

It's Beginning to Rain

Iverna Tompkins

As transcribed by Jane Vaughn

Everyone today is wondering about something or other. Whether they know Jesus or not, there are all kinds of questions out there and it's no longer limited to the USA. As you travel throughout the world, you'll find people saying, "What's going on here? What's happening? What's next?" In my whole lifetime, I've never known of a time when those questions have been more prevalent in the minds and often on the lips, of both men and women, young and old. "What is going on?"

We know that time has been speeded up – *whish!* and it's three years later! We understand that the disasters taking place are no longer centralized – it's not happening only in this state or a specific region or particular country. It's not just in the more impoverished third world countries, but it's happening throughout the whole world. And yes, all during our lives we've had "*wars and rumors of wars*" (Mt. 24:6) and disasters – *famines and earthquakes*, tsunamis and floods and hurricanes – all the things Jesus said were going to precede His return. We've had those things happening all through our lives. Is that not true?

But amazingly, not many of them have occurred very close to us in our nation, on our soil. It's much easier to pick up the newspaper and read of these tragic things happening thousands of miles away, across vast oceans and say, "Oh, my! God help those poor people." But it is truly a stirring and personally disastrous thing when it happens just next door. And we are seeing that now... in the path of a string of massive hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico and especially Hurricane Katrina that all but wiped New Orleans off the map in August of this year, 2005.

Can you, and I'm speaking spiritually now, can you just about *feel* the ground shaking under you? I have never seen so many displaced people. So many people *suddenly* feeling and believing they should uproot from here and go to there – and not all related to severe weather tragedies. They're being re-placed and re-located. The ground truly is shaking beneath us, even in the Church, and it could cause a moment of panic if we weren't certain of the things we sing about today! In my day, we sang about the same things but with different words. We used to sing: "On Christ, the solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand." The same message – from so many years ago – is being sung today because that's what we cling to with tenacity. That's what we have as our security – the Rock.

But why is all this happening – now? What are we feeling? Why that *insecurity*, if you will? Why do we find it so difficult when things begin to change? The simplified answer is – we simply don't know the Word! And so we question the strength of our foundations.

I want us to look at Deuteronomy, chapter 32. We recently have experienced the disaster of rain – too much rain. And yet, is that not what the Church has been praying for? Rain? "Oh, Lord! Send rain! My God! Rain upon us!" We pray it. We sing it. We really and truly want it. And God says, "Alright! Get ready!" ☺

Now through the years, we've learned that it's *first in the natural realm – and then in the spiritual*. But when things happen in the natural scene, we're just so surprised by the occurrences we often fail to comprehend the spiritual signals or lessons. We are inept at handling that, and instead of rejoicing and preparing ourselves for what is about to come spiritually, we just panic along with the unbelievers! A sad commentary but, by and large, it's true.

Throughout scripture, rain is spoken of as the blessing of God and that is wonderful. But rain in the Word of God is actually symbolic of both blessing and judgment. If we don't have rain we have *dearth* (lack, shortage, drought, famine, deficiency) and *barrenness* (unfruitfulness, emptiness, bleakness) and even *death*. Things just cannot live without rain. Of course, if we get too much rain we also get – floods. One

of the reasons, spiritually, that we *flood out* is because we do not have enough outlets from our lives – hear it now – to handle the rain that comes in answer to our own (good) prayers. Are you okay? Are you understanding the parallels between the natural and the spiritual?

I get excited when I hear the things in which a local church becomes involved, especially when they are activities in the community. It's like saying to the people: "It isn't just for us, you know... these blessings, the Rain." I know churches that sit in *Rain*, spiritual Rain, up to their eyebrows – every week. They even remind me of Jonah in the whale – when the water kept coming in – and kept coming – and Jonah survived only because the Lord didn't allow any more water to come into the whale.

They sit there in their pews crying: "Give us more!" and the Lord says, "If I did, you'd die! You can't handle anymore!" Too many people, and churches, have come to a place where they know more truth than they possess! We need to think about that statement – to really ponder what it is saying. I love you, Friends, but that's what I believe I hear from the Lord. It's just time to put what we know into everyday practice – regularly. We need to possess it – to walk in the Truth of it.

When we have pastors and leaders who are truly prophetic, we receive the *revelation* of the Word of the Lord long before we discover it in the *written* Word of the Lord. Now, that can be a wonderful thing! It's powerful! It's *Rain*! It just comes to us and waters us. But if we never learn that the Solid Rock is to be discovered by *individuals coming to His Word*, and if we don't understand that every prophetic utterance is to be founded solidly on the Word of God, and in agreement with it's details, we will find ourselves on sinking sand all too soon!

