

IS THE LATTER RAIN FALLING?

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A brief study about the timing of the Latter Rain from the perspective of Ellen G. White

INTRODUCTION

There are many sincere Adventist lay members, preachers, and even theologians today that are saying that the latter rain is falling. Some make the claim that it began in or around the year 1888. Others will claim that it did not begin then, but has recently begun. They will typically claim evidences for this such as, many conversions or baptisms in some country or locality. It seems that nearly everyone has different ideas on this subject. This study is designed to take a brief look at this subject from the perspective of Ellen White's writings.

The following is a statement often used by some to state that the latter rain began to fall in or around 1888:

"Let us, with contrite hearts, pray most earnestly that **now, in the time of the latter rain**, the showers of spiritual grace **may** fall upon us....**It is the time of the latter rain**, when the Lord will give largely of His Holy Spirit." Testimonies to Ministers, p 509, 512 (Review and Herald March 2, 1897).

Ellen White made the statements "now, in the time of the latter rain" and "It is the time of the latter rain." It's important to note that she never stated that the latter rain was falling, only that it was "now" the time for the latter rain! On more careful examination of this statement you notice the statement, "the showers of spiritual grace **MAY** fall upon us." This is evidence alone that this statement is being misinterpreted. This is a conditional statement. The qualifying word is, "may." It is also important to note here that she did NOT state that showers of spiritual grace were NOW falling upon us!

Zechariah 10:1 states, "Ask the LORD for rain in the time of the latter rain. The LORD will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, Grass in the field for everyone." It can be noted that Ellen White was most likely getting her words and phrasing directly from this Bible text. What is also important to note with this Bible text is the instruction that "in the time of the latter rain" we are to "ask the Lord for rain". These two sources are expressing parallel thoughts. It is also important to remember that asking and receiving often happen at very different times. Just because we asked of the Lord for rain in or around 1888, and even the message of Righteousness by Faith began to sound which is technically a part of the loud cry does not mean that the latter rain was poured out at that time. In point of fact Deut. 11:16-17, 1 Kings 8:35, 2 Chron. 6:26-27, 2 Chron. 7:13-14, Isa. 5:6, Jer. 3:3, and Zech. 14:17 all threaten "no rain" for various stated reasons, primarily disobedience or disregard for God's law. It stands to reason that the quantity of texts that mention this problem would have a bearing near

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the end of time. If the latter rain began to fall in 1888 or shortly thereafter then none of these texts would have any bearing on final events.

There is always a danger in placing private interpretation upon individual Bible verses, or in this case EGW statements. Private interpretation has often led to fanatical movements. Adventists have always been known for basing their beliefs solidly on the weight of the evidence and not individual verses or statements. This is truly the only safe way to study the Bible or EGW's writings. In point of fact Ellen White states, "All should decide from the weight of evidence." {RH, September 16, 1873 par. 10} Having made this statement isn't it only right to study this question in the same manner?

In this study, we have attempted to produce a balanced, systematic approach to this often asked question. Is the Latter Rain falling?

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Statements from Ellen G. White on the Timing of the Latter Rain

Latter Rain was yet future on March 18, 1852

"The latter rain **is coming** on those that are **pure** -- all **then** will receive it as formerly." {SpM 3.1} (Copy of Three Early Visions, March 18, 1852)

Latter Rain was yet future in 1887:

"**When the way is prepared for the Spirit of God, the blessing will come.** Satan can no more hinder a shower of blessing from descending upon God's people than he can close the windows of heaven that rain cannot come upon the earth." -1SM 124 (1887). {LDE 188.2}

Latter Rain was yet future in 1888:

"[REV. 18:1, 2, 4.] **This scripture points forward to a time **when** the announcement of the fall of Babylon, as made by the second angel [REV 14:8] of Revelation 14, **is to be repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the various organizations that constitute Babylon, since that message was first given, in the summer of 1844.**"** {GC88 603.2}

"The Lord has permitted the enemy of truth to make **a determined effort against the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.** He designs by **this means to awaken a decided interest in that question which is a test for the last days. **This will open the way for the third angel's message to be proclaimed with power.**"** {1888 902.4}

Latter Rain was yet future in 1890:

"Then thousands in the eleventh hour will see and acknowledge the truth. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed" (Amos 9:13). **These conversions to truth will be made with a rapidity that will surprise the church, and God's name alone will be glorified.**" -Letter 43, 1890, p. 5. (To Brother Olsen, December 15, 1890.) {1MR 179.1}

