

“Behold, I Will Do a New Thing—this Year!”

A Blog Post by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

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We stand at the beginning of a new year. What makes a new year special is the fact that it’s, well—NEW!!

Every New Year brings with it new hope—hope that in this new year God will make things in our lives new in the sense of new opportunities to serve Him or at your job, new strength for victory over old sins, a new relationship perhaps if you’re single—in short, the hope that this new year will be a better year than last year!

And if that is your hope for *this* new year—you’ll be happy to know that you are on solid biblical ground! I say that because we serve a God who is *constantly* wanting to do new things in the lives of His people.

This was something God promised His people Israel, in Isaiah 43, when the nation was in captivity in Babylon because of their sin—and things looked like God had abandoned them.

You can imagine how the people felt forsaken by Him and the future looked bleak and hopeless—but right when the people of Israel believed all hope for the future was lost God said:

Isaiah 43:18-19 (NKJV)

¹⁸ "Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. ¹⁹ Behold, I will do a new thing...

I believe this passage captures the heart of God for His people throughout the year—but especially as we enter the New Year! That there is hope because God has promised never to leave us nor forsake us because of our sins or failures—in fact, He is wanting to do a new thing in all of our lives!

You may say:

- *“How do you know that? How can you be sure that this passage expresses His heart and desire for my life personally?”*

I know it because God always wants to do new things in the lives of His people!

We saw this principle at work when we got saved—

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

So, when God saved us, He did a new thing in our lives by making us a *spiritual* ‘new creation’. But even before that He seems to have incorporated this principle into the *physical* creation as well.

God is the source of life and every living thing created by Him is constantly being made new in the sense that our old cells are constantly dying and being replaced by new ones.

Someday we will see this principle applied to the whole universe—

Revelation 21:5 (NKJV)

⁵Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."...

Revelation 21:1 (NKJV)

¹Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...

Now when it comes to our spiritual lives (that part of us that deals with our relationship to God), He always wants to do new things because—it keeps our relationship with Him fresh and vibrant. You see, God hates complacency and stagnation in our spiritual lives because—if we're not constantly moving forward, we will inevitably start sliding backward.

So, you can be sure that in this New Year God wants to do something new in your walk with Him! But listen, so often God can't do a *new work* in our lives until He first tears down the *old junk* that we have built—

Jeremiah 1:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To root out and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To build and to plant."

God has to tear down the old before He can build something new—and it is at this very point where we come in. You see, *we* have to be *willing* to change—**He won't force change on us.**

God isn't asking us to have the *power* to change our lives—***this isn't about making New Year's resolutions.***

But while He doesn't expect us to be *able*—**He does expect us to be willing to change.**

If this is going to be a year where God does an awesome new thing in your life and walk with Him—understand, it first starts in the heart with *repentance* (to turn away from old destructive habits and sins)—and then by you purposefully walking in the Spirit once again.

Galatians 5:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

What does it mean to *walk in the Spirit*?—it means to surrender to the will and leading of the Holy Spirit.

It starts by doing the things that will bring us *closer* to God and staying away from the things that will carry us *away* from Him—and remember it's not always choosing between the good and the bad, but often choosing between the good and the best.

The background behind the Lord's words to His people Israel in Isaiah 43 was that once He delivered them from Egypt and they were His redeemed people—He eventually placed them in the Promised Land, that place of blessing, victory and freedom.

So, what happened you ask that they were now in captivity in Babylon?

The people of Israel got comfortable, complacent, and began to equate all their blessings to *themselves* and to their own hard work and military might (sounds like America!).

Eventually, all of these things turned their hearts away from God—and when that happened, they turned *from* God *to* idolatry.

The covenant, chosen people of God backslid into a life of idolatry, materialism and hedonism—and the result was that God allowed them to be carried away captives to Babylon.

The Babylonian captivity was used by God to break His people of their sin and rebellion and resulted in the promise He made to them in Isaiah 43:14-17—that if they repented and came back to Him in their hearts—He would restore them back to the Land of Promise.

God promised them, He would bring them back to that place of blessing, freedom and victory once again—in other words that He would do a new thing in their lives!

That I believe is God’s promise to any of His people who find themselves in a place far from Him because of their sin—that if they desire to come back to Him and repent, He will welcome them with open arms. (The Prodigal Son—Luke 15:11-32))

Listen to what He promised His people Israel—

Isaiah 43:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Folks, that is a promise of restoration and revival!

It’s our backsliding that puts us in a spiritual desert—and it’s the spiritual desert that produces the thirst—and it’s the thirst that leads to the desire—and the desire that leads to fervent prayer—which leads to God satisfying that thirst with a fresh outpouring of His Spirit! (Luke 11:13)

God promised in Isaiah 44:3 that He would pour His Spirit upon the one who was thirsty like water upon the dry ground—if they repented and came back to Him in their hearts.

Let’s be honest, when we stop serving God, when we stop going to church and Bible study—we begin to wander aimlessly in our walk with Him and put ourselves into a spiritual desert of sorts. When that happens, after a while, it makes us long for (thirst for) God again—as the psalmist cried, *“My soul thirsts for God...”*—and that is always the prelude to a fresh outpouring of God’s Spirit upon our lives (revival)!

Let me give you a couple of basic principles to bring about change in this New Year.

➤ **The power for change comes from God’s Spirit—the desire for change needs to come from us.**

This principle starts with sincere and brutally honest self-examination. (Explain)

Ask the Lord to give you the grace to take a good, hard look at yourself and then write down (make a list) of what He reveals that needs to be changed.

This would include the way you relate to your spouse, your kids, the people you work with, the way you conduct yourself among others in your local church—and most importantly, in the way you relate to God!

Is your life being controlled more by the Spirit or by the flesh?

As we move into the new year—give yourself over to some honest self-examination—and repentance!

➤ **Pray for the Holy Spirit's power and wisdom in how you can begin to see these changes become a reality**

When I say pray—I mean really PRAY!!

Pray fervently that by the Holy Spirit's power you can begin to make changes to that list.

I'm not going to give you a method or formula for change—you need to seek God for His leading on what He wants changed—things you need to focus on.

I will say this—the biggest areas that are in need of change are often the most obvious.

If you do 'your part' (get serious about change), then God will do 'His part'—pour out His Spirit upon you and do a new thing in your life this year!