Now, I invited you to a portion of scripture. Let's look at it: Deuteronomy 32, verses 1 through 6. We'll read from the NIV: "*Listen, O heavens, and I will speak. Hear, O earth, and the words of My mouth will speak. Let My teaching fall like rain and My words descend like dew, like showers on new grass the abundant rain on tender plants*" (vss.1 and 2).

What does it mean when it says that the rain will come "*on tender plants*?" Each of us, I think, has done something called gardening, in one form or another. We have flower boxes or tomato plants or something – some experience of taking care of plants. You dig in the dirt, put the little seed in the hole or trench, replace the dirt, pat it down, and say a prayer – praying for rain. ☺ That's particularly important in the desert where I live! ☺

When the Lord says, "Listen, I'm going to speak to the *tender plants*, or to the *new grass*, or the *newly mown grass*," spiritually He is saying: "the newly planted Christians' – I'm going to *teach* them." I don't know how long you've known the Lord, but I assure you if you've known Him for as short as a single week, He wants to teach you! And you will learn from Him if you'll go to His Word – the Bible.

This is the day of revelation and God is teaching some things many of us didn't know for many years. All He wants is for us to – "*Draw nigh to God and He'll draw nigh to you*" (1Jn.4:7). He only wants you to look in The Book!

I have met hundreds of new Christians who've said, "When I try to read the Bible, I just don't understand it." That's when I suggest, "Throw out that version and get another one!" ☺ There are so many good translations these days – easier to understand the language, and fully accurate. Get the New Living Translation. Get the Amplified Bible – if you can't understand that one, go back to kindergarten! ☺ There are many reliable and contemporary translations available that can open up the Word for us. Read those as new Christians and after awhile you'll want to go to some other older translations as well. Then you'll find yourself reading in many of them for comparisons – to get the whole picture of what the Lord is saying.

Because our many versions of the Holy Scriptures are a product of *translation* and not *transliteration*, we find they differ somewhat from one another in some areas of the text, and some actually may be more

accurate in some places than others. Translations are a result of scholars' research – academically sound, yet the work of the human mind and understanding and interpretation.

So, how do we know we have what God actually said? Where is the purity of thought? God says here in Deut.32, “If you will accept the Word as My *rain*, **I** will rain upon it understanding. If you don't even try, if you don't look, if you never read it, I might as well not rain on it because there's no seed!” Are you getting this? You may wish you weren't! ☺ Now you're responsible for that truth! ☺

The Word is the seed (Mk.4:14; Lk.8:11) and it has to be planted in you and in me. We have to come to the Word itself. It isn't, “What does Brother So-and-So think about this passage?” Or, “What does Sister So-and-So say about this verse?” We actually could empty our counseling chambers if we would get everyone into God's Word for themselves – for their own feeding, for their own understanding. For their own *rain*! That's because His mighty Word contains the answers to every question of every individual life. The absolute, specific directives for us come from the Word of God! I promise this is true.

If you don't have a *habit* of reading the Word of God daily, but only carry your Bible to church because it's the holy day, or because someone on the platform might ask, “How many have your Bibles with you today?” and you want to be able to lift yours along with all the others... You see – if you cannot be trusted to do other than simply carry it with you, get a big Bible that's too heavy to carry and leave it open on the table at home – maybe you'll glance at it from time to time! ☺

Some of the versions in translating this particular verse read: “*Let My teaching fall like rain . . . I will let it fall on newly mown grass.*” Now, I'm one of those despised desert dwellers who has a lawn – and I use water on it. ☺ I like the soft green grass and we have a man who comes once a week to mow that grass. There is nothing that excites me more (in the natural) than that day. I actually look forward to Monday afternoons when he has been there mowing the grass. I go outside just to smell the *new mown grass*.

But when I think of this verse from a spiritual perspective, I think, “Oh, my! This must be speaking of *people* that have been mowed down!” Just about the time you get up and think you've got it altogether – you've had a prophetic word and you've seen it in the written Word – and the joy of the Lord is spilling out and you've got a purpose and a plan: “Alright! Now I know what God has ordered for me!” Just about that time – when you've grown enough that you're a healthy green ☺ – something comes along (it might be a hand-pushed mower! ☺) – and mows right over you! ☺ “If you were really a Christian, you'd...” ::errgh!:: Have you ever felt like you've been *mowed down*? That is a horrendous feeling when you are doing the best you know to do and are at the highest level of growth you've ever achieved or obtained or come to and you are suddenly cut off! What is the purpose of that?

