Workers*, pp. 383-384.

<sup>21</sup> Osborne, *op. cit.*, p. 424.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

- It is also a prophecy for our time!

In the final witnessing of the saints, the 144,000, this is the promise (in highly symbolic language) of the power of that message.

- *“And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony”* (Revelation 11:5-7a).
- The whole world will hear their final gospel invitation and warning to repent. Then Jesus will come.

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