



# PREPARING TO STAND

#8 — July, 2008

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“In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord.” SW 3-21-05

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## Pray for the Latter Rain

by Ellen White

(Quoted from *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* page 506-512)

“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.” “He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain.” In the East the former rain falls at the sowing time. It is necessary in order that the seed may germinate. Under the influence of the fertilizing showers, the tender shoot springs up. The latter rain, falling near the close of the season, ripens the grain and prepares it for the sickle. The Lord employs these operations of nature to represent the work of the Holy Spirit. As the dew and the rain are given first to cause the seed to germinate, and then to ripen the harvest, so the Holy Spirit is given to carry forward, from one stage to another, the process of spiritual growth. 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.

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.

There is to be “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” There must be a constant development of Christian virtue, a constant advancement in Christian experience. This we should seek with intensity of desire, that we may adorn the doctrine of Christ our Saviour.

Many have in a great measure failed to receive the former rain. They have not obtained all the benefits that God has thus provided for them. They expect that the lack will be supplied by the latter rain. When the richest abundance of grace shall be bestowed, they intend to open their hearts to receive it. They are making a terrible mistake. The work that God has begun in the human heart in giving His light and knowledge must be continually going forward. Every individual must realize his own necessity. The heart must be emptied of every defilement and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer

and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now. Then the human agent had only to ask for the blessing, and wait for the Lord to perfect the work concerning him. It is God who began the work, and He will finish His work, making man complete in Jesus Christ. But 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.

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. Yet these alone will not suffice. While we cherish the blessing of the early rain, we must not, on the other hand, lose sight of the fact that without the latter rain, to fill out the ears and ripen the grain, the harvest will not be ready for the sickle, and the labor of the sower will have been in vain. Divine grace is needed at the beginning, divine grace at every step of advance, and divine grace alone can complete the work. There is no place for us to rest in a careless attitude. We must never forget the warnings of Christ, "Watch unto prayer," "Watch, . . . and pray always." A connection with the divine agency every moment is essential to our progress. We may have had a measure of the Spirit of God, but by prayer and faith we are continually to seek more of the Spirit. It will never do to cease our efforts. 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.

"Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain." Do not rest satisfied that in the ordinary course of the season, rain will fall. Ask for it. The growth and perfection of the seed rests not with the husbandman. God alone can ripen the harvest. But man's co-operation is required. God's work for us demands the action of our mind, the exercise of our faith. We must seek His favors with the whole heart if the showers of grace are to come to us. We should improve every opportunity of placing ourselves in the channel of blessing. Christ has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst." The convocations of the church, as in camp meetings, the assemblies of the home church, and all occasions where there is personal labor for souls, are God's appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain.

But let none think that in attending these gatherings, their duty is done. A mere attendance upon all the meetings that are held will not in itself bring a blessing to the soul. It is not an immutable law that all who attend general gatherings or local meetings shall receive large supplies from heaven. The circumstances may seem to be favorable for a rich outpouring of the showers of grace. But God Himself must command the rain to fall. Therefore we should not be remiss in supplication. We are not to trust to the ordinary working or providence. We must pray that God will unseal the fountain of the water of life. And we must ourselves receive of the living water. Let us, with contrite hearts, pray most earnestly that now, in the time of the latter rain, the

showers of grace may fall upon us. At every meeting we attend our prayers should ascend, that at this very time God will impart warmth and moisture to our souls. 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. If we pray for the blessing in faith, we shall receive it as God has promised.

The continued communication of the Holy Spirit to the church is represented by the prophet Zechariah under another figure, which contains a wonderful lesson of encouragement for us. The prophet says: "The angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, and said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: and two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? . . . Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. . . . And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? . . . Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

From the two olive trees, the golden oil was emptied through golden pipes into the bowl of the candlestick and thence into the golden lamps that gave light to the sanctuary. So from the holy ones that stand in God's presence, His Spirit is imparted to human instrumentalities that are consecrated to His service. The mission of the two anointed ones is to communicate light and power to God's people. It is to receive blessing for us that they stand in God's presence. As the olive trees empty themselves into the golden pipes, so the heavenly messengers seek to communicate all that they receive from God. The whole heavenly treasure awaits our demand and reception; and as we receive the blessing, we in our turn are to impart it. Thus it is that the holy lamps are fed, and the church becomes a light bearer in the world.

This is the work that the Lord would have every soul prepared to do at this time, when the four angels are holding the four winds, that they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. There is no time now for self-pleasing. The lamps of the soul must be trimmed. They must be supplied with the oil of grace. Every precaution must be taken to prevent spiritual declension, lest the great day of the Lord overtake us as a thief in the night. Every witness for God is now to work intelligently in the lines which God has appointed. We should daily obtain a deep and living experience in the work of perfecting Christian character. We should daily receive the holy oil, that we may impart to others. All may be light bearers to the world if they will. We are to sink self out of sight in Jesus. We are to receive the word of the Lord in counsel and instruction, and gladly communicate it. There is now need of much prayer. Christ commands, "Pray without ceasing;" that is, keep the mind uplifted to God, the source of all power and efficiency.

We may have long followed the narrow path, but it is not safe to take this as proof that we shall follow it to the end. If we have walked with God in fellowship of the

Spirit, it is because we have sought Him daily by faith. From the two olive trees the golden oil flowing through the golden pipes has been communicated to us. But those who do not cultivate the spirit and habit of prayer cannot expect to receive the golden oil of goodness, patience, long-suffering, gentleness, love.

