

# Rise & Fall of Civilizations



**The Outward Relinquishes  
To the Inward**

**DICKSON**

# Rise And Fall Of Civilizations

Roger E. Dickson

## CONTENTS

Preface – 3

Introduction – 6

1 – *Rise And Fall* – 8

2 – *Economic Inequity* – 9

3 – *Aging Civilizations* – 11

4 – *Cracks In The System* – 13

5 – *Aging Parts And Pain* – 19

6 – *From Farm To City* – 24

7 – *Too Big To Sustain* – 26

8 – *Faith Permeates Transitions* – 28

9 – *Remembering Roots* – 31

10 – *Inward Inequity* – 36

11 – *Loss Of The Moral Compass* – 38

12 – *Discovering The Moral Compass* – 43

13 – *Road Map To Consummation* – 49

14 – *Social Signals* – 65

15 – *“Fallen! Fallen Is Babylon The Great!”* – 69

Epilogue – 73

rdickson@mweb.co.za

www.africainternational.org

www.blog.africainternational.org

Facebook: Africa International.org

Philadelphia, Western Cape, South Africa

Copyright 2018, Africa International Missions

Scripture quotations from *International King James Version*

Cover picture: everything-voluntary.com

## Preface

Have you ever heard the statement, “Once you leave home you can never go back”? I can testify to the truth of this statement. Its truth is based on the fact that societies are always in transition. Change is the very core of every society that seeks a better way of life. And since it was America that my wife and I left in 1974, we have never been able to go back to the society that we left.

After we had been gone for only two years, we made an excursion back into the rapidly changing culture of America. We were quite surprised. Change had already taken place in many sectors of the society. Political issues were different. Interests in current affairs were different. The economy was different. America has never been the same as it was when we left in 1974.

Throughout the years we have had the privilege of living on two other continents. I have traveled to more countries than I can remember—at least seventy-five. I have experienced and lived in so many cultures of the world that the only affinity I have with the American culture and society is the English language I still speak. Other than that, both Martha and I would be considered world citizens.

Much travel, however, has been a blessing. It has allowed both my wife and I to experience civilizations at different stages of transition throughout the world. This personal experience has also given us the privilege of experiencing the rise and fall of many civilizations that are surrounded by national borders. We have been there when some of these civilizations went through the throes of a sociological paradigm shift. These experi-

ences have schooled both of us in the art of putting our finger on those things that inherently bring a civilization to its demise. In those times of transition, it has given us the opportunity to remind the saints that no matter what comes out on the other side of social chaos, God remains the same and we still have the same unchanging Savior.

It has been with some apprehension, however, that I have written this book. My transcultural experience has urged me to look back over my shoulder and see that the Western civilization of America, from where we originated, is passing through some sociological chaos that is common with civilizations in transition or decline. The West is experiencing the social chaos we have personally experienced in so many nations throughout our many decades of enrollment in the school of world cultures.

Those who live within a changing society often feel only small tremors of change throughout their lives. Nevertheless, those small tremors eventually build over time into a tectonic movement that eventually signals the fall of a civilization. When a civilization has changed so much, it is no longer identified by those cultural norms it maintained in the past. This book is about identifying those social tremors that will eventually lead to tectonic changes in Western civilization.

When talking to people about what may to them seem to be only minor social dysfunctions, they are often offended concerning the matters that are discussed in this book. This is especially true when there seems to be a time in the history of a collapsing civilization when society is

fighting back to preserve itself. But we never forget what happened during the thirty-one year reign of King Josiah when the civilization of Israel was in its final years (See 2 Kg 22, 23). Israel as a whole had failed to print their Bible, and subsequently, all copies of the law of God were forgotten by the time of Josiah's reign. The word of God was no longer a part of their civilization. In the former years of Israel when the temple was built, one wise old scribe knew what would eventually happen in Israel's history. He knew that the people would eventually forsake and forget the word of God and follow after their own religiosity. He thus buried a copy of the law of God in the walls of the constructed temple of Solomon.

This copy of the long-forgotten law of God was eventually discovered many years later during the reign of Josiah. When King Josiah read the warnings within the law concerning what would happen if God's people forsook the law, he repented. He then led a populace movement to restore conservative values—restoration of the law of God—throughout Israel. He burned the Baal “church houses” (temples). He burned to ashes all those articles of religiosity within the Baal “churches.” He even put to death all those “idolatrous pastors” whom the former wicked kings had ordained. He broke down all the adulterous sodomite houses next to the temple in which women committed fornication in religious worship. In fact, Josiah was so zealous in restoring Israel to God that the Holy Spirit recorded of him, *“Before him there was no king like him who turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses. Neither after him*

*arose there any like him”* (2 Kg 23:25).

However, it was too late. When Josiah died, except for a small remnant that was carried off into captivity, the last residents of the civilization of Israel in Palestine were terminated. When a civilization is embedded with those negative social norms that lead to its demise, no matter how zealous a populace restorationist king might be to detour the fall, the fall is inevitable. After all that Josiah did, the Lord was still going to bring down the civilization of Israel in Palestine because the people had embedded within their society those suicidal social norms that lead to the collapse of civilizations. The Holy Spirit wrote,

*The Lord did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath with which His anger was kindled against Judah because of **all the provocations** with which Manasseh had provoked Him. And the Lord said, “I will remove Judah also out of My sight as I have removed Israel”* (2 Kg 23:26,27).

We are world citizens, and thus, we look at the world as a whole in reference to eternal matters. Though this book focuses on identifying those social dysfunctions of the West, we understand that what afflicts the West, afflicts the rest of the world. In view of the world influence of the West, we are always fearful of God's pronouncement of Genesis 6:5: *“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, **and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**”*

We know the end of this story. The civilization of the world that then was was wiped from the face of the earth by a global cataclysmic flood of waters. The civi-

lization of the world that then existed was terminated. We infer a principle from what God did through the global cleansing of the earth during Noah's era: **When the world morally digresses to the point of no moral return, then the world has lost its purpose for existence, and thus, it will be taken out.**

The next time God takes out the world, it will not be by water—thank God for the rainbow of remembrance. It will be by fire. But the lesson is that the world is moving in the direction of no moral return. The world is losing its purpose for existence, that is, to populate heaven.

The civilization that is the impetus of this moral decline is the West. Because of the explosive influence of the entertainment industry over the past century, and now both the international corporate news media and social media, the West is taking the rest of the world down into the immoral quagmire where every thought of man is only evil continually.

There are some societies of the world that are already there. We do not know how long God will allow the moral demise of the rest of the world to go before He calls it quits for humanity. Only the naive and culturally cocooned do not realize that we live in a world that does not get better, but worse. No matter how many feel-good books we write and read, the world is still moving toward a tectonic destruction by the hand of God.

Men do not become morally conservative over time. As Israel, when people become religious without the word of God, they will turn to “religious fornication” or some other deviate form of religiosity. Most of the time people simply turn away from religion. Either way, society ends up in the same spiritual pit.

It is for this reason that I have focused in this book on those things that are filtering from the West into all the world. But do not be deceived into thinking that a moral decline is not in action. Satan is still that roaring lion who is going about and devouring whole civilizations as he has so successfully done in the past.

The responsibility of God's people today was clearly uttered in a repetitive statement that Jesus made when He warned the first century Christians not to be caught up in the demise of the Jewish civilization that ended in A.D. 70. He warned, *“Be not deceived.”* Those who would ignore the moral decline of Western civilization are allowing themselves to be deceived. Those who have been desensitized to those things that bring civilizations down, have been deceived. It is the responsibility of God's prophets in every generation to be straightforward in their message in order that the people of God not be deceived. When the Israelite civilization was on the brink of termination, God called a prophet to do his duty before the people. We can envision God looking directly into the eyes of the prophet Ezekiel when He made the following mandate:

*When I say to the wicked, “You will surely die,” and you do not give him warning, nor speak to warn the wicked of his wicked way, to save his life, the same wicked man will die in his iniquity. But his blood I will require at your hand. Yet if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he will die in his iniquity. **But you have delivered your soul** (Ez 3:18,19).*

## Introduction

We live on a continent where hundreds of civilizations have come and gone over the past three centuries. Along with some individual tribal civilizations, they have throughout these centuries gone through a series of paradigm shifts in culture. When colonialism came to the continent, one tribal civilization after another succumbed to the new law and order of the colonial powers who submitted the people to new “tribal” orders. Admittedly, some of those old tribal civilizations were quite barbaric in reference to cultural dysfunction. But those civilizations of barbarism are all gone. The sociological behavior of those old cultures have long since been replaced with new cultural values and morals and hope for future development.

After the colonial years, “dictatorial colonialism” came amongst the people, and unto the 1950s to the middle of the 1990s, this culture of control had formed many of the nations of the African continent. But the dictators, too, have mostly passed on and Africa is entering into a new paradigm of democracy that the Africans have redefined according to African culture in general. What has brought on this new paradigm is a culture of education. For the past fifty years, education has captivated genera-

tions of people who in many ways are not unlike their Western counterparts. The Internet, with smartphone connectivity, is transitioning the new Africa into a world that is much different than their forefathers less than a century ago.

The new Africa is becoming increasingly urban. Well over half of the population of Africa today now resides in urban centers. This percentage of urban residents will increase dramatically by the end of the century. This urban generation has long forsaken the culture of the rural village. It is a generation that will define Africa for the rest of history. No urban African wants to return to the village.

We introduce this book with these historical insights that are characteristic of many civilizations throughout the world. The Internet has globally connected people to the point that when we speak of the decline of Western civilization, we assume that this decline affects other civilizations. This is true because of the influence that Western civilization continues to have on the rest of the world. As goes the West, so goes the rest of the world. All of those moral norms of the West, whether positive or negative in reference to the existence of civilizations, are spreading with light speed around the world through social media. We live in a

world today where no civilization can remain isolated from the rest of the world.

We judge that it is detrimental for the rest of the world to be influenced by many of the negative social values that define Western civilization. Since the moral values of the West are now embedded in the human rights of the United Nations, we are concerned that the negative values of the West are now being imposed on peoples throughout the world. In conjunction with the pressures that the United Nations imposes on all its member states in reference to moral values, the social media that is now such a part of the lives of billions around the world, continues to be the medium through which the negative moral values of the West are propagated worldwide.

Christians must prepare the residents of the world to face the onslaught of unrighteous moral values that are now being propagated around the world. Civilizations since the beginning of time have gone through individual paradigm shifts. In many cases, those civilizations collapsed. But those were civilizations that were in many ways autonomous. In the world today, however, it is drastically different. The world is now so interconnected that where the West leads, the rest of the world is following

through the Internet. Such is the curse of the Internet in reference to propagating unhealthy moral values.

Unlike centuries in the past, no civilization today lives in a world of its own. No “great walls” can be built to hold out invading forces from the north. No border can be so secure to refuse entry of those detrimental moral values that lead to the decline of a civilization. We live in a world that is connected, and thus, where the moral norms of the West go, so will follow the rest of the world.

The things about which we speak have no need of a stamp in a passport. With a tap on a smartphone, negative moral values can now be broadcast around the world. There are now over two billion people on Facebook alone. Add to this the billions that are on other social media. It is for this reason that Christian leaders need to be alert to what is happening in the West. What is happening there shows up on thousands of smartphones throughout the world every day. We can no longer say, “That is the problem of the West.” The West, as it declines from within, has now become our problem. The problems that are causing the decline of Western civilization are in many ways, problems for the rest of us.

## Chapter 1

### RISE AND FALL

As we journey through any study of the decline of civilizations, Christians must always remind themselves with the following statement of King Asa of old as he faced his enemies and the probable end of his kingdom:

*Lord, it is nothing with You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power. Help us, O Lord our God, for we trust in You and in Your name we go against this multitude. O Lord, You are our God. Let no man prevail against You (2 Ch 14:11).*

And then there were the words of the psalmist, who at the time, was evidently experiencing traumatic times in either social or national upheaval.

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth is removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea (Ps 46:1,2).*

No better words could have been spoken at a time when God's people stood against the onslaught of opposition that would prevail in a world of evil. It is always as Jonathan said to his armor bearer as he was about to en-

gage the enemies of God, "... *there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few*" (1 Sm 14:6).

With that encouragement, we rally our thoughts around what many historians believe is the final chapter of Western civilization as we know it. It is not a matter of if, but when. And when we speak of the fall of civilizations, we speak of decades, if not centuries. But one truth is always axiomatic when historians contemplate the end of empires. **All empires eventually reach their consummation.** Only the naive assume that what they have and enjoy in the present will continue forever. In the history of civilizations, that is simply not possible.

We must sometimes live for decades before we can be aware of centennial transitions in civilizations. As Western civilization now transitions into another social paradigm, our experience of many decades speaks no different than those of past millennia who have experienced the fall of empires in their time. As Israel's prophets cried out against the majority in their final years, so we would cry out today as we experience the moral decline of Western civilization. If one would question our concerns, we do not stand alone. A simple Google

search on the Internet will reveal an overwhelming amount of books and articles on this subject. So bear with some of our own speculations, if not postulations concerning what we have gleaned from the material that has been researched and written, and in our lifetime, have experienced.

Rachel Nuwer, in a featured BBC Future's *Best of 2017*, was right when she wrote that the collapse of many civilizations ...

... have occurred many times in human history, and **no civilization, no matter how seemingly great, is immune to the vulnerabilities that**

**may lead a society to its end.** Regardless of how well things are going in the present moment, the situation can always change. Putting aside species-ending events like an asteroid strike, nuclear winter or deadly pandemic, history tells us that it's usually a plethora [combination] of factors that contribute to collapse. What are they, and which, if any, have already begun to surface? It should come as no surprise that humanity is currently on an unsustainable and uncertain path—but just how close are we to reaching the point of no return? (Emphasis mine, R.E.D.).

## Chapter 2 ECONOMIC INEQUITY

The consensus of historians on this matter is in agreement with the conclusions of Nuwer. It is also a consensus that Western civilization as we know it is showing many of the signs that brought down empires of the past. As Christians who are a part of any society, it is our ministry to give hope in times of social tensions. When experiencing what seems to be the tensions of social transition in Western civilization, it is a time to direct the minds of the people toward the unchanging God who has been around since the finality of hundreds

of civilizations since the beginning.

Christians must always be the apostles of hope for those who are having difficulty as a part of a society that is transitioning into a new and different civilization. The Holy Spirit's exhortation of 1 Peter 3:15 is appropriate to prepare the people around us with hope, regardless of what happens. As Christians were in the throes of the fall of national Israel prior to A.D. 70, Peter wrote to encourage those Jewish Christians who believed the prophecy of the demise of national Israel that was spoken by

Jesus (Mt 24). Jewish Christians must encourage their fellow countrymen to maintain their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

*But sanctify Christ as Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear (1 Pt 3:15).*

It causes no little anxiety to compare the judgments of the prophets of Israel in reference to Israel's demise to what is leading Western civilization to the same conclusion. One of the major reasons for the demise of national Israel could be summed up in one statement: **A poor economic class developed in Israel that was continually exploited by the rich for the benefit of the rich.** When this social structure was developed in Israel, God closed the book on Israel.

When such a social structure develops within any society, it is not possible for the principles of God's word to rule in the hearts of the people. What rules is a selfish elite class who exploit the lower class who compose the majority of the society. In such a social environment of inequity, the concept of "love-your-neighbor-as-yourself" is marginally practiced. The principle of loving one's neighbor as himself cannot be sustained in a soci-

ety where one economic class marginalizes another in order to maintain their own economic superiority. There are no "love-your-neighbor" people on wall street.

In the end of Israel, God said to the economically advantaged, "*For you have eaten up the vineyard. The plunder of the poor is in your houses*" (Is 3:14). Their luxurious houses manifested that the poor had been exploited for the benefit of the rich. The rich had ground "*the faces of the poor*" for their own prosperity (Is 3:15). The rich took the money of the poor investors on the downside of the stock market. Isaiah judged,

*Woe to those who enact unrighteous [constitutional degrees], and who write misfortune that they have prescribed [through legislation], in order to turn aside the needy from justice and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey and that they may rob the fatherless! (Is 10:1,2).*

As a prophet during social demise, Isaiah continued to speak of the foolish ones of Israel who led the way to the end of Israel's civilization. The rich aristocracy were the "investors" who devised "*wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speak right*" (Is 32:7). Jeremiah joined Isaiah by proclaim-

ing that the economically advantaged “do not defend the rights of the poor” (Jr 5:28).

We wonder where Western civilization is in reference to this reason for the end of civilizations? Could there be embedded in the financial structure of the West those things that exacerbate the continued separation of the haves from the have nots?

Nuwer also reported the results of a systems scientist by the name of Safa Motesharrei at the University of Maryland. Nuwer referred to the conclusions of Motesharrei when she wrote that ...

**... elites push society toward instability and eventual collapse by hoarding huge quantities of wealth and resources, and leaving little or none for commoners who vastly outnumber them yet support them with labor** [Emphasis mine, R.E.D.].

These words echo the pronouncements of Isaiah and Jeremiah when the two prophets proclaimed the final days of Israel.

Benjamin Friedman compared Western civilization with the spinning wheels of a bicycle. The wheels are kept spinning by the forward motion of economic health. However, if the forward motion of the bicycle slows, then the bicycle starts to teeter. If the wheels cannot be kept turning by strong economics in order to produce social equity, then the bicycle society is headed for social collapse. We would add that the bicycle may come to a conclusion in forward motion and fall to the side, but the wheels will keep spinning as a deceptive indication of continuing life in a fallen economy. However, the spinning wheels will eventually come to a halt.

