

The Holy Spirit in the Last Days



SABBATH—JUNE 17

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Joel 2:28, 29; John 1:9; Acts 2:14-24; Acts 3:19, 20; James 5:7; Revelation 14:6-16; Revelation 18:1-5.

MEMORY VERSE: “You will hear your Teacher’s [the Holy Spirit’s] voice behind you. You will hear it whether you turn to the right or the left. It will say, ‘Here is the path I want you to take. So walk on it’ ” (Isaiah 30:21, NIV).

THE EARLY DISCIPLES PRAYED AND CONFESSED¹ THEIR SINS. They made themselves holy before God. By doing so, they prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.² We must do the same. Then God will finish His work. His work is to make us complete in Christ. If we prepare ourselves to receive the Holy Spirit, we will be preparing ourselves for the last days.

This week, we will focus on the Holy Spirit in the last days. We will study what the Holy Spirit will do in order to prepare us to spread the gospel and to stand true in the last days.

Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, June 24.

¹ confessed—admitted their sins to God and to one another.

² Pentecost—when the disciples received the Holy Spirit after Jesus went back to heaven. After they received the Holy Spirit, they could preach in languages they had never studied (Acts 2:1-4).

SUNDAY—JUNE 18**THE SPIRIT IN THE LAST DAYS
(Joel 2:28, 29).**

What message do Joel 2:28, 29 and Acts 2:14-24 have for us today? How have we seen Joel 2:28, 29 fulfilled?

Joel's words are some of the most exciting words in the Bible. His words point to a time when the Holy Spirit will be poured out again just as it was at Pentecost. This outpouring does not just happen. It is part of God's purpose to bring people to a saving knowledge of Jesus. Peter makes this very clear in his Pentecost speech. After quoting Joel 2:28, 29, Peter begins preaching about Jesus (Acts 2:22-24).

Joel 2:28 says that God will pour out His Spirit upon "all people" (NIRV). This does not mean all people will surrender humbly to receive the Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit, God is able to make every person feel guilty of sin (John 1:9). But sadly, not everyone will accept Jesus. The good news is that all who do accept Him will have the promise of eternal³ life.

What proof do you see of the Holy Spirit's influence upon those who are not Christians? What can we do to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to help these people see Jesus in a fuller light?

MONDAY—JUNE 19**PENTECOST AND THE LAST DAYS (Joel 2:23-32).**

Joel 2:28, 29 speaks of a great outpouring of God's Spirit upon His people. Young men see visions. Old men dream dreams, and sons and daughters make prophecies. Joel even sets the time for this experience. The sun will become dark. The moon will become the color of blood. Terrible happenings on earth are described as "blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke" (Joel 2:30). All this is to happen before "the great and the terrible day of the Lord" (Joel 2:31).

Peter and other early Christians saw Christ's first coming as the last days (1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 1:2; Hebrews 9:26; 1 Peter 1:20). Peter said that Joel's prophecy pointed to the Pentecost experience (Acts 2:16-21). Peter said the gift of prophecy in Joel 2:28 was the gift of tongues the disciples received from the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Peter quotes Joel 2:23, and then Peter talks about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. What symbols did Joel use for the Holy Spirit in Joel 2:23-32?

Joel's prophecy about the prophetic gift is symbolized by the early and later rains (Joel 2:23-32). The refreshing, life-giving fall rains made the

³eternal—forever; without beginning or end; lasting forever.

seed grow. These fall rains were the early rain. The spring rain made the grain ripe and ready for harvest. The spring rains were the latter rain. The early and latter rains are symbols of the spiritual refreshing God gives to His people through His Holy Spirit (Hosea 6:3). Peter believed he was living in the last days and experiencing the early rain. But latter rain is to come upon God's people at the end of earth's history.

What are we to understand by the meaning of the “latter rain”?

“Near the close of earth's history, God promises a special outpouring of spiritual grace to prepare the church for Jesus' return. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit is symbolized by the latter rain.”—Adapted from *The Acts of the Apostles*,⁴ p. 55.