Latter Rain was yet future in 1892:

"**It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. **Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.**"** -5T 214 (1882). {LDE 192.3}

"The latter rain will come, and the blessing of God will fill every soul that is **purified from every defilement.** It is our work **today** to yield our souls to Christ, that we may be fitted for the time of refreshing from

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the presence of the Lord--fitted for the baptism of the Holy Spirit." -1SM 191 (1892). {LDE 193.1}

Latter Rain was yet future in 1896:

"There is a world lying in wickedness, in deception and delusion, in the very shadow of death,--asleep, asleep. Who are feeling travail of soul to awaken them? What voice can reach them? **My mind was carried to the future, when the signal will be given.** "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." But some will have delayed to obtain the oil for replenishing their lamps, and too late they will find that character, which is represented by the oil, is not transferable." {RH, February 11, 1896 par. 6}

Latter Rain was yet future in 1896:

"The great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole earth with His glory, will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it means to be laborers together with God. When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God." --ChS 253 (1896). {LDE 193.3}

Latter Rain was yet future in 1897: (This statement is from the same year as the statement listed above from TM 509 that has been misapplied by some to say that the latter rain is now falling.)

"(Isa. 61:11.) Not to Wait for Latter Rain.--We must not wait for the latter rain. **It is coming** upon all who will recognize and appropriate the dew and showers of grace that fall upon us. **When we gather up the fragments of light, when we appreciate the sure mercies of God, who loves to have us trust Him, then every promise will be fulfilled.** [Isa. 61:11 quoted.] The whole earth is **to be filled** with the glory of God." (Letter 151, 1897). {7BC 984.5}

Latter Rain was yet future on March 2, 1897:

"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. ... 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

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rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it." {RH, March 2, 1897 par. 4}

Latter Rain was yet future in 1898:

"A similar work will be accomplished **when that other angel, represented in Revelation 18, gives his message. The first, second, and third angels' messages will need to be repeated.** The call will be given to the church, ... [Rev. 18:2-5]." {16MR 270.1} (1898)

Latter Rain was yet future in 1899: (The time for the Latter Rain came years prior to this statement according to EGW, but because we were not prepared it had still not been given.)

"Brethren, we have little time in which to work. Certainly we need to stop complaining about each other, and lay our whole hearts open before God, that we may receive the Holy Spirit. **Years ago the time came for the Holy Spirit to descend in a special manner upon God's earnest, self-sacrificing workers.** The Lord will greatly bless His tried and chosen ones if they will cooperate with Him. When the Holy Spirit came down in the day of Pentecost, it was like a rushing, mighty wind. It was given in no stinted measure; for it filled all the place where the disciples were sitting. **So will it be given to us when our hearts are prepared to receive it.** Ms 2, 1899, p. 1. ("The Need for Greater Consecration," January 24, 1899.) {1MR 175.4}

Latter Rain was yet future in 1899:

"I know that a work must be done for the people, **or many will not be prepared to receive the light of the angel sent down from heaven to lighten the whole earth with his glory.**" Letter 24, 1889, p. 4. (To the General Conference, circa 1889.) {1MR 175.3}

Latter Rain was yet future in 1899: (This statement was not released by the White Estate until 1950)

"**When** the Third Angel's Message shall go forth with a loud voice, the whole earth shall be lightened with His glory, the Holy Spirit is poured out upon His people. The revenue of glory has been accumulating for this closing work of the Third Angel's Message. The prayers that have been ascending for the fulfillment of the promise, the descent of the Holy Spirit, not one has been lost. Each prayer has been accumulating, **ready to overflow and pour forth** a healing flood of heavenly influence and accumulated light all over the world." Letter 96a **1899**, p. 2. (To Sister Henry, **July 19, 1899**.) White Estate Washington, D. C. **August 30, 1950** {1MR 180.2}

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Latter Rain was yet future in 1899:

"When Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened (obviously Rev. 18) **concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath**, then whoever shall transgress the command of God to obey a precept which has no higher authority than that of Rome, will thereby honor popery above God. He is paying homage to Rome, and to the power which enforces the institution ordained by Rome. **He is worshipping the beast and his image.**" {LDE 226.1} {GC 449.1} (The loud cry is against "worship of the beast and his **image.**") (Ev 234, 235 1899)

Latter Rain was yet future on October 9, 1903:

"The prophecies in the eighteenth of Revelation will soon be fulfilled. During the proclamation of the third angel's message, "another angel" is to "come down from heaven, having great power" and the earth is to be "lightened with His glory." The Spirit of the Lord will so graciously and universally bless consecrated human instrumentalities, that men, women, and children will open their lips in praise and testimony, filling the earth with the knowledge of God and with His unsurpassed glory, as the waters cover the sea." {2MR 21.3} --Ms 122, 1903, pp. 1-4. ("The Time of the End," Oct. 9, 1903.)