## Chapter 3

### AGING CIVILIZATIONS

Societies make nations, and thus, societies are as aging individuals within a nation. Western civilization was built on the forward motion of financial prosperity. But if for some reason cracks begin to appear in the financial structure of the society, then the society is showing the first signs

of age. For this reason, the rise and fall of nations in a modern world is defined by the rise and fall of the society of individuals within the nation who depend on the financial institutions of the nation.

As individuals, our bodies are unfortunately a metaphor of the rise

and fall of every nation that has appeared on the stage of history since the beginning of time. As a young person, we were alert and vibrant. We were idealistic with ambitions for the future. We were full of hope and optimism. By our middle age years, we had determined who we were, and thus, were on course for the rest of our lives. Unfortunately, we began to grow old. We knew we were losing the energy of our youth.

In our aged years it is difficult to make decisions. Actually, we become fearful of making decisions. It is as Solomon said. The evil days have come upon us (Ec 12:1). Our functionality has slowed down to the point that we seem to have no function at all. We are afraid to make decisions because we have slowed down in our ability to function both physically and mentally. Hope is often lost because there are no aspirations for the future. The future is only death, not a long life of achievement. Solomon resolved, *“As he came forth from his mother’s womb, naked will he return to go as he came. **And he will take nothing from his labor that he may carry it away in his hand**”* (Ec 5:15).

In our old age we start fall apart physically. There is modern medicine to patch up dysfunctional parts, and in some cases replace those parts that have long since worn out. But regardless of all the patch work, the end is

inevitable. We will fall apart when there is no strength to maintain life among the living.

What is most frustrating above all is that the mind seems to have been originally made by our Maker to be terminal regardless of the extension of the physical. We can medically keep the physical body going, but often the physical long surpasses the ability of the mental to continue. We forget who we are. We sometimes forget where we are. We do not trust others. We become paranoid in thinking that someone is out to get us. We make sure all the doors are locked. We are over cautious. We take no risks as we did when we were young and ambitious, and stroked by invincibility. We thus withdraw within ourselves in order to survive. We lock ourselves away from a supposedly evil world that is out to suck the last remaining sparks of life out of our very existence.

Does the preceding remind us of any particular society/nation of the world? It has all happened before a hundred times over as civilizations reached their aged years. One of the most classic series of books on this matter was written by Edward Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Books as such could be written about every empire/civilization that has existed since the beginning of time. Before and after

Rome, there have always been the rise and fall of empires. The West is just another in a series of empires that have risen throughout history, but now it is showing the signs of an eventual consummation. It is now in the twilight of its existence as a civilization on earth because it, as all aging empires, is winding down. It is as an aging individual who cannot stop the aging processes. As a civilization, the West manifests all the symptoms of an aging body that has only demise to which to look in the future. We thus join Isaiah and Jeremiah, not to be pessimistic, but realistic in reference to God's work among the nations of

this world in order to bring about His purpose for the world. Nevertheless, there is a "walking dead" society in existence in Western civilization that has given rise to the competition of sub-societies who will determine what will be the next group of conquerors that will assume control of the West. A society filled with "doomsday preppers" know that something is up, but they cannot yet lay their finger on the eventual cause that looms over the not so distant future that will threaten their survival. They only live with the dread of what lies in the future. Bunker sales are on the increase in such a society.

## Chapter 4

### CRACKS IN THE SYSTEM

We would remind ourselves that the demise of the present Western civilization will not be the termination of the people. It will be as the demise of the Soviet civilization decades ago. Russia still exists today as a people, but the Republic of the Soviet Union no longer exists. What will terminate the West will be the fall of conservative Western morals, Western values, Western behavior, the Western family, and possibly a variation in the Western system of democratic government.

As Rome, the West is, or has,

fallen from within. Charles Moster was a former litigation attorney in the Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush presidential administrations. His evaluation of the Western civilization in comparison to the Roman civilization is striking:

The historical consensus is that Rome rotted from within and ultimately collapsed in a whimper. Although there are divergent historical opinions on the cause of societal death, **most attribute Roman's demise to suicide resulting from a precipitous de-**

**cline in traditional values and outright failure of government** [Emphasis mine, R.E.D.].

Those who are aware of what is culturally now in progress in the Western world will find little with which to disagree on this matter. This is especially true among those who can still remember the 1940s and 1950s. The Western world today is vastly different from those decades that marked the end of a society that no longer exists. But before we think Western civilization is finished with transformation into something vastly new and different, hang on for the end of this century. Unfortunately, those who will take Western civilization into a different social paradigm will have fewer moral norms of bygone years by which they can judge their digression. The West is as Peter Lavelle of the news media, *Russia Today*, stated in a January 2018 TV broadcast: “The West is living in an intellectually morally corrupt world.” This is the way all civilizations go out, that is, from within. The civilization of the grandfathers is long forgotten by the time the grandchildren or great grandchildren usher in a new moral system.

The socially democratic West began in its youth as a vibrant civilization that was full of hope and optimism. Economic growth has taken the West unto heights of remarkable

prosperity. Its prosperity to a financial zenith has affected the rest of the world. In fact, many nations of the world, as was the case with the Roman Empire, depend on the existence and financial strength of the West. Rome pumped life-giving financial blood throughout the Empire. Societies continued as long as they would vote in favor of Rome that held up their societies through financial aid and military reassurance. But in the end, Rome was unable to financially sustain all those who depended on her wealth. Initially, Rome was able to increase the financial prosperity of the people of the Empire because its economic foundation was established on a high moral standard. Moster’s evaluation of the strength of the Empire was correct:

Rome emerged and captivated the world because of the strength and stability of its family unit and commitment to universal national values over selfish interest. With increased affluence came complacency and the abandonment of core ideals. The national government failed because it was paralyzed by irreconcilable conflict and corruption.

The West is simply reliving the consummation about which John wrote of Rome in her later days when dependent nations mourned over the

demise of the Empire. Their mourning was not over Rome itself, but over their loss of financial and military security that was provided by Rome (See Rv 18). In her latter years, when Rome forsook her moral foundation, the financial and military structure collapsed.

The nations that leached on the finances of Rome were similar to the financial relationship that many nations today have with the West. Dependent nations will vote in the United Nations against positions of the West, but at the same time they will have their cuffed hands stretched out behind the UN building, begging for foreign aid for their perpetually impoverished nations they govern through corruption, or to continually take advantage of the West through unfair trade deals.

Aging has affected the moral norms upon which the West accomplished its great financial power and influence. To some extent, the democratic system that was given birth by independence from England through the Revolutionary War, has to some extent developed into a congress of governance that cannot get along with itself. The governance of the West is almost impotent in reference to making decisions. And for this reason, the financial base of the West is always on the verge of the bears who would take the stock market into a financial

tail spin. Most financial gurus with whom we have consulted on this matter are almost unanimous in their conclusion that the stock market is headed for a severe crash sometime in the future. And where goes the Western stock market, so goes the markets of the world.

There is heart disease in the source from which financial blood is pumped to clinging societies throughout the world. There is so much political paranoia in the governing environment of the West that elected officials are afraid to make decisions lest they lose the votes of their liberal or conservative constituencies that put them in office. Western civilization is experiencing the Achilles' heel of democracy: **As goes the electorate of society, so goes the elected officials of society and its government.** In the case of Western civilization, the divisions within the society of the voting constituencies is so great that governance of the populous becomes almost impossible.

The problem is not so much with the forces of conservative preservation, but with a neo-liberal constituency that has lost its moral compass. After the days of President John F. Kennedy, the people of Western civilization progressively digressed into a liberal culture of despising dignitaries. As Jude spoke of the final days of Israel in the latter part of the first

century, so Western civilization is today. We are in the days of those who morally “*defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignitaries*” (Jd 8). This is the biblical definition of a true neo-liberal society. These are the days of banners that read, “Not my president,” “Abortion is legal,” “My body is my choice,” or “My life-style is my business,” and popular songs with lyrics that read, “It’s my body I’ll do what I want.” Citizens have lost all respect for honoring the king or any authority that would impose on them moral standards that preserve society. They thus feel free to march in streets against elected dignitaries whom they despise. They march for immoral social rights that attack the very fiber of society. They thus march for moral degradation that expedites the collapse of any civilization.

The more harsher the criticism becomes from the social liberal, the more successful those candidates are who reflect the moral digression of the society. The civilization has now accepted the cancer of an aging person that has spread throughout the body for social self-destruction. Dysfunctional cancerous cells are spreading throughout the body of society. Moster wrote specifically of America:

The statistical evidence is clear that American society is rotting from

within as the rate of divorce has skyrocketed along with the rise of so-called nontraditional families and births out of wedlock. Religious views, whether Christian, Jewish or other faiths, are in rapid decline as atheism has expanded its reach.

No matter who is Caesar in the final years of a morally degraded civilization, it is a time when this head of state will be severely criticized by those who defy moral standards. Those who seek to relieve themselves of any moral constraints despise any leader who would impose on them any moral standards. This answers the question as to why the Millennial Generation that is less than ten percent religious according to Bible standards, has a difficult time with moral standards that would come from any faith that believes in the morals of a Higher Power. This eighty-million strong generation is bringing into the American civilization the collapse of religious social standards that preserve societies. “Church goers” in a collapsing civilization, therefore, should not be surprised that “church attendance” is in decline. It is simply a telltale sign of a collapsing civilization when a society “despises the dominion” of anyone who would imposed moral values, starting first with the religious institutions of the society.

The most sinister morals of a falling civilization thrives on the criticism of any leader who would promote standards by which society must conduct itself. This criticism would be focused toward any local religious leader, and go all the way to the top seats of government. And among the top seats, senators of the empire are willing to take knives of criticism and put Caesar to death. And then after Caesar is gone, another Caesar is set up for the same fate. There is biting and devouring among those who are supposed to control the society.

Among the remnants of the religious community of a collapsing civilization, religious universalism becomes the philosophy of religion of the times. Universalism (everybody is going to heaven) becomes so accepted that those religious leaders who preach unchanging moral norms are “despised dignitaries.” Since anyone of faith will be saved, and thus should be accepted by everyone, then those who would impose any moral standards on society should be rejected. Whether from the Bible, Quran, or any “book of faith,” unchanging moral standards are rejected by the neo-liberal society. The faithful become a remnant within a society that has become increasingly non-religious. No one has a right to judge another, and no religious book of authority is to be accepted if it requires

obedience to unchanging moral standards, or absolute truth that must be believed and obeyed. It is believed that if one is simply religious, then he or she will make it through the pearly gates, if indeed there is life after death.

Universalism is the result of a shrinking religious community within a society. When a society begins to decrease in its religiosity, religious leaders become desperate. Since the liberal society in which they preach is rejecting moral and doctrinal absolutes, church attendance declines. Since only a certain percentage of the society is religious, churches start competing for their share of the religious remnant that remains within the society. All sorts of “religious gimmicks” are used in order to “keep the youth,” and give the flock a “worshipful experience.” A healthy society is always measured by the faith of the society in a Higher Power. When this is gone, the society has lost its moral direction.

In such a religiously sterile society atheism becomes fashionable. And for this reason, atheism is on the rise in the West. Atheism is flaunted by politicians who recruit Hollywood stars because both seek the approval of a nonreligious audience. When a civilization is going down, one of the first indications of such is the rise of atheism. Of course the atheist says he needs no belief in a Higher Power to control his moral behavior. But he

needs to make this argument with the former Nazi Germans who led themselves to believe that it was morally right to murder a society of people within the society as a whole.

The people of a dying civilization become frustrated with the constant political turmoil that has brought the aging nation to the old age of political paranoia, social dysfunction and a crippled government. As an old person who can no longer make decisions for the future, Western civilization is in the throes of constant struggles from within. Citizens are frustrated with social dysfunction, having little understanding of that to which they aspire. Such is the frustration of a liberal society that has lost its moral compass. What is being experienced is the collapse of a civilization through the fall of sustaining norms that keep a society on a moral course. So as Rome, the collapse is from within. The city of Rome did eventually fall to an invading army in A.D. 476. However, it had already fallen morally and economically long before the invaders reached the gates of the capital.

In our aging years, we are not in control of our being. We used our youth to gain our wealth to decide our future, and now in our old age we are trying to use our wealth to sustain our existence for just a few more decades. When an aging nation is out of con-

trol because of the lack of ability to make decisions, it becomes as individuals whose aging process is out of control. In order to disguise the teetering bicycle, we “dress for success” in order to hide our aging. In order to give a presentation that we are still great, we present ourselves in a way that portrays to the voting constituents and the world that we are in control of our own destiny. Arrogance by the leaders gives the impression that they are in control.

So we deceive ourselves. One of the signs of a civilization that has aged is the presentation of their rulers as “presidential.” Our leaders must look and behave like kings. They must dress like kings. And as President Macron of France, they spend thousands of dollars on cosmetics in order to give the physical appearance of a king who is in control. The use of the word “optics” is now the cherished word of those who would give a presentation of being in control. In fact, we now have masters of body language to evaluate our kings in order that they behave in public as kings who are in control of the empire. But such theatrical presentations lead us to ignore that beneath the cosmetics, there are irreversible aging processes that have set in. There is sin beneath the sin that will bring Western civilization as we now know it to an end.

We forget that our destiny is determined by our age, and thus, we all follow the path of Rome and a thousand other expired empires since the beginning of time. No matter how successful we present ourselves to those who depend on us, there are aging forces at work within the Western society that will eventually bring

the civilization to its knees. We are only deceiving ourselves if we think we can elect a successful technocrat as our leader, and at the same time, avoid the overpowering forces of social and economic dysfunctions that bring empires down. Aging civilizations choose no moral leaders to save them from their decline.

## Chapter 5

### AGING PARTS AND PAIN

As a nation—and as our physical bodies—we become inflexible in our old age. Every movement becomes painful. Our loss of flexibility means that we are moving toward falling apart. In reference to nationhood, we have entered the time when parts must be propped up in order to continue. Congressional indecision is evidence of an aging process. Indecision is the reflection of a polarized society that finds it difficult to discuss politics at the kitchen table. Our lack of flexibility means that the West has entered the years of a bipolar civilization.

Rome fell apart from within because it could not produce a unified society that wanted to work together for the glory of Rome. National pride gave way to petty special interests within that were centered around local matters. The greater glory of the

Empire could not overshadow the social divisions that existed within the Empire. Once the control of the central government collapsed through inflexibility, the dangling dependent nations throughout the Empire sought to go their separate ways.

In the gradual social paradigm shift of a civilization, we start choosing leaders who we believe will fix our aging body. Since the West is a business-oriented empire that was established on the foundation of two centuries of hard work, society will elect populist technocrats who major in success in the business world. Regardless of the technocrats' experience in democratic functionality, however, society assumes that if business technocrats were successful in the financial world, then certainly they will make us economically successful again as we were great in bygone

years. If our technocrats take our prosperity to new levels, then certainly our nation is in good hands and we will survive. We are forcing ourselves to believe a lie.

What we forget is the fact that when empires fall it is usually not from the top down, but from the bottom up. The causes of the fall come from within the society, not from the halls of the capital, though those in capital reflect the people in a democratic society. When God sought to preserve for the captivity of His people the society that had Nineveh as their capital, He did not send Jonah to the capital building to preach to the politicians. He sent the prophet to the people in the streets with the message, “*Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown*” (Jh 3:4). The problem was in the society of the Ninevites. In order for the society to be preserved for the arrival of Jewish captives when the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians in 722/21 B.C., the society of the Ninevites could be preserved only if the people would repent, which thing they did.

We forget that great civilizations are not built on money, or the success of technocrats, but on the people. When purse and power are used to manipulate people, then as Israel, the civilization is on its way out. When a society refuses to recognize that its financial institutions are in trouble, they

are burying their heads in their troves of money. If they think a new leader will rise to be their messiah, then they are not focusing on the cause of their demise. What was commendable of the society to which Jonah preached a short eight-word message is that the people took ownership of their social problems in order to escape their certain demise that was coming (Jh 3:4-9).

The financial world of printing money in collapsing civilizations of today lead the people to believe that the printed paper money will perpetuate the existence of an empire. But printing money produces inflation, and inflation further increases the gulf between the rich and the poor. The printing of money increases the shares the elite have in the financial institutions of the free-market society. The success of the financial institutions and stock markets, therefore, are deceptive. Because so much printed money is in circulation, its “appearance” in society shows up in overinflated financial institutions. Successful financial institutions and a high stock market deceive the populace into thinking that their economy is healthy.

One need only to look south from America across the Gulf of Mexico for a history lesson on this matter. Venezuela is printing bundles of money to prop up a revolution that is

imploding. In decades of the past, the rich become so prosperous in Venezuela and other Latin American countries, that the masses of the poor rose up in democratic elections. In Venezuela the masses elected Hugo Chaves to take control of the empire that had been in existence since the days of the Spanish Conquistadores. In the election of Chaves, the empire of the elite was overthrown by the poor labor class. But now, those who have assumed the leadership of the revolution, are taking the empire further into demise by printing so much money that inflation is into the thousands of percent per annum. People are now fleeing the country in order to survive. President Ronald Reagan once said, “No great nation that has abandoned the gold standard has ever remained a great nation.” The problem is that without a gold standard, there are no limitations on how much money the government will print and spend in order to prop up the nation. Paper money is continually printed in order to pay the expenses of an economy that is continually beyond its own resources to pay the bills.