I'd like to remind you of Psalm 84. It talks about a man that is. . . Well, I'll just tell you the story – I can tell it so much better than it's written. ☺ The psalmist talks about a man – or a woman – who's making their way through a certain valley – the Valley of Baca. Now that word means “weeping.” The valley was actually named because of the weeping of the many balsam trees in the area, so they, whoever named it, said, “that's the ‘Valley of Weeping.’” But as he or she walked through this valley in our story, they stopped long enough to make or dig a *well*, and then they passed on through the valley.

How do you *make a well*? And why would you make a well – when you're going through a Valley of Weeping? Wells are dug out of the ground. The digging continues deep enough until they hit water. One of the ways we do that is just to cry it out. Hellooo. Have you ever been that *mowed down* that you just couldn't do anything but weep? I have. You just weep and... Come on, men, you do too! – and it just comes out of your being – the weeping.

First, we weep in *self-pity*. ::whine:::wail:::whine::: “Oh my God! I was doing the best I knew to do. Ohhhhh! I was just following Your Word...” Waah! Waah! ☺

And then we weep in despair. We're so woeful and whiny: "I don't know where to go from here and I don't know what to do now. I can get up but if I do – where will I go? It's just hopeless! *I'm* hopeless." ☺ I can just about hear your guilty laughter! ☺ So, there we are in this valley – weeping. We announce, "There's no good thing that'll come from this!" And finally we go on our way but realize, "I have left a well." And the next person to come through that same valley will be *refreshed* by my tears.

Now if that was the only point I wanted to make, we could read about where Paul says, "the reason we're suffering is for you (2Cor.1:4-6). We have to go through these things so we know how to help you go through them later." And I can prove that scripturally, but I'm going to challenge YOU to prove it in the Word! It's in the Word! It's in the Book! You see – I'd like that to become a motto for you – "It's in the Book!" Learn how to study the Book (2Tim.2:15; 2Tim.3:16,17).

You need to know The Book so well you know what's *in the Book*. Then, if a flood should hit us and floated away all the Bibles – so we were left with nothing written, nothing tangible – we still could look at one another and say, "Help me read it!" "*Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not miss the mark.*" (Ps.119:11). And we'd just trade verses and passages to encourage one another, and remember what He said. I'd say, "I remember where Paul said..." and you'd say, "I remember this from John..." And we'd just share the Word back and forth – because there's life in His Word!

The acceptance of the rain when it comes is... Deuteronomy 32, verse 3, (and you thought I forgot where we were! ☺) It's in the ***I will***. "*I will proclaim the name of the Lord. O praise the greatness of God.*" Praise the greatness of our Lord.

Now I'm going to say something that you may not like and I forgive you ahead of time! ☺ It is very easy to *applaud* or clap. Applauding for something does not put me on the line at all. It requires very little effort. So, when someone says, "Let's just praise the Lord!" and we clap – "Yea! Yea God!" ::*clap-clap-clap*:: That's okay, it doesn't take much out of us – besides, applause is such an accepted thing. It's acceptable in our world – applauding at sports events or for famous personalities. But perhaps we need to remember when it is we should applaud. We applaud when someone we esteem as important enters a room – or when someone does something especially good – or afterwards, when they depart or leave the platform. (It's awful when that applause is louder than the former... ☺)

So ::*clap-clap-clap-clap*:: we applaud for the Lord and that is good. But we need to know – is this clapping because He came in visitation and we have just recognized His presence... then what? Well, let's get rid of Him? ::*clap-clap*:: You see, we need to be careful to know what and why we're applauding. When the applause is over, is He here now? So, what will we do next? Think about this: you don't walk up to someone and ::*clap-clap-clap*:: in his (His) face! ☺ There must be another acceptable way to praise the Lord while in His Presence.

So now the demand is on. *Now* it is for you to endeavor to find *appropriate words* that fit your emotions, and words that exemplify or are taken from His Word that can be spoken back to THE Word! "You are altogether lovely! (Sol.5:16). You are the Great I Am! (Ex.3:14). You are Alpha and Omega – the Beginning and the End! (Rev.1:8). You are what You say You are! (Num.23:19; Heb.6:18; Tit.1:2). You are Creator of all! (Isa.40:28; Col.1:16). You are Magnificent! (Ps.24; 145; 150). I exalt You, O God! (Ps.118:28). I love You, Lord!" Now, that's vulnerability – when it comes from the heart!

