

# 3 Unifying Prayer Priorities for America in 2018

As we enter this exciting year of 2018 together, only God knows what is before us. We do not know what the future holds for us personally or for America; but we do know who holds our future.

Unifying in prayer for America is powerful. As we discern what is before us right now in our nation, as well as listen to the Lord and His voice to us through His Word, we lift up these three prayer priorities for America this January.

*Please share these with friends, pastors, churches, denominations, networks, ministries and Christian media. The more people we have praying together about the same things in our nation, the more we will see God move us forward together.*

We are going to be praying for unity in America for the next several months. We revealed in November that Pray For America: UNITY is our 2018 theme for the National Day of Prayer. We chose this theme because we strongly believe this is God's heart. Therefore, from now until and even beyond our Thursday, May 3, 2018, National Day of Prayer, we are going to call for, forward and pray for unity in America.

Millions of Christians in our nation need to enter the throne of grace with boldness in this time of great need in our nation. If we do not unify soon, I believe our nation's future will be jeopardized.

Whether you pray daily or weekly for our nation, please join us in praying with the authority of the Scriptures for these three priorities for America. This week, we are four months away from Thursday, May 3, 2018, our National Day of Prayer. Now is the time to pray for these three prayer priorities for America:

## **1. #Pray4unity in the church of America.**

“Now I ask you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak in agreement and that there be no divisions among you. But be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10).

- God is calling His church in America to unify upon the authority of the Bible and the centrality of Jesus Christ, the only Savior of the world.
- Ask God for thousands of local churches to unify as one body of Christ, agreeing together that God is our greatest need in America.
- Call upon God for Jesus’ Church in America to walk in unity, harmony and oneness, so His church personifies, calls and leads America to unity.
- Convict the church in America to wake up spiritually, agree clearly, unite visibly and pray extraordinarily for the next great spiritual awakening in America to occur in our generation.
- Call upon God to bring spiritual awakening now in America, shaping the future of America, just as the great spiritual awakenings in our history have shaped our spiritual heritage as a nation.

## **2. Ask God specifically to give our nation’s leaders clear direction to lead the people in our nation throughout the year of 2018.**

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths” (Prov. 3:5-6).

- Lord Jesus, give our nation’s leaders a passion to lead by Your Word and according to Your will in all things.
- Father, help our president, our vice president, the Cabinet and all the members of Congress, as well as the leaders in our state and in our region to know that God

is able to reveal the path He wants us go to in our regions, states and nation.

- Spirit of God, move upon the leaders of our nation to work together toward resolving these critical issues:
- Personal credibility and the integrity of leadership among their own colleagues charged with leadership in our nation
- Divisiveness and vitriolic communication in our nation
- Tax reform implementation
- Health care reform
- Immigration reform
- Education reform
- National security
- Religious liberty
- Sanctity and dignity of human life
- Terrorism nationally and globally
- Drug addiction and overdose
- Other issues that may emerge this month
- Sovereign God, we ask that You protect the leaders of our nation and their families, as well as the members of our military nationally and globally, and all the first responders in our nation.

### **3. Appeal to God passionately to intervene supernaturally on the National Day of Prayer on Thursday, May 3, 2018.**

“Be eager to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3).

- Lord Jesus, we ask You to call all leaders of denominations, church networks, churches, government, education, business, cities and all communities in America to create thousands of gatherings that will saturate their regions in prayer for unity in America.
- Father, use all relationships, social networking and all forms of media to mobilize millions of people to prayer for America on Thursday, May 3.
- Spirit of God, raise up all generations, all

- ethnicities, all churches, all denominations, all networks and all languages to pray for America on May 3.
- Great God in heaven, please remove all obstacles that stand in the way of every gathering on the National Day of Prayer.
  - Now Lord, as the national organization of the National Day of Prayer Task Force leads in this national effort, please provide for the financial needs that exist as it forwards prayer in America.
  - Holy Spirit, as Dr. Ronnie Floyd, the president of the National Day of Prayer Task Force, provides direction and leadership over this national prayer movement, please give Him Your direction and will in all things.

Dear friends, prayer warriors and anyone who loves America and believes in prayer: Let's come together now, forward these prayer priorities in January of 2018 everywhere we can, and join in agreement daily or weekly over these needs before the Father in heaven.

We believe in the power of prayer. Therefore, let's pray for our country as if we do. {eoa}

*Dr. Ronnie Floyd is the senior pastor of Cross Church, president of the National Day of Prayer, founder of the Cross Church School of Ministry, and host of the Ronnie Floyd on Life and Leadership Today podcast.*

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## **US, President Trump Face Hefty Challenges in 2018**

President Donald Trump returns to Washington after his Christmas break facing a slew of domestic and international

action items.