There is a difference between a stock pile of gold and a stock pile of paper money. One pile indicates that an empire is truly rich. But the other indicates that an empire is built only on a pile of paper. Today’s world money is simply on a computer chip

of some financial institution. We are just a mouse click away from a financial fall as the bears would take advantage of 401K stock holders. The only hope in this possible electronic catastrophe is that only about 50% of the population of America have any investment in the stock market.

The destiny of a “paper empire” is terminal. When the empire cannot print enough money to pay the interest on the accumulated debt of the empire, then the empire is destined for a catastrophic financial correction. And when the correction comes, those who know these things about “paper empires” have already cashed out and sold their stock. In doing so, they further enrich themselves and their separation from those who lost fortunes in “Bitcoin bubbles.”

The social result is that the financial and social gulf between the rich and poor is exacerbated to revolutionary proportions. The rich land owners are run from the land. A social paradigm shift occurs, and thus a French Revolution (1789-1799), Russian Revolution (1917), and Latin American civilizations socially restructured when the land owners are run out of their countries (1950s, 1960s). In the case of Zimbabwe, the poor simply took the land from about 4,000 farm owners and redistribute it to the poor who could not afford to buy land. And in South Africa, the

majority of the politicians voted in parliament in February 2018 to take the land from the farmers, who owned 72% of the land, and give it to the poor who also could not afford to buy land.

**A society that has been born and bred on prosperity always forgets that the social norms of a society are always more influential in the future of the civilization than financial wealth.** Must we return to the lessons that Israel learned in her rise and fall? Rome, as Solomon and Rehoboam, also tried the deception of taxation to produce a strong nation (See 1 Kg 12:10,11). The problem was that enough finances could not be produced through taxation to sustain the military systems that would sustain the nation. As a nation cannot tax itself into prosperity, so neither can the printing of wealth perpetuate a nation that depends on the same.

We have fooled ourselves when we think that financial health has priority over social norms. It is a morally healthy society that perpetuates a civilization, not a stock market that is breaking new limits. In fact, aging financial health often works against social health because financial health is so deceptive in reference to a morally degraded society. In a society that has prided itself on financial successes one after another, we forget that in a free market democratic society, such

successes place the majority of the wealth into the hands of the few. The problem with this inequity is that the few rich, as in the end of Israel, have few moral norms by which they can maintain their wealth in reference to the poor, who become the mass labor force of the society. The labor force that produces and maintains the empire, begins to be marginalized by the elite few. It is then that social cracks begin to appear in the civilization. It is then that the financially exploited begin to consider revolution.

Among the disadvantaged, hope gives way to despair, and despair in a democratic society eventually catches up with the nation as a whole. The poor have no hope of being successful as the rich for whom they labor. They can only envy the Kardashians and imagine their life-style. The reason for this is that in a democratic free-market society, the cost of living bypasses the financial abilities of the labor population. Labor finds it difficult to survive because the wealth of the society is in the hands of too few people, who have, for example, priced all the houses out of financial reach of the poor. The masses who are on the bottom cannot keep up with the economy that is governed by the wealthy on the top of the food chain. In a democratic society, the majority that is now financially suffering, determines the future of the civilization.

In this social environment, the rise of “prosperity prophets” infiltrate the religious sector of the populace. They preach a “prosperity gospel” in order to bring hope to the financially disadvantaged. They deceive the people into believing that they can use their faith to gain wealth. Because the faith of the deceived is often the last social norm upon which the disadvantaged have to maintain some hope, they bite into the deception that their faith can produce financial success. They convince themselves that God wants them to also be rich. Therefore, they conclude, the more faith one has, the richer he will become. Religion thus becomes an investment scheme for the profiteering preacher.

The prosperity preacher dresses himself in fine clothing. He wears gold in order to give the appearance of financial success. He orchestrates emotional assemblies before whom he stands as a successful pulpiter who dangles an audience of religious puppets before him with an orchestra of stringed instruments who play rapturous concert music. In order to take his audiences into a hypnotic frenzy, people are supposedly healed and dead people raised. The coffers are passed among the poor and filled with pension money. Worship is sacrificed for an opportunity of the pulpit profiteer to weekly convince the attendees that they too will “be blessed” if they

will only “bless” the collection for the day.

The deceived ignore the fact that the “financial success” of the prosperity preacher came at the expense of a people who have been jilted into believing a prosperity religion of deception (2 Th 2:1-12). The prosperity preacher thus joins the exploiting rich in a declining civilization. He has bought into the culture of financial prosperity, and thus has convinced himself that the aging civilization of which he is a part can be restored when the people of faith gain financial success. He exploits the contributions of his constituency in order to maintain his wealth. The religious constituency has been blinded to the historical reality that the Baal prophets of Israel were interested in bales of money.

In Israel it was the same in their final years before the captivities of Assyria and Babylonia. The prophets of God encountered the prosperity prophets who said that the end was not near. The prosperity prophets cried out, “*Peace, peace*” (Jr 6:14). But there was no peace. Doom was imminent. The “peace prophets” lashed out against God’s prophets who said that the end was near. God’s messengers, subsequently, brought upon themselves the “*trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, also bonds and imprisonment*” (Hb 11:36;

see Hb 11:37-40).

The same prosperity preachers existed again when national Israel was coming to its final demise in A.D. 70. With the consummation of national Israel in view, Luke recorded that the prosperity preachers of the time, the Pharisees, were “*lovers of money*” (Lk 16:14). This group of preachers had even digressed in their covetousness to the point that the money that was to be given by the children to support their parents in their old age should be given to them as Corban. According to the Pharisees, the money

for the aged parents should be dedicated in contributions to the prosperity preachers (Mk 7:9-13).

When preachers take advantage of the people in the offerings that the people should offer in their commitment to God, then they are no better than Hophni and Phinehas who siphoned off more than their share of the contributions that were offered by the people (See 1 Sm 2:12-17). As their judgment, these two prosperity preachers ended up dead because they took advantage of the people’s offerings to God.

## Chapter 6 FROM FARM TO CITY

When Israel was first established as a nation in Palestine, it was a rural society. The people lived and labored on their own farms—as it was in the early development of America. In early Israel, God gave the cities to the preachers (Levites) who were supported by the people. When there was a drought or pestilence in a particular region of Palestine, according to the law, other farmers would help to aid the unfortunate who were suffering because of the loss of their crops. The “gleaning law” was designated for those whose land was unproductive because of drought or pestilence (Lv 19:9,10). There was to be no poor

among the people because there was sharing in times of need (Dt 15:4,9). There was to be a debt cancellation every seven years (Dt 15). The year of Jubilee, when all land was to be returned to the original owners, was to guarantee that the society would not move into a “haves and have not” economic society (Lv 25). God’s civil equity laws of the Sinai law would guarantee that the society of Israel would never digress into a social order where the poor were marginalized by a rich elite.

A poor class did not exist in Israel until some citizens began to ignore the rules of the Sinai law that

were established to ensure that a society of equity would exist and prosper as a whole. Therefore, when inequity set in that produced a minority elite, a majority became the exploited for the benefit of the elite. It was then that God said that such a society could not exist to represent Him among the nations of the world. Such a society could not carry on to manifest His benevolent nature of love to the world.

While Israel was digressing into moral and social decay, God was building two foreign economies that would become stronger than Israel in order to bring judgment upon Israel. Because Assyria and Babylonia became stronger economies with totalitarian governments that had stronger military forces, they were able to overpower a nation that depended on the power of the rich “corporate” owners in the cities of Samaria and Jerusalem. Because the upper wealthy class of Israel could not inspire patriotism from the “deplorable” rural masses, Israel was doomed. The rural masses of the exploited saw no need to defend the prosperity of the rich, even though it was against an invading power.

In the case of Israel, it was not a revolution by the poor farmers, but an invading force that brought the nation to a close because of its moral weakness from within. Ironically, when the outside invading forces showed up at

the city gates to bring down the rich city elite, the captors took the elite city survivors into captivity. However, the invading armies “*left some of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and farmers*” (2 Kg 25:12). With the final destruction of Jerusalem and termination of the southern kingdom of Israel, “*Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard [of Babylon] left in the land of Judah the poor of the people who had nothing. And he gave them vineyards and fields at the same time*” (Jr 39:10; see Jr 40:7; 52:16).

The irony of both the Assyrian captivity of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722/21 B.C., and the Babylonian captivity of the southern kingdom in 586 B.C., was that the city elite of both Samaria and Jerusalem were marched off into captivity. The poor, however, were allowed to remain in the land to farm the farms and tend the vineyards. God’s judgment of the elite exploiters of the poor was just. The poor did not suffer the judgment that was due the elite. The poor, who were left in Palestine, restored a rural society as Israel was when she was first established in Palestine after Egyptian captivity.

The poor were again to institute the rural statutes of the Sinai law. The only thing that changed was that they became an occupied land, first by the Assyrians, then by the Babylonians, then the Medo-Persians, the Greeks,

and finally the Romans. It was during the occupation of the Romans that they would be allowed again to have their own king. However, their real King Jesus would not reign on earth in Jerusalem as King Herod. Jesus' reign would be as it was before Israel cried out for a king on earth during the days of Samuel. As the Father was their King in heaven for almost five hundred years after they came out of Egyptian captivity, and when they were a rural society before King Saul, King Jesus would also reign in heaven

over the spiritual Israel until the consummation of the world at the end of time. Under the reign of King Jesus, the social economic policy among the citizens of His kingdom reign was explained in Acts 2:44,45: "*Now all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they sold their possessions and goods and divided them to all, as everyone had need.*" This was a social order policy after the order of the Sinai law, that there would be no one in need among the disciples (Dt 15:4,9).

## Chapter 7

### TOO BIG TO SUSTAIN

Israel did not have, but we do, the example of millennia of empires that have fallen because the societies of these empires moved into social conditions that could not be reversed. For example, we again refer to the Roman Empire. One hundred years before Jesus, and because of its strength, Rome had conquered every nation encircling the Mediterranean basin. The problem with the expansion of the Empire, however, was that Rome became ambitious and reached beyond the Mediterranean basin to territories that overextended their financial ability to sustain. By the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D., their expansion and control aspirations eventually caught

up with them. It was then that the Empire began to collapse from within when civil wars and invasions, with national tensions, taxed their financial strength. The end was finally in sight when the Visigoths attacked and took the city Rome in A.D. 410. However, the collapse of the Empire had actually begun far before this date as the society had already started to implode from within.

In the area of government and finances, Rome, as all collapsing empires, ignored the principle of "social thermodynamics." In the realm of natural law, the law of thermodynamics is a principle that the energy that sustains the physical world is con-

stantly degenerating into entropy. The universe is simply running down and will not be restarted with new energy. As a burning match that is going out, the energy that maintains the “burn of the universe” cannot be recaptured to burn again. The energy that maintains the continued existence of the physical world will eventually evaporate into uselessness (entropy). Lost energy will not be regenerated, and thus there remains no more energy to sustain that which is now running down.

The same principle is true of societies and kingdoms. There is a social thermodynamic that cannot be reversed in a democratic, free-market society. The continued existence of the empire is based on the energy of the society to produce wealth, and thus continue the existence of the empire. When the society begins to lose its power to sustain both society and government, then the society and government begin to crumble. Rome exercised great social ingenuity and social energy in order to continue for several centuries. But in its last century of existence, the signs of consumption were evident. The energy of social strength was digressing into a realm of “social entropy.”

Rome grew its military force in order to conquer and control a vast number of nations. To encourage continuity and a strained patriotism, she permitted self-rule of those people

whom she conquered, and sought to integrate conquered societies into Roman culture and government. Rome sought to encourage patriotism to the Empire that would in turn keep the peace. Rome even gave a limited autonomy to regional courts within the societies of the conquered people. But as Gibbon and other historians have concluded, these things were to no avail. As the society of Rome began to follow the course of “social thermodynamics,” the government and war machine headed into “social entropy.” There was eventually no more social energy (patriotism and finances) to continue the Empire.

When social structures within the society and government of Rome were crumbling, it was only a matter of time until the final collapse. Historians give A.D. 476 as the date of the end of the autonomous function of the Roman Empire. This was the date when the Germanic Odoacer deposed from Rome the last of the Roman Caesars. Odoacer became the first barbarian to rule in Rome. One thousand years of Roman influence over approximately twenty percent of the world’s population came to an end.

And as went Rome, so goes all empires of this world, including Western civilization. As we previously stated, it is not if, but when Western civilization will eventually consum-

mate its existence as we now know it, and give way to another. No civilization can withstand the changing forces of “social thermodynamics.” Even as we write, Western civilization is giving way to another predominate social civilization that will eventually make itself known by the end of this century. A social paradigm shift in Western civilization is well on its way.

The people of West will not vanish away. Only the means by which they morally conduct themselves and govern themselves will pass away. When the final outcome reveals itself as having shifted from the morals of the past, then it may be more advantageous to be a poor farmer in the fields of Palestine, than an elite resident in the crime-ridden urban centers of the empire.

## Chapter 8

### FAITH PERMEATES TRANSITIONS

When the unbelieving citizens of a fading society are on the downside, they seek to find some demon on which they can place the blame for their demise. They conclude that some foreign demon has surely interfered with their continued prosperity and success, and thus has diabolically sought their demise. This outside force has surely been the cause of why they are doing so badly, and specifically, why their system of free-market democratic government has been impaired. Finger pointing and criticism of suspected demons, even from within, become the norm of a society that is moving into “social entropy.”

When we are paranoid about the rise of other contemporary empires, we know we are in trouble. A lack of confidence in the strengths of our own

civilization leads us to be in fear of others. By our own telltale division and mutual criticism from within, and the rise of other competitors, we know that our civilization is supposedly under attack, or transforming into another paradigm of social existence. Social division is the impetus that leads us to question our own social structures, and subsequently, expedite our own demise.

Whether perceived, or ignored, societies that are in social chaos are seeking to give birth to something new and different. The physicist, Margret Wheatley, in her book, *Leadership and the New Science — Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*, alerted us to the fact that both in the physical and social world, chaos always gives birth to something new

and different. We may recognize this sociological conflict within a society that is in a social paradigm shift, but we are always apprehensive about the new and different that is coming. Nevertheless, we must realize that social tension is simply a natural process in the social world that is constantly in change. The Holy Spirit revealed this when He metaphorically used the word “sea” as a metaphor to illustrate the restlessness of the people that compose society (See Rv 4:6; 5:13; 7:1-3; 8:8,9; 10:2,5,6).

There is a *status quo* within the restless “sea” of any civilization. This *status quo* is always changing. The common identity of what is considered “it-is-our-culture” is always in transition. In other words, the *status quo* of a society never remains the same throughout the history of any civilization.

We have used the words “liberal” and “conservative” to define the general position of those within any society who are in constant conflict to determine what would be the future *status quo* of a changing society. The definition of the *status quo* is always moving at the control of the majority of those who are either liberal or conservative. When either side has the advantage within the society, a new *status quo* is defined by the opinion of the majority of the people. This is why social norms are always defined

by the *status quo* at any one time in the history of a civilization. For example, if same-sex marriage is accepted by the majority of the society, then same-sex marriage becomes a part of the new *status quo*. A civilization falls when the *status quo* constitutes those social norms that are inherently detrimental to the survival of the civilization.

The generation within a restless civilization that is most sensitive to social paradigm shifts is usually the older generation. Older people often stand between the *status quo* of the past and the new *status quo* in which they live. The uncertainty of the society in which this generation resides, will, in a democratic government, motivate them out of their easy chairs to go to the ballot box. They go because they perceive that there are candidates to be elected who will preserve the past *status quo*, and thus, stabilize society and prevent change into a new and different *status quo*.

The younger generation, however, is often the engine of change. The youth are often in the streets, marching in protest against the *status quo* of the past. They seek change and the possibility of a spring that will cause the winter of the past to go away. If a society of youth who march for change dwell in a society of autocratic leadership in government, then the street protests become more radi-

cal. In order to maintain their power, autocratic leaders often use live bullets to resist the change of the emerging new *status quo*. People subsequently die in the streets. But if the majority of the protesting generation is young and unemployed, then they will stay in the streets and face the bullets until an “Arab Spring” is realized. If the cries of a peaceful revolution are not heard, then the peaceful turns into violent revolution.

Democracy is certainly not the most efficient form of government. But it is the most free. And that freedom is worth fighting to preserve. In the marches for change in autocratically governed societies, those in power load their guns with bullets to put down revolutions. But in a democratically governed society, the police load up with tear gas. And there is a vast difference between guns and tear gas.

Our advice to the older generation who resists social paradigm shifts is not to become indifferent. They must, in a democratic society, assume their responsibility to vote. They must be thankful that they can make their way in peace to the ballot box.

When bombarded with overwhelming information that pours into our minds because of our obsession with social media, we must be patient. The young people of the West spend an average of four hours a day on so-

cial media. If the reported protest march in some area of the society is over an issue that does not involve a paradigm shift in civilization, then patience is in order. There are those on the streets who are seeking relief from social stresses that have built up within their area of society.