But it's easier to sing it than say it. "I love You, Lord, and I lift my voice..." That not so hard. It may be hard to listen to some voices ☺ but it's not hard to sing the songs. Yet, it is a whole other thing to have to say it to Someone who, by faith, you first have to believe is there!

A leader could come to the platform and say, "Let's just all say, 'We love you, Iverna.'" And because I visibly stand in front of you, you would say it whether you did or not. ☺ "We – love – you." Or out of respect, you might applaud. But when the opportunity comes for us to accept the *rain* that is falling, we must direct ourselves beyond applause and say or sing to Him, "I love You, Lord!"

Now men, it's harder for you than it is for us. That is just a fact – because you're thinking of "Him" as male. It's embarrassing for many men to address Him – "Sweet Jesus." ☺ "I love **Him!**" That's easy for women – "I love You – Sweet Jesus – Beautiful Savior – You are altogether lovely!" But we **all** have to speak our praises to Him. You must, men, if you have breath (Ps.150:6). You must get beyond that thought of "He is a man!" and see that He is God-man! He is all-together lovely.

Oh, read the Book, my Friends. It's true! All of us are coming to that wonderful wedding we're invited to attend (Rev.19:7ff), but it's the Church – it's people – it's us – who do the separating. *We* make the separations (discriminations?) like gender distinctions: "This is a lesson for women" and "This is a class for men." The Word of the Lord is speaking today saying, "It's raining on all of you!" It's raining on each one of us – the *newly planted* as well as those who have been *mowed down*.

Those who will accept that rain ought to say: "*I proclaim the name of the Lord! He is the Rock – His works are perfect – all His ways are just – a faithful God who does no wrong – upright and just is He*" (Deut.32:3,4). Now, I have to pause right here because we must admit that just is not what every Christian believes this day.

When we look at what has just taken place in the world recently – 2005 USA Gulf Coast Hurricane season, with 4 major hits in about 8 weeks: Dennis, Katrina, Rita, and Wilma – and, what was it? 70,000 or more, many more people were killed in the earthquake in Pakistan? (October 2005). But if we only look at the disaster in our own country (particularly Hurricane Katrina) and see all those people that lost their homes, were displaced, transported, and re-placed in some other geography – and we want to know: "What is this?" I was informed that 40% of them will never go back to New Orleans and rebuild. They will choose to relocate elsewhere.

Do you ever stop to think about these kinds of disasters? "What kind of God would allow that to happen?" You might as well think about it soon because people are going to ask you. "If your God is in charge of the rain and the wind, how come He let that happen to them?" Well, **I** don't have all the answers, but sometimes I make them up. ☺ Or, I try to release my informed imagination – because the bottom-line is – listen now – God is not (here's an antiquated word for you) *beholden* to me, to tell me why He does – *anything!* He expects me to accept whatever happens as ultimately being a good thing – because it came from Him and because I trust *Him* for everything, regardless if I can figure out any "good" results.

Having said that, here's my reasoning about the tragedies in New Orleans in particular: All of these years, these poor people have been living and giving birth in stark poverty in their city, being ignored as though unseen in a part of our world that has so much mixture of religious traditions with witchcraft and voodoo and all those other things. They are just born into that environment. They haven't chosen to leave Christianity to go into that other – they were simply born into the squalor and know nothing else. Hello. Moreover, they are just inches away (maybe a single block) from people like you and me, who have, in comparison, wealth and means, education and – Christ! They have been merely inches away, generation after generation, and yet they are untouched – by the lovely ones. And I can imagine God declaring, "I have to do something to uproot this thing... to change this cycle."

I've preached in New Orleans. I could tell you about a number of churches that have had thousands of real believers there in attendance. And bonafide Revivals were taking place in the area just shortly before the big rains came. A great Revival Meeting, if you will, took place near there just last June and the prophetic word was CLEAR at the time that "a water-cleansing" was going to come to the whole area! Who believed that? Who could possibly have imagined the magnitude of the floods? Well, those who did believe it *spiritualized* it to such an extent so as to say, "Hallelujah! It will cleanse! It will purge out the mixture! We do need a cleansing!"

Here's the problem with that kind of rain. When it rains that heavily – nothing can prevent the overflow. If we could only get hold of this... I know some of you do – *the church within the church* is always right on the cutting edge! You see – if you could really understand this, you'd stop worrying about the devil and the people you live with and those all around you who are bent on their evil ways. If God really moved like these floods did, *no one could stop the flow of God* – no matter how hard they tried! Oh, my Friends, when God really rains upon the Church, there's nothing anyone can build that will stop His flow! It is going to overwhelm us – the believers! It is going to take us over! And that's the Good News!