Fresh off his tax cut and reform victory on Capitol Hill, the president is hoping for more legislative action on his agenda in 2018.

This weekend, he's hosting Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., at Camp David to plan out the 2018 legislative itinerary.

GOP leaders are eager to make more progress before lawmakers shift their focus to the midterm elections.

Abroad, the president has taken a strong position supporting Iranian citizens protesting in the streets of Iran for more freedoms.

The Trump administration also continues to focus on North Korea's nuclear aggressions. In his New Year's address, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un repeated nuclear threats against the U.S., saying his country's nuclear forces are now a reality, not a threat, and that he keeps a nuclear button on his desk.

Over the weekend, the president also posted a tweet accusing Pakistan, another nuclear power, of spewing lies and deceit and giving safe harbor to terrorists U.S. forces flush out of Afghanistan while taking billions in American aid.

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# **Man Attacks Coptic Church,**

# Killing 11

Egypt's public prosecutor has filed murder charges against a man accused of killing 11 people in an attack on a Coptic church and a Christian-owned shop in a Cairo suburb last week, judicial sources said.

The man, arrested after the Dec. 29 attack, was receiving medical treatment in custody for injuries sustained in an exchange of gunfire with authorities outside the church. The prosecutor ordered him detained pending investigations, the sources said.

"He is accused of premeditated murder, attempted murder, possession of an unlicensed weapon and using it for terrorist activity," a judicial source said.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attacks shortly afterwards, in a statement carried out by its Amaq news agency, though it provided no evidence for the claim.

Islamist militants have claimed several attacks on Egypt's large Christian minority in recent years, including two bombings on Palm Sunday in April and a blast at Cairo's largest Coptic cathedral in December 2016 that killed 28 people. {eoa}

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## 9 Tips to Reverse Your

# Holiday Weight Gain

Did you gain any weight over the holidays? I did. I put on two pounds. I'm ready to get them off, plus a few more. How about you? Here are a few tips to get you started on your reversal of the calorie blowout.

1. Don't stop eating altogether. Drink a veggie juice for breakfast. And eat a little protein. If you do skip a meal, it should be dinner, not breakfast or lunch. If you starve yourself all day, you'll be much more prone to binge in the evening—the very worst time for that.
2. Forgive yourself. Yes, you blew it! You didn't work out, and you ate too many potatoes and appetizers. A new year is just around the corner. So get ready to praise yourself for the weight you're going to lose.
3. Start moving right away! Join the club, get a workout buddy or take your dog for a walk. The point is to get moving and keep moving. You'll burn calories and build muscle. You'll also get the good endorphins pumping. That puts you in a positive mood; you'll be less apt to turn to food for a lift.
4. Ditch the carbs. Those breads, bagels, crackers and potatoes really pack on the pounds. They've got to be the first things to go. Hey, here's the good news. You'll feel better in less than 48 hours.
5. Write down your goals. How much do you want to lose? What else do you want to achieve? When it's on paper, it becomes real. Give that weight loss a due date. By what date do you want to lose the weight? How hard will you try when it comes to that goal?
6. Juice and eat your vegetables. Vegetables suppress your appetite. By the way, bread stimulates the appetite.
7. Throw out the holiday leftovers, except for the turkey and veggies. You're done with that. Don't eat it to get rid of it, which will pile on more pounds.

8. Plan ahead. Take food with you on errands so you aren't tempted to hit a fast-food place. If you do get a food urge after dinner, eat a small low-cal snack, brush your teeth afterward, and "close down your kitchen."
9. Join one of my weight loss classes. I have two classes starting January 8—Juicing for Weight Loss and The Watercress Soup Diet. I'm teaming up with Angela for a new venture in weight loss. We're setting up 10 coaching emails and a webinar for both groups. Angela lost 70 pounds. She's traveled the weight-loss road. If you've tried many programs and have not succeeded, please don't think there's no hope. Join us in the new year. We're committed to helping you reach your goal.

## **Weight-Loss Buddy**

- 3-4 carrots, scrubbed well, tops removed, ends trimmed
- 1 Jerusalem artichoke, scrubbed well
- 1 cucumber, peeled if not organic
- 1 lemon, peeled if not organic
- 1/2 small beet, scrubbed well with stems and leaves

Cut produce to fit your juicer's feed tube. Juice ingredients and stir. Pour into a glass and drink as soon as possible.

Serves 1

Note: Jerusalem artichoke juice combined with carrot and beet is a traditional remedy for satisfying cravings for sweets and junk food. The key is to sip it slowly when you get a craving for high-fat or high-carb foods.