Christians who live in democratic societies must be thankful that marches and ballot boxes exist. When these two rights of a democratic society are threatened, then it is time for Christians to be on their knees for their leaders. They must be there in order that they lead a quiet and peaceful life (See 1 Tm 2:1,2). We must always keep in mind that those social forces within a civilization that change the direction of the civilization, transpire over decades, if not centuries. Therefore, it is not a time to become anxious when we are messaged a news report on our smartphones of a minor disagreement of some segment of society where a group of people who are marching for something that will soon pass away.

The beautiful thing about Christianity is that its principles of gospel living are applicable to all societies of all history. The reality of the gospel is that it brings peace of mind that surpasses anything that can be offered by any government of any society. The Christian understands that Jesus is in control of all things, for He now

has all authority over all things (Mt 28:18). When a society is in a social paradigm shift, Christians must not forget that they will always come out victorious on the other side (Rv 17:14). The gospel will permeate any social paradigm shift.

Rome fell, but the fall was because of a society that could not sustain a self-imploding government that was unable to militarily rule over all the people of the Empire. The people of Rome (Italy) continued to exist after the fall of Rome, but the government order that continued was new and different. So it will be with the transition of Western civilization into a new paradigm. The people will continue, but they will continue with new and different social standards or governing orders than that which they experienced in the past generations.

In reference to the fall of Rome, we must not forget that the people of God continued strong within the civilization. After the fall of the Roman Empire in A.D. 476, Christians con-

tinued to thrive throughout the former boundaries of the fallen Empire. We must not as Christians forget this. Christianity was treated as an insurrectionist religion in the Roman Empire from about A.D. 150 to A.D. 311. In this their darkest hour, Christians hid in the catacombs of Rome. But after Jesus took away the persecuting Caesars, Christianity continued to exist, even unto this day. And thus the encouraging prophecy of Revelation was realized when Caesar Constantine issued the Edict of Toleration in A.D. 311. We thus find encouragement in the words of John who wrote to prepare the early Christians for the state persecution of Rome that was coming soon in their lives, and would not be lifted until A.D. 311:

*These [enemies of Christianity] will make war with the Lamb and **the Lamb will overcome them**, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings. And those who are with Him are called and chosen and faithful (Rv 17:14).*

## Chapter 9

### REMEMBERING ROOTS

The citizens of a civilization in transition become increasing dissatisfied and anxious about their future. They often lose hope. They then start assigning blame for their frustrations.

But the blame is often directed to those outside their national social order. Their finger pointing is often directed to other social groups, other religions, other nations, or the combi-

nation of all the preceding. Or worse, they start blaming their own leadership for the cause of their own uncertain future. They are frustrated because their social transition, of which they are often unaware, seems to be chaotic and out of control. They are mostly unaware that the fall of civilizations always comes first from within. Outside forces are only the mechanism by which the fall is sometimes finalized.

In the American West, a national paranoia has set in to the point that a refugee is now considered a threat to the social existence of the empire. Immigration means the dissolving of the identity of the society that is in chaos. Even within the society itself, divisions arise between race or economic groups in order that identities and social structures be preserved. Therefore, immigration is targeted as one of the threats to the existing civilization. And for this reason, immigration in the West has become the most important social issue of the day.

In the Western civilization of America, amnesia concerning how America was originally built is systemic in producing this social paranoia. America was strengthened in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries when immigrants fled oppressive feudal systems and religious oppression in Europe that offered little hope for the future. In their frustra-

tions, these immigrants had their hopes revived when they gazed from aboard ships that approached the statue of Liberty in New York harbor. Ellis Island became a gateway to a New World for millions who sought hope and freedom.

As immigrants congealed into a society over the next century, they built the "American Dream." But the present generation, whose fathers and grandfathers built America, seem to have forgotten that what made America great in the first place was the injection of immigrant energy from Europe. The existing society of America is an immigrant society that now seems to turn its back on immigrants who come to America for many of the same reasons their forefathers came more than one hundred years ago. Admittedly, the origin of the new immigrant is different than the origin of the original forefathers, but with many the dream is the same.

New immigrants from oppressive secular and theocratic nations are again looking to the liberating West. The free West has engraved on a plaque of the statue of Liberty the following words of hope:

*Give me your tired,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.*

A civilization that forgets its roots of freedom upon which it was built, is truly a civilization that has fallen from the true “dreamers” who built the civilization. Every year the United States accepts more immigrants than the rest of the nations of the world combined. But we see a growing resistance against immigration that originally made America great. And from one point of view, this resistance is valid.

Those original immigrants over a century ago built America. They came to the West in order to build a better life. Through hard work and great hardships, they built that for which the new immigrant thirsts to be part. The new immigrant, therefore, is not necessarily seeking to immigrate to the West in order to build, but to get a job in what has already been built. He wants a piece of the pie, but is not thinking about making the pie. He is often a poor financial immigrant who has few dreams of building, but simply becoming a part of the labor force. So in many situations, he does not immigrate on the basis of merit, but on the basis of cashing in on a dream that has already been created. We are sure that those who originally inscribed the preceding words on the statue of Liberty had in mind the masses who could help build the American dream. Those immigrants who built America were generally

farmers who spread out across the western frontier of America in order to make a life of freedom for themselves. The new immigrant, however, more often wants to show up in a city and get a job. And when finding no job, he has simply transferred from poverty in his homeland city to be in poverty in a Western city.

In a democratic society, the society as a whole must be cautious about electing a government that would manipulate society against the very principles upon which the society was first built and continues. This means that an immigrant society has the responsibility to allow into its ranks those who will aid in continuing the values of the society and the building of the economy. Nevertheless, with the immigration influx into America over a century ago came also some of those who disrupted the moral values of society. The Mafia came in on the back of a wave of immigrants who wanted to better their lives. But the moral norm of the Mafia was to use the existing society as a means to generate wealth for themselves by leaching off society. In these times, the vetting of those who seek to immigrate often stops at the foreign consultant the socially dysfunctional. Those from gangs as MS-13 (the new Mafia) can be stopped before their social cancer can enter a society that is seeking a better life for

all. Islamic radicals who would also seek to endanger the democratic society of the West can be barred from infiltrating a society that seeks to be free in both speech and religion.

Each established society has a right to secure its own borders. If such a right is not enforced, then the society is endangering itself to turn from the values upon which the society was originally established. What the illegal immigrant does not understand is that through his illegal actions, he is actually changing the society to which he illegally immigrates. Through his actions, he is actually making the society to which he illegally entered dysfunctional in law and order that was characteristic of the society from which he fled.

The West must be cautious about any political ambitions of the new immigrant. If the new wave of immigrants come to assimilate into an existing social order in order to continue the “American dream,” then the West should welcome the new social energy that seeks to escape oppression. Those who find freedom will again energize Western civilization. But if the new immigrant seeks to conform his new adopted society to his own political agenda or theocratic constitution, then there will be a stressful social transformation of a Western society that was founded upon freedom from either political or religious op-

pression.

The West was firmly built on a free democratic society that was liberated from the constraints of both feudal governments and theocratic religiosity that choked freedom of speech and faith. Any threat to these fundamental rights upon which the culture of the West was built should be shunned at all cost.

We look to the United Kingdom as a forecast to caution the West to guard the principles of freedom and free speech upon which immigrants of the past built America. There are today four million Muslims among the sixty-six million population of the UK. However, these four million Muslims have throughout the years elected Muslims as mayors in major cities as London, Birmingham, Oxford and Sheffield. There are now over 1,000 Muslim mosques in the UK, over 130 Sharia courts and 50 Sharia councils, though there is little difference between the courts and councils.

This is not the post WW II picture of the UK. One paradigm shift has already taken place in the civilization of the UK. Since WW II, another social paradigm shift is on its way, if it has not already occurred. The average Muslim family has 2.3 children in the UK, whereas the overall average for the rest of the families is 1.8. One need only to do the math

in order to calculate where this civilization will be by the end of the century. In reference to paradigm shifts in society, a shift to Islam is essentially a shift to a different form of government if Muslims do not modernize the Sharia law mandates of the Quran.

Throughout the centuries, the civilization of the UK was not built on the foundation of democracy, liberty, freedom of religion, and free speech as was America. These pillars of civilization came only when kings and feudal systems passed away. These three pillars that define the West are the primary citadels against the invasion of any system of government or religion that would change the constitutional government of the American society. As a note of caution to America, when the vast majority of the UK becomes Muslim, theocratic Islamic law could become the law of the land and the Quran the new constitution. The country will pass from its present democratic society into a system of law upon which the Ottoman Empire was built—Islam.

If Islam modernizes in the UK, then the UK will be spared the paradigm shift from constitutional democratic law to Islamic Sharia law. Many Muslims are now working to modernize Islam, though they face great opposition in the Islamic world.

It is simply a race between the modernization of Islam and Islamic majority rule in the UK that will determine the final outcome for the UK civilization.

The efforts of many Muslims to modernize Islam has caused great tension within the Islamic world. We must remember that it is the radical Islamists who are fundamental in their faith of practicing Sharia law. From this very small group of radicals come some who seek to terrorize the rest of the world. We would urge our Western leaders not to base their view of Islam on the terroristic acts of only a few Islamists. We do not want Muslims to define Christianity by the political-religious anomaly of the Crusades. The Christian should be fair in not defining modernized Islam by the crusading Islamic terrorists in their efforts to terrorize the West.

At least the terrorist is unknowingly accomplishing two very important social reactions: (1) By his radical activities, he is making the West more cautious and apprehensive about the conservative agenda of Islam. (2) He is motivating the moderate Muslim to work harder to modernize Islam.

The terrorist is accomplishing both goals, for civilization in general repudiates any form of terrorism against innocent people. Atheists would conclude that the murder of in-

nocent people by a teenage suicide bomber is the ultimate proof that there is no God. And he is right. The god of the terrorist exists only in the mind of the terrorist. Such acts of terror are simply insane madness on the part

of a people who cannot assimilate with any society, even with moderate Islamic societies. The West must secure its borders to such people, for radical Islamists are a cancer to any society, including Islamic societies.

## Chapter 10 INWARD INEQUITY

At times in history in a democratic society, special interests of the society send their candidates to the center of government where social division is reflected in a parliament that has difficulty walking in unity for the benefit of the whole. Representatives of their respective constituencies arise to the floor of congress and express their frustrations as to why the elected officials cannot make unified decisions. The empire, therefore, has started to implode socially through an electorate that reflects the deep divisions that exist within the society. Through social implosion by division, the empire is weakened, and subsequently, it is on its way to consummation from the unity that built the society. From the floor of the parliament we will begin to hear repeatedly the words of betrayed compromises, “*et tu, Brute.*”

The more divided the empire becomes, the sooner its consummation is realized. Western civilization will

not go out with a bang, as many empires of bygone years went out when militarily conquered by an invading army. Western civilization will not come to an end with a nuclear holocaust. That which we now know will simply fade into the past. As the British Empire, upon which the sun once never set, faded away, so Western civilization will fade away in order to give way to a new order. In his book, *2052: A Global Forecast for the Next Forty Years*, Jorgen Randers concluded,

Western nations are not going to collapse, but the smooth operation and friendly nature of Western society will disappear, because inequity is going to explode.

Rander’s conclusion may be correct. He added, “Democratic, liberal societies will fail, while stronger governments like China will be winners.” In 2017, 1% of the people of the world controlled 82% of the wealth of the

world. We can assume that there will be some dramatic changes in societies where there such a great economic inequity is real.

As Christians, our worry is not so much about economic inequity, but moral dysfunction that inequity causes. Economic inequity surely leads to change, if not revolution, but moral dysfunction leads to the collapse of civilizations. Moral irresponsibility is always the cause of fiscal inequity. The greedy will always exist because they are that part of society who have given up the social norm to “love your neighbor as yourself.” The poor are always within society in order to remind the rich not to forget their heart. But when the rich elite have no consideration for the poor, it is then that a group of financial elite within society have lost their heart. And when the elite lose their moral heart for the poor, then the society as a whole begins to spiral down.

We must never forget why God took the land away from the rich city elite of Israel. There were no corporations at the time of Israel’s existence in the land of Palestine. However, the land was the “corporation.” The city elite used the corporate land to exploit the poor farmers. To do this, the rich city elite ignored the restoration law of the year of Jubilee, and thus, the farmers became poor as the city elite controlled the land and the marketing

of the produce. In this way, the wealth of the nation shifted from the rural farmers to the corporate elite in the cities. When this happened, God, through both the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, removed the city elite who owned all the land. Since the city elite would not honor the land restitution law of the year of Jubilee, God removed them and restored the land to the poor farmers.

Those who are familiar with rural America understand that land inequity is well on its way to the reason why God brought down Israel. As the wealth of the nation gravitates to the wealthy elite of the city, only the wealthy have the resources to buy the land. The price of the land thus becomes too high for the average farmer to purchase and pay for over time with the profits that come from the sale of the crops of the land.

Corporate farms have arisen in Middle America. The land is moving from individual farmer ownership to corporate ownership, just as it was when God judged Israel. Farmers are becoming tenet farmers of the land, and thus their profits are determined by the speculation of the futures traders on the US stock markets. When there is a good year and crops are plentiful, crop prices are traded low. When there is a dry year, and the crops are sparse, then traders push the prices up on the markets. In both situations,

farmers receive the same profit margins for their labors, while the traders on the stock markets make their money in buying and selling on the

futures of the stock market. In such a scenario, the farmers never win. We have not forgotten the final years of Israel.

## Chapter 11

### LOSS OF THE MORAL COMPASS

The more liberal a society becomes, the easier it is for the citizens to lose their moral norms, and thus, their moral compass. Consequently, the more liberal the society becomes in a free-market democracy, the easier it is for the people to lose their way. And in such societies, fiscal inequity invariably becomes real, and eventually the social trigger that ignites revolution is pulled.

The definition of a social liberal is that society is allowed the freedom to determine its own moral norms at any time in history. For example, if homosexuality is the present moral norm within the society, and subsequently agreed upon by society as a whole in the present, then homosexuality is right for the times. However, homosexuality is not the real problem. Homosexuality, and a host of other social behavioral dysfunctions of the society according to the Bible, when consolidated as the behavioral norm of the society, bring a civilization to its demise.

A society that has prided itself on

freedom, often makes the mistake of assuming that society can exist without any moral boundaries. The far left thus feels liberated from any moral restraints. The liberal seeks freedom from all moral standards, and thus, relishes in the freedom to determine his own social behavior.

As a liberal society, the people as a group are losing moral norms by which they identify themselves as a unique society. They lose those moral structures that keep society as a whole from adopting social behavioral values that promote social continuity. The loss of moral standards is what produces divergent behaviors, which behaviors are contrary to a conservative philosophy of life that produces social stability. Therefore, we must always look deeper into the soul of a liberal society in order to discover those eroded moral norms that cause a paradigm shift from the moral *status quo* of one civilization to that of another.

Though homosexually and same-sex marriage are social attacks against

the family—the major building block of society—the moral problem of the two sins goes much deeper. There is sin beneath the sin. When a civilization is in collapse, those prophets who would stand up and voice their warnings, must focus on the sin beneath the sin that is destroying the sustaining moral norms of the existing society. And in reference to the preceding two social dysfunctions, it is the attack against the central structure of the family that is the problem. This was reflected in the fact that *Time Magazine* reported in 2015 that 26% of the citizens of the West have made a decision to remain single. Others have made a decision to live a gay lifestyle. These are choices that are made regardless of the far left erroneously asserting that one is born gay. The Western family is under attack because there are those who choose to live contrary to family values.

But we must dig deeper into the sin beneath the sin of both homosexuality and same-sex marriage. A few of the males among the 26% who have determined to remain single have done so on basis of religious principles. We know this because some young men have not been able to find within Western society a wife who would emulate the relationship of their mothers and fathers who lived according to biblical principles.

In the Western civilization of

yesteryear, before 50% of the marriages ended in divorce, the wife maintained an Ephesus 5:22-33 relationship with her husband. In other words, the wife submitted to her own husband in order to live an example of how a citizen must submit to authority in society. But when children grow up in homes where there are no examples of submission, they often go forth into society without a social norm of submission to authority. This is particularly true in a home where there was an environment where a wife resisted any form of submission to her husband. When we speak of these things, we must not forget that when any principle of the Bible is violated, there will be consequences.

The “women’s liberation movement” that started over a half century ago in Western civilization has now produced its fruit. Part of the fruit is single parent “families.” Another fruit is in reference to a man who wants to be a man in a marriage relationship. One male resident of the West once said to us, “I think I will find an immigrant woman to marry in order to find someone who knows how to submit according to biblical principles.”

The submission of the wife in a marital relationship is a biblical norm. Violate this norm and society will pay the price with many citizens who do not know how to submit to authority. Two men, or two women will often

live in a homosexual or lesbian “partnership” because neither came from homes where the dignified ministry of submission was lived by a devoted wife. Of course these thoughts seem outlandish in a liberal society where Bible standards for marital relationships are now deeply resented.

The liberal can never address the sin beneath the sin that destroys any social order. The liberal cries out in fear about generating the possibility of a nuclear war, a truly bad “sin.” But he fails to see the flawed moral norm that would push the nuclear button in the first place. In the fall of the existing Western civilization, it will not be a nuclear blast that will lead to the end, but a gradual decay of stabilizing moral norms that govern how we socially interact with one another. When the moral norms of the God-ordained structure of the family falls aside, then we know that a civilization is on its way out.