Here's the bad news: when a flood comes – it goes down into the depths of all our foundations and stirs up *anything* (and everything!) that is there. All those left-over “before Christ” things that never were dealt with and have been hidden and well-concealed begin to rise – putridly – to the surface. And anyone that steps around in all that loses any purification they have had. Are you there? That kind of flood **demand**s a total displacement of the past and a replacement elsewhere. Oh, bless you for reaching to understand this! It may be things we've forgotten were even there... or things we tried to put away, but should have discarded long ago. God's cleansing floods will bring them out of hiding!

I am so sure of this message. I've never preached it before, but I am so certain of this message – that this is exactly where the Church is right now! There are so many *putrid* things in individual lives that have remained hidden there as we've preached above them – as we've talked over them – as we've ignored them. And we gave birth to new people, right in the midst of all that. People who have not yet developed a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit to see it for what it is.

God's been listening to our prayers for rain – and songs for rain – “Rain, rain, rain, Lord. Rain, Lord, rain.” And He's said, “I'm starting to rain.” That's my message to you today – “***It's beginning to rain!***” And Church, we'd better get ready for it! Because it is going to be a deluge! He **is** going to move! The power of His Spirit is going to come – because rain typifies that – in that it is a cleansing of all that old “stuff.” God wants a purity in our worship – and no mixture with the old.

The Holy Spirit, promised long ago, that came in Acts 2, verse 4 – that many of us claim to be filled with when we really have only a drop or two! Hello! Because we're so full of – ahem! ☺ – other things ☺ – and we're still sitting in the Valley of Baca (Re-read part 1). Other things: hurts, or disgruntlements or bitternesses, or unforgiveness, or blah-blah – “I'm at this church because I've tried all the others and...” – and all those “other things” that have never been dealt with – I promise you – you're going to be swimming in them – and SOON! Because the move of the Spirit is starting to rain! Oh, it is! And it isn't just going to be this church or that church or the other church! Even God's people are going to be amazed! It's going to happen everywhere – because God wants to reveal the failure of this section to that section!

What happens when we reject – the move of God? When God does something *abundantly*... (we love that word, but we don't always love the action of it) – when God *overrules* our limitations... Are you there? You see – I want the rain – on the day I choose – in the place I want it – and to the extent and degree for which I think I'm ready – in Jesus' name! (of course! ☺) But it just doesn't happen that way. He says, “Do you want My rain – or not? You've had years without it – you've become very good at preaching about it – you've gotten very good at listening about it...” (and we also lie about it! I'm sorry – I shouldn't say “we” – I should say another word, but I can't think of one. ☺)

We pretend Revival – and we pretend Rain. I've been in some of the driest places that exist (churches) and have heard the leader declare: “Oh! I *feel* God is here! Don't you just *feel* God here?” And I think *whew*: “Not!” Then I'd look around at everybody else. They had their hands up in agreement with his declaration – and so I lied too! ☺ Have you ever been there? Ever done that? What the leader was actually saying is, “Ohhh! I *wish* I felt God!” ☺ “Ohhh! I sure wish God was here! Let's declare Him here! – He's here! He's here! He's here! He is – here!” ☺ Not so funny, actually.

Do you think God is unfair – in some of the things He allows to happen? Look at this – Deuteronomy 32, verse 5: “*They...*” Listen carefully, because He precedes this verse with: “*A faithful God who does no wrong, a God who is upright and just*” (vs.4). Now go on to verse 5: “*They have acted corruptly toward Him to their shame – they’re no longer His children but a warped and crooked generation.*” That’s fairly straightforward and doesn’t need much amplification or explanation, does it? “*O foolish and unwise people, is this the way you repay the Lord? Is He not your Father, your Creator who made you and formed you?*” (vs.6).

Now, if I put that into today’s vernacular, here’s what it would say: “Who do you think you are?! I brought you into this world, and I can take you out!” ☺ He just words it a little differently in the King James. ☺ These are people who deserve to die! They’re not even His children anymore – they’re no longer acting like His children – but mercifully He doesn’t kill them! He just *floods* them. Can you see this?