From *The Turbo Diet* {eoa}

**Cherie Calbom, M.S.**, holds a Master of Science in whole foods nutrition from Bastyr University. Known as "The Juice Lady" for her work with juicing and health, she is the author of 32 books, including her latest book *The Juice Lady's Guide to Fasting*. She and her husband offer juice-cleanse retreats

throughout the year, *30-Day Detox online and Garden's Best Juice Powder*. "What You Can Do When Your Healing Doesn't Come" is one point from her teaching "7 Keys to Your Supernatural Healing." You can connect with Cherie at .

This article originally appeared at .

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## 44 Numbers From 2017 That Are Almost too Crazy to Believe

2017 went by way too quickly. Donald Trump's first year in the White House shook up the entire planet, and nobody is quite sure what is going to happen next. Personally, as 2017 began, I was still having a hard time actually believing that Trump was going to be our president. Once he was finally inaugurated on January 20th, I was able to relax a little bit, but at that point I had no idea I would soon be running for Congress here in Idaho as a pro-Trump candidate. As 2018 begins, I think that it would be good to look back and remember some of the most important things that happened over the past 12 months. The following are 44 numbers from 2017 that are almost too crazy to believe:

1. During Donald Trump's first year, ISIS lost 98 percent of the territory that it gained while Barack Obama was in the White House.
2. The price of Bitcoin rose more than 1,300 percent during 2017.
3. According to *The Washington Post*, one out of every 10 young adults in the United States has been homeless at some point over the past year.

- 4.** The United States has lost more than 70,000 manufacturing facilities since China joined the WTO in 2001.
- 5.** On Donald Trump's first full day in office, he was 70 years, 7 months and 7 days old, and it happened in year 5777 on the Hebrew calendar.
- 6.** The all-time record for the number of retail store closings in the U.S. was absolutely shattered in 2017. According to the latest figures, a total of 6,985 store locations were shut down last year, and we are expected to break the record again in 2018.
- 7.** Incredibly, the number of retail store closings in 2017 was up 229 percent compared with 2016.
- 8.** When Ronald Reagan entered the White House, the federal government was about \$1 trillion in debt. Now we are \$20 trillion in debt, with no end in sight.
- 9.** Prominent names in the financial world such as John McAfee and James Altucher are predicting that the price of Bitcoin will eventually reach \$1 million.
- 10.** According to the most recent numbers we have, 41 million Americans are currently living in poverty.
- 11.** A recent CNN poll found that only 37 percent of Americans have a favorable view of the Democratic Party.
- 12.** Ever since the beginning of April, Congress has had an average approval rating of less than 20 percent.
- 13.** The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up more than 5,000 points in 2017, and that absolutely shattered the previous record of 3,472 points in 2013.
- 14.** At one point in 2017, the total market cap for all cryptocurrencies combined (Bitcoin, Ethereum, Ripple, Litecoin and so on) surpassed the half-trillion dollar mark.

**15.** Wildfires burned an astounding 9,791,062 acres over the past year.

**16.** It is being reported that less than 50 percent of all third, fourth and fifth grade students in the state of California meet minimum standards for literacy.

**17.** At one very poorly performing elementary school in California, 96 percent of the students are not proficient in either English or math.

**18.** Back in 1960, an average of \$146 was spent on health care per person for the entire year, but today, that number has skyrocketed to \$9,990.

**19.** Thanks to Obamacare, an appendectomy is 10 times more expensive in the United States than it is in Mexico.

**20.** Thanks to Obamacare, a family of four in Virginia is now facing the prospect of paying \$3,000 a month for health insurance.

**21.** It is being projected that the average rate increase for Obamacare plans will be 37 percent in 2018.

**22.** In 2017, we found out that 264 cases of sexual harassment involving members of Congress have been settled for a grand total of \$17,250,854 since the start of 1997.

**23.** Economic growth is starting to pick up under President Trump, but the U.S. economy only grew at an average rate of just percent over the 10 years prior to 2017.

**24.** It is being reported that homelessness has become so pervasive in ultra-liberal Seattle that "400 unauthorized tent camps" have popped up around the city.

**25.** One survey that was conducted in 2017 discovered that 78 percent of all full-time workers in the United States live paycheck to paycheck at least part of the time.

**26.** According to the Federal Reserve, the average U.S. household is now \$137,063 in debt, and that figure is more than double the median household income.

**27.** A staggering 59.8 percent of younger Millennials (18 to 25) are now living with relatives, and overall, an all-time record 38.4 percent of all Millennials are currently living with family.

**28.** Boston University professor Larry Kotlikoff says the federal government is facing a fiscal gap of \$210 trillion over the next 75 years.

**29.** According to the National Center For Health Statistics, nearly 40 percent of all U.S. adults are now officially obese. That is an all-time record.

**30.** Our obesity epidemic is now costing us \$190 billion a year.

**31.** Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos of , and Warren Buffett now have more money than the poorest 50 percent of the U.S. population combined.