If we are liberal, and thus refuse to be directed by constant moral norms, then the majority in a democratic free society will transition the conservative society of the past into a new and different society of the future. This process of change is already at work in the West. If the 2016 presidential election in America revealed anything, it revealed the statistical fact that America is now divided in about half between neo-liberals and conser-

vatives. It is our prediction that the neo-liberals will eventually win the elections in the decades to come simply because it is usually the demeanor of conservatives to remain somewhat indifferent to social changes and take the moral blows of a fading civilization. It is usually the liberals of society who get out and march for their positions, while conservatives stay home and watch on their televisions and complain about the liberal marchers.

We must continually remind ourselves that elections in free societies are the reflection of the society as a whole. It is worthless rhetoric to complain about the politicians who are elected by society. Society puts the politicians in power in order that decisions be made for a population that voted for the political position of the elected politicians.

The extreme loss of moral norms in the Philippines encouraged a frustrated society to vote into power an autocratic leader who rightfully saw, in the proliferation of drugs, the end of their democratic society. Extreme measures, therefore, were implemented to alleviate society of the problem that would bring down their democracy, for a democracy cannot survive a cultural behavior of drug addiction—do not forget this point. But the problem was and is not the drugs, nor a new social order of ex-

trepreneurial police domination. The problem is sin beneath the sin. Social problems within society must be addressed before the sins of society can be corrected. Unfortunately, a liberal society exists because it seeks not to be judged by standard moral norms. Because of this, it cannot correct itself, and thus ends up in a downward spiral.

If a society is to be morally preserved for the future, then the moral norms that make a society functional must be highlighted by society as a whole. Unfortunately, in a society that is on its way out or down, there will be no marches by liberals in the streets who encourage the binding of moral standards. If there are marches by those who seek moral standards, then there will be voices of derision from the liberals against the moral marchers. Liberal marchers always march against those who would impose on them moral discipline.

In the country of our present residence, there was a nationwide moral march against the high number of murders, especially those committed on farms. One of the degenerate politicians of one of the parties of the nation stood up and berated the marchers with the statement, "If they [the moral marchers] don't like the country, then let them leave the country." This is the language of Sodom and Gomorrah. It is immoral language

that brings nations down. The problem comes when the supposedly moral leaders of the country and the religious leaders do not sense the self-destructive sentiment of such language of moral degradation. A society is in serious trouble when the leaders of society have been desensitized to the moral degradation of the society as a whole.

Consider also the January 2018 Western CNN interview with the new president of Zimbabwe. The interviewer asked the President, "Will you defend the civil rights of same-sex marriage?" The President replied, "Such is against our constitution, and it is my duty as President to defend the constitution of my country." The CNN interviewer then asked, "So you are willing to keep your country **in another age**" (Emphasis mine, R.E.D.). We wonder if the interviewer in this matter did not represent a dysfunctional society that is morally degenerate, while the "Third World" leader was trying to preserve a higher standard of morality for his country. At the very least, the interviewer was a representative of a Western civilization that has fallen from the moral standards of the Zimbabwean President, which moral standards were once cherished in the West less than half a century ago.

Those moral dysfunctions that took down Sodom and Gomorrah

have now become classified as human rights in Western civilizations. And it is a function of the United Nations to promote human rights throughout the world. Therefore, not only has the West adopted those “human rights” that bring down the family structures of a society, the moral values of the West are now a mandate for the United Nations to impose on the rest of the world.

The Philippines is an example of a society that revealed through drug abuse that it morally lost its way, as the West as a society has revealed that it has lost its way in the opioid epidemic. We are waiting to see what the West will eventually do in response to the opioid epidemic of Western civilization.

Statistics are now out for 2016 and 2017 in reference to life expectancy in the United States. Because of the opioid deaths, particularly among Millennials, average life expectancy has come down in America. Heroin related deaths tripled in America from 2010 to 2015. The *New York Times*, in a news release entitled, “The Opioid Epidemic: A Crisis Years in the Making,” reported:

The current opioid epidemic is the deadliest drug crisis in American history. Overdoses, fueled by opioids, are the leading cause of death for Americans under 50 years old—kill-

ing roughly 64,000 people last year [2017], more than guns or car accidents, and doing so at a pace faster than the H.I.V. epidemic did at its peak.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported through Reuters,

Life expectancy in the United States dipped in 2016 as the number of deaths due to opioid drug overdoses surged and total drug overdose deaths rose 21 percent to 63,600.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control also reported that opioid deaths have been on the rise since 1999. However, between 2014 and 2016 there was an average surge of 18 percent per annum in opioid-related deaths. Of the approximately 64,000 opioid-related deaths in 2107, most occurred between the ages of 25 – 54.

There is social sin beneath the sin in this civilization. We see the symptoms of this moral cancer that is eating away at society. If what usually happens in the future in reference to solutions that are made by liberal democratic societies in the present, the solution to the opioid epidemic will not deal with the real sin that has caused the sin of opioid addiction. To address the problem, the liberal society of America has simply increased

legislative punishment against the supposed perpetrators (the drug companies) whom they have demonized. Lawsuits, therefore, are now brought against the opioid producing corporations.

The Philippines, in a different manner, dealt with the problem of drug abuse through the rise of an autocratic leader and police force that dealt harshly with the drug offenders on the street. Thousands of drug users and dealers were shot dead in the streets. But in a liberal society, these measures are judged to be too harsh and barbaric. Nevertheless, if all the lawsuits against the opioid corporations are won, the problem of opioid addiction will not be solved. The liberals of society, who reject the enact-

ment of strong moral standards, will find contentment for themselves in their minor victories to prevent social destruction by penalizing corporations. Western civilization that has sluffed off moral constraints is actually overdosing itself and committing social suicide.

A liberal society always deals with its social problems by enacting legislation against evil. But this is only a surface cure. The citizenship forgets to deal with their own hearts. They want to ban guns, but only put bandages on evil hearts. This is now the way of the West. Their interpretation of freedom is to ignore the sin that causes harm to their own social order.

## Chapter 12

### DISCOVERING THE MORAL COMPASS

Liberal societies never approach the problems of society through the preaching of moral norms. The corporate liberal news media will report and cry out against the opioid epidemic and other social problems. However, they will never interview a Bible believer who has the solution for the problem of opioid addiction. The corporate news media cannot interview the Bible student because the very definition of a liberal society is

that the people seek to free themselves from moral restraints.

Since the majority of the viewers of the corporate liberal news media pay the bills of the corporation through their purchase of the products of the sponsors, then the corporate news media is locked into aiding the downward spiritual of the civilization. In other words, there are not enough conservative viewers to buy the products of the sponsors. The corporate

news media must cater to the majority of the viewers in order to keep their ratings up. And when the vast majority of the viewers are the liberals of society, then the corporate news media can only lean toward the desires of the liberals of society. They must do this in order to survive as a corporation in the free-market economy. The focus of news broadcasting in the West has now tipped toward the liberal base of society. So unless the Western viewer turns off his or her televisions, liberal values will continue to be fed into the minds of those who seek to free themselves from moral restraints.

The lack of moral norms of the liberal society of Noah's day led the people in the direction in which "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually" (Gn 6:5). There was a point of no moral return to establish standards that would preserve that civilization. The same is true of Western society today. Every day the majority of the corporate news media must, for financial survival, please the liberal majority of their viewers.

We are not optimistic about the solution the liberal West will provide for the opioid epidemic. The West may build more jails, but jails are only a legal bandage to a real social cancer about which the legal news media is unable to report.

There are more people incarcerated in prisons in America than in any other nation of the world. One answer to solve this prison problem is to legalize what put many people in prison. So the West is now on its way to legalizing certain euphoric drugs. But this too is not the solution. Since many of the West have lost their moral center of reference, it is doubtful that the West will ever deal with the sin beneath the sin by dealing with the emotional depression of those who seek a chemical solution for depression.

Faith assumes moral standards. But the Western liberal seeks to throw off the moral standards of faith that bring relief to both stress and depression. This means that any faith that promotes an absolute moral standard must be ignored, or sent out the back door of the church house. Society would rather overdose on opioids than overdose on faith.

We have now introduced ourselves to a paradox in reference to what we formerly referred to as a "Christian" nation. Why would a supposedly "Christian" nation end up with a psychological social sickness that leads to the death of over 64,000 people every year from opioid overdose? Why would a "Christian" nation have a decrease in life-expectancy because of the opioid epidemic? Where are the guardians of faith of

this society?

The answers to these questions are quite simple. We would suppose that a “Christian” nation would morally direct its society by moral standards that would preserve society, which moral standards are commonly stated throughout the Bible. These moral standards were the foundation upon which the West was originally built when the first Puritan immigrants stepped off the Mayflower. But something has gone terribly wrong.

All went well until about half a century ago when the religious community of the West became simply religious, having forsaken the authority of the word of God. And in forsaking the authority of the word of God, society was released from the moral constraints of the Bible. Religion in Western culture today is generally not Bible based, especially in reference to the application of moral standards.

The liberal thinking of society has moved into churches. In order to keep the liberals in attendance (particularly the Millennial Generation), religious leaders can no longer preach “hell, fire and brimstone” sermons that are based on Bible truth. Western religion has subsequently become biblically sterile. And through the international communications media, this sterile religion has been broadcast throughout the world. Instead of

serious Bible study, pastors and priests watch or hear their sermons on the communications media, and then stand up on Sunday morning with the same morally sterile, “Bibleless” sermons. Social media as Facebook and Twitter have brought the world together, but they have also become the engines to propagate moral decline throughout the world. Bible study is no longer a part of being religious. Religion in the world today is based on how many people can be gathered for a concert, a charismatic speaker, and in some cases, performed “miracles.”

One of the greatest religious leaders of Western civilization was buried in America not long ago. After living a long ninety-nine years, Billy Graham was laid to rest. He was probably one of the greatest, if not the greatest religious leaders that Western civilization produced. But his greatness in his generation of the 1940s and 1950s will always remind us that the West has religiously fallen from the days of his ministry.

Graham drew hundreds of thousands to stadiums across America. He drew people with the simple message of the gospel of Jesus Christ and repentance. But today, that same message draws audiences only in the hundreds. Those years of Graham, and a host of others who preached Christ and repentance, are forever gone in

Western civilization. They are gone because the religious community of the West has dwindled to a small remnant of faithfuls who are becoming even smaller. Since the believer is the salt of the earth, the salt is fast passing out of the West. The West that sent a missionary force of faith into all the world in the middle twentieth century is now withdrawing within itself for its own preservation.

The mission of the Western remnant has for half a century struggled through motivational sermons and entertainment to build assemblies and draw contributions. But there is no message to strike fear in the hearts of those who continually violate the Divine principles of gospel living. The people are not drawn to forceful messages that call the people to repentance. If Jesus were to personally speak out today to the Western religious world, He would surely say the following:

*I have a few things against you because you have there those who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication (Rv 2:14).*

*I have a few things against you because you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet-*

*ess and teaches and deceives My bondservants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols (Rv 2:20).*

*You say, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." But you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked (Rv 3:17).*

In these times, "miracle-working" charismatic prosperity preachers have sought to captivate audiences. The attendees are overwhelmed in hysterical faith-healing assemblies, but go home with the same life-style by which they conducted themselves on the way to the religious theater. Because the people are deceived by experiential religiosity, they do not hear sermons today coming from pulpits that use the word of God to bring judgment on homosexuality, same-sex marriage, fornication and a host of other sins that destroy both the family and the moral fabric of society (See Gl 5:19-21).

Therefore, we are not surprised with the opioid addiction in a society that has rejected Divine social standards that deal with the stress of the soul. When a society is in social turmoil, stressed out about having no moral compass, then drugs, not faith, are always the solution in such secular societies. A faithless society never

adopts solutions that deter the moral fall of civilizations.

The opioid epidemic is to a great extent among the Millennial Generation, those who are in their late twenties and early thirties. According to Rainer and Rainer, this generation is only 6% religious in reference to believing in the authority of the Bible and Jesus as the One through whom one would approach God (*The Millennials*, p. 232). This is basically a faithless generation of about 80 million strong in a nation of over 300 million. This generation is bringing down the religious core of Western civilization. The children and grandchildren of this faithless generation will greatly decrease faith in the Western civilization as we now know it. Faith in the West is becoming the minority even as we write these words. The remnant of faith is fading away. In the future, the faithful “120” will be meeting in an upper room in order to start it all over again.

And for us who grew up on a farm in Middle America, even now, America is not what it was in the days of our youth when men like Graham drew hundreds of thousands into stadiums to listen to Bible preaching. No mass audiences could be drawn together today to listen to the preaching of Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, many of those who are seeking to immigrate to

America are driven to do so by a dream that no longer exists in reality. They are motivated by an illusion. The “Christian” nation of America has long since faded into a memory of years gone by. If you do not believe this, then consider the following moral norms that **were not accepted as common life-styles** in the general public fifty years or more ago. These social dysfunctions existed, but the general acceptance of these life-style sins today is the signal of a morally fallen society:

- Abortion
- Fornication of every kind
- Gender choice
- Gender changing
- Same-sex marriage
- Homosexuality
- Mass abuse of drugs of every kind
- Pornography of every kind
- Premarital sex
- Premarital cohabitation
- Recreational sex
- Divorce for every reason
- Despising public officials
- Despising the President

Need more be said? If we would continue listing the specifics of the sins of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21, we could mention many dysfunctional behavioral sins that are now accepted as normal in to West and openly promoted in society by a liberal corpo-

rate news media and the entertainment industry.

Those who ascribe to the above listed social dysfunctions are often highly critical of other societies that are governed by moral absolutes, especially religious absolutes. For this reason, no Western liberal corporate news media has been kind to the President of the Philippines, or the existing President of a divided American society. Through the social news media, corporate news media, Hollywood, television, and now some articles on the human rights of the United Nations, the West is seeking to take the rest of the world into this social sin quagmire where “the thoughts and imaginations of men are only evil continually.” It is not simply a Western sin phenomenon, but it is now spreading worldwide through Western systems of communication.

The Western resident simply cannot understand why a woman wants to wear a hijab (head covering) to reveal her faith and womanhood in an Islamic society. The Western woman cannot understand the fact that a Muslim woman personally wants to wear the hijab in public in order to manifest her submission to her husband. For this reason, the liberal West will never understand Islamic countries, for the social fabric of Islamic countries is religiously and culturally conservative, and thus functions in con-

trast to neo-liberal Western values. Islamic countries thus consider themselves threatened by the neo-liberal West. They believe that Islam is under attack by the behavior that is promoted by the moral liberals of Western civilization. And they are right. The fact that the West judges Islamic countries to be backward because of their conservative life-style should give some indication of how far to the left on modesty and morals the West has gone.

For the same reason, it is difficult for the West to understand culturally conservative nations as Russia and China. The Russian society is conservative, based much on the moral conservatism of the Russian Orthodox Church. China, and the Far East, are likewise morally conservative according to the teaching of Buddhism. Both civilizations have centuries of existence that have been based on conservative moral norms.

For the liberal Westerner, the religiously conservative Russia, and principle-driven China, are to be feared because he cannot envision that we can live with moral absolutes in a free democratic world. We cannot bring down harsh judgment on drug offenders. We cannot execute thieves and punish adulterers. The death penalty is considered barbaric. We could never defend a constitution that prohibits fornication and same-sex mar-

riage. Such constitutional mandates are indications of “another age.”

A liberal society, therefore, is continually in judgment of a social order that would be controlled by conservative values. Since the social liberal thrives in a social order wherein freedom from control is the foundation upon which all things can be changed to satisfy the *status quo*, then the liberal concludes that citizens who live in morally controlled societies have no freedom. This may explain why the citizens of Western civilizations are so fearful of both Russia and

China, and some Islamic countries. But the liberal has simply forgotten that **there is no freedom without law and there are no morals without law**. A liberal resents being criticized by any who would judge him according to absolute moral standards. He is known for his reaction, “Don’t judge me.” But what the social liberal is doing in protesting for freedom from moral restrictions is taking his or her civilization to where every thought and imagination of society is only evil continually.

## Chapter 13

### ROAD MAP TO CONSUMMATION

The historical setting of the prophecy that Jesus made in Matthew 24 took place in the latter part of His earthly ministry (See also Mk 13 & Lk 21). The information revealed in the prophecy was for the purpose of preparing His Jewish disciples for the fulfillment of the prophecies of both Daniel and Ezekiel concerning the consummation of national Israel after the Messiah had come. The fulfillment of the prophecy of Matthew 24 subsequently became added information for the disciples as they went forth throughout the Roman Empire from Jewish synagogue to Jewish synagogue.

The disciples’ ministry was first

to preach the gospel and proclaim that Jesus was the fulfillment of all Messianic prophecies (Lk 24:44). However, they were also to prepare the Jewish Christians for the consummation of their national heritage. When the disciples went forth with the message of the gospel, they informed all the Jews to whom they went that it was indeed “the end of times.” God was going to shut the book on national Israel.

The fullness of times had come upon national Israel, and now it was time to terminate this special nation of people that God had used to bring the Messiah and Savior into the world. There would not be another Messiah.

There would not be another Savior. Therefore, unless the unbelieving Jews who rejected Jesus should hope that the Messiah was yet to come in Israel, God shut down Israel.

