

## CHAPTER 10

# TABERNACLES - THE FEAST OF INGATHERING

“And the Feast of Ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labors out of the field” (Ex. 23:16).

If the Passover is wonderful - and it certainly is — how much more wonderful shall we expect Pentecost to be in its fulness? And if Pentecost is wonderful, how much more shall we expect Tabernacles to exceed it in glory? In the Passover we have but the Sheaf of Firstfruits by way of harvest, and not the harvest itself. But Pentecost was the harvest. And what a tremendous harvest there was! And so now the Feast of Ingathering must far surpass Pentecost, even as Pentecost surpassed the harvest of the Sheaf of Firstfruits.

### A GREAT ECLIPSE

The Cross and Pentecost — this was but the dawning of the great Day of the Church. That Day has already extended some nineteen hundred years and more, and the sun rises higher and higher and higher in the heavens of God’s eternal purpose. We are not inferring that the glory of the Sun continued to grow more brilliant as it rose in the sky. It should have done so, but through the disobedience of the reapers the sun was darkened, and the moon (even the Church) did not give her light. The history of the Church is a history of darkness and sorrow and bitterness. What happened? Did the Sun of Righteousness set in the heavens? And was the Church swallowed up in defeat? Ah no! It was not the setting of the Sun, but it was a great eclipse that caused the darkness, even the eclipse of the Dark Ages.

First there was the eclipse of the moon, the Church. In her circuit about the heavens she was caught in the shadow of the earth, and the corruption of the earth transformed her beautiful glow into blood and sorrow. And then there was the eclipse of the Sun. The apostate Church in her circuit obscured the glory of the Sun, so that earth-dwellers witnessed the eclipse of Truth himself. Truth perished from the earth; and joy withered away from the sons of men. Hence the Dark Ages! A few godly saints were left, for God has always had His believing remnant; and how they must have thought the Sun had set forever upon the once-glorious Church! But no! It was just an eclipse, and in due course—according to Divine pattern, the moon began once again to take on her celestial glow, and the Sun began to shine brilliantly in the heavens of the Church Age. The Reformation had started. Light began to dawn upon the darkened understanding of men, and truth began to be

restored to the Church. And the Reformation has not ended by any means. Indeed, it too seems to have gone into partial eclipse. But rays of promise are again breaking forth from the heavens. “The darkness is passing away, and the true light now shineth” (1 Jn. 2:8, Literal).

“Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?” (Song 6:10). She is the group known as the overcomers. She is the “undefiled,” “the choice one of her that bare her.” As we mentioned before, there are many, many groups in the Church, according to God’s plan and purpose; and we are not attempting to make any particular distinction between them. “There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is but one” (Song 6:9). There is a place for all God’s people in His great House; but shall we not seek after that intimate place of fellowship and communion with Him in the very “secret place of the Most High?” Says Paul, “In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor...” All the saints have a place in God’s Church; but one company receiveth the highest prize. The challenge is therefore thrown out to the saints everywhere, to rid themselves of the corrupting influences of the flesh and of the natural, and to diligently seek the things of the Spirit of God. “If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (2 Tim. 2:20,21).

### **THE CHURCH, THE GARDEN OF GOD**

Jesus testified, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth (pruneth) it, that it may bring forth more fruit” (Jn. 15:1,2). The Church, the Garden of God! Surely this truth alone is sufficient to establish the fact that the Church’s day must end in great fertility and unparalleled prosperity. If we constitute God’s Garden, then nothing shall prevent the great Husbandman from bringing His heritage to abundance and fruition. It is His responsibility to look after it, and to see that it brings forth a harvest for His glory. “For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like **the Garden of the LORD**; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody” (Isa. 51:3).

God always brings light out of darkness, life out of death, joy out of sorrow, strength out of weakness, and fruition out of barrenness. We can rejoice, therefore, as we see the desolation of Zion, knowing that her “desert” shall become like the very Garden

of the Lord. “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing...” (Isa. 35:1,2).

### WINDS OF JUDGMENT AND BLESSING

“A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed...Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices there of may flow out” (Song 4:12,16). Both winds are necessary for God’s Garden: the blighting cold winds of the north to test and try the saints; and the warm breezes from the south, to bring forth the fragrance of the Spirit. We can be thankful, then, that in all the strife and bitterness of the Church’s history, God’s sovereign purposes have been fulfilled. For God has reserved the time of the “south wind” until now. “For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth” (Song 2:11,12).

### THE LATTER RAIN

We are looking forward with anticipation for the coming of the promised “latter rain.” The saints of God are thirsting for these living streams from heaven. But how little do we realize that God is more anxious for the “latter rain” than we are! And why? Because He is the Gardener; and He is waiting for the Feast of Ingathering, when He might gather in the precious produce. “Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he (it) receive the early and latter rain” (Jas. 5:7). God is waiting for the hour when He shall bestow His latter rain, just as anxiously — and even more patiently — than we are. James says, “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto **the coming of the Lord,**” for in a very real sense the coming of the latter rain is the coming of the Lord into the midst of His people. That is exactly what the prophet Hosea declared: “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” (Hos. 6:3). The time is at hand when we may with all confidence expect the latter rain, for this is the last day, and God’s triumphant Church must be a glorious Church. However, it is not only the latter rain for which we are looking, but **the latter and former rain!** What does this mean?

### JOEL’S PROPHECY

Let us refer to Joel’s prophecy concerning the former and the latter rain. This refers to **the seed rain and the harvest rain.** God promised that His people should have both in due season as they walked in His ways: “The first rain and the latter rain, that thou

mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil” (*Deut 11:14*) This is what James was referring to, and it is that which Joel prophesied about:

“Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, **the former rain, and the latter rain** in the first month. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil” (Joel 2:23,24).