What is your own experience with the “early rain”? Why is it so important to receive the early rain before the latter rain comes? What does it mean “to receive” either the early or the latter rain? What changes do you need to make to be ready for the latter rain?

TUESDAY—JUNE 20

THE LATTER RAIN (James 5:7).

Based on what we have studied so far, how do you understand James 5:7? What does this verse show us about our need to depend completely on the Holy Spirit for spiritual power?

The prophet Joel used rain as a symbol for the Holy Spirit. The words “rain,” “early rain,” and “latter rain” referred to the farming seasons in Bible countries. The early rain fell in the seventh month, just after the Feast of Tabernacles. This is almost the same as our September/October. For the Israelites, it was the season for plowing the fields and planting the barley and wheat. The latter rain fell just before the barley and wheat were harvested. The harvest was in March and April. The latter rain helped the barley and wheat to ripen for the harvest.

So, Bible writers used the words

⁴apostles—God's disciples who preached the gospel after Jesus returned to heaven. The word *apostles* means “people who are sent out.” The apostles were sent out into the world to tell others about Jesus.

“rain,” “early rain,” and “latter rain” to symbolize great times of spiritual refreshing after the gospel had been preached. The point is that both the early and latter rains are needed for the harvest to be reaped.

How do the following verses help us understand the meaning of rain in describing our mission as a church? Matthew 9:37, 38; Matthew 13:24-30; Revelation 14:14, 15).

The purpose of the spiritual “latter rain” is almost the same as the natural latter rain. The natural latter rain prepared grain for harvest. What a powerful symbol for the work the Holy Spirit is to do among His people! His people are to preach the gospel to the world. “While we enjoy the blessing of the early rain, we must not forget the latter rain. Without the latter rain to ripen the grain, the harvest will not be ready for reaping. And the work of the sower will have been for nothing. God’s grace is needed at the beginning (the early rain) of His work. And only His grace can finish (the latter rain) the work.”—Adapted from *The Faith I Live By*, p. 334.

WEDNESDAY—JUNE 21

**“MAKING EVERYTHING NEW”
(Acts 3:19, 20, NIV).**

Read Acts 3:19, 20. Notice how

closely Peter connects repentance⁵ and conversion⁶ with the “making everything new.” What happens in our hearts is connected with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We must never forget how real this connection is between heaven and earth.

What three great last-day events⁷ is Peter talking about in Acts 3:19, 20?

With the Holy Spirit’s leading, Peter is talking about the powerful outpouring of God’s Spirit and the final cleansing of the sins of God’s people. These two events are tied to a third event—Christ’s second coming.



God wipes away our sins. He will make everything new.

Read Revelation 14:6-16. Why do

⁵ repentance—to be sorry for your sins and, with the Holy Spirit’s help, to want to stop sinning.

⁶ conversion—accepting Jesus as your Savior and changing how you live because you became a Christian. Conversion happens only with the Holy Spirit’s help.

⁷ events—things that happen.

we know these three angels give their message just before the Second Coming? How do these verses prove a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

All through Revelation 14:6-16, we see proof of the Holy Spirit working through His people. He prepares them to preach the “everlasting⁸ gospel” (Revelation 14:6) to the world. The Holy Spirit warns people against worshipping “the beast” (Revelation 14:9). He also prepares people to “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12).

As you look at the church today, why is it so clear that we will need an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to do the work? Why is it so clear that you need it too?

THURSDAY—JUNE 22

**“WITH A MIGHTY VOICE”
(Revelation 18:1-5, NlrV).**

We saw at Pentecost a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit. That was the early rain. We also believe that in the last days we will see an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will be more powerful than the first. The world needs to know the truth about Jesus through the three angels of Revelation 14. The world needs to know about the false doctrines⁹ of

Babylon that lead to the mark of the beast. Only Seventh-day Adventists are preaching the three angels’ messages. However, we cannot preach these messages without a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. So, we believe that in the end of earth’s history the Holy Spirit will give gifts to the church in a wonderful way. That will be the latter rain.



God’s church calls all people to come out of Babylon and find salvation in Jesus.

What will be the results of the latter rain outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church? Revelation 18:1-5.