Everyone is to keep himself separate from the world, which is full of iniquity. We are not to walk with God for a time, and then part from His company and walk in the sparks of our own kindling. There must be a firm continuance, a perseverance in acts of faith. We are to praise God; to show forth His glory in a righteous character. No one of us will gain the victory without persevering, untiring effort, proportionate to the value of the object which we seek, even eternal life.

The dispensation in which we are now living is to be, to those that ask, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Ask for His blessing. It is time we were more intense in our devotion. To us is committed the arduous, but happy, glorious work of revealing Christ to those who are in darkness. We are called to proclaim the special truths for this time. For all this the outpouring of the Spirit is essential. We should pray for it. The Lord expects us to ask Him. We have not been wholehearted in this work.

What can I say to my brethren in the name of the Lord? What proportion of our efforts has been made in accordance with the light the Lord has been pleased to give? We cannot depend upon form or external machinery. What we need is the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit of God. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Pray without ceasing, and watch by working in accordance with your prayers. As you pray, believe, trust in God. It is the time of the latter rain, when the Lord will give largely of His Spirit. Be fervent in prayer, and watch in the Spirit.

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Notice that *all* that was available to the disciples under the "early rain" is still available to us now. And, unless we have already received the "early rain," the "latter rain" will not do us any good—we won't even recognize it when the "latter rain" is poured out! We *must* prepare our hearts to receive the Holy Spirit and ask for it. Our, "heart must be emptied of every defilement and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit."

Remember also, receiving the Holy Spirit isn't a one-time experience, "by prayer and faith we are *continually* to seek more of the Spirit." And, "we should improve every opportunity of placing ourselves in the channel of blessing." But, it is not enough to just attend spiritual gatherings, we must pray, asking to be filled with the Spirit. (See also Eph 5:18.)

Notice also the comment, "We may have long followed the narrow path, but it is not safe to take this as proof that we shall follow it to the end." Let us continually abide in Jesus, enduring to the end, so we may "stand in the great day of the Lord." —J.B.

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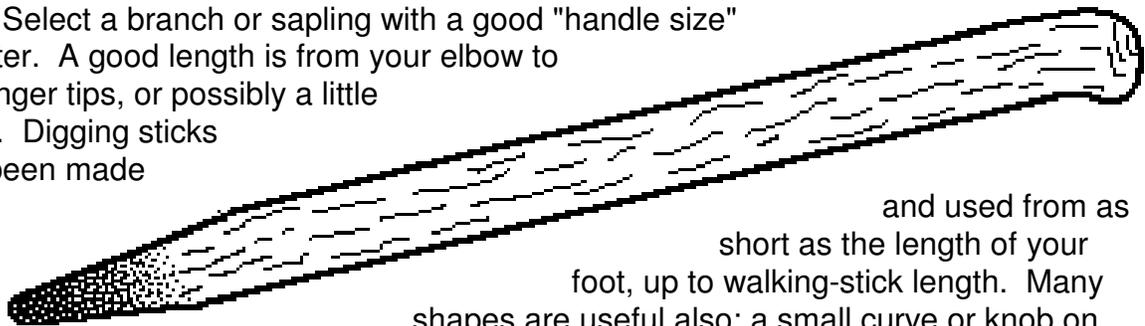
## The Digging Stick

Digging Sticks, also known as throwing sticks, rabbit sticks and gathering sticks, are very useful tools for primitive wilderness living. Different peoples around the world have used these sticks for thousands of years. The Australian Aborigine's boomerang is a specialized type of throwing stick. And our letters P and C evolved from symbols representing throwing sticks in the Mediterranean area. They can be used for digging edible roots, digging fire pits, and "cat holes," for leveling shelter areas, and as a mallet, club or pry-bar. Thrown overhand or side-arm with a flick of the wrist, it can bring down small game. Because they are so useful, a digging stick is one of the first things you would want to make in a wilderness survival situation.

Most sticks that are found laying on the ground do not make good digging sticks. By the time a branch dies, get rotten enough to fall off the tree, and then lays on the ground for who knows how long, it is probably too rotten to be strong enough for the things you will want to use it for —though some of these sticks off the ground can be thrown successfully. The best digging sticks are made from green, or recently killed, wood. In choosing your stick, it is important that you have the attitude of a caretaker, rather than being a careless taker. Do not take a sapling growing off by itself even though it may have the best shape —keep looking, you will find something else that will work just as good. Cut a sapling or branch from an area that is crowded, and needs to be pruned out anyway. A tree or branch that has recently been blown down, or killed some other way, is an even better choice.

Most types of trees will make serviceable digging sticks. Softer woods are easy to work with, but wear out more quickly. Harder woods will yield a very durable tool, but are much harder to carve. Unless you have a good knife, and are skilled at using it, a soft or medium hard wood, such as willow, birch, and some of the maples, would be a good choice.

Select a branch or sapling with a good "handle size" diameter. A good length is from your elbow to your finger tips, or possibly a little longer. Digging sticks have been made



and used from as short as the length of your foot, up to walking-stick length. Many shapes are useful also: a small curve or knob on the larger end, boomerang shaped, or simply straight.

Peel off the bark and smooth any rough spots so your hand can slide smoothly over the entire stick. Carve a rounded blunt point, or a chisel-like point, on the narrow end, and round off the thicker end. Fire-harden the pointed end by slowly "roasting" it over a bed of coals until it turns a golden brown. Take your time so the heat can penetrate the wood, but be careful not to let it burn. Fire-hardening causes the cells in the wood to shrink tightly together and makes the point tougher so it will last longer.