God says, “First, I have to reveal you to you – and I’ll also reveal you to the others through exposure. And then I’m going to mix things up.” Oh, if you don’t know what I’m saying, you don’t read the newspapers! He has taken different cultures and different generations and different nations and He’s removing some from this place and putting them over here and... Look at our own nation! I don’t even understand people in the airport anymore! I don’t know what they’re saying! They speak a different language! ☺ So, I just follow the crowd! They take off their shoes – Hey! I take off mine. ☺ We have people from all over the world running this place now! Instead of saying, “We need to shut our borders...” Are you kidding? You cannot barricade against God’s move! They’re going to come. The ones you don’t like – they *are* going to come! ☺

“Well, what will we do? What will we do when that happens?” It’s already happening! Here’s what we do: *we recognize our foundations*. Remember the story Jesus told? People that *read* the Word – and *heed* the Word – and *do* the Word – build on the Rock for their foundation (Mt.7:24,25). They don’t have to worry when the storms come! The rains can come; the winds can blow and beat against the house! Do you think you’re the only one that the wind beats against? *∴whine∴*: “Well, I tell you, Pastor. You don’t know what I’ve been through this year!” “Good! I don’t want to!” ☺

I, Iverna, could tell you stories all day long – personal stories – about the wind and the rain beating against my house! If the devil could – he would destroy everything I ever built! But, he can’t! So, he huffs and he puffs... and he threatens. ☺ But I’m not built of straw – and I’m not built on sand (Mt.7:26,27). This building didn’t go up that fast! It has taken my whole lifetime! ☺ First, I found the foundation (Jesus, the Rock) and then the Holy Spirit began to sink my feet in, deeper and deeper: “What do you really believe?” “Oh, God show me Your Word!” “What are you standing on?” “My hope is built on nothing less...” ‘Oh, the blood of Jesus!’ Thank God for His Word! ‘*I will never leave thee nor forsake thee!*’ (Heb.13:5b; Dt.31:6) Thou art My child! ‘*I know My plans that I have for thee! They’re plans for your good!*’” (Jer.29:11).

And I go deeper and deeper and deeper and deeper... into the things of God until there’s not much left of me! I’m so deep in the Rock! Oh, come on, Saints! When the house goes up, it’s as if it’s made of glass bricks. Are you there? You’re safe – but everyone can see in.

“*Fear thou not for I am with thee. I am thy God. I will comfort thee.*” (Isa.41:10; Jer.31:13).

Did you lose your job? And you think you’re the only one? You’ve got a whole lot of company there... After this message, I may lose mine today! ☺ We’ve got new companies coming into our region – maybe you’ll get a new job there. Maybe not – maybe you’ll have to sweep floors. But! – “*Fear thou not.*”

Did you make an investment and lose it? Ha! Join the crowd! ☺ The only thing you may have to thank God for in that is – like me, I had the money to make the investment in the first place! WOW! What a wonderful opportunity I had! ☺

Are you sick? “Well, I hurt all the time. I’m telling you – I just hurt all the time.” You’ve got a body! And it’s moving! Time to rejoice! ☺

You see – we have to learn to *accept the rain!* “*He maketh the rain to fall on – the righteous and the unrighteousness.*” (Mt.5:45; or “the just and the unjust”) Let me tell you what that means – then you’re really going to wish you weren’t reading this message! ☺ It means that when God begins a time of judgment, we are not exempt from it. We also go *through* it – unless there comes a sweeping away of the Church first! You know, the Rapture of the Church – that’s a doctrine I want to believe – “Let’s go first!” That just sounds really good to me! “Get me outta this mess!” ☺ But this scripture indicates that God is saying to us: “You’re going to go through some things yet.”

Now, my personal feeling at this particular moment is “What else?” ☺ “There’s not very much You could frighten me with! I’ve been there! I’ve done that!” ☺ But He always makes us strong enough! Listen! – It’s a two-fold strength – strong enough not only to *endure* His judgment of others – but also strong enough to help them go through it!

When you’re in a difficult moment in your life and someone comes to you and says, “I’ve been exactly where you are, Sis...” you usually listen to them because you want to know how to get through this hard place you’re in at the moment. But if someone comes to you, and it’s obvious by their life that they’ve never had a real problem or a serious sickness or a negative situation, and they offer this counsel to you: “You know, Brother, you just have to trust the Lord...” – that’s when you just want to shoot them! ☺ That’s never happened to me, of course. I got that illustration from the testimonies of others! ☺

So! Get ready, Church! What I’m saying today is, you’re going to be *tried*. You really don’t know how strong you are! I don’t know how strong I am until I have to face a thing. After that victory, *then* I can put up my dukes and say “Bring it on!” ☺ The truth is, I don’t think we’re going to be exempt from some things that are soon going to happen. We’re going to be tried – proven – tested.