The “mighty voice” of the angels

⁸ everlasting—lasting forever; eternal; without beginning or end.

⁹ doctrines—church beliefs.

goes everywhere. This voice is a symbol of God's church calling all His people from Babylon. "Babylon" is the false religious and political system of the world that is working with the antichrist¹⁰ against God's true church. The mighty voice calls all of God's people in Babylon to escape the last plagues (Revelation 15) and to find shelter in Jesus. In the last battle between Christ's followers and the beast's followers, Christ will be glorified through the latter-rain power of the Holy Spirit (Revelation 18:1).

In the very last days, the work of the Cross will be completed. All the dead in Christ will rise. They and Christ's followers who were alive when He returned will be taken to heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17). All this will be the most powerful work of the Holy Spirit. He will work on the hearts of those called to preach the three angels' messages. He will work on the hearts of those who hear and accept these messages. These people will stand with us against the forces of Babylon. Finally, they will stand with us on the sea of glass in heaven (Revelation 15:1-5).

What a gift God has given us in the Holy Spirit!

Write a prayer thanking God for the Holy Spirit. Also, ask that the Holy Spirit will prepare your heart for the closing days of earth's history.

¹⁰ antichrist—someone who is against Christ.

¹¹ mercies—acts of kindness we do not deserve.

FRIDAY—JUNE 23

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Ellen G. White, *Education*, pp. 35–38; *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 238–243; *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 578, 593–595; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, pp. 21–23; *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 64–68, 506–509.

"We must not wait for the latter rain. It is coming upon all who will recognize and make use of the dew and showers of grace that fall upon us. When we gather up the pieces of light (understanding) and enjoy the sure mercies¹¹ of God, every promise will be fulfilled."—Adapted from Ellen G. White Comments, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 984.

"The holy gatherings of the church in camp meetings, in home church meetings, and in all soul-winning events are God's chosen opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain."—Adapted from *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 508.



God can give us the Holy Spirit when we gather together.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. As a class, talk about world events that are pointing to last-day events. What do we see that points to the very end events? What things can you do to help your local church understand the times we are living in? What should we do to prepare for the latter rain?
2. As a class, think about the Holy Spirit's work. Of all the Holy Spirit's gifts and of all the work He does for the church, what is the one thing you believe your local church needs the most? Why?
3. What did you learn from this quarter's study on the Holy Spirit that has influenced your life the most? What have you learned that shows your need for personal change? If the study did not cover some things you wished to study, plan to continue studying those areas on your own.

Jesus is still the answer!

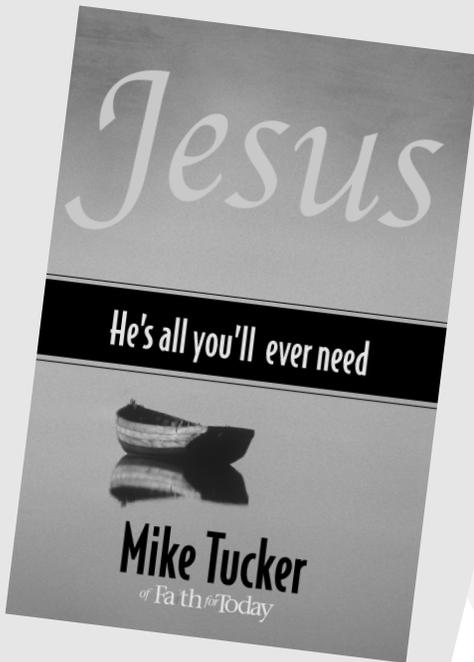
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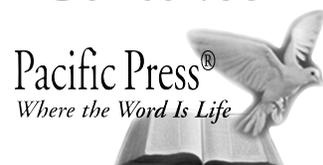
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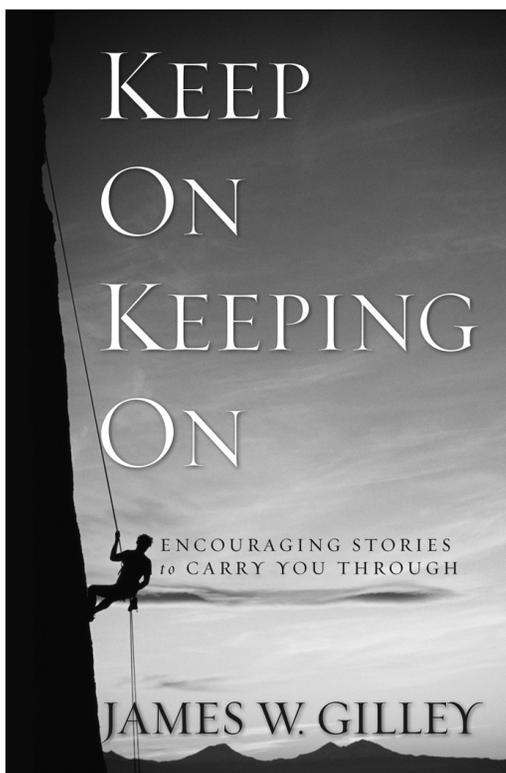