**32.** At this point, 20 percent of all U.S. households have "either zero or negative wealth."

**33.** U.S. stocks have increased in value by more than \$5 trillion since Donald Trump was elected.

**34.** For the season, NFL television ratings were down about 9 percent, and many believe that the anthem protests were the primary cause for the ratings decline.

**35.** One very disturbing survey found that less than one out of every four Republican members of Congress supports building Trump's border wall. This is just one reason why we need to vote out the RINOs and replace them with pro-Trump candidates who will support President Trump's agenda.

**36.** Another survey discovered that 50 percent of all Americans favor a pre-emptive strike on North Korea even though many of them cannot even find North Korea on a map of the world.

**37.** Last year, criminals were able to hack into Equifax and make off with the credit information of 143 million Americans.

**38.** Venezuela, the 11th-largest oil producing country in the entire world, decided to stop using the petrodollar in 2017. This was one of the biggest news stories of the entire year, and yet the mainstream media in the U.S. didn't want to talk about it.

**39.** It has been reported that only 25 percent of all Americans have more than \$10,000 in savings right now.

**40.** A study conducted by the Federal Reserve found that 44 percent of all U.S. adults do not even have enough money "to cover an unexpected \$400 expense."

**41.** In the early 1970s, 70 percent of all men in the United States from the age of 20 to the age of 39 were married, but today that number has fallen to just 35 percent. Instead of getting married and starting families, a lot of our young men are still living at home with their parents. Today, 35 percent of all young men from the age of 21 to the age of 30 "are living at home with their parents or a close relative."

**42.** In 2017, the federal government spent more than \$4 trillion for the first time ever.

**43.** Our government continues to waste money in some of the most insane ways imaginable. For example, in 2017 we learned that the U.S. military actually spends \$42 million dollars a year on Viagra.

**44.** One survey discovered that 40 percent of all Americans now "prefer socialism to capitalism," and so we have much work to do if we intend to have any chance of turning this country

around.

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# Rare First Temple-Era Discovery Brings Biblical Narrative Alive

Israeli archaeologists excavating the Western Wall Plaza recently made a unique and significant discovery when they unearthed a stamped piece of clay from the First Temple period which belonged to the “governor of the city” of Jerusalem, the most prominent local position to be held in Jerusalem 2,700 years ago.

The extraordinary find is a small lump of clay, stamped and pre-fired. It measures 13 by 15 mm. and is 2 to 3 mm. thick. The upper part of the seal depicts two men facing each other in a mirror-like manner, and the lower part holds an inscription in ancient Hebrew script. Its exact use is yet unknown.

Dr. Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah, excavator of the site on behalf of the Israel Antiques Authority (IAA), believes that the seal “had been attached to an important transport and served as some sort of logo, or as a tiny souvenir, which was sent on behalf of the governor of the city.”

She further suggested that “it is likely that one of the buildings in our excavation was the destination of this transport sent by the city governor.”

Finding a seal with this high-ranking title, in addition to the large assemblage of other seals found in the building in

the past, supports the assumption that the excavated area, located on the western slopes of the western hill of ancient Jerusalem, was inhabited by high ranking officials during the First Temple period.

## **Support for the Biblical Narrative**

“This is the first time that such a seal is found in an authorized excavation. It supports the biblical rendering of the existence of a governor of the city in Jerusalem 2,700 years ago,” Weksler-Bdolah pointed out.

The two standing men facing each other on the seal have their heads depicted as large dots, lacking any details. The hands facing outward are dropped down, and the hands facing inward are raised. The figures are wearing a striped, knee-length garment.

In the register beneath the double line is an inscription in ancient Hebrew:  $\text{לְיָד הַשָּׂרֵן הַיְיָרֵךְ}$ , with no spacing between the words and no definite article. It denotes  $\text{לְיָד הַשָּׂרֵן הַיְיָרֵךְ}$ , i.e., “belonging to the governor of the city.”

Prof. Tallay Ornan of the Hebrew University and Prof. Benjamin Sass of Tel Aviv University who studied the seal explained that “the title ‘governor of the city’ is known from the Bible and from extra-biblical documents, referring to an official appointed by the king.”

Governors of Jerusalem are mentioned twice in the Bible: in 2 Kings, Joshua is the governor of the city in the days of King Hezekiah, and in 2 Chronicles Maaseiah is the governor of the city in the days of King Josiah.

## **A City With a Magnificent Past**

The seal was presented to Jerusalem’s mayor, Nir Barkat, during his visit to the Davidson Center, near the Western Wall, last week.

Barkat stated that “it is very overwhelming to receive greetings from first temple-period Jerusalem. This shows that already 2,700 years ago, Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, was a strong and central city.”

