

Dutch Sheets: The Year of Joel 2:16

As we have heard from many prophetic voices, the year 2016 is full of promise for seeing a great turning in America.

At the start of the year, the Lord also spoke to me about this season we have stepped into, telling of spiritual recalibration and a great convergence within His church. He spoke of restoring our passion, our vision, our heart for service and our love for His Word. The Lord even told me of a great shift toward righteousness within our government in 2016. What the Lord made clear to me, however, is that all He desires to do this year can happen only as we make prayer our priority.

A Huge Surge of Prayer

For much time, I have been sensing that a huge surge of prayer is coming to America in 2016. A great work of preparation has been done, and this wave of prayer will now hit its stride this year. A conversation I had with my dear friend and son in the Lord, Will Ford, put a phrase to what I had been sensing. Based on a dream given to his wife, Will said, **“The year 2016 is the year of Joel 2:16.”**

“Gather the people, consecrate the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and those nursing at the breast; let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber” (Joel 2:16, MEV).

This verse highlights God’s present call to personal lifestyles and mass gatherings of fasting and prayer. The subsequent verses speak of the fruit of such devotion: **deliverance, restoration and a massive outpouring of the Holy Spirit.**

Over the last few years, I found myself grieving over what I considered to be a loss of momentum, or even a dying, of the “prayer movement” in America. But the Lord changed this by giving me a prophetic message and a practical method for mobilizing the masses to pray.

The story behind the Appeal to Heaven flag is creating vision and issuing a call to the church concerning God’s plan for a resurgence of prayer. Between on-site attendance on unique online views, over 50,000 hungry people engaged in our most recent Appeal to Heaven Conference. And at the writing of this piece—only four months after its launch—nearly 300,000 people have downloaded the Give Him 15 daily prayer app to help guide them in unified intercession and scriptural decrees for America.

I have never seen as many significant prayer gatherings planned for this nation as are scheduled for 2016. We are told that Lou Engle’s Azusa Now stadium gathering in Los Angeles on April 9 is seeing thousands of registrants per day, and on that same day, tens of thousands of pastors will gather at our nation’s capital to pray. The recent Harvest America stadium gathering in Dallas looked like the days of the Jesus People Movement, with masses of people surrendering their lives to the Lord, and Together 2016 is aimed at gathering 1 million people on the Mall in Washington, D.C., this summer.

And there is still more to come. I was fascinated by what took place at a recent meeting in Colorado Springs, Colorado, hosted by Dick Eastman, whom I consider to be the patriarch and strongest apostle of prayer in America. Leaders from prayer ministries across several denominations convened to develop a unified strategy for shifting the nation through prayer.

Clearly, God has birthed and breathed life upon these and many other prayer efforts to help prepare the way for a mighty outpouring of His Spirit in America. Let your heart be filled

with hope!

Appeal to Heaven Movement!

Another generation is about to receive their version of a prayer movement, and what God is about to do is bigger than what He did in prayer in the 1990s. He's taking us all the way back to what He did through prayer in America in the 1770s.

Many are not aware that America was birthed through prayer.

The Lord used General Washington, the commander of our military at that time, to commission a flag with a message of hope stitched across its top. "Appeal to Heaven" became more than a catchphrase; it became a prayer movement, which swept through the colonies, empowering a fledgling nation to rise up in supernatural strength against the giant of their day.

In resurrecting the Appeal to Heaven flag, the Lord is communicating His desire to resurrect the prayer movement for the rebirthing of this great nation. He is taking us back to the founding of our nation, affirming His covenantal promises with us, and equipping us with what we need to take out the giants of our day and shine as a city on a hill and light to the nations once again. It's going to be amazing!

Those who respond to what the Spirit is saying to the church in this hour, taking up the mantle of prayer, will become new wineskins filled with new wine. New paradigms, systems and structures will come into place to make way for what God is releasing into the Earth.

Schedules and agendas are changing to make room for Holy Spirit's invitation to personal lifestyles of fasting and prayer. Pastors and leaders across America are hearing heaven's call to reprioritize and give prayer the place of pre-eminence in their churches and ministries. Houses of prayer will spring up from among them, and new schools of prayer will be launched, as well.

A new awakening and outpouring of prayer are coming to America. We must make room for them. Let this be our Joel 2:16 year, in which we gather, consecrate ourselves and, through prayer, see the Lord shift the nation!

Let communing with Him be our priority this year!

Dutch Sheets is an internationally recognized author, teacher and conference speaker. He travels extensively, empowering believers for passionate prayer and societal transformation. Dutch has pastored, taught in several colleges and seminaries and served on the board of directors of numerous organizations. Dutch's greatest passion is to see America experience a sweeping revival and return to its godly heritage. Dutch is a messenger of hope for America, encouraging Believers to contend for awakening in our day and reformation in our lifetime. Dutch has written over 20 books, many of which have been translated into over 30 languages.

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