

Revival Can Save a Nation

For hundreds of years historians and scholars have carefully studied and evaluated the factors that have caused the decline and death of great empires. Their careful conclusions are readily available to those who really want to know them. Scholars like Edward Gibbon, who wrote the classic "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", and Arnold Toynbee who wrote "A Study of History" have set forth in great clarity and detail that twenty-one of the last great empires on earth all showed the same common signs of decline just before they dissolved and disappeared from world history. This simply cannot be refuted by any honest person!

History is littered with the remains of once great empires, each one having had their turn at the very helm of the world, rising so high, yet today they are only a memory. Will this be true of America? Many historians have catalogued the "commonalities of calamity" or "the pathology of death" for human societies, and the diagnosis is alarming! Nations do not really die...they dissolve, a slow process of erosion. They self-destruct due to disintegration caused by dangers lurking within. Let us list those common symptoms of the end, harbingers of death shared by all twenty-one of the last great extinct societies:

The Social Symptoms: 1. An increase in lawlessness and promotion of the wrong people. 2. Loss of economic discipline and self-restraint; greed. 3. Rising government taxes and regulation, growing bureaucracy. 4. Decline in the relevance and quality of education.

The Cultural Symptoms: 1. Increase in materialism and selfish luxury. 2. Weakening of the foundational principles that built the nation and made it great. 3. Policies based on feelings and not moral discipline. 4. Loss of respect for established authority.

The Spiritual Symptoms: 1. Rise in immorality and perversion. 2. Lure of alien gods and exaltation of man. 3. Decline in value placed on human life as evidenced by abortion, brutality, loss of natural affection, care for the elderly.

Nations ready to die are plagued by lawlessness, economic insolvency, loss of values, self-centeredness and the breakdown of social order. Peace and order become impossible to maintain despite a deluge of "new laws" to stem the flood. The Barbarians then come in/infiltrate, and the nation cannot resist. It loses its moral fiber and the will to sacrifice is no longer present. There are well-worn paths to disaster. These are stark warnings to any nation and reminders not to make the fatal movement away from God as Lord of all. The old expression, "No man loves his alarm clock!" is appropriate here.

A nation that does not fear God has no chance! The nation that does not fear Him...has forgotten Him. The reason that history repeats itself is that most people do not listen the first time! Someone has said, "The future cannot be seen clearly without the past." (See Job 8:8-13, Eccl. 1:9-10) It was Aristotle who first said, "Those who do not know history are doomed to repeat it." The lessons of history are meant to lead us to the Lord of history. It is really History... and it practically shouts at us that every individual and nation is accountable to Him.

God repeatedly warns a nation and pleads with that nation, before He removes it, but history shows that nations seldom listen! The great hope is that God will send a mighty move of His Spirit in the nation and revive it to blessedness and a right relationship to Him. In America, true revival will not come by simply becoming aware of our great need for it. It will not come even if we are successful in pointing out all our present grievous sin and error. It will not come because of multiplied meetings to encourage us, and to make us want revival; even sing about it.

Revival will come only in God's sovereign grace when the people of God recover God's revelation of who He is. We must have fresh revelation of God through His Word...Jesus Christ the Lord. Inherent in this revelation will come the glorious realization of who He wants His people to be. Then, the people of God must choose to authentically respond to Him in such a way as to allow Him to clear up the discrepancies and contradictions. Submitted to Him...the Church will once again become "salt and light".

Friends... in our day we seem to have lost sight of who He is. And because we don't see His holiness there is no fear of God. Because we don't see our unholiness there is no brokenness. Because we don't see His forgiveness there is no joy. Because we don't see His plan there is no purpose.

Let each of us realize today...America is in grave danger and is repeating the mistakes of nations long gone. In fact, we are outdoing them in their error. And the fact that we have had so much blessing and Truth from God only makes us more accountable to Him.

If true revival comes it will make the Church a bull's eye for the world, not just a blessing. Attacks will come from the world outside and from the worldly inside the Church. But God will own His Church in manifest power and there will be fresh demonstration of Resurrection Life in His Body. She will worship the Lord "in the beauty of His holiness", and the Gospel will go forth in power! Just imagine what the Church would be like if our wonderful Lord had His way! Oh, we need an epidemic of the Glory of God!! It is time for the Church of the Lord Jesus to heed the scriptures afresh! We must deal with the real issues of the heart...the ones that have kept us from heavenly intimacy with and passion for our Lord.

The world is waiting to see the New Testament Church, clothed with power from on high and brimming over with the joy of Resurrection Life. Revival in the Church!! It is the only hope for our nation and the world. Isn't it true...the Church cannot have a message for the heart of the world until the Lord has the heart of the Church? God must ignite us or we will be ignored by the world! God loves a Church aflame; He cannot abide the lukewarm. It is time to seek the Lord... to let the Holy Spirit burn the promise of II Chron. 7:14 into our being. "Lord send revival, and let it begin in me."