Israel was no longer needed as a physical heritage from which a Messiah or Savior would come. The Savior had come and was standing in the midst of those to whom the message of Matthew 24 was directed. What was now offered to the Jews was the only alternative they had in reference to any covenant relationship with God (See At 4:12). All things were summed up in Jesus Christ, and thus the last excuse not to respond to the gospel of Jesus was about to be taken away in the destruction of national Israel, the temple and Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Those who would seek to further their understanding of what transpired during the final days of Jerusalem should consult the Jewish historian, Josephus. Josephus wrote *Jewish Wars* as a personal account of the final wars of Rome against the insurrectionist Jews of the Roman Empire. As a historian who was contemporary with the events, Josephus claimed to have been a personal witness of the fall of Jerusalem. His account of the fall of the city is quite revealing.

In their novice interpretations of the Scriptures, many miss much of the context and purpose for which Jesus

gave the information of the Matthew 24 prophecy. Instead of applying the prophecy to Jesus' intended audience to prepare contemporary Jewish Christian families for the end of their national heritage, some seek to steal the fulfillment of the prophecy from those immediate Jews. They mistakenly apply the fulfillment of the prophecies to a time two thousand years removed from the first century Jews.

In fact, their misapplication of the fulfillment of the Matthew 24 prophecy is quite calloused. Instead of Jewish fathers and mothers, who lived with their many children in Jerusalem at the time, being warned and prepared for the final destruction of Jerusalem, they steal the warning of the prophecy from these fathers and mothers. They leave these Jewish families in Jerusalem unprepared for the coming of the Roman armies, and thus condemn them to suffer the fate of being a part of the over one million Jews who were killed during that calamity that overcame Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Those profiteers today who voice their misunderstanding of Jesus' prophecy steal away from those early Jewish families the warning that Jesus made to His beloved resident Jewish disciples in Jerusalem. They do so by applying the prophecy to some historical fantasies that are yet to occur

in the future. In doing so, they have interpreted the prophecy erroneously. They are willing to leave those early Jewish families in Jerusalem without any warning to flee the calamity that would occur in A.D. 70. They are willing to do this in order to satisfy their own misguided prognostications concerning the final coming of Jesus.

We are convinced that some preachers today need to take another look at what they would be doing if their application of the Matthew 24 prophecy does not refer specifically to the Jewish Christian families of the first century. If they were themselves Jews and residents of Jerusalem in those years leading up to the fall of Jerusalem, and were standing in the presence of Jesus when He made this prophecy, then surely they would want to have their children and grandchildren warned concerning the devastation of their lives that would take place forty years after Jesus made the statements of the prophecy. They, too, would want their families to flee Jerusalem.

In fact, if Jesus was who He said He was, and God was bringing national Israel to a catastrophic conclusion through the destruction of Jerusalem, then we would rightly suppose that Jesus would forewarn the Christians who lived in Jerusalem. If He did not warn them, then two things would be true: First, Jesus was to-

tally unaware of the consummation of national Israel, but supposedly, according to some interpreters, aware of all “signs of the times” in reference to His final coming. However, if He were supposedly aware of the signs of His final coming, then certainly He could have been aware of the signs that led up to the consummation of national Israel.

Second, if Jesus knew of the coming destruction, but did not give the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem warning, then He was calloused and hard in heart. Jesus was at the time at least a prophet. And as God warned of the fall of national Israel through His Old Testament prophets, then Jesus was given the same privilege to warn the disciples. We must always remember the principle of the statement of Amos 3:7: *“Surely the Lord God will do nothing **without first revealing His plans to His servants the prophets.**”*

Jesus said, *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven nor the Son, but My Father only”* (Mt 24:36). On earth, Jesus did not reveal the “day and hour.” If He had, then we would accuse Him of not revealing that specific “day and hour” in order for the resident Jerusalem Christians to flee the day just before the “day and hour” when the Roman army showed up at the gates of the city. Instead, as God

did through the Old Testament prophets, He gave them all the indications of the fulfillment in order that through faith, they would believe the “signs,” and then move away from Jerusalem the years before the fall.

Unfortunately, too many interpreters today do the same with the prophecies of the prophets of the Old Testament, as well as John’s prophecies of the book of Revelation. They leapfrog over the intended fulfillment of the prophecies in time in their obsessions to find some “signs of the times” for the end of the world at the end of time. In doing this, they miss entirely the fulfillment of the prophecies of these books in the context of those who would personally experience the fulfillment of the prophecies.

Throughout the Old Testament prophets, God prepared His people for their fall as an independent nation when the Assyrians and Babylonians were to be victorious over both the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel (See Am 3:7). In the same way, Jesus, in the prophecy of Matthew 24, prepared the resident Jewish Christians of Jerusalem for the termination of national Israel in the destruction of Jerusalem.

As He did with those empires He used to punish Israel in Old Testament times, God would eventually bring down the Roman Empire. As God had brought down both the Assyrian and

Babylonian kingdoms, He would also bring down the Roman Empire that rose up its head against His people, the church. In the book of Revelation, John would encourage the Christians of the Roman Empire concerning its consummation, which eventually took place in the latter part of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

In the context of Matthew 24, we seek to identify those things that Jesus said would identify the “signs of the times” that would exist during the consummation of a civilization. We seek to know those things that are indications of the fall of civilizations, for indeed, the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus concerning Jerusalem was more than the fall of a city. As Josephus graphically explained, it was the consummation of a civilization.

In the fall of both the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel through the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, Israel lost her right to the possession of the promised land and her independence as a theocratic nation. However, the people were allowed to keep their Jewish identity. Nevertheless, in the fall of Jerusalem, not only were over a million Jews killed in the actual battle of Jerusalem, but the remaining eighty or more thousand survivors, according to Josephus, were sold off as slaves across the Roman Empire, thus elimi-

nating any Jewish establishment as a people in Palestine. Though all the goals of the Romans were never truly realized in their war against Judaism, at least all the birth documents of the Jews were destroyed in the burning of the Jewish temple. All that the dispersed Jews had to identify themselves as Jews was their memory of who they were, which information was passed from one generation to another unto this day.

Some of the social reasons for the consummation of national Israel in A.D. 70 are those reasons why all civilizations come to a close. When Jesus revealed the collapse of national Israel, He embedded within His message reasons for the fall. He wanted the Jews to understand at the time of the collapse of the Jewish civilization that it was their own fault. It was not that the Romans just woke up one morning and decided to end Israel. Vespasian, the commander of the Roman army at the time, simply responded to an increasing “Jewish problem” that necessitated the extraction of the Jewish social cancer from the Empire. The following are some of the surrounding circumstances that Jesus revealed would occur during the final days of national Israel. Our task is to determine if some or all of these social characteristics exist in the Western civilization of today.

- **Social dishonesty:** We must keep in mind that Jesus made His statements in this context in view of the Jews’ nationalistic hope for the reestablishment of an independent Israel. Even the disciples had this misguided belief unto the final hours of His time on earth (See At 1:6). In order to recruit loyalty to the national/religious state (theocracy), insurrectionist Jews would use deception to convince fellow countrymen to take up arms against Rome. If Christians were not alert to this misguided patriotic call, then some Jewish disciples could possibly join the ranks of the resistance. Therefore, Jesus warned His disciples, “*Take heed that no one deceives you*” (Mt 24:4).

There would arise many who would come and claim to be the Messiah (the Christ), whom the Jews believed, would restore national independent Israel (Mt 24:5; see At 1:6). These religious/political deceivers would “*show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect*” (Mt 24:24). Because the nationalistic Jews had rejected Jesus as the Messiah, in the final years before A.D. 70 when political tensions began to rise between nationalistic Jews and Rome, there were numerous political messiahs who arose in order to recruit fellow Jews to rally around a nationalistic cause.

We would assume, therefore, from Jesus' warning to His disciples that they be not deceive. The fact that they could be deceived indicates that the religious/political intimidation in the final years of national Israel would be strong. In fact, it became so strong that even some Jewish Christians could possibly be led astray in answer to the patriotic call of the false messiahs. At least, when the book of Hebrews was written during the last decade before A.D. 70, there were some Christian Jews who were being intimidated into returning to the Sinai law and covenant that the nationalists were particularly enshrining in the minds of the Jewish society (See Hb 2:1-3; 6:4-6; 10:36-39).

- **Popular leadership:** The Jews were waiting for the coming of a national restorationist messiah. Their expectations were earthly, not spiritual. And because Jesus' kingdom was not of this world, He did not have a great reception among the nationalistic Jews of His day (See Jn 1:11; 18:36).

In the final years of Israel, Jesus revealed that there were those who would appoint themselves to be the messiah (christ). These would be those who would stir up the patriotism of the people in order to gain a following to lead in rebellion against Rome (See At 21:38). These popular

messiahs believed that they could lead the people in a movement to restore an independent national Israel if the occupation of Roman could be overthrown. According to Josephus, even in the final days before the fall of Jerusalem, there were false messiahs springing up within the falling city of Jerusalem who were calling on the people to remain loyal to the cause.

Leaders who could make the loudest noise in appealing to the patriotism of the people were elected as the leaders of the day. "Make Israel Great Again" was the cry, and many joined the ranks of the rebellion against the Romans. If only Israel could separate herself from the Roman community, these false messiahs preached, then she would prosper. What actually happened in history was that all the nationalistic leaders passed on, national Israel was concluded, and history moved on. They forget that when a civilization is in its final chapter, no individual leader can prevent its cessation.

When civilizations fall, no one individual can be the messiah to prevent the fall. The fall of civilizations is not determined by the leaders. Self-proclaimed messiahs can delay the process of falling, but we must not forget that self-proclaimed messiahs are always populace leaders. They are voted into office by a popular vote because the people are simply frustrated

in their present situation. They are thus looking for a “messiah” who will deliver them out of their social despair. But the people must not forget that their frustrations are the result of their own moral demise. They themselves are the problem, whether in cause or effect. There may be no outside force that is occupying the land. After all, Rome did not decide to terminate Israel until Israel from within provoked Rome.

If the fall of a civilization is coming from within, then the citizenship must consider the possibility that there are those from within who are seeking to overcome the land. A liberal or revolutionary movement is working from within the Western society to change society to a new and different order. A social paradigm shift is happening from within and no one “popular messiah” can stop the shift.

When Jesus came into the world as the Messiah, He represented a new and different order. However, what He brought as the Messiah was contrary to the expectations of the religious establishment of the day. The majority subsequently dispelled with Him and His Way because He did not conform to the religious aspirations of the general public. He did not preach a nationalistic message that would please the populace Jews who were headed for the termination of their social order in A.D. 70. When a

civilization is set on a course for a paradigm shift, the change is going to happen regardless of the efforts of any one individual.

Jesus’ message of Matthew 24 was an encouraging reminder to the disciples that they would continue to remain in the minority when the final day came. No populace messiah would change the final outcome of the misguided majority. In fact, the conclusion of the misguided majority would be the opportunity for the faithful minority to “*shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*” (See Mt 13:36-44). When Christianity permeated the fall of national Israel, then the world could see that the body of Christ was not a sect of the Jews.

- **Stirring of fear:** Jesus alerted the disciples, “*And you [disciples] will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled, for these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet*” (Mt 24:6). The Roman Empire was continually engaged in some war with some nation somewhere throughout the extremities of the borders of the Empire. As America in the world today, Rome was in perpetual war somewhere in the Empire. In order to engage in these wars, Rome was built on the backbone of a strong military. In fact, as also in America, it was a military welfare state where the military con-

sumed a great deal of the taxable income of the state. The Caesars of Rome had a thirst for conquest and expansion, and thus, every effort was made to build the military through tax increases. However, the wars about which Jesus spoke in this context were battles between Jewish loyalists and Rome as the Roman army took three years of war before ending the war against Israel in A.D. 70.

When Vespasian marched the Roman army from Rome to Jerusalem, for three years he squashed every Jewish resistance effort along the way. Word of mouth of the battles spread like wildfire in reference to what was transpiring. This gave the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, who believed the prophecy of Jesus, time to get out of town. Jesus' prophecy of Matthew 24 saved the lives of thousands of Christians who were still living in Jerusalem at the time. Because they believed the prophecy of Jesus, they fled for safety to other regions of the Roman Empire.

A previous exodus from Jerusalem, because of the persecution of Saul, is insignificant in reference to what eventually came in A.D. 70 (See At 8:4). This initial exodus of Christians from Jerusalem set the ground work for the massive exodus prior to A.D. 70. Because of the initial exodus, there were relatives already settled in other regions of the Empire

who could receive Judean family members who fled during the exodus immediately before A.D. 70.

The distant wars, therefore, were the signal of the coming end. When the Christians in Jerusalem heard of these skirmishes, Jesus said, "*See that you are not troubled, for these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet*" (Mt 24:6). The skirmishes between rebellious Jews on the road from Rome to Jerusalem were only signals that doom was in sight for national Israel. These wars, however, were only a sign that the end was coming.

The resident Christians in Jerusalem must not become complacent and assume that Rome's victories over Jewish zealots in distant lands would appease Rome's determination to once and for all terminate the insurrection of Judaism in the Empire. The Christians must remember that Rome was determined to cut the heart out of the Jewish insurrection by the total destruction of Judaism and Jerusalem. The Christians' love for their homes, therefore, must not lead them to believe that Rome would surely not bring down the temple and Jerusalem.

(We must add here that the countless wars in which Rome involved herself in her last century of existence as a world Empire eventually led to almost bankrupting the Empire. The borders of the Empire had been ex-

tended to so many distant lands, that it became increasingly difficult for the central government to support the military establishment. As America that has over 700 military bases throughout the world today, Rome overextended herself militarily. If the military failed, then the Empire would collapse, which very thing happened at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Rome could not support a strong enough military to hold back the invading Germanic groups from the north.

All this did not transpire for over four centuries after the events about which Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24. At the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the strength of the military of Rome was at its zenith.)

• **Conflicting society:** *“For nation will rise up against nation and kingdom against kingdom”* (Mt 24:7). When a civilization is in its final years of existence, it is tormented by other civilizations that would assume their leading role in world affairs. Civilizations exists because of military strength, for it is the military strength of a nation that builds and sustains the civilization through strength. It is a strong military that intimidates other civilizations to negotiate for terms of peace (Compare Lk 14:31,32).

Though Jesus was not directly educating the disciples in reference to

the fall of civilizations, He was giving them historical information to which they must be sensitive in reference to the civilization of which they were a part. The Roman civilization would continue after the fulfillment of all those things about which He spoke. However, the Jewish civilization, with its Roman-controlled nationalism within Palestine, would cease. It would cease because God allowed in the leadership of the Jewish civilization the existence of the false messiahs who would lead the Jews to accomplish His will, that is the termination of national Israel in Palestine.

The end of some civilizations is characterized by their clashes with other civilizations. On the world stage of the rise and fall of civilizations, the first indication of the fall of one civilization and the rise of another is revealed when there are clashes of one civilization with another. Throughout history the clashes between civilizations have often been the result of military conflicts. But military conquests do not demand the passing of the citizenship of a civilization.

The fall of civilizations from within is different. These consummations come through revolutions. The fall from within is characterized by sociological clashes within the citizenship. Whether from outside forces through military conflicts, or through

social conflicts from within, what comes out on the other side of social chaos is something new and different. The citizenship is changed until another era of tension arises that starts the cycle of change all over again.

We must never forget that dominant civilizations will always have “cold wars” or “trade wars” with one another. This is the relationship between contemporary kingdoms that are in contact with one another. From the beginning of time, there has always been a struggle of one civilization against another. But when a civilization falls from within, the fall is often not realized by the citizenship. It is usually not realized until historians start writing history books on the way it was.

In the context of Jesus’ prophecy there were certainly continual military conflicts of Rome against other world kingdoms throughout the extremities of the Empire. However, Jesus’ reference to clashing kingdoms was probably more in reference to isolated Jewish confrontations with Rome throughout the Roman Empire. Because of the continual clashes of pockets of Jewish resistance throughout the Empire, the Roman government sought a final solution to the problem of Jewish insurrection. Therefore, the final solution was to march on Jerusalem, and thus destroy the center of Jewish patriotism and religiosity.

• **The sign of natural catastrophes:** During the days of the prophet Amos, God had to reveal through Amos that the great locust plague that brought great suffering upon the people at the time was actually judgment sent directly from God. The people thought it was just another natural plague. But God wanted the people to know that the plague was His doing in order to urge the people of the northern kingdom of Israel to repent.

This seems to be the same connecting of the dots in reference to what Jesus said in the context of the final years of the Jewish civilization. The difference between the two scenarios, however, was that there was no call for repentance given to the Jews of national Israel. The time for repentance was over. It was now time for judgment. And as evidence for this coming judgment, Jesus said, “*And there will be famines and earthquakes in various places*” (Mt 24:7). Famines and earthquakes in various places have existed throughout the world since the beginning of time. But there was something unique about these “famines and earthquakes” that would alert the disciples that something was up.

The “various places” were within their ability to know that they were occurring. Therefore, if they connected the dots between the “wars and rumors of wars,” with the “famines

and earthquakes,” then they would be reminded of what Jesus said in this specific prophecy concerning the end of national Israel. They would understand that these physical catastrophes of the world of nature were not accidental, but God caused. Therefore, these were certainly regional “famines and earthquakes” that would sensitize the people to the coming fulfillment of what Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24. Their occurrence would indicate that God’s judgment of national Israel was near.

