

Last week we considered the great and precious promises and their ability to minister divine life to us. We also considered the promise of resurrection to every believer. Job spoke of this hope in *Job 19:25-26* when he said “*For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: [26] And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.*”

Although his hope spoke of those who will sleep in Christ, Christ said that if any man lives and believes in Him, he will never die. Death is both physical and spiritual. God is able to preserve a person till they see the coming of Christ, an example is Anna in *Luke 2*. However, we must be willing to count our lives as nothing for the excellency of gaining Christ.

The First Fruits.

The first fruits is an indication that there will be more fruits to be harvested. Israel manifested great faith to give the first fruits of the land to God, believing for a bigger harvest. In *Deuteronomy 18:1-4*, we will see that Levi was chosen as an inheritance of God, having no inheritance among their brethren, they were to eat the first fruits.

Deuteronomy 18:3-4

And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep; and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw. The firstfruit also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him.

When the Lord comes to harvest His first fruit, He looks for the first fruit of the corn, wine and oil. While the firstfruit of the fleece of the sheep is also important, we are considering the earth, since we are Jehovah's land. Our identity to the earth is what gives us the right to reign on the earth and so it is not by mistake that we are born to the tribe we are in, physically speaking.

Israel was an agricultural nation, however, the land was not located near rivers and so any irrigation they would have at that time would depend on the rain. *Deuteronomy 11:13-14* shows that the outpouring of the rain is necessary for the gathering of the corn, oil and the wine. However, this rain pouring is contingent on them harkening diligently to the Lord's command. This obedience to the Lord is inspired by love.

What is the rain of the Lord?

The first rain that fell in Israel was called the Yoreh. It fell in the fall, right after the hot and dry summer. The rain came in the form of soft showers to prepare the ground for planting. This early rain is the teaching rain. It is gotten from a root word which means to shoot and to teach, like a person bending an arrow and shooting targeted words. The latter rain, Malqosh, is a heavier rain. It comes to bring the Spring harvest. This heavy rain falling on the dry ground can cause flooding, so it comes after the early rain.

The Spring harvest falls at the same time as the feast of first fruits and the feast of Pentecost. This is the time of harvest of grains in Israel. We can therefore say that the early rain brings justice or clarity of the Lord's counsel and the latter rain launches us to greater life and ministry. This rain comes to us in the medium of the Word of God and His Spirit. As we engage in these, we spring up as willows by water courses; walking in patience and the Spirit of counsel as we enjoy the overflowing waters of God's goodness to us, His people. Each time we fellowship with the Lord, it is the rain coming to us and this rain can convert the little herbs (those who are little in spiritual things), causing their tender herbs to spring forth. *James 5:7-8* therefore admonishes us to be as husband men waiting for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting for the rain of the Lord. *Hosea 6:1-2* likens the coming of the Lord to the rain.

THE CORN, WINE AND OIL

It is important to note that corn during the time of Israel was not maize as we know it. Corn simply meant grain. There were two kinds of corn in Israel, the barley and the wheat. *Psalms 78:24* said God gave them the corn of heaven, speaking of manna, which was like bread. The barley and the wheat were both planted at the same time, but the barley matured first, *Exodus 9:30-32*, around April, while the wheat matured in mid May. This barley harvest was the feast of first fruits and 50 days after, the full harvest (wheat and barley) came which celebrated the Pentecost, *Exodus 34:33*. This means, the barley harvest speak prophetically of the first fruit Christ, while the wheat harvest speak of the those who are Christs at His coming as seen in *1 Corinthians 15:23* (consider the previous meditation for more explanation). The grape harvest comes much later and this speak of the unjust who would be trodden in the great wine press of the Lord, *Revelations 14:19-20*.

Jesus was raised about 50 days before the Pentecost. Also, we see prophetically of our redemption, Ruth coming in the time of the barley harvest and working till the end of the wheat harvest. Boaz also gave her 6 measures of Barley, speaking symbolically of men (the number 6) who would be harvested in the first fruit season. John also, speaking of Jesus said He would come to gather the wheat, *Matthew 3:11-12*. However, Jesus mentioned that the wheat is gathered by the reapers. We see a parable of the wheat and the tares in *Matthew 13:24-25*. Men slept and the enemy sowed tares. However, this is among the wheat

class of believers. The barley class, the first fruits, are harvested first and do not sleep. These are the angels (the messengers) who would be used to harvest the wheat at the end of the age.