The displacement – the replacement – the flooding. This is especially hard (and revealing) when, from one of your “favorites” (idols?) flows – filth! From someone that you have put your trust in, or your faith in, and up comes their “foundations.” Helloooo! God says, “You can’t do that! You have to put your trust in the Lord alone. I’m going to float some “stuff” up and out of them and you’re not going to like what you see.” Now, what will you do with what you feel? If God floats the “puke” out of them (Excuse me, I just don’t know of a more descriptive word to use here ☺), are you going to *reject* them? If so – you’re next in line for the cleansing! “*For with what measure ye measure...*” (Mt.7:2; Mk.4:24; Lk.6:38).

God wants to get us ready for what’s coming. I don’t know exactly or specifically what’s going to come, or even when, but I know that it’s going to come. He wants us to be so strong and so full of love and so full of His grace, His mercy, His Word that when the Lord squeezes out those things, that we really don’t want to see in others, we won’t live in denial but we’ll step up to the plate. *You* step up to the plate and you’re ready to go to bat – *for them!* Come on, Church – “*Let him who is without sin...*” (Jn.8:7).

That is so easy when we’re all sitting in a church and we’ve been cleansed through worship and we’re freshly filled with the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues and prophesying with one another – but – “it” hasn’t happened yet. That “other” hasn’t come out yet. When you begin to see the other “stuff” come forth – then what’s next? There’s a tendency to pick up a stone – and out of our mouths come judgmental words. Oh, that is so dangerous, my Friend. That is so dangerous! Because it demands judgment – from God – of you!

Jesus said the storms came – they hit both houses: the one on the sand, the one on the rock (Mt.7:24ff; Lk.6:47ff). You know which one fell. So, the question is: what are you built on? Is it your church? If you didn’t have your church to attend, would you – as we say in some circles – backslide? By the way,

you can't really *backslide*. That is a condition that doesn't actually exist. What it is really, is that you just run away! You don't slide backwards – you run! You turn your back on the good things and start heading toward the other. It's a deliberate act – just like when you accepted Jesus in salvation! That was a deliberate act of turning your mind away from what was your accustomed way at that time, and saying, "I will accept Jesus."

If your foundation is your church, you're demanding that it float! Otherwise, it can't save you in the flood. You can't trust anyone but Him! I can only trust you – through Him. That's how trust works. My trust in others goes through the One I can trust. And the minute we meet other believers face to face, it *should be ::snap!::* just like that! Unity. We have a common foundation. When Jesus is truly their all – you just know that you know it.

I'll never let you down if you trust me – *through Him* – because if I fail, you can trust Him to Rain. Now, I'm learning that when I feel the first drop of it falling – I say, "I don't know what it is that's going to come up, but I repent!" ☺

Now listen – the Lord says, "*Jacob, my servant, Israel, my chosen one, the Lord who made you and helps you, says this: 'Do not be afraid. Do not fear, for I will give you abundant water to quench your thirst and moisten your parched fields'*" (Isa.44:1-3).

How we have sown! *You* have sown. We've trained – and taught – and counseled. Planted seeds – seeds – and more seeds! We've gone out into the highways and the byways in every way we knew how to compel them to come (Lk.14:23). And young people – you've spoken to other young people and said, "I'm telling you, *this* is the way. This is where joy is! This is where you'll find peace. This is it!" We have sown and sown, but there hasn't been enough *water* to come on the seeds for them to accept it and sprout forth.

Here's the promise: God says, "*Listen, my servants, I have chosen you and the Lord that made you, helps you! Don't be afraid, I'm going to give you abundant water to quench your thirst and moisten your parched fields; and I will pour out My Spirit in blessing – on your children!*" (Isa.44:2,3).

So many of us have children we'd really love to see God just pour out His Spirit on them in blessing. Well, here's the promise. It's not my promise. This is not something I "rev" up prophetically. This is the Word of God! He said, "*I will do it. I will pour out. It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God! That your sons and daughters shall prophesy*" (Joel 2:28).

Some of our sons and daughters may seem so very far from that as a reality. And *we* think, "If they're going to prophesy, they will come into the church building, be appointed to some position, and then will prophetically show forth their gift." But I want you to know that people are out in the world prophesying today! My own son is in the corporate world and so frequently calls and says, "I was dealing with this group, Mom, and I don't know where it came from – ☺ – but I just started... and knew exactly what to say." I said, "It's called *prophetic understanding*, Son." He said, "Really?" "Of course. It wasn't you, was it, Dumb-Dumb? ☺ That's God!" Okay, I don't really call him Dumb-Dumb. ☺ I just said that to make you think!