- **Painful consummation:** Jesus continued, “*All these are the beginning of sorrows*” (Mt 24:8). There would indeed be sorrow in the final consummation. The end would be painful. There is always social pain in the collapse of a civilization. In this context, those who were citizens of the Jewish state would suffer the sorrow of losing a number of family members who were not Christians. These would be unbelieving Jews who would not heed the warning to stay away from Jerusalem in its final days.

There was great sorrow throughout the Jewish world among family members who believed Jesus, and thus stayed home and did not make the fateful Pentecost journey to Jerusalem, for it was on the Pentecost of A.D. 70 that Rome marched against Jerusalem. Many Jews who believed

Jesus and stayed home said good bye to their unbelieving family members whom they would never see again as they journeyed to Jerusalem for Pentecost. During the three-month onslaught of Rome against the city of Jerusalem on the Pentecost of A.D. 70, and according to Josephus, the Roman army slaughtered over one million Jews. Great sorrow spread throughout the Roman Empire as the news of the death of so many loved ones began to trickle back home to friends and loved ones.

- **Politicalization of society:** During the times before the fall of Jerusalem, there was great pressure imposed on the Jewish society by loyalist Jews who urged all Jews to join the ranks of the resistance. If one did not join in opposition against the unbelievers (Rome), then he or she was as a “traitor.” Every aspect of society was politicized in order to recruit individuals to be patriotic to the cause.

Patriotism to Judaism became radical. Therefore, “*they [the radical Jews] will deliver you [Christian Jews] up to be afflicted and will kill you. And you will be hated by [the Jews of] all nations for My name’s sake*” (Mt 24:9). Those Christians who would not join in the rebellion were despised by their fellow Jews throughout the Roman Empire. Because faithful Jewish Christians

would remain loyal only to the name of Jesus, they would be hated by those Jews throughout the Roman Empire who took up arms against Rome.

When a civilization is in collapse, it is divided politically from within. Those of the citizenship are forced into taking sides. If a particular side is not taken, then the accusation of being a “traitor” is thrown around by one side against another in order to intimidate individuals to take sides on the “patriotic” movement of the *status quo*. When a society becomes so polarized, it is then that it is on the verge of social suicide from within. Divided civilizations self-inflict themselves unto their own consummation. When no peaceful political discussions around the kitchen table can be conducted by family members, then a society is beginning its revolution through division.

- **Social pressure invokes disloyalty:** *“And then many will be offended and will betray one another and will hate one another”* (Mt 24:10). When the great persecutions came, the disciples should not be surprised that some Jewish Christians would think more of themselves and their safety, than standing for the name of Jesus. In view of this one prophecy of Jesus, we can better understand why Paul wrote the following words to Christians who lived in the seat of

command of the Roman government that would commission the destruction of Jerusalem: *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation ...”* (Rm 1:16).

Even while Paul was in prison in Rome less than ten years before A.D. 70, some brethren disassociated themselves from him. They spoke out to bring opposition against him (Ph 1:15-18). Their lack of love for him was revealed in their unwillingness to stand by him in his darkest hour. This was the very thing about which Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24. Some Christians in Palestine also forgot this when the Roman army marched toward Jerusalem. The social turmoil of the time revealed that they had little loyalty to the name of the King of kings when they gave in to the social intimidation of the times.

Those who denied Christ went even further. When an oppressing army is trying to flush out all rebels, they will through torture demand the names of other rebels. And because some succumbed to torture, they betrayed others. In a collapsing civilization, one’s own self-preservation becomes more important than one’s loyalty to his neighbor. At least this is what happened while Paul was in prison in Rome in A.D. 61/62.

- **Desperation of the elite:** *“And*

many false prophets will arise and will deceive many” (Mt 24:11). In the case of the fall of national Israel, there were those Jewish religious leaders in the society as there were in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah. They cried out “Peace! Peace!” However, there was no peace. In other words, deceived religious leaders who are participating in the social and financial benefits of the collapsing society have no desire that their influence over the people should come to an end. This was the social and economic situation among the Jews at the time of the end of Israel.

James wrote about three years before the fall of Jerusalem. He wrote to a Jewish audience in which he included a special reference to the rich Sadducean Jews by whom many Jewish disciples were exploited. As he wrote concerning the rich Sadducean elite of national Israel throughout the Jewish diaspora (Js 1:2), he reminded them that they were about to lose all they had.

*Come now you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded. And their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. **You have heaped treasure together for the last days** (Js 5:1-3).*

The rich Sadducean Jews had “*despised the poor*” (Js 2:6). They had exploited the poor farmers for their own benefit (Js 5:4). Therefore, the judgment of God was coming upon them in the consummation of the economy in which they had reaped their wealth.

The judgment about which both Jesus spoke and James wrote was not something that was going to transpire over two thousand years after both prophets spoke their words of judgment. James comforted the poor of his Jewish readers in A.D. 67 with the words: “*You [faithful disciples] also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near*” (Js 5:8). This was the coming of the Lord **in time** in judgment on unbelieving Israel. The judgment **was near**. James’ Jewish readers in A.D. 67 could be comforted by these words because relief from their exploitation by the rich Sadducean elite was near. It was the same coming in judgment that brought relief to the poor among the northern kingdom of Israel during the days of Amos.

- **Willful violation of covenant laws:** “*Lawlessness will abound*” (Mt 24:12). In a society that forsakes social norms by which relationships are controlled, “law abiding citizens” become oppressed. In a liberal society that seeks to be free from the restric-

tions of law, the people become a law unto themselves (See Jr 10:23). When Divine law is rejected, society seeks to establish its own moral standards of conduct, and thus, in relation to the law of God, they become lawless.

The audience of Jesus in reference to the prophecy of Matthew 24 was specifically to the Jews. There was certainly lawlessness in the society of the Jewish insurrectionists as they rose up against the Roman Empire. It was this lawlessness that eventually led to the destruction of national Israel.

But in view of what James prophesied, there was great lawlessness among the Jews themselves concerning the Sinai law. For example, James mentioned lawlessness in reference to the exploitation of the poor farmers by the rich Sadducean elite: *“Behold, the wages of the laborers who have mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out against you”* (Js 5:4). This lawlessness among the Jews themselves led to the rise of the rich Sadducean elite who exploited the poor farmers. The times for the consummation of national Israel in the last half of the first century were the same as the final years of both the northern kingdom of Israel in 722/21 B.C. and the southern kingdom in 586 B.C.

We must not forget that the Jews had lived in Palestine since 536 B.C.

under an occupying foreign nation. They lived first under the occupation of the Babylonians, then the Medo-Persians, the Greeks, and finally the Romans. All went well until a lawless spirit of insurrection arose among the Jews in the first century. This spirit of lawlessness became so great that the occupying foreign power (Rome) determined to terminate the seat of Jewish rebellion.

- **Frigid society:** *“The love of many will grow cold”* (Mt 24:12). Imploding civilizations that are based on economic inequity, seek to exploit the labor force of society, just as James explained was the case in Israel at the time he wrote. Such societies become as the society of the northern kingdom of Israel when that civilization of Israel at that time came to an end. God said that *“they [the rich elite] sold the righteous [poor] for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes. They pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor and pervert the way of the meek”* (Am 2:6,7).

God was preparing the northern kingdom of Israel for its demise. He wanted the people to know exactly why He was bringing judgment upon them. As with the elite Sadducean Jews of the prophecy of Jesus, God brought judgment upon northern Israel because of those who exploited the poor:

*Therefore, because you [rich elite] trample on the poor [farmer] and you take from him tribute of grain, and have built mansions of hewn stone, you will not dwell in them. You have planted pleasant vineyards, but you will not drink wine from them (Am 5:11).*

The judgment that God unleashed on the elite of the last generation of the northern kingdom of Israel, was the same judgment He was going to unleash on the last generation of Israel about which Jesus prophesied. Amos recorded, “*I will smite the winter house [of the rich elite] with the summer house. And the houses of ivory will perish, and the great houses will have an end*” (Am 3:15).

In the last section of Jesus’ prophecy concerning the consummation of national Israel, Jesus made the statement of Matthew 24:14, which statement is often misunderstood. In the historical context of Jesus’ statements He had the consummation of national Israel in mind in reference to the fulfillment of the prophecies of both Daniel and Ezekiel.

The prophecy of Matthew 24 would be fulfilled within forty years from the time when Jesus made the prophecy. In order to spare Jewish Christians as much suffering as possible during the conflicts that led up to the final destruction of Jerusalem

in A.D. 70, Jesus wanted to sift out of national Israel all those who were children of God by faith. These were those who would believe in Jesus as the Messiah. In order to call out of Israel all those who would obey the gospel, the gospel had to be preached from synagogue to synagogue throughout the Roman Empire. All Jews had to be given an opportunity to obey the gospel in order to escape the coming consummation of Israel. In order to do this, Jesus promised, “*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world [of the Roman Empire] for a witness to all nations, and then will the end come [to national Israel]*” (Mt 24:14). Those who believed and obeyed the gospel would also believe Jesus’ prophecy of Matthew 24.

The phrase “all the world” referred to all the world of the Roman Empire. It was all the world that would suffer from Rome’s wrath that she would pour out on rebellious Jews. The “end” would be the end of Israel, the consummation of all that a Jew was nationally. This end in time would be a tragedy for every Jew.

While in prison in Rome in A.D. 61, Paul wrote to the Colossians concerning “*the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was preached to every creature that is under heaven*” (Cl 1:23). The fulfillment of Jesus’ promise in the prophecy of

Matthew 24:14 had been fulfilled by the time Paul wrote to the Colossians in A.D. 61. In only a few years after Paul wrote that the gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven throughout the Roman Empire, Rome commenced her campaign to bring national Israel to an end. Paul's statement in Colossians 1:23 was the Holy Spirit's affirmation that Jesus' prophecy of Matthew 24:14 had been fulfilled.

In the first consummation of Israel in the days of Amos, God warned the people through the prophets. Amos wrote, "***Surely the Lord God will do nothing without first revealing His plans to His servants the prophets***" (Am 3:7). And in reference to the end of national Israel in A.D. 70, this He did through Jesus and James. He warned the Jews to get out of Judaism through obedience to the gospel. And in getting out of Judaism, they would listen to the warning of Matthew 24 to get out of Jerusalem. Therefore, the warning to all those of Israel prior to the termination of national Israel in the first century, the words of Amos still rang loud in the ears of those who know the word of God:

*Therefore, thus I will do to you, O [unbelieving] Israel. And because I*

*will do this to you, **prepare to meet your God, O Israel** (Am 4:12).*

Those who recognize the fall of civilizations, prepare for such by the renewal of their commitment to the unchanging Jesus Christ. When Christ becomes unfashionable, then the faithful renew their faith in the incarnational Son of God who gave His life that our existence will permeate any fallen civilization of this world.

The beautiful thing about being a Christian in this life is that Christians need not fear when civilizations either fall through military conflict, or fall within by a change in moral standards and systems of government. Jesus and His moral standards have existed unchanged throughout the fall of numerous civilizations over the past two thousand years. Civilizations come and go, but the Christian can trust in the following words of Jesus regardless of the rise and fall of civilizations.

***"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty"*** (Rv 1:8).

***"I am He who lives. And I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. And I have the keys of death and of Hades"*** (Rv 1:18).

## Chapter 14

### SOCIAL SIGNALS

A young teenager is bullied in school. It is persistent, ruthless, and never seems to go away. It is nothing new. Bullying has been going on ever since there were young people on the face of the earth. Ishmael bullied Isaac (Gn 16), and bullying is wrong. The problem with bullying today is that its effects are far greater. The social cancer of bullying has gone into hyper-drive through social media. In a social environment where 50% of marriages end in divorce, the bullied have a weak support system at home with a single parent in which to receive reassurance.

Back when the vast majority of families were strong and bonded in America, young men could go home after a day of bullying in school and find security and solace in the comfort of their home. They could be reassured in the presence of a father who was their hero. They had an emotional sense that their father was better than any other father in the whole world. He could hunt a bear with a switch, and guard the home against any evil that might invade his castle. If the bullying at school became too intense, the bullied always knew that retreat could be found at home in the presence of a father who brought reassur-

ance in what often became a cruel world.

Through a weekend of participation in their sons' lives, fathers can help get the minds of their sons off the bullies long enough to regenerate them emotionally to face another five days of bullying in school. Such a home scenario is reassuring for teens who are trying to be accepted in a world that seems to feast on rejection. With all the stresses that face a young person in a modern world, a strong family has always been enough to offset even the most strenuous challenges that young people face in growing up.

But to a great extent, retreat to a home of emotional solitude is gone in many homes of the West. In the Western civilization of America, there was an average of one "school shooting" a week throughout 2017. It is an American anomaly. Nowhere in the rest of the world is such a tragic phenomenon occurring. Something, therefore, is uniquely wrong about the civilization of America that sets it apart as "different" from the rest of the world.

As we look to America, we stand aghast at such a phenomenon. Since such a social tragedy is not common

around the world, and was not common in America a half century ago, then we must conclude that something in the America civilization has gone tragically wrong. Our overall conclusion is that such a social anomaly is a signal that the society has a sickness from within. This social sickness is being reflected in the deadly behavior of school shootings.

When a society is suffering from social evil, we have observed that the society is focusing on the effect more than the cause. In cases as school shootings, the obsession is over the effect to the point that the cause is simply ignored. TV ratings go up when the corporate news media obsesses on reporting such effects in order to keep our minds focused on the tragedy. As a result of our misdirected focus for the profits of the corporate news media, the general public bewitches whatever instrument was used to cause the evil. We assume that the user was psychotic. We have observed that a liberal society will almost always ignore the cause by obsessing over the effect.

When considering decades, if not a century of social degeneration, and from a biblical perspective, we must focus on the cause that would generate the effect of social evils. It is worthy to note, therefore, that former Senator Rick Santorum stated on an international news broadcast that

**about 80% of those young men who commit “school shootings” have grown up in families where there was no father figure.** And there is the root cause for this evil effect of society.

Religious leaders have been alerting society for years across America that 50% of all marriages in America end in divorce. This 50% must be understood in view of the marriages that are officially registered with the county clerk. Some people have gone through serial marriages. The 50%, therefore, are marriages registered at the county court house that have ended in divorce. Half of the registered marriages end in divorce. The statistics reveal that the American society has a social problem in being unable to connect two people in marriage for life.

Consequently, “single parenthood” has become a normal social order of the American society. Young boys grow up being cheated of a father figure in the home because two parents have lost their love for one another (Remember Mt 24:12). What is deceptive is that the general society believes that it can get away with such a social dysfunction in marriage without reaping the evil effects.

In an agnostic/atheistic society where moral standards are constantly changing, society determines for itself what is to be considered “family.” So

in contrast to God's moral standards in reference to the family, single parenthood is considered a normal family. Add to this social dysfunction, the "marriage" between a man and a man, or a woman with a woman. Consider the adopted children that will come forth from these biblically defined dysfunctional unions in society. Western civilization is not finished in playing out the consequences of dysfunctional marital relationships. All of us today will be long gone before the last chapter of this sociological book is written.

When God's parenthood plan is ignored, society will eventually pay the consequences. Unfortunately, if a society bases its moral norms on an agnostic/atheistic world view of evolutionary change, then "moralizing" by the religious community is considered to be the antiquated postulations of "another age." We would say to those who promote dysfunctional unions that replace God's plan for marriage and family, that their sins will eventually catch up with their descendants. And in reference to school shootings, the sins of single parent "families" have arisen to remind us that when the parents sin, the children pay the price.

Yes, bullying has always been around, and will be around for as long as there are young teenagers in society. But what has exacerbated the bul-

lying that has led to an average of one school shooting a week in America is the obsessive use of social media among young people. Young people in America spend an average of at least four hours a day on a social media device. In the past when the last bell at school rang to conclude another day at school, the bullied young person could run home to the security of a strong father. But in many homes that opportunity no longer exists. The bullied run home, but he runs home with his smartphone, carrying with him after school hours all those Facebook posts and tweets of evil that state he is abnormal, bad, stupid, socially dysfunctional, and rejected by everybody. And because he often lives in a "single parent" home, such social tormenting may have existed before he even showed up at school in the first place. But now his social tormenting is compounded. He is reminded by his tormentors on social media 24-7 that he is an outcast. The social worker Justin Nutt wrote in a posted article, *School Shootings and Possible Causes*, the following:

In the digital age, a bully has the ability to torture and humiliate someone while in their presence as they always have, but in the modern era a bully can also do so on Facebook and Twitter for the world to see.

Eventually, the bullied becomes so frustrated that he acquires a weapon in order to release his pain on those who continually tweet him in the middle of the night that he is not accepted by anyone. The next thing the public hears are shots ringing out in some school hall. Nutt explained:

If a person feels the whole world knows what has been said about them, there could be a feeling that it will take just as large a show to solve the issues that were created.

Thoughts of a life being ruined forever, as teens often view things, can mean the only option is to lash out by attacking the bullies and those who laughed along, or in other cases, to commit suicide to end the pain.

We thus remind ourselves that civilizations fall from within. There are social diseases that society cannot overcome simply because the diseases have become the identity of the society. Bullying is not a social anomaly in the modern world. It has always existed. However, when a society takes away the father figure from the home, then the bullied have been deprived of one of the strongest reassurances to be emotionally reenergized in order to tackle another day of life at school. The absence of a

father in the life of a bullied teenager is a recipe for social disaster.

