

He Shall Come to Us as the Rain

By Michael Clark and George Davis

How many times have we heard a brother or sister in Christ refer to the former and latter rains as past and future events--a happening or occurrence--something that did take place or that will take place in the last day? As something that happened at Pentecost almost 2000 years ago or that is needed to bring the ultimate and final surges of growth just preceding the final harvest?

"Come and let us return to Jehovah. For He has torn, and He will heal us; He has stricken, and He will bind us up. After two days He will bring us to life; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. Then we shall know, if we follow on to know Jehovah. His going out is prepared as the morning; and He shall come to us as the rain, as the latter and former rain to the earth." (Hosea 6:1-3 MKJV)

Have you ever noticed or caught yourself thinking of the scriptures and the workings of God as something that DID happen, that must be measured up to, or that is GOING TO happen, either dreaded or hoped for? Or along the same pattern of thought, we place events or happenings that have to do with the kingdom of God in some far away land, but not in our immediate lives. We seem to go through a mental gymnastics as we read the Bible that assures us that the buck will never stop here.

The more I (Michael) search my heart and motives and ask for the Lord to shine His marvelous light on me, the more I find verses in the scriptures I have done this with. Of course our modern Bible teachers impregnate us with this form of thinking, with doctrines of dispensationalism and teachings that make us look for the building of physical temples in Jerusalem so that the scriptures can be fulfilled. All the while the New Testament and the teachings of Jesus point to a kingdom that is within and now and a temple that is made of living stones. Could this be a kind of avoidance we get into so we do not have to deal with the life changing demands of His kingdom? The longer I live, the more I see just how "desperately wicked and deceitful" our hearts really are. Pray that the Lord might open your eyes to see Jesus as He IS. The God we serve calls Himself the I AM, not the I Was or the I Will Be, and He is always present at all times and in all places in His creation.

I (George) am almost ashamed to admit that it was just recently that the meaning of these words "He shall come to us as the rain, as the latter and former rain to the earth" broke fully upon me! The latter rain is not a happening, an event, a something. It is not a movement, a future outpouring, or a revival, at least not as we have traditionally known revival. He will come as the rain! He will come AS the latter and former rain. *He is the event!* It is a deception of religion to view truth as fractured pieces of knowledge, as though it were something completely apart from God. For instance, to us "getting saved" is an "it," a feel-good "experience," accompanied by goose bumps. Getting blessed is the chief and desired goal rather the consequence or byproduct of abiding union with Christ. We view eternal life as a qualitative state of being rather than the experiential and intimate relationship with God. (See John 17:3)

"Christ has been made unto us redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:29f). There is no redemption apart from Him. We are not saved by giving mere mental credence to a formulated "doctrine of salvation" but by believing in Him (clinging to and relying upon Him as our only life) who Himself is redemption. He shall come to us as the rain. He is life! As John reported his first-hand observations of the Son, "In Him was life and the life was the light of men." We tend to turn it all around seeking Jesus as knowledge, "light," and in finding that light we think we will have "life." The more things change, the more they remain the same. Jesus had this same problem with the religious Jews 2000 years ago when He warned them, "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life."

The Church today largely wants the blessing, the benefits, the salvation, and the identity without the hassle of having Him. In Isaiah chapter four verses one and two, the prophet says, "Seven women (seven lamp stands) shall take hold of one man, saying, 'We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel; Only let us be called by your name, To take away our reproach.'" What a vivid picture this is of the current church, which in effect says, "Give us salvation, give us the blessing, give us wealth, give us eternal life, take away our reproach, give us your name, let us be called 'Christians'--Christ ones. We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel. We will trust in our own righteousness, we will rely on our own doctrines, just give us your name--your blessing! That is enough! We desire no more than this. We seek your name, not you! Only your name." If you love anyone because he/she is wealthy, you love only his or her gold! Have we become a cult of gold diggers, a bride that only

wants the blessing and gives feigned love and support just to get the perks, while her heart belongs to another?

We give Him allegiance so that we can have His treasures, all the while not appreciating the fact that He is that Pearl of Great Price that we are to sell all and give all to purchase. He is the true treasure! You have always heard this parable taught, as if YOU are the treasure, haven't you? Can't you see the self-centeredness of our backward thinking and backslidden hearts? He will come as the rain! He will come as the blessing. He is the bread of life! He is the living water! He is that eternal life.

Hudson Taylor, the famed missionary to inland China of the mid-1800s, prayed for years that He would know the power of Jesus, that he would receive the power to be a witness of Christ to the Chinese people. It troubled him that every day was filled with effort and toil as he did his overwhelming missions work in that backward nation. There were orphans to feed, sick to be tended to, the gospel to preach, and it sorely taxed him to the bone. What made it worse was when he read the words of Jesus, "[Take my yoke upon you, for my burden is easy and my yoke is light.](#)"

One day as he was meditating on Jesus' words in John, chapter fifteen in his time of prayer, the lights came on! He read, "[I am the vine and you are the branches. . .abide in me. . .the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine. . .for without me you can do nothing.](#)" Taylor said in that moment he saw it, "Jesus is the Vine, Jesus is the branches, Jesus is the fruit of the branches!" It is all about Jesus and not about us! From that time on, Hudson would get up early in the morning and pray and worship until well into the day, practicing his abiding in the Spirit. He actually spent less time doing the work of the mission, and more time with the Lord in prayer, but strangely enough, more was getting done than before. And on top of that, he was rested at the end of the day instead of being wrung out. God had shown him the importance of Jesus doing the work by constantly abiding in Him. It is all about Jesus, not us.