“Jerusalem is one of the most ancient capitals of the world, continually populated by the Jewish people for more than 3,000 years. Today we have the privilege to encounter another one of the long chain of persons and leaders that built and developed the city. We are grateful to be living in a city with such a magnificent past, and are obligated to ensure its strength for generations to come, as we daily do,” he added. {eoa}

*This article originally appeared at .*

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## **Thousands of People all Over the World Are Converting to ‘Jediism’**

Yes, there are actually people out there who want to be a Jedi so badly that they have made “Jediism” their official religion. As you will see below, a new documentary entitled *American Jedi* has just been released that examines this phenomenon, and when I first heard about it, I decided to learn more. So I did some research, and I discovered that there is actually an official website for “the Temple of the Jedi Order” that bills itself as the “international church of Jediism”. And even though this “faith” is entirely based on fictitious characters, the IRS actually granted tax-exempt status to the Temple of the Jedi Order in 2015.

I was 7 years old when *Star Wars* first came out, and it

definitely had a major impact on me.

But even as a child, I understood that it was just a movie.

Unfortunately, there are some people out there that are so drawn to “the Jedi Order” that they actually want to make it a religious faith. The following comes from the Huffington Post...

*For small sects of the fanbase, however, the line between the two worlds has blurred, and their love for “Star Wars” has manifested itself into a religious devotion. Literally.*

*A new film called American Jedi is an enchanting look at this community.*

This new documentary was filmed by Laurent Malaquais, and he told the Huffington Post that he “grew up in an environment where spirituality was about being inclusive of many religious practices.” So as he filmed this project, he felt he was able to identify with those who have chosen to belong to “the Jedi community.”

Of course wherever there are Jedi, the Sith are not too far behind, and it turns out that “a practicing Sith” also plays a significant part in this film...

*According to the Huffington Post, American Jedi follows one follower of Jediism in particular: Opie Macleod. While they were living in the Jedi community, Macleod discovered his wife was having an affair with his friend Miles Robinson, described as “a practicing Sith.”*

*“My student, who I had said was a Jedi Knight, not only tossed the Jedi path away to follow and explore the Sith path,” Macleod said, the Huffington Post reported, “but also slept with a Sith.”*

It is one thing to dress up like Luke Skywalker and wave a

fake lightsaber around, but it is another thing entirely to make “Jediism” your religion. I guess it just shows how spiritually empty a lot of people are feeling these days.

The core of the Jedi religion is a creed known as “the Jedi code”:

*There is no emotion; there is peace.  
There is no ignorance; there is knowledge.  
There is no passion; there is serenity.  
There is no chaos; there is harmony.  
There is no death; there is the force.*

This “code” doesn’t even make sense, and yet there are thousands upon thousands of people all over the world who have chosen to make it the foundation of their lives.

In recent years, you may have seen news stories about “the growth of the Jedi religion” in English-speaking countries around the globe. According to Wikipedia, this “movement” began in 2001:

*The Jedi census phenomenon is a grassroots movement that was initiated in 2001 for residents of a number of English-speaking countries, urging them to record their religion as “Jedi” or “Jedi Knight” (after the quasi-religious order of Jedi Knights in the fictional Star Wars universe) on the national census.*

Without a doubt, many are reporting “Jedi” as their religion to census officials just to be funny. But there are others that take this stuff deadly seriously, and their numbers are growing.

According to the New York Post, “Jediism” is now the seventh-largest religion in the United Kingdom, and it has 65,000 adherents in Australia:

*The U.S. census doesn't count Jedi as a religion, but other countries' data give us a sense of the size: In England, it's the seventh-largest religion, with 175,000 members; 15,000 Jedi can be found in the Czech Republic, along with 9,000 in Canada and 65,000 in Australia.*

If the U.S. census actually included "Jedi" as an option, it would be fascinating to see what the numbers would be in the United States.

We live at a time when people are groping for answers to the most fundamental questions in life. Millions of Americans are feeling deeply disillusioned, and they don't know where to turn. The spiritual void in our society is growing with each passing day, and the need for a new spiritual awakening has never been greater.

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## **Top Shelf**

Credit card commercials ask us, "What's in your wallet?"

A better question to consider is, "What's in your toolbox?"

I have a clear picture in mind of a tall, clunky mechanic's toolbox. It's filled with drawers of various depths. It's fair to assume that the mechanic's most used tools are in the top pull-out. Rarely used tools reside in the box but are foreordained to a bottom drawer.

Knowledge workers are enlightened by their personal inventory of tools. A worker's productivity is largely impacted by the quality of tools available for random access. When we are called upon to add knowledge to a project, our primary contribution emerges from our storehouse.

As our eyes open widely this morning in view of the possibilities of a new year, one thing seems certain. We're going to need a bigger toolbox. Many of last year's tools have elevated down to a less relevant drawer. The half-life of knowledge continues to narrow.