Of course, this passage did have a partial fulfillment at Pentecost, inasmuch as Peter declared: **“This is that** which was spoken by the prophet Joel ...,” and we have already pointed out that Pentecost is a harvest of Firstfruits. The fulness of the harvest, however, is the Feast of Ingathering in the seventh month, when the wine and the oil were gathered in. You see, Israel observed two different calendars: they had the Sacred Year which began with the Passover in April, commemorating their departure from the land of Egypt, and their beginning as a redeemed nation. But they also had what has been termed a Civil Year, or an Agricultural Year, which began in October. This, then, was the first month of the Civil Year, but at the same time it was the seventh month of the Sacred Year — the month of the Feast of Tabernacles.

What Joel prophesied then, was this: “Be glad then, ye children, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you **the former rain moderately**, ... “Dispensationally this was Pentecost, when God first poured out His Spirit in copious showers of the former rain. Peter therefore could testify: **“This is that ...”** But it was only part of what Joel had prophesied, for he continued: “And he will cause to come down for you the rain, **the former rain, and the latter rain**, in the first month.” The period from October to April was the rainy season. Then followed the long summer months when no rains were to be expected. The October and early November rains were called **the former or the seed rains** — the rains which prepared the ground for the seed; then the rainy season ended with **the latter rains** of April, or **the harvest rains** — that which caused the grain to ripen; preparatory for the harvest.

Joel’s prophecy, therefore, speaks of Pentecost — but it goes on to embrace the fulness of Pentecost, even the Feast of Tabernacles. God did give the former rain moderately — in the Pentecostal Age extending from the early Church until now. **But here is something very unusual.** Right here in the “first month” of the Agricultural Year (the seventh month of the Sacred year) God has promised to do something most unusual; for He would

give, not only the former rain which belongs to that month, but He would give **the former rain and the latter rain combined!**

Can we not see from this what God has promised His people in this great hour? Not only the fulness of a great and glorious harvest, as in Pentecost. And not only the wonderful harvest of Tabernacles, the Feast of Ingathering. But all the glory and power of the early Church combined with all the glory and power which rightfully belongs to the triumphant Church of the last days! All her former glory combined with all her latter glory! Truly we cannot begin to imagine the great and tremendous things which God hath prepared for them that love Him! “And he will cause to come down for you the rain, **the former rain, and the latter rain, in the first month,**” — Or, “in the beginning of the season.” It is the promise, not only of the early and latter rain in the hour of the Feast of Tabernacles (the “first month” of the Civil Year, but the seventh of the Sacred Year) — but it is also a promise of the great day of harvest. “And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil” (Joel 2:24). The normal procedure is: the early and the latter rain, then the harvest which culminates at Pentecost, then the long summer months of dry weather, and then the final ingathering at the year’s end. And that indeed is the way it has happened dispensationally in the Church: **the former rain** at Pentecost, but only **moderately** — producing only a moderate harvest, and followed by a great period of drought for century upon century. Now the Lord will do a quick work in the earth. This is the focal hour of Church history. Now we shall have not only the great and mighty harvest of the seventh month, the Feast of Ingathering, **but the former and the latter rain combined!** A veritable deluge of rain from the gates of Heaven! No wonder the prophet prophesied, “The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former ...”

### THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

“And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil.” Or, literally, “New wine and oil,” beautiful symbols of the fruit of the Spirit in the saints. Said Paul, “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18). And the oil, as we know, is a symbol of the anointing. “The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you...” (1 Jn. 2:27).

This great ingathering is the harvest for which the husbandman has been waiting ever since the foundation of the Church. Gifts of the Spirit are really no evidence of spiritual attainment: God bestoweth His gifts freely by His grace upon whomsoever He will. But with fruit it is entirely different. Fruit must grow; and God has never intended that the Body of Christ should ever bring forth fruit except through a continual Divine growth in the Spirit

of God. The Ascension gifts that we mentioned are for the purpose of adding growth to God's Garden, that we "may **grow up into Him**" (Eph. 4:15). God will not come to us looking for gifts, but for fruits of the Spirit. He gave us His gifts freely by His grace, and all we had to do was to receive them and use them. What God wants now is **fruit**, because that is **something which He can receive from you**. That is something which must **grow** on you by your patient and continual walk with God and your appropriation of His Spirit. Until now the Husbandman has come into His garden, pruning, cultivating, watering — without expecting anything in return. But now the harvest time is approaching, and soon He shall visit His garden for one purpose and for one purpose only: seeking for fruit, and trusting that His tender care over the vine has produced genuine **fruit of the Spirit**.

Let us never forget that the fruits of the Spirit, and **not the gifts** of the Spirit, constitute the real test of spiritual life; for the latter are given to produce the former, and **it is the fruit that is the embodiment and expression of Christ-likeness** within the heart and soul. That is why Paul exhorted, "**Follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts ...**" (1 Cor. 14:1). Gifts are absolutely necessary, for they are the means to the end; but Love is the end, the consummation, the fruit for which God is waiting. Love is the Ultimate, because "God is Love," and it is His purpose to conform the saints even unto "the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). Love is the End: but it is an End which knows no beginning or ending, for it is God himself; and when we become thoroughly united with Him we are in a realm which is eternally progressive.

O what a grand and glorious day awaits the Church in the Feast of Ingathering! The Day of the fruit of the Spirit! Because we do not have the fruit of the Spirit in any degree of fulness, we cannot appreciate its glory. Before the gifts of the Spirit were restored to the Church we had a faint conception of what they would be like, but what a revelation it is as we see them gradually unfolding before our eyes! So with the fruit of the Spirit. We know what they are: "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22). But we shall never appreciate any measure of their real glory until the fruit of the Spirit becomes visibly manifest in the saints of God.