

2016 Prophecy: A Year of Shifting Seasons and Suddenlies

Last year, the Holy Spirit spoke expressly to my heart that 2015 was the year of new beginnings. That rang true in my life and in the lives of many people whom God called from the waiting room to the delivery room.

2015 was a challenging year in many ways, a year of stretching and transitioning from the old to the new—and now we're going to the next. With regard to 2016, I heard the Holy Spirit say it's a year of "shifting seasons and suddenlies."

Those rhythmic words got my attention. What, exactly, does He mean? On the surface, it sounds like more change, more transition—and at least a few unexpected twists and turns along the way. I decided to press in to pray and study what this means practically. In this first article, I'm giving a general overview at the personal level. I will follow up with more specific details in the weeks ahead.

Embracing Shifting Seasons

We all know what a season is, but we don't always know what season we're in. Spiritually speaking, a season is a period of time—that can be specific or indefinite. We know that to everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven (Eccl. 3:1). We know we're not supposed to grow weary in well doing because we'll reap if we don't give up—in due season (Gal. 6:9).

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We know that if we meditate on the Word day and night, we will

stand like trees planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth fruit in its season and prospering in whatever we do (Ps. 1:2-3). But we must also know that it is God who changes the times and seasons (Dan. 2:21). We can't change our own season, but we can position ourselves for a season shift.

Merriam-Webster describes a "shift" as "to exchange for or replace by another; to change the place, position or direction of; to change gears; to go through a change." When the Holy Spirit said, "shifting season," it's easy to discern that He meant changes are ahead. Some of you are going to shift from a time of sowing to a time of reaping. Others will shift from weeping to laughing. Still others will shift from lack to prosperity.

I'm reminded of what God told Jeremiah: "For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11). God has good plans for us in 2016. He wants to shift us out of what has held us back from His best and into His good, perfect and acceptable will (Rom. 12:2).

Creating a Climate for the Shift

Our part is to position ourselves for the shift—and that means creating a climate that sets the stage for God to move in our lives. Scientists will tell you that the earth's seasons have shifted in recent years—and they point to climate change as the foundation for the shift.

If we translate this to a spiritual reality—as natural surroundings often correspond to spiritual conditions—it's clear that changing our spiritual climate sets the stage for a shift in spiritual seasons. We can't shift our seasons—God does that. But we can create a climate that invites Him to do the work in our hearts that prepares us for the next season.

What is the spiritual climate over your life? If you are

angry, ungrateful, complaining, angry, greedy, controlling, critical, impatient, indifferent, discouraged, jealous, frightened, frustrated, unforgiving, resentful, bitter, selfish or something of the kind, you're creating a spiritual climate over your life that repels the Holy Spirit. He loves you, yes, but your flesh is warring against His Spirit.

If, by contrast, you are thankful, peaceful, prayerful, joyful, generous, forgiving, loving, content, selfless, hopeful, faithful, inspired and worshipful, you are creating an atmosphere that attracts the presence of God. And the presence of the Holy Spirit is the ultimate key to spiritual change and growth. Put another way, we need to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit in our lives and reject the works of the flesh. In doing so, we position our hearts for God to shift us into fruitful seasons of harvest.

Wait for the 'Suddenlies'

When you change your climate unto a season shift, it will lead to a "suddenly." Merriam-Webster defines "suddenly" as "happening or coming unexpectedly; a changing angle or character all at once; marked by or manifesting abruptness or haste; made or brought about in a short time."

After weeks of praying in unity, "suddenly (there was) a sound like a mighty rushing wind," and the 150 in the upper room were filled with the Spirit (Acts 2). When Paul and Barnabas experienced persecution for Christ's sake, suddenly an earthquake rose up and opened the doors to the jail (Acts 16:26). Suddenly.

Suddenly you may shift into a promotion. Suddenly you may shift from sickness to health. Suddenly you may shift into greater authority in the spirit. Suddenly you may shift from a dark night of the soul to greater revelation of Christ. Suddenly you may shift from feelings of oppression to new levels of freedom. Suddenly.

Believe for the suddenlies in 2016. Expect them to happen. Wait with anticipation, but understand that you have to do your part. Like the disciples in the upper room, you need to pray. Like Paul and Barnabas in the prison, you need to praise. In other words, you need to create a spiritual climate over your life that invites the Holy Spirit to work in your heart, in your life and in your circumstances. Your climate change will eventually lead to a season shift that will bring a suddenly you could never make happen in your own strength.

Take heart in Isaiah 48:3: "I have declared the former things from the beginning and they went forth from My mouth, and I announced them. Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass." {eo}