

The prophecy continues with another look to the further future. The period of consideration is set by the term "*the time of the latter rain*". This is a term not found elsewhere in scripture, but it does resonate with the idea of a latter-day revival, found in the book of Joel 2v23. At that time, it says "*And my people shall never be ashamed*" so we know it has not yet happened.

It also has a link with Proverbs 16v15 "*In the light of the Kings countenance is life, And his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.*" Clouds bring rain and the future clouds that bring rain to a restored Israel will be the clouds of the immortalised saints, the cloud of witnesses spoken of in Hebrews 12v1. The King will return to rule in the midst of his enemies and will be joined later by those he judges worthy to accompany him in his role of transforming the earth as a place fit for the Father. The grace of the King will be necessary not only for these saints both Jew and gentile but also for the restored twelve tribes of Jacob. Ultimately the latter rain will be a further outpouring of Holy Spirit power which will follow, not precede, the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. Those who look to the antichrist for miraculous manifestations before the second coming will misalign their accusations onto Jesus himself in their folly and wresting of scripture. There is no pre-advent outpouring of the Holy Spirit gifts!

These false idols, diviners and dreamers speak lies and give false comfort to the masses who are deceived by their soft words of human philosophy. The prophet warns against such deceivers but, just as Israel very largely were taken in by the false prophets and false shepherds, so too modern Christendom is beguiled by the platitudes, nice sounds and intentions of the ignorant who pretend to be wise.

There are those who set themselves up as shepherds over Israel but that flock is not protected by them. There are those who are the goats, not sheep (of Matthew 25v31-33) who are to be the rejected nations, not individuals, after Christ is enthroned in glory. These goat nations are punished at this point by God in His anger. He will not unconditionally forgive everyone tearing up all His previous dictates on how He will treat those who are content in sin.

The opposite is present here in this context. The house of Judah, the southern two tribes, the residue of Israel in political and religious capacity left in the land during the time of the prophet Zechariah after the return from Babylonish exile;

they are to become God's goodly horse in battle. A nation equipped for future warfare under the command and generalship of Christ. No strong human army even on superior "*horses*", will be able to stand against this host, they will be battle hardened at Armageddon and as a battle-bow they will be launched upon the adversary (or "*satan*", as the word is in Hebrew) to carry all before them.

The mighty and the oppressors all come forth from the LORD just as certainly as the nail and corner did. The nail speaks of the dependable security of a fastened support, see Isaiah 22v23. The corner speaks of the foundational point from which the rest of the building receives alignment as well as support, see Isaiah 28v16. Both are indicative of the Lord Jesus Christ who emanates from the Father Himself who begat His Son in accordance with His good pleasure and purpose. Just as the Son is the head of mankind so God is the head of Christ, 1 Corinthians 11v3. AS their head Christ will lead the oppressors into battle and empower the mighty with his purpose and the spirit which he first received from the Father. They shall tread down their enemies in the streets of battle, suggesting an element of urban warfare within the bastions of humanity in their resistance to the display of absolute power which Christ will wield but which of course will be to no avail.

God promises to hear them. He will open His ears to the prayerful cry of the penitent, particularly those of His people Israel in both their southern, Judah and northern, Ephraim, elements upon whom He will extend mercy. Ephraim has a future as he has children promised to him at this time of latter rain. Mercy will be extended as He will act towards them as though He had not cast them off, which at the time of Zechariah He most assuredly had done. In far away countries they will remember and they will return. Sown among the people in the diaspora, which has been their lot for over two thousand five hundred years, they will at last go back in service to their God.

This future restoration is to be from both Egypt and Assyria, both from the south and from the north, something which throughout history has never happened like it has started to happen now, but which will not be finalised until after the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. "*Place shall not be found for them*" because they will be so many. Gilead, the land east of Jordan, and Lebanon a separate country to the north of Israel will be required to be incorporated into greater Israel in order to make room for the new arrivals which the call of the Eonian gospel will bring back to the promised land. Today neither of these areas is included under the area of

Jewish jurisdiction. The contended west bank and Gaza themselves will not be sufficient to house the new influx of returning Israelites. Many millions still remain, particularly in the American continent which has yet to send the majority of their Jews back to Israel as some other countries already have in this modern era. As God did before; the waters of the Red Sea and the river Jordan were miraculously held back to allow the passing over of the Israelites on dry land. This Mosaic and Joshua-like exodus will be a phenomenon to behold in the coming future, but those like ourselves who are responsible to the judgment seat will be able to see this for themselves not as mortal witnesses like Rahab, but as immortal assistances in the coming drama.

The great empires of Egypt and Assyria will pass away. The King of the North and the King of the South will both be absorbed into Christ's empire when he shall rule as King of Kings over all countries of the globe. No rival sceptre will be permitted in opposition to the rule of Christ. The pride of other peoples will be turned to humility in the face of the manifestation of divine power which the Son will be able to exhibit having received such from the Father. Both these powers will be incorporated into the true religion of the Bible and not just be absorbed politically. *"And I will strengthen them in the LORD; and they shall walk up and down in His name"*. Even the great historic enemies of Israel will be transformed by the unleashing of this rain from heaven, and no one will be able to gainsay that it was the God of Israel which has not only promised to do this, now extant for some, 2,500 years, but has also now enabled it to be done, so that at last it will be said "It is finished" all that the prophets have spoken of this glorious future. Will we be there to see it?

A Voice from the Altar

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