

God's new year is coming. Are you ready?

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*YHWH said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. Exodus 12:1-2*

## **Ready for the New Year?**

Many of us are aware that God has a calendar that's different than our cultural one. This upcoming Monday evening at sundown the new biblical year starts. I've been thinking a good amount about this coming year. What will this new year look like for us all? In this season, there is an increasingly tangible sense of foreboding for our nation. I've heard this verbalized even from unbelievers. Our country has been unraveling at the seams for some time now but it's becoming more and more apparent. We also have a number of signs that seems to tell us that God's trying to get our attention and that there is divine discipline coming. Here are a few current signs:

- The total, rapid destruction of the Francis Scott Key bridge (he was the one who penned our national anthem)
- The upcoming solar eclipse (with some interesting peculiarities)
- Also this year we have another national election which I'm betting will be even more contentious and challenging than the last one.

So how should we as Believers posture ourselves and what should we do? Here are a few thoughts (not meant to be exhaustive) that come to mind. First of all, we are not to let our hearts be overcome with negative, dark emotions. Yeshua said to His disciples on the brink of the most challenging time for them and arguably in their nation's history, "Don't let your heart be troubled." This is still His message for us today. We are to combat these dark thoughts with the Scriptural ammunition He provides in John 13-17 and in the rest of Scripture.

Secondly, we are to watch and pray. God has promised His presence in our difficulty and will give us greater clarity through His Word, His Spirit, and speaking through prophetic people (Amos 3:7). He will speak to us to better prepare us for what is coming if we will listen. He has also promised to help us and to change things as we meet His criteria in 2 Chronicles 7:14. In this passage, we as His people pray, seek His face, repent, and turn from ourwickedness. God doesn't put the onus on the wicked but on His people to do these things as a tangible solution.

Thirdly, we are to embrace the harsh reality of our present (and coming) difficulties while combining this with a tension of healthy optimism. In Jim Collins book *Good to Great*, he described this as the Stockdale Paradox. James Stockdale (pictured above) was a high ranking naval officer who was captive as a prisoner in Vietnam for seven years during that war. He was regularly tortured but held to this principle...and he survived and encouraged others to do the same. He described the unrealistic "optimists" who kept telling others that they would be freed by such and such a date (that would come and go) as the ones who didn't make it. Rod Dreher in his excellent book *Live Not by Lies* alludes to something similar in describing how

we as Christians can live as impactful dissidents in the midst of trouble. For those interested you can find out more about the Stockdale Principle in the attached short article: <https://bigthink.com/health/stockdale-paradox-confronting-reality-vital-success/>.

Finally, study people and the concepts related to those who stood firm under great duress and difficulty. This was what Richard Wurmbrand (the founder of Voice of the Martyrs) and his wife did beforehand to help prepare themselves to stand firm and be faithful witnesses in the midst of horrific challenges. *Jesus Freaks* by Voice of the Martyrs is one of the best resources that I have discovered for this. And for those interested in other books like this, email me, and I'll send you a list of other books that I've found helpful.

So, in closing, are we ready for this new year in front of us? Are there any things that we need to make adjustments with as we look ahead? I know that I have some changes that I need to make. I need help and accountability on this journey and am grateful to have a band of brothers and sisters to go forward together with. Tomorrow we'll hear more about this topic from God's Word. I'm looking forward to it and hope to see a number of you there.