We must know more to do more. I have a few excellent college textbooks in residence in my home-office library. The books, while as comfortable as spaghetti night, rest peacefully on a bottom shelf. Shockingly, few people query me about state of the art marketing knowledge circa 1970.

The top shelf of my toolbox is an ellipsis for what awaits in 2018. I'm hungry to know more because more will be required of me.

As Solomon warned, knowledge is folly without the presence of God. Lean upon the Lord to fill your top shelf with His inspired Word. Lean not on your own understanding. Seek Him first.

"For the word of God is alive, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

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## **Prophecy for 2018: This Is the Year of the Threshing Floor**

There is nothing magic about 12:01 a.m. on January 1st. God is not dictated to by the calendar that man creates. While it is

the beginning of the new year of 2018, for us who use the Gregorian calendar, the Jewish new year of 5778 began on the evening of Sept. 20, 2017. So, from a biblical standpoint, we have been in a new year since September. Scripturally speaking, God operates in "times and seasons" (Eccl. 3:1) but, there are times when His divine providence lines up with our calendar, and we enter His times and seasons.

This is why we begin to listen so attentively to the Holy Spirit as we approach the change of years. We are trying to ascertain what the season of the Lord is. We are leaning in closely for prophetic direction to prepare and position us to walk uprightly in the coming days.

Each year I hear such variance in what representatives of the body of Christ say the Lord has told them regarding an approaching year. Sometimes it is more than variance; sometimes it is dissonance. We also release "words" that can be disjointed with little or no continuity from the previous year, making God appear schizophrenic. But I have found that God speaks in sentences. He is forming paragraphs. He is revealing complete thoughts. It may take multiple "words" or years before we understand what he is saying and doing, but He is progressive. "For He says, 'Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little'" (Isa. 28:10).

This is how God framed this coming year to me. He has initiated a season of the threshing floor for His people. But, it has not appeared randomly or haphazardly. It has followed progressively what He has been doing in the most recent years. In 2015 God told me He was re-establishing His plumb line in His people and His church. In 2016, He told me we had entered a season of confirmation where He was going to begin to sovereignly bear witness of what was and wasn't acceptable to Him. This year, in 2017, it was going to be a year of polar opposites, because the elevation of truth was also going to bring a revelation of error. People would be looking at the

same thing and reaching two entirely different conclusions because of how they responded and related to truth. You see, truth and light not only unite, they also divide.

A few months back, the Lord said to me that the light and truth of 2017 revealed the husk, but in 2018, He is going to deal with the husk, and that we had entered a season of threshing and winnowing.

There is such important scriptural and prophetic significance surrounding the threshing floor. Ruth, who is a type of the church, received the promise of betrothal from Boaz as her kinsman-redeemer, who is a type of Christ in the Scriptures (Ruth 3:6-15). She presented herself to him on the threshing floor after his work threshing and winnowing the grain was complete.

Solomon's temple, the house of God, was built on the very spot of a threshing floor that King David purchased from Ornan (Araunah) the Jebusite (2 Chron. 3:1). Previously, David built an altar to the Lord there to stop the judgment of God against Jerusalem, and God answered him at the threshing floor (1 Chron. 21:14-28). But that was not the first time God had tested His people at that place. This was Mount Moriah, it was the place where God tested Abraham's heart and asked him for Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen. 22:2-14). God was looking for something in Abraham and used great testing to reveal it. Even as God dealt with Abraham's outer man, he yielded to the process and built an altar and worshipped God.

Both historically and symbolically, the judgment of God and the purifying process are associated with the threshing floor. God struck Uzzah at Nachon's threshing floor for taking hold of the things of God incorrectly (2 Sam. 6:6-7). Jesus himself spoke of the work of the Holy Spirit to identify and separate the wheat from the chaff in final judgment. "His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean His floor and gather His wheat into the granary; but He will burn up the chaff with

unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:12).

It is clear that a separation will occur at final judgment, but what of the separating, purifying work of the Lord in the lives of His people and His church before His return? Is He not at work cleansing and preparing His bride, removing spot and blemish with the "washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:26b)? If His return is near as many believe, wouldn't the purifying process intensify? We must not relegate His threshing and winnowing of His people to only an end-time judgment. There is an outer man, a carnal man, a "husk" that must be dealt with and removed to reveal the inner man, the "kernel."

God is after the precious in us, the genuine, the eternal, the inner and the pure. In order to accomplish and reveal these, anything that is in the way must be identified and done away with.

What powerful imagery the Lord uses to help us see and understand. When Jesus spoke of the process of revealing the glory of God, He said it required that the outer be subjected to a process that revealed the inner. Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:23-24).

There are two important aspects that must not be overlooked here. First, the process was a violent separation: death. Secondly, though the word "grain" is used twice in this passage, the first word means the whole kernel with the outer shell and the second word means fruit. Or in other words, that which is produced after the outer is removed.