In his book, "Abide in Christ," Andrew Murray points out how a branch is grafted into the vine. First the vine or stalk is wounded and a slit is made in its bark and opened up. Then the branch is wounded, cut off from its old life source. Finally the branch or "slip" is inserted into the vine, and they are bound together as one until the stalk accepts the branch and they become one without the help of the bindings.



This is so pregnant with meaning! Can you see it? First Jesus had to be wounded for us. The soldiers opened up His side. Then we have to be wounded, cut off from the old world and our old life source of the flesh. Finally, we are grafted in to the True Vine, the ever living source of life. The slip does not start to bear fruit until it has found its life

in the True Vine. Do you understand why you have been so wounded in the world and why your life has been so hard since you decided to give your life to Christ? You are being made ready for His wonderful engrafting so that you might find Him and Him alone as your only source of life. The day is coming when each of us will be so engrafted with Him and His life that no one will be able to see where Jesus leaves off and we begin. Then Jesus' priestly prayer will be answered:

"I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. . .For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. "Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. . .But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. . .And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. . .that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

"And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17:6-26, NKJV).

One! Not "What Would Jesus Do?" But, "Look at what Jesus is doing!" Not imagining what we should do in each circumstance by remembering what we read about Him in the Bible, but abiding in the Doer and seeing Him manifest Himself through us! "Father, that they all may be one as You are in Me and I (abide) in You; that they might be one (abide) in Us." No guess work here on how to imitate Jesus. No! God will not settle for any cheap imitations of His Son! Only Jesus in us will satisfy Him.

Have you ever wondered how the all-present and all-knowing God could say, "I never knew you"? The people He speaks these words to did miracles, cast out demons and performed many wonderful works in His name. How could God not know them? They did not abide in Him and He was not their intimate fountain of life. They thought to themselves, "Now, what would Jesus do?" and went out and did it. Remember the seven sons of Sceva in the Book of Acts? They were casting out demons in His name, too, but not by the same life-source that Paul and Jesus knew. The demons knew it too, and they said, "Jesus we know and Paul we know, but who are you?" According to Jesus, "Apart from me you can do nothing."

Another area where we have our thinking backward and are carnally minded is this thing about "putting on the whole armor of God." Whose armor is it? Is it ours or God's? The text says it belongs to Him! How can we put on His armor if He is wearing it? The answer is simple. Again it is all about Jesus. We must first put on Christ if we are to be able to wear the armor with which He is cloaked. Paul knew this! Did he not say, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:26-27 NKJV)?

When you look at all the division and denominationalism it seems that some who have been baptized were not baptized into Christ! Many, in fact, have not put on Christ. We "put each other on," wanting to have His name without being clothed in Him. No wonder our armor is so lacking against the wiles of the enemy and there is so much division in the church.

Can you see how we of modern church-thinking fall so short of the glory of the abiding Christ? We are always placing the kingdom in another time or another place. We run from sea to sea seeking Him and His manifestation, when all along He warned, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst." (Luke 17:20-21). The King and the kingdom are within you! Don't let the enemy and his side-shows steal what is yours in abiding in Christ.

Here is another manifestation of this "elsewhere" and "another time" way of thinking:

So they (the people of Nazareth) were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house." Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. (Matthew 13:57,58, NKJV).

Why is it that a man is practically unheard of in his own home town, but if he travels a few hundred miles he has credibility? Why is it that when God raises up a prophet among us, we say, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" Maybe we know that the man from out of town will not be staying, and that we can fake being Christian for a short time until he leaves. Maybe we figure that he will not be around long enough to see who we REALLY are outside of Christ, whereas the local prophet knows us all too well and is a living accusation of where we fall short. It is safer to leave him in his cave, unacknowledged by all.

Remember Paul the apostle's words? ". . .according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:20,21, NASB). For me to live IS Christ. The death of my life essence is gain. The way we modern Christians think

reminds me of a country and western song with a lyric that goes, "Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die."

Many want His name, want to be thought of as "good Christians," but do not want to walk the way of the cross, giving up their own lives to have the life of Jesus and "the fellowship of His sufferings." They do not want to be rejected by the world and the worldly church. The cost is too much. Walking with God can be dangerous to our worldly lives. Remember Enoch?

When Philip asked Jesus to show him the Father, what was Jesus' reply? "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father." Jesus also said to His disciples, "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord."

Look back to the passage from Hosea we opened with:

After two days He will bring us to life; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. (Hosea 6:2 MKJV).

Why does He say here that we will live in His sight? Shouldn't that be a foregone conclusion? The Lord is saying more here than that we will be "going to heaven." Jesus said, "I do the works I see my Father doing." Jesus had a special spiritual sight. He walked in that sight. He dwelt in that sight. He had the sight of the Father and so it was easy for Him to see as God sees and do as God does. The promise is for us as well. The day is upon us that we shall dwell in His sight. The kingdom is in our midst. Lord, do for us what you did for the servant of the prophet. Open our eyes so we can see what You are doing and believe on You and your power as our only life flow. Amen.