Latter Rain was yet future on October 13, 1904: (almost identical to the statement above)

"We see before us a special work to be done. We are now to pray as never before for the Holy Spirit's guidance. Let us seek the Lord with the whole heart, that we may find him. We have received the light of the three angels' messages; and we need now to come decidedly to the front, and take our position on the side of truth." {RH, October 13, 1904 par. 1}

...

"The prophecies in the eighteenth of Revelation will soon be fulfilled. During the proclamation of the third angel's message, "another angel" is to "come down from heaven, having great power," and the earth is to be "lighted with his glory." The Spirit of the Lord will so graciously bless consecrated human instrumentalities that men, women, and children will open their lips in praise and thanksgiving, filling the earth with the knowledge of God, and with his unsurpassed glory, as the waters cover the sea. {RH, October 13, 1904 par. 3}

Latter Rain was yet future on October 20, 1904: (repeated from statement above but notice even more future tense emphasis is added)

"We see before us a special work to be done in the time when the whole earth shall be filled with the light and the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. The prophecies in the eighteenth of Revelation

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will soon be fulfilled. During the proclamation of the third angel's message, "another angel" is to "come down from heaven, having great power;" and the earth is to be "lightened with the glory." The Spirit of the Lord will so graciously and universally bless consecrated human instrumentalities, that men, women, and children will open their lips in praise and testimony, filling the earth with the knowledge of God, and with his unsurpassed glory, as the waters cover the sea." {RH, October 20, 1904 par. 2}

Latter Rain was yet future in 1904:

"Let Christians put away all dissension and give themselves to God for the saving of the lost. Let them ask in faith for the promised blessing, and it will come."--8T 21 (1904). {LDE

Latter Rain was yet future in 1909:

"When the reproach of indolence and slothfulness shall have been wiped away from the church, the Spirit of the Lord will be graciously manifested. Divine power will be revealed. The church will see the providential working of the Lord of hosts."--9T 46 (1909). {LDE 193.4}

Latter Rain was yet future in 1911: (Surely if the latter rain began to fall between the 1888 printing of the Great Controversy and the 1911 printing (as some state) then Ellen White would have taken note of this amazing fact that lightens the whole earth with it's glory in the 1911 printing of the GC. **THE FACT IS SHE REVIEWED AND AUTHORIZED THE 1911 PRINTING OF THE GC AND NOT ONLY NEVER MADE SUCH A STATEMENT BUT REITERATED THE FACT THAT THE LATTER RAIN WAS YET FUTURE.**)

"[REV. 18:1, 2, 4.] This scripture points forward to a time when the announcement of the fall of Babylon, as made by the second angel [REV 14:8] of Revelation 14, is to be repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the various organizations that constitute Babylon, since that message was first given, in the summer of 1844." {GC 603.2}

"Of Babylon, at the time brought to view in this prophecy, it is declared, "Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." [REV. 18:5.] {GC 604.1}

Latter Rain was yet future in 1911:

"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

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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." {AA 55.1} (1911 see note below from White Estate about the book, Acts of the Apostles)

"THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES WAS ONE OF THE LAST BOOKS WRITTEN BY ELLEN G. WHITE. IT WAS PUBLISHED A FEW YEARS BEFORE HER DEATH. IT IS ONE OF THE MOST ILLUMINATING VOLUMES THAT CAME FROM HER PROLIFIC PEN. THE AVERAGE READER WILL FIND IN IT LIGHT FOR CHRISTIAN WITNESSING. THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK IS UP TO DATE, AND ITS RELEVANCY IS REFLECTED IN THE EFFORT OF THE AUTHOR TO SHOW THAT THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WILL WITNESS A BESTOWAL OF SPIRITUAL POWER EXCEEDING THAT OF PENTECOST. THE WORK OF THE GOSPEL IS NOT TO CLOSE WITH A LESSER DISPLAY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S POWER THAN MARKED ITS BEGINNING. THAT THE READER MIGHT PARTICIPATE IN THIS RE-ENACTMENT OF THE GLORIOUS SCENES OF THE EARLY CHURCH AND AT THE SAME TIME BE PRESERVED FROM THE SUBTLE COUNTERFEITS OF THE ENEMY OF SOULS IS THE PRAYER AND EARNEST WISH OF --THE PUBLISHERS."