A dying process is one way to accomplish that, but the scriptures reveal others. God uses tribulation, difficulty and challenges to perfect and reveal the inner man. Paul

references this twice in the same chapter. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, the excellency of the power being from God and not from ourselves. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; and always carrying around in the body the death of the Lord Jesus, that also the life of Jesus might be expressed in our bodies. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that also the life of Jesus might be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then, death works in us, but life in you" (2 Cor. 4:7-12).

Why is God allowing or initiating these circumstances? He is after a removing of the outer and a revealing of the inner man. "While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. "For this reason we do not lose heart: Even though our outward man is perishing, yet our inward man is being renewed day by day. Our light affliction, which lasts but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor 4:16-18). Though these two passages may not use the term "threshing" or "winnowing," it is in essence the same process.

The threshing floor involved two processes to separate the inner kernel from the outer unusable covering, and both were violent. First, pressure was applied to the stalk by either trampling or beating. This broke the grain away from what held it and caused it to move deep below the surface threshing to protect what was precious from actual damage. Second was a winnowing process of repeatedly tossing the grain into the air and allowing it to fall to the immovable surface of the floor. This not only further separated the chaff from the actual wheat grain by repeated impact, but amazingly used the wind to blow the lighter, worthless shell away. The weightier, inner,

wheat grain would begin to appear and gather. This was the real harvest and what the planting, watering, tending and threshing process was intended to yield.

Beloved, there is much error, immaturity and carnality in the church and the people of God today. Race and politics separate us. We have elevated positions, titles and even the very country we live in to a place of worship. We are enmeshed and intermingled with the very things we are called to speak against, and our witness has lost its credibility. The world needs to see and experience the life of Christ and truth from an inner man, but a carnal outer shell is in the way.

We have entered a season of the threshing floor. It began in 2017. God is after something in us, and He is both allowing and initiating circumstances in our personal lives, the church and even this country to deal with the husk that in is His way and separate it from us.

There will be times this year that the circumstances of our lives, the church and this country will appear violent as God tosses us again and again into the wind of the Holy Spirit to separate us from what must be revealed and removed. Our repeated impacts against the immovable truth of God will cause a breaking. It will appear as judgment, but His purpose is not vindictive but redemptive. It will work for our good if and as we yield to Him in the process and genuinely worship Him there as Abraham and David did.

How perfect God is in His ways. The first reference in Scripture to a threshing floor is associated with offering and worship. May we embrace the work of the threshing floor and the Lord's winnowing in our lives and in the church in this season.

"The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When you come into the land where I

bring you, then it will be, when you eat of the bread of the land you will offer up an offering to the Lord. From the first of your dough you will offer a cake as an offering. As you make the offering of the threshing floor, so will you offer it" (Num. 15:17-20).

**Pastor Gregory D. Reynolds** is the founder and senior pastor of House of Liberty Covenant Church, in Cincinnati, Ohio, which was established in 2012. He has been shepherding for more than 21 years. Pastor Reynolds has long been a prophetic voice with a burden for truth and unity in the body of Christ and operates with a mandate from God to address the issues that bring error and separation within it. He has been married to his wife, Cheryl, with whom he shares senior pastoral leadership at House of Liberty, for 39 years. They have three adult children and have been blessed with four grandchildren.

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## **SPLC's 'Hate Tracker' Caught Automatically Monitoring #Merrychristmas**

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has a so-called "Hate Tracker" webpage, which purports to track social media communications of groups that SPLC hates. The "Hate Tracker" page includes the following social media hashtags: #christmas, #merrychristmas, #merrychristmaseve, #jesus and #whitegenocide and #ineedwhitesupremacybecause this week.

The SPLC claims it monitors social media communications of so-called hate groups and now claims that the #christmas, #merrychristmas, #merrychristmaseve, and #jesus hashtags are due to a so-called algorithm, but the SPLC cannot run from the

clear intent of its “Hate Tracker” page.

The SPLC website plainly states that it is a “Hate Tracker” and, when narrowed to specific days, on Dec. 24, #merrychristmas held the No. 2 ranking. On Dec. 25, #merrychristmas was ranked No. 1 and on Dec. 26, it was ranked No. 3. After Liberty Counsel and other media sources challenged the SPLC, it now claims the rankings are created with an automatic feed of popular tweets among those it claims are hate groups, and that the “Hate Tracker” webpage doesn’t actually track hate; it just tracks what is being tweeted by supposedly hateful people.

There is further evidence, however, of the SPLC manipulating its website. On its Dec. 27 page, the SPLC claims that the 12th highest “trending hashtag” among all the so-called “hate groups” it claims to monitor is “#ineedwhitesupremacybecause.” However, when fact-checked on Twitter, there were only two tweets on the 27th that used that hashtag across all of Twitter. Of the two Twitter users on Dec. 27 who each tweeted it, one’s profile claims to be from New Zealand, and the other’s chosen name is “@BakedNorwegian.” This indicates that both users, if not internet bots, could be international accounts.