Having understood this in generality, how does the corn, oil and wine apply in our lives individually?

THE CORN: This is the increase and the fruit of a detailed investment of God's word in an individual. It is the fruit that comes with labouring in God's word and afflicting your soul for the sake of the cross. This corn was ground to fine flour to bake bread. It was also used in the meal offering in *Leviticus 23:12-13* (for more insight, please see the bible study on the feasts). God is looking for the first fruits of the corn. Paul encourages that they who labour should labour in hope. *Hosea 2:21-23* shows the end result of this hope filled labour. The Lord will hear the request of the heavens, responding for the cry for rain. The heavens will hear the earth which will hear the corn, wine and oil and it will eventually hear Jezreel. Jezreel speaks of spiritual nothingness. This is an encouragement to continue taking in the word of God, through study and listening to prophetic teachings.

THE OIL: This speaks of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Those who are in union of the Lord will partake and receive of this oil. In *Zechariah 4:3-5*, there were two olive trees with two lamps connected and there was a pipe connected to the olive trees to supply oil to the lamp. The anointing comes as we remain connected to the Lord in fellowship, abiding in the vine. This is not just an anointing for service, but the ability to live as clean devoted spirits unto the Lord. It involves a purging from any defilement. It also speaks of the graces that rest on the believer; the Wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

THE WINE: This is the revelation of God's Word. Revelation is very necessary and comes when there is an investment in the Word of God. We see this shown prophetically in the miracle at Canaan of Galilee. Here, Jesus instructed the servants to fill clay pots with water and when it was full, this water turns to wine. We are the clay pots to be filled with the Word of the Lord and the Lord Himself, turns this water to wine. There is no time frame to this, what matters is the obedience to fill ourselves up with the Word of God. This wine is served for the edification of the saints and not for showmanship. The revelation of God's word helps in our transformation. Every revelation received is a journey until it is worked into the receiver. However, there is a temptation to share a revelation and water other people's vineyard, while the receiver's remains uncatered because of a lack of diligence to the revealed word. We need to be slower to speak and allow the Word of God work in us, so that we would preach words that we have lived.

In the Old covenant, God harvested His first fruit through the high priests. In this new covenant, He will harvest His first fruit through our high priest, Jesus. *Romans 11:16* says if the first fruit is holy, the lump is also holy. We who will be the first fruit shall bare the rest of humanity.

In conclusion, *Exodus 23:14* shows that God has commanded that we appear before Him three times in a year. Although there were 7 feasts, three feasts were highlighted: Passover, Pentecost and the feast of tabernacles. Christ our Passover lamb has been slain. However, this is the time we deal with leaven in our lives. We need to search our lives and deal with any malice and wickedness, *1 Corinthians 5:7-8*. The Pentecost has been given to us in a measure in the early rain, during the time of the apostles. However, this will come in a more grandiose manner. The emphasis on this age is not necessarily evangelism, even though we have been commanded to preach the gospel. The emphasis is that God finds a body of people who will perform the greater ministry to men in the age to come, the millennial reign of Christ. Each man must watch over His soul that he will be counted worthy to partake of the first resurrection. At the Passover, we received Christ. At the feast of unleavened bread, we purge ourselves of leaven. The Pentecost is what gives us the ability to make the first fruits. Although leaven is dealt with in the unleavened bread, we see leaven again in Pentecost, however, this is not impure leaven. This leaven is seen in *Matthew 16:11-12*, where it is able to greatly multiply an effort. We see this at work on the day of Pentecost, where 120 disciples multiplied to 3000 in a matter of hours and then 5000 in a matter of days. This power will be unleashed even much more as we approach the end of the age.

After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. [3] Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

Hosea 6:2-3 KJV

The Grace of the Lord be with your Spirit. Amen.