Latter Rain was yet future in 1911:

The work of apostasy has not yet reached its culmination and will not reach this condition until, 1) Satan works with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 2) and the union of the church with the world (Sunday Law enforcement.) (1911)

"The message of the second angel did not reach its complete fulfillment in 1844. The churches then experienced a *moral fall*, in consequence of their refusal of the light of the advent message; **but that fall was not complete. As they have continued to reject the special truths for this time they have fallen lower and lower. Not yet, however, can it be said that "Babylon is fallen... because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." She has not yet made all nations do this.** The spirit of **world conforming and indifference to the testing truths for our time** exists and has been gaining ground in churches of the Protestant faith in all the countries of Christendom; and these churches **are included in the solemn and terrible denunciation of the second angel. But the work of apostasy has not yet reached its culmination.**" {GC 389.2}

"The Bible declares that **before the coming of the Lord, Satan will work** "with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness;" and **they that "received not the love**

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of the truth, that they might be saved," will be left to receive "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11. Not until this condition shall be reached, and the union of the church with the world shall be fully accomplished throughout Christendom, will the fall of Babylon be complete. The change is a progressive one, and the perfect fulfillment of Revelation 14:8 is yet future. {GC 389.3}

"Revelation 18 points to the time when, as the result of rejecting the threefold warning of Revelation 14:6-12, the church will have fully reached the condition foretold by the second angel, and the people of God still in Babylon will be called upon to separate from her communion. This message is the last that will ever be given to the world; and it will accomplish its work. When those that "believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:12), shall be left to receive strong delusion and to believe a lie, then the light of truth will shine upon all whose hearts are open to receive it, and all the children of the Lord that remain in Babylon will heed the call: "Come out of her, My people" (Revelation 18:4)." {GC 390.2}

Latter Rain was yet future in 1911:

"But unless the members of God's church today have a living connection with the Source of all spiritual growth, they will not be ready for the time of reaping. Unless they keep their lamps trimmed and burning, they will fail of receiving added grace in times of special need." - {AA 55.2}

Latter Rain was yet future in 1913:

"But the time to receive the mark of the beast, as designated in prophecy, has not yet come. The testing time has not yet come. There are true Christians in every church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion. None are condemned until they have had the light and have seen the obligation of the fourth commandment. But when the decree shall go forth enforcing the counterfeit Sabbath, and when the loud cry of the third angel shall warn men against the worship of the beast and his image, the line will be clearly drawn between the false and the true. Then those who still continue in transgression will receive the mark of the beast in their foreheads or in their hands." {BTS, February 1, 1913 par. 5}

A Caution Against Time-Setting Expressions

"The times and seasons God has put in His own power. And why has not God given us this knowledge?-- Because we would not make a right use of it if He did. A condition of things would result from this knowledge among our people that would greatly retard the work of God in preparing a people to stand in the great day that is to come. We are not

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to be engrossed with speculations in regard to the times and the seasons which God has not revealed. Jesus has told His disciples to "watch," but not for definite time. His followers are to be in the position of those who are listening for the orders of their Captain; they are to watch, wait, pray, and work, as they approach the time for the coming of the Lord; but no one will be able to predict just when that time will come; for "of that day and hour knoweth no man." You will not be able to say that He will come in one, two, or five years, neither are you to put off His coming by stating that it may not be for ten or twenty years. . . . **We are not to know the definite time either for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit or for the coming of Christ.** ... Why has not God given us this knowledge?--Because we would not make a right use of it if He did. A condition of things would result from this knowledge among our people that would greatly retard the work of God in preparing a people to stand in the great day that is to come. **We are not to live upon time excitement.** . . ." --Review and Herald, March 22, 1892. {Ev 221.1} {LDE 33.1}

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CONCLUSION

This study makes it evident that Ellen G. White not only never stated that the latter rain was falling, but that in every statement she made she continued to look forward to this great event throughout her life. There has not been an event since 1844 “**with ten times the power**” of the “**midnight cry**” {SpM 4.3} to this date. However, that being said, we believe that this mighty manifestation of God’s spirit and power will yet be displayed in his people somewhere during the “little time of trouble” and that many of the principles and examples from the book of Acts will yet be repeated but on a worldwide scale. We look forward to this great event and continue to pray for it.

If this study has helped you in your spiritual walk, please contact us and let us know. <http://www.SealingTime.com/contact>

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