However, on SPLC’s page are *no* Twitter accounts mentioned with that hashtag, and *no* images found, even though one of the two Twitter users posting the hashtag “#ineedwhitesupremacybecause” *included* an image with their tweet. This indicates that SPLC’s claimed “algorithm” does not automatically pull all images. These inconsistencies raise serious questions about the SPLC and its misrepresentation of the groups they “monitor,” the algorithms used and the complete ineffectiveness of the organization to track what it claims.

The SPLC cannot hide behind a so-called algorithm because the SPLC has final editorial control of its webpage. Here are the

facts: The SPLC's webpage is titled "Hate Tracker." The web address is , and it displays the words "Hate Tracker" and its Twitter name @splchatetracker on each of its pages. It also ranked #merrychristmas in each of its top three highest-ranking positions on its "Hate Tracker" website this week.

In addition to hashtags, the SPLC has a section on images that contain the following warning: "This view shows images posted with trending hashtags during the selected time period. WARNING: This content may be upsetting. We have restricted the view to prevent offensive content from being viewed in full. These images may be pulled from accounts that are not necessarily part of the far-right population we monitor."

Included on the image page are the following "upsetting" images: 1) a large lighted Christmas tree with two angels set up in a public venue; 2) a dog wearing a Santa hat and another dog with reindeer antlers; 3) first lady Melania Trump wearing an elf hat; 4) a large lighted Christmas tree inside a building; 5) Marines pushing up a Christmas tree and 6) a sleeping baby in a "National Right to Life" Christmas outfit. The SPLC cannot blame this page for an algorithm. An algorithm did not write "WARNING: This content may be upsetting." The SPLC chose to place this warning on a page that included Christmas images.

The message SPLC is sending is the same one that appeared in a recent *Newsweek* article entitled, "How Trump and the Nazis Stole Christmas to Promote White Nationalism." In that article, Christina Maza writes that "critics" (which includes herself) say that President Trump's "crusade to bring back Christmas is part of a larger attempt by the president to define America as a country for white Christians alone."

She goes on to say, "Wishing people 'Merry Christmas' instead of 'happy holidays' is thus in line with Trump's decision to ban citizens of Muslim-majority countries from entering the United States," and "it fits neatly with his refusal to

condemn white supremacists when they march against diversity, and with his condemnation of athletes who protest police brutality against black men.” Yet, Christmas is a holiday celebrated around the world by people of different races, ethnicities, cultures, political ideologies and even faiths.

The SPLC’s agenda willfully combines pro-family, Christian and/or conservative groups and leaders with the KKK, white supremacists and Neo-Nazis in the mind of the public to damage the reputations of good people who oppose violence.

The SPLC’s false labeling is as damaging as it is mistaken. It targeted the Family Research Council (FRC) with its rhetoric. Then in 2012, Floyd L. Corkins II, intent on committing mass murder, went on a shooting spree at FRC. He brought with him Chick-fil-A sandwiches and magazines full of ammunition. When he arrived at FRC, he aimed his gun at Leo Johnson, an African-American security guard, who ducked away and then, with a gunshot wound in his arm, subdued Corkins. Corkins later admitted to the FBI that he targeted FRC and other groups, whose addresses were found in his pocket, using the SPLC’s “Hate Map” website. The SPLC’s rhetoric turned deadly again this summer. It incorrectly identified U.S. Representative Steve Scalise as a white supremacist, and then one of SPLC’s Facebook followers, James Hodgkinson, shot and wounded Rep. Scalise and attempted to kill many more people at a baseball field this summer. But even in these situations, the SPLC will not accept responsibility for its irresponsible rhetoric.

“The SPLC’s false ‘hate’ labels have resulted in violence against innocent people. Instead of stemming the evil of hate, the SPLC fans the flame,” said Mat Staver, founder and chairman of Liberty Counsel. “The SPLC operates by associating peaceful, nonviolent groups alongside hateful, violent groups and thus seeks to connect the two in the minds of the public. This is precisely the intent of its so-called ‘Hate Tracker’ and ‘Hate Map.’”

The SPLC has been thoroughly discredited by journalists from the political left and right and the federal government, much of which is included in a website compiling the truth about the SPLC. Another website exposes the SPLC's hypocritical and misleading tactics. In addition, Liberty Counsel has created a page answering SPLC's false, name-calling of its non-profit Christian ministry and its pro bono work in the legal field. Liberty Counsel believes that every person is created in the image of God and should be treated with dignity and respect.

*For the original article, visit . {eo}*