Prophecy doesn't have to be "Thus saith the Lord..." He doesn't even need the "thees" or "thous." ☺ The Church needs those for authenticity, so we add them! ☺

You get those little nudgings from within – I'm certain of it. You'll be in conversation with someone and hear yourself say, "I don't know. I just think that..." That's prophecy! Say it! Say it! Say it! Because that's the *Rain* on top of a seed you don't even know has been planted! Some grandmother planted that seed years before in prayer: "Oh God! Let it be watered! Let them meet someone on the job! Let something water the seed!"

And He says, in Isaiah 44, “*They...*” – that’s the new generation. “*They will thrive...*” Now listen kids – (if you’re under 50 you’re kids to me! ☺) – “*They will thrive like watered grass and like trees on a riverbank. Some will probably claim, ‘I belong to the Lord!’ Others will say, ‘I’m a descendant of Jacob.’ Some will write the Lord’s name on their hands and will take the honored name of Israel as their own.*” This is from Isaiah (44:4,5).

And that’s exactly what we’re seeing today. It’s so difficult for us to get it, when people don’t say the same words we say. It’s hard for us to believe that they just may be serving the same God! How clear can that be? “Some of you are saying, ‘Well, I believe in the Jewish faith, but I’ve met the Messiah and so I’m a Messianic Jew.’” You have to find – listen – we have to find *Him* in *them*, not in the way they express it! I’m not talking about Islam or Mohammedanism or any of the other false religions. It’s The Book! *Our* Book. If they’re in the same Book and they’re on the same Rock and they express it differently than I say it, they’re still my brothers and sisters – whether they vote “Yes” or “No” on me! ☺ I had four brothers but one went on up to Heaven before the rest of us. Out of those brothers, none of them actually voted “Yes” for me. I just came to their parents – and the parents presented me: “We have a girl!” And they could say, “Bah humbug. Oh, Boo! Put her back!” ☺ But it wasn’t up to them.

You see, God took you out of the womb. He formed you (Jer.1:5). He’s forming you – He’s forming you now – He’s *forming* you! You’re getting better looking all the time! ☺ He is making something pretty marvelous out of your life! And He’s about to *explode* on it and on you! *You* are going to have an understanding for the times (1Chron.12:32). And young people of this generation – you’re going to be able to see the results of the sowing you have done, and that the living of the separated life in the midst of scoffers is effective, because when the flood hits this time, they won’t scoff any more. They will cry out, “Help!”

And that’s when we throw them the lifesavers! Oh, yeah! We just throw out there an invitation to them: “Come on! Jesus is the answer!” “Well, I don’t speak the same language you do. I don’t believe in... uh, wine for communion. I take grape juice.” “I don’t believe in being dipped down under for baptism.” “I don’t... like you do...” “Who cares? You want to be saved or not? ☺ You want out of that mess you’re in – or not?” We’re not going to argue over these “dumb” things! Man made them up, not God! If you want grape juice, fine. It doesn’t matter! But it’s The Book that’s important! We get so – picky-picky-picky! We think we’re so pure, but when the flood comes, we’ll discover we aren’t! That stuff isn’t going to matter that much in the end.

“*In the light of the King’s countenance is life, and His favor is like a cloud of the latter rain.*” Proverbs 16:15.

Here’s your message for today – if you missed everything else, get this: The *latter rain* was that which fell in March or April in the Holy Land – just before the harvest. We’ve already had the former rains – the water came and softened up the soil. Seeds are sown in there. Now we’re ready for the latter rain. They’re going to come from the north and the south, the east and the west. And your families that you have witnessed to and who have laughed at you for a long time – get ready – because very soon, you’re going to hear it from them too: “Help.” You’re going to hear: “I need...” You’re going to hear: “I can’t go on like this...” You’re going to hear something that reminds you of the Valley of Baca you went through before – weeping all the way! “Oh, my Lord!”

And you’re going to be able to say to them, “Let me draw you to a well. I know a Man who can take away all sorrow. I know a Man who is dearer than them all! He’s been waiting for you through this whole generation! He’s been preparing you for this very moment! All you need to do is say, ‘I accept.’” “Oh! But do I have to quit this and do that?” “You don’t have to, but you probably will – because the only thing you’re going to be judged by in the end is whether or not you’ve received God’s Son. If you receive Him, you *will* be changed!”

Now that's Kingdom teaching. And it isn't that I think this world is getting better and better and then we'll rule and reign. I think it's getting worse and worse and worse – and we'll rule and reign.