

# The Promised Revival

By MARK A. FINLEY



**H**ave you ever wondered how God’s work will be finished on this earth? How is it possible for the truth about Jesus and the gospel of His grace to be proclaimed to the ends of the earth so that Jesus can come soon? With the millions who do not know Christ, and many who have never heard the name of Jesus, how will they ever have a reasonable chance to respond to His love and understand His Word? In this lesson we will study how God will accomplish His mission in finishing His work.

**1** **What marvelous promises does Scripture give us about the entire world’s having knowledge of God’s love and His last-day message? Reflect upon these promises as you read Habakkuk 2:14; Matthew 24:14; and Revelation 18:1.**

Although it might seem impossible, God will work powerfully through His people in the last days of earth’s history to complete His mission on earth. According to the apostle Paul, “He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness” (Rom. 9:28).

**2** **Read Joel 2:23, 28, 29; Jeremiah 5:24; Zechariah 10:1. What symbolism did these Old Testament prophets use to describe the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit to empower God’s people to proclaim the gospel to the ends of the earth?**

In Israel’s agricultural cycle the “former rain” fell to germinate the seed, and the “latter rain” fell to bring the seed to harvest. Bible prophets used this familiar symbolism of the latter rain to describe the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit to finish God’s work on earth.

**3** **Read Acts 2:14-18. When did Joel’s prophecy begin to be fulfilled?**

In fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost. Three thousand were

baptized in a single day. Then, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the gospel was preached throughout the Roman Empire, and tens of thousands became Christians. New Testament Christianity moved the world. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts represents the early rain. The gospel seed planted by Jesus germinated; the Christian church was launched. But the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain will be even more glorious.

**4** **Was Joel’s prophecy limited to Pentecost? Read Joel 2:28, 29 again, and compare it with Joel 3:13-16 and Acts 2:18-21. What discovery do you make?**

The language of the prophecy clearly indicates that it has a dual fulfillment. It applies both to Pentecost and the last days. It applies especially to just “before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord” (Joel 2:31).

**5** **How does God picture the completion of the gospel message? What symbol does He use in Revelation 14:14-20?**

The latter rain has done its work; the time for harvest has come. Every person has made their final, irrevocable decision for eternity. The harvest is fully ripe.

**6** **Why has Jesus delayed His coming? What is He waiting for? Read 2 Peter 3:9-13.**

Our Lord carries His return with long-suffering patience, longing for every person on Planet Earth to come to repentance and a knowledge of His love. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain will hasten the proclamation of the gospel so that God’s work on earth can be finished quickly. Should we not then be seeking God with all our hearts for the power of the latter rain? Isn’t this the time to surrender ourselves fully to Him to be used by His Spirit in finishing His work? ■