

The Coming Winter

(This vision was received in 2006)

One night as I was praying and seeking the Lord, I was greatly troubled and burdened about the spiritual state of the church. I was deeply distressed that the body of Christ, which outwardly looked like a beehive of activity, had so precious little of Christ's life and power. I asked God how His will and purpose for the church could ever emerge from this dismal situation. As I entreated the Lord, He then gave me the following vision.

I saw a large forest with thousands of trees. Many of the trees in the forest were old oak trees that were at least sixty feet tall. I saw that many of the branches were intertwined so that a thick canopy of leaves covered the forest. As I was observing this scene, a gentle wind began to stir all the leaves on the trees. The Lord said, "The forest is the body of Christ and My Spirit is breathing on the body. As a result, many in the body are restless and dissatisfied with the condition of their spiritual lives." The Lord then said, "It is now autumn, and this present stirring is only the beginning. All this activity that you see in the body is not the long-awaited outpouring of the Holy Spirit. For the body of Christ does not yet know that it has died."

"First must come the winter," said the Lord. As soon as the Lord spoke these somber words, the wind began to quickly increase in force and I saw all the leaves shrivel and die. A strong gust then blew all the leaves completely off the trees and I saw them scatter in the wind. Then, just as suddenly, a fierce and bitter cold winter came upon the land and blew through the forest. Dark gray winter clouds covered the skies as far as I could see. I surveyed the forest and saw that the bare trees now looked desolate and vulnerable on the frozen landscape. Powerful gusts of freezing cold wind blew continuously upon the trees. The Lord said, "The wisdom and strength of men will fail them in the coming winter and the works of their hands will be destroyed." I then saw many tree branches break off in the strong wind and fall to the icy ground. Even some of the largest trees in the forest were uprooted and toppled. The harsh winter caused great destruction and seemed to last for a long time. The Lord said, "Many will fall away from the faith during this time. Only those whose roots are deep in Me will endure the coming winter." The Lord then said, "I am sending the winter to prepare the body of Christ so it can receive the outpouring of My Spirit." When He said this, I had a strong impression that He was sending the winter because of His great love for His people.

The winter then came to an end and the forest became still. I saw a spring rain begin to fall on the earth. It grew until it was a continuous downpour, which soaked the barren ground under the old trees. The Lord said, "This is the promised latter rain!" Then sprouts of new life - new trees - began to rise up everywhere on the forest floor. I said to myself, "This is how God's purpose for His body would be fulfilled - from out of the death of our natural strength would spring the resurrection power of Christ's new life." I saw that God would use the coming winter to bring His people into this truth: we have been crucified with Christ and we no longer live, but Christ lives in us; and the life we now live, we live by faith in the Son of God (Galatians 2:20). Then the Lord said to me, "Record the vision so that those who hear it may run."

"Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run. For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal and will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay."
Habakkuk 2:2-3

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