When one grows up undisciplined, he will not discipline himself. In a single parent family, discipline has its limits. There is only so far a single mother can go before her teenage son claims his own self and goes into the world. Finding consolation in a mother by a bullied teenager has its limits. Once the home fails to bring solace, gangs are the other social structure that develops in societies where young teens can find protection from the pain of social rejection. The gang becomes the surrogate family for those who have grown up in homes without a father figure. And no one will bully a gang member. As the West deals with the MS-13 gangs, they need to remember that such gangs are the result of dysfunctional families.

In a socially democratic society that votes lawmakers into office who must make laws according to their voting constituency, the legislators can only make social “bandage laws” to correct social dysfunctions. By voting legislators into office, society deceives itself into thinking that their congressmen can make laws that would limit the instruments that are used in school shootings. It is assumed that laws against the instruments that were used to cause the effect will solve the real social cause of

the problem. They do this because a liberal society cannot deal with the sin beneath the sin. It is the society itself that is harboring the sin. "Every imagination of the hearts of men are evil" when a society reflects evil within itself. The society is in a mode of self-destruction because its identity is now characterized by that which destroys civilizations from within.

When enough self-destructive moral norms are accepted by a society, and thus become the identity of the new society, then the old civilization has terminated because it is identified by the new social order. It is terminated because the remnant of the old social order could no longer preserve the continued existence of the old civilization.

## Chapter 15

### "FALLEN! FALLEN IS BABYLON THE GREAT!"

In Revelation, John heralded throughout the corridors of time, "*Fallen is Babylon the great, which made all the nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication*" (Rv 14:8; see 17:5). And fallen she is.

Many have read through the speculations of our postulations with a thought of doubt concerning the state of "Western Babylon." If the doubtful reader resides in the rural area of the West, then we can understand the apprehension by which he or she would be discouraged with the moral state of affairs of the West. The reason for this discouragement is that the rural West retains a great deal of the moral fiber upon which civilizations continue to exist. Nevertheless, the moral degradation of the cities of the West will eventually filter to the rural areas, and in particular during

these days, throughout the world through social media. "Babylon" is bringing the world down through her worldwide influence.

In order to discover where the West is in reference to the inward moral decline, we would look to the entertainment industry. We would judge that Babylon has already morally fallen by what is now considered popular television and movie entertainment. In order to make our judgment, we would compare some award-winning TV series that captivated the audience of the West over a half century ago to what is popular today. In the generation of today, most will not be aware of these programs that we use to compare the past with the present. But in comparison to the past, what was popular in entertainment over a half century ago, and what is popular today on movie and TV

screens is strikingly different.

For an initial example, in 1957 CBS ran the first episode of the series, *Leave It To Beaver*. The series ran until 1963. It was a series of TV shows that was based on the family wholesomeness of the 1950s and early 1960s. The characters were innocent of all the immorality that is so accepted and publicized today in the entertainment world. The biblical structure of the family was intact. Unfortunately, what happens with such a wholesome series is that when the viewing audience begins its moral decline, such series become unpopular, and subsequently, are discontinued. We would judge that the audience today would find this particular TV series quite boring.

But we need to move further back. There was also the *I Love Lucy* TV series that was broadcast by CBS from 1951 to 1957. In preparation to air the series, the producers debated as to whether they should cast the married couple (Lucy and Ricky) in bedroom scenes where the married couple would be lying in the same bed. The producers finally decided that in order to preserve the moral standards of the day, they would cast the bedroom scenes of the series with two beds instead of one. They wanted to shun any appearance of a male and female in the same bed, regardless of whether they were married.

And then our older generation remembers the *Andy Griffith Show* that was aired between 1960 and 1968. It too was a TV series that portrayed the innocence of a generation that is now lost. Interestingly, on cable TV today repeats of this series can still be seen. However, it is watched only by the aged generation that existed when the series was first aired.

The West is now into a new generation that is certainly based on a different moral standard than a half century ago. That which motivates the attention of the fallen generation of today are TV series as *Two and A Half Men*, that aired from 2003 to 2015. Then there is the *Big Bang Theory* that was first broadcast in 2007 and continues today, but with Penny and Leonard finally married after living in fornication together for over two years.

These series, and almost all like them that are aired today, portray the moral decline of Western civilization. With the production of each new TV series or movies, and unlike the producers of the lost generations of the past, the neo-liberal producers see how far they can go in portraying the dysfunctions of a morally fallen society. They have gone about as far as they can possibly go into immoral degradation.

Neither modern-day movie nor

television entertainment is without what the post WW II generation considered moral degradation. The moral standards of Hollywood have been propagated throughout the world with the rebroadcasting of Western entertainment through satellite media. The entertainment industry of the West reveals that the morality of the West has fallen! In its fall, it has dragged the rest of the world into its immoral pit.

In those innocent days prior to WW II, the West sent their young men into war against a megalomaniac who was murdering a civilization of people in Western Europe. Through the death of hundreds of thousands of Western soldiers, who were guided by the moral standards of the Western civilization of years gone by, Nazi Germany was defeated and the attempted extermination of the Jews by that wicked regime was brought to an end. Throughout the entire WW II ordeal, the moral West finally put a stop to the genocide of the Jews, which by the time of the end of WW II had reached at least six million.

But six million is the number of unborn babies that are now murdered every six years through abortion in the West. There are about one million babies aborted every year. What has gone wrong with a moral generation that stopped the murder of millions in the early 1940s, but now carries on

with a legalized murder of unborn babies of its own population today?

Adolf Eichmann was a German Lieutenant Colonel during WW II. He was one of the masterminds of the Holocaust that led to the murder of over six million people in death camps across Eastern Europe. After the war, Eichmann fled to South America. He eventually ended up hiding in Argentina. In 1960 he was captured by the Israeli Mossad, and secretly spirited away out of Argentina and to trial for his war crimes. He was found guilty and hanged in 1962 for his crimes against humanity.

When Eichmann was asked during his trial why he and others did what they did to over six million Jews, he stoically and unrepentantly responded, "It was the right thing to do at the time."

There are people now marching in the streets of the West who are saying the same thing in reference to the murder of unborn babies. "It is the right thing to do." They are protesting their right to have one million unborn babies murdered every year. We find it difficult to see a difference between the genocide of Nazi Germany and the genocide of innocent unborn babies today. The morality of the West has indeed fallen. Murder of unborn babies in the West is now the "right thing to do."

We must never forget that within

a fallen society those who are a part of the society rarely realize that they have morally fallen. When God is terminated in the minds of the fallen, then there is no limit to which the moral standards of the civilization will digress. Women can march with smiles on their faces in the streets while they hold up signs that read, "It's my body I will do what I like." These marchers will have long forgotten the moral standards of their ancestors of "another age."

When God told Lot to get out of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot left town for the mountains (Gn 14). However, on his way out of town, "*his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt*" (Gn 19:26). It was not that she simply looked over her shoulder to see what was happening to their home town. She was on her way back to "Walmart." Though righteous Lot realized the wickedness of the society of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot's wife was comfortable living in the city of sin. Lot was headed for the mountains, but his wife was returning to the comforts of the city, regardless of the degradation of sin city.

When the population of a civilization becomes morally desensitized, the people express no consternation about the moral degradation of the society in which they live. Watching a continuous diet of immorality on

movie and TV screens no longer causes any anguish in the spirit of a society of people who have been desensitized by the commonality of sin. Sodom and Gomorrah had truly fallen, and were at the time of Lot's residence there to the point of no moral return. But what was in store for the residents of the cities was that they were unknowingly awaiting for fire and brimstone from heaven. The destruction of the cities of the plain was so complete that archaeologists today can only guess where the cities were originally located.

Western civilization is truly in a state of committing social suicide. Nevertheless, there is always a remnant of "righteous Noahs and Lots" who maintain the way of the Lord. There will always be a righteous Noah and his family who will board a boat and say good-bye to a civilization that has given itself over to agnostic/atheistic wickedness. As the moral decline of a civilization reaches epic proportions, the "faithful remnant" is voted out of office in a democratic society that is bent on moral suicide. Many decades ago prayer was voted out of schools in the West. And now, shots ring out in school hallways across the land. When a civilization loses its godly moral majority, it votes into power a new moral base whereon the imagination of men is only evil continually.

## Epilogue

When Vice President Mike Pence was berated for his religious faith on the nationwide and highly viewed ABC television series, *The View*, we were again reminded that a neo-liberal social order has set into the society of the West. On the bright side, however, a minority faith-driven audience of over 40,000 people called in and complained to the producers. Joy Behar of *The View*, the host who made the derogatory remarks, had to personally call and apologized for her ridicule of the faith of a Western dignitary.

But it was too late. Behar's words had already reverberated across the world, reminding us all that a large segment of Western society has lost its faith. Behar's derogatory statements against a Vice President, who seeks to maintain a remnant faith in a civilization in spiritual collapse, only revealed that Western civilization as we formerly knew to be "Christian," is in its final century.

This brings us to our knees in reference to the future of faith in a civilization that is nearing its end. To this present generation of faithful grandparents, we can only say what God said to Abraham in his final years when he was dwelling in the land of Palestine.

*And you will go to your fathers in peace. You will be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they [your descendants] will come here again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete* (Gn 15:15,16).

The Amorites—could we now say, the Americanites—were morally progressing toward consummation as a civilization at the time Abraham was among them. The Amorites were on the road to a certain destiny of finality. However, they were not on this road because they were predestined by God to be there. On the contrary, it is always the responsibility of a morally suicidal civilization to realize that **they are the cause of their own demise**. God does not predestine civilizations to fall. He only knows and reveals the embedded sociological and moral reasons that bring about such falls.

God knows when a civilization is in demise, which demise will lead to the termination of the civilization. At the time Abraham was in Palestine during the days of the Amorites, the fall of the civilization of the Amorites was "*not yet complete*." At the time, it was in the process of completing its demise. God wanted Abra-

ham to recognize that the Amorite civilization was in the process of bringing itself to its own suicidal consummation. That time would not come for over four hundred years later when the children of Israel would come forth from Egyptian captivity in order to eradicate the Canaanites from the promised land.

God is patient with civilizations that are in decline. We must not misunderstand His patience. His patience does not mean He has forgotten wickedness and the destiny of a civilization that gives itself over to wickedness. God is patient with the wickedness of the world today, but the end is coming. Therefore, each one of must remember that God ...

*... is longsuffering toward you, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. **But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise and the elements will melt with fervent heat. The earth also and the works that are therein will be burned up** (2 Pt 3:9,10).*

When the “fourth generation” of Abraham’s seed returned to Palestine after the Egyptian captivity, they (the Israelites) would be God’s instrument by proxy to take out the wicked Amorite civilization, which at the

time of the descendants’ return would have spread to all the Canaanite societies of Palestine. In the forewarning of the eventual consummation of the Canaanite civilization, God sought to warn the descendants of Abraham that they must eradicate the Canaanites from the land lest they themselves be infested with the social concepts of wickedness that bring civilizations down.

Of course we know the rest of this story. The descendants of Abraham, the Israelites, did not drive out all the Canaanites. Eventually, the wickedness of the Canaanites led Israel to her own demise as a civilization in the land of Palestine.

When the time in history came for the Canaanites to be taken out of the land of Palestine, we must keep in mind that there were some among the Canaanites who maintained faith in the God of Abraham. God even used a “faithful fornicator” to accomplish His mission to eradicate the wicked Canaanites from the land. Rahab the harlot lied to save the spies of Israel, but she lied in faith to send them safely back to the Israelite army (Js 2:25). She eventually became part of the Davidic lineage through which the Messiah and Savior came into the world.

One may be a resident of a civilization that is destined for doom, but this does not mean that he or she will

go out with the demise of the civilization. The faithful must simply remain faithful, regardless of being surrounded by wickedness. We must not forget that righteous Noah was surrounded by a wicked world civilization during the one hundred years he prepared the ark. He and his family eventually floated to safety, but his contemporaries were taken away (See Mt 24:37-39).

The people of God today are not a military force to eradicate evil forcibly from the world. That is not the business of King Jesus and His church in this present world (Jn 18:36). However, with His mighty hosts, He will eventually be revealed from heaven in flaming fire in order to finalize all civilizations on earth (2 Th 1:6-9; see Jd 5-7,14,15). But until that last day, the people of God are destined to live in the world, but not be a part of the immorality of the world (1 Co 5:10). Until the day of final global consummation comes, God's admonition to the faithful would be to buckle up and ride out a falling world until they hear a final trumpet call. Until that final call, the following are some thoughts to consider:

- We have been harsh on the corporate news media. In many cases our harshness was justified because much of the corporate news media has in these last times morphed into a lib-

eral corporate news commentary on news events, rather than simply airing the news. Every news media today seems to have its own panel of commentators who explain this or that about the news. The problem with this system of media is that the particular bias of the corporation that controls the particular media outlet often voices its own biased opinions about the news events. When a society becomes divided, the news media often becomes partisan in the interpretation of the news. The era of David Brinkley and Chet Huntley are long gone (NBC *Huntley-Brinkley Report*, 1965–1970). We are in the era of a leading news anchor concluding with his or her stacked panel of either liberal or conservatives, who with a partisan bias laboriously, expound on the news of the day.

We say all this with some complaint, realizing at the same time that **a free democratic society cannot exist without a free press**. Unless there are zealous investigative reporters among us, and especially among the rulers who govern us, we cannot vote wisely in the elections. If we had a choice whether to live in a society that had no free press, and a society that has a biased press that in many ways has gone astray in just giving us the news, we would choose the latter. We will suffer through the panel of commentators simply because we seek to

have among us honest investigative reporters who can sort through the fake news and give us the true story.

However, when a civilization with a corporate news media is in decline, viewers must with caution question what they read, see and hear. Civilizations in decline inherently become divided. In this modern world of corporate news organizations, the organizations report the news that caters to the majority of the society to which they broadcast. They thus enable the divided society for the sake of profit. Their total emphasis is to maintain high ratings in order to reap high profits for the majority viewers. In a truly divided society, therefore, the corporate news media generally takes the side of the majority, for it is with the majority that there are more viewers, and subsequently, more profits. When we grew up more than a half century ago our father always told us, “Boys, don’t believe half of what the newspapers report, and always question the other half.” Not bad advice, even to this day.

- We must understand that judgment eventually comes in time upon those civilizations that forsake the moral norms that preserve civilizations. Hiding one’s head in the sand is the last thing the faithful should do. In fact, those who hide their “spiritual” heads in the sand are part of the

problem. There is no consternation within their soul to speak out against the moral condition of the society in which they live. However, if one recognizes that society is on the backside of existence, but “*not yet complete*” in its final demise, then there are things to do. It is a time to speak out about sin that is taking society into the pit of wickedness. It is a time to make that call to complain about arrogant TV hosts who rail at dignitaries on the communication media.

- The righteous must plead for a remnant. Sodom and Gomorrah, the cities of the plain during Abraham’s stay in Palestine, had socially reached their time of consummation (See Gn 10:19; 14:8). Their wickedness was complete. When Lot pitched his tent among these cities, they were at that time in their years of finality. “*The men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinners before the Lord*” (Gn 13:13).

The outcry of wickedness of the cities of the plain was great before the Lord (Gn 18:2). When it was time to close the chapter on this civilization of sin, Abraham pled for the cities in asking those who were going to carry out the deed of destruction, “*Will you also destroy the righteous with the wicked?*” (Gn 18:23).

Abraham pled for the cities on behalf of the righteous remnant whom

he supposed was still dwelling in the cities. But after all his pleading, only Lot and his family were salvaged from the total destruction of a civilization that was characterized by complete wickedness. We would be as Abraham, and so we would also plead for the civilization in which we dwell, believing that our present civilization “*is not yet complete*” in its demise, but is headed in that direction.

- During His ministry, Jesus knew the certainty of the termination of national Israel in the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. His following pronouncement over Jerusalem would certainly be the words of the righteous over a civilization in which they now live, but feel totally helpless to preserve:

*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, even as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not* (Mt 23:37).

A falling civilization will always “kill the prophets” who cry out to turn society from certain consummation. Prayers will be offered. Proclamations will come forth from the hearts of the faithful. But no one will listen. The falling society will mock the faith

of the faithful (See Mt 5:10,11). They will persecute with words those who would stand up and speak out for faith. The faithful, however, must be more persistent than Satan. Since Satan continually goes about seeking whom he may devour, then the faithful must also be going about seeking those whom they may detour from destruction through the preaching of the gospel.

The faithful of falling civilizations seek to gather society under their wings in order to preserve them. But the moral and social norms that cause the demise of civilizations are so embedded within society that the rebellious will despise their leaders (Jd 8) and rail at the faith of those who would lead them out of the certain termination to which they are moving.

Only the faithful understand that a society is morally fallen. Those who are content within the society to live contrary to spiritual matters, only show contempt for those who cry out against what will inevitably lead to the fall of a civilization.

Nevertheless, even to forty years before national Israel was consummated in A.D. 70, Jesus mourned over its demise to come. He did not pray that the end not come. He only prepared His Jewish disciples in Matthew 24 to prepare for the end. And such would be our ministry to every believer in every civilization that is

nearing its “completion.” It is a time to prepare for the end, not a time to hide one’s head in the sand and say that there will be no end. Such head burying some did in deceiving themselves in the middle