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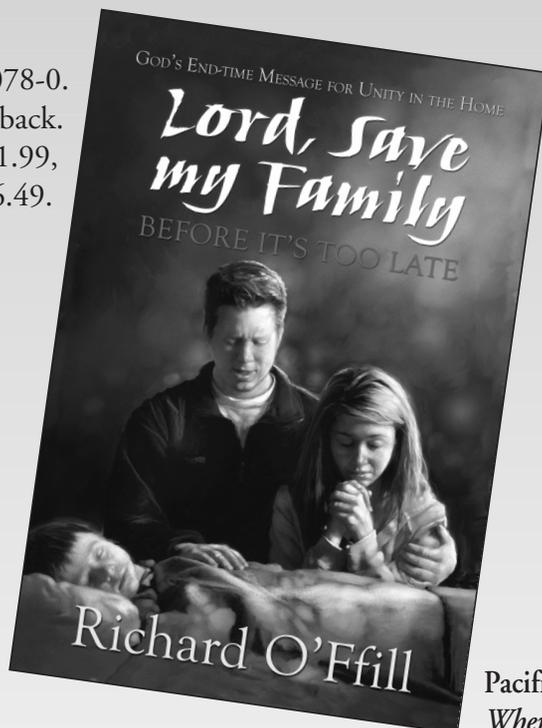


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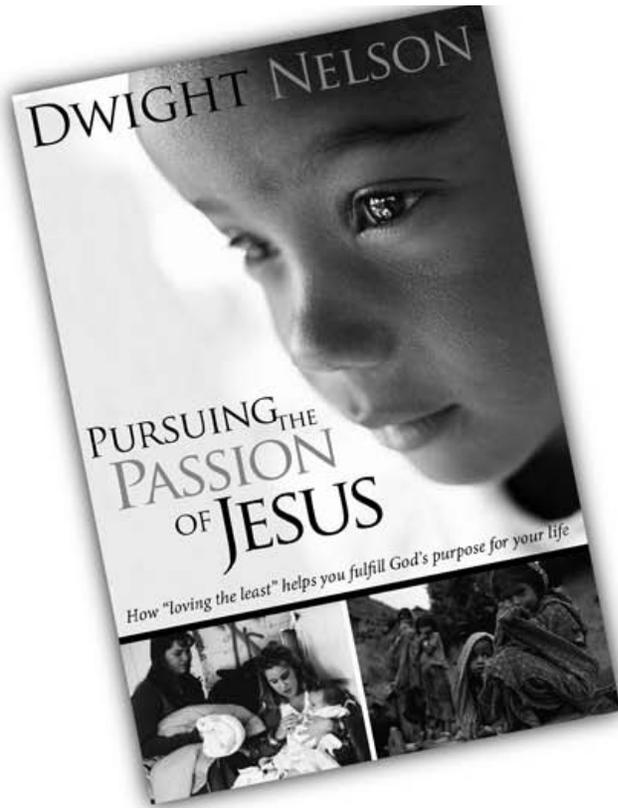
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