

“SPIRITUAL BIRTH PANGS”

All Life experiences trials and change! Wheat must be sifted and pulverized to get flour. A grape must be crushed to bring juice. An olive must be pressed to give its oil.

As we draw closer to our Lord of Lord and King of Kings return, without question, we don't escape feeling of change and spiritual birth pangs. When thinking of where the Church of God is today spiritually, some words of Jesus come to mind. *“A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come....”* (John 16:21). After digging deeper into this subject, Its amazing to find the Scriptures often compare certain spiritual situations to a woman in the travail of child birth.

In that moment for a woman, there is pressure, pain, and panic. Medical doctors tell us that it is the \closest a woman will come to death without actually dying. And to think, a woman will endure all of that for just one thing,- the birth of a new life.

As the Lord prepares us for the days ahead, are we prepared for that future moment? Can we endure the possibility of spiritual pressure, spiritual pain, and spiritual panic unlike anything we have ever known? Meditating on this process, what can we expect as the end of this age draws closer?

Reading God's word makes It sound like it will be a sudden experience. The Apostle Paul writes *“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape”* (1 Thess 5:2-3). Paul compared the day of the Lord to a woman who found herself suddenly in travail. A woman can go from total peace and contentment, to anguish and pain in matter of seconds. There is typically little notice or warning; it just hits. The word *“travail”* means to *“bring forth.”* A life or church that expects to *“bring forth”* the Kingdom of God in a sudden moment. A woman will say, *“it could be any day now.”* She anticipates, looks, and longs for the moment. During that time, what feeds the anticipation is the curiosity as to who (or what!) they will look like, whether it is a boy or a girl, and the hope of his or her potential in life.

There is one thing we all understand when a child is born, the hand of God has been at work. If you are seeking to bring God Kingdom into your life, expect and anticipate a sudden travail in your life. At that moment, let the curiosity of what God will *“bring forth”* from your life captivate your attention.

Birth is a sorrowful experience. The joy of a child being born will NEVER come without having sorrowful pain. When you see a person to whom God has given a new child, what do you think? Some wish it were theirs, while others think it is given them a gift like an athletic event to the first 100 who enter. However, think what it is they have been through to get it. The anointing of a new born is not free nor easy. Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:3, *“... and they shall not escape.”* A mother in travail wants to get out of the experience. However, as the womb contracts, the only way out is to go through with it.

It is a separating experience. In Genesis 35, the unthinkable occurs with a woman in travail. Rachel dies giving birth to Benjamin. In giving birth, she gave up herself! So few of us will ever know abundant spiritual life because we cannot part with ourselves. When a woman gives birth, there are some things altered that will never be the same again. Is not that what the new birth is all about? In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus met travail that pressed out submissive courage. On the stake, Jesus met travail that crushed sin. When our moment of travail comes, what will we *“bring forth.”* *“A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world”* (John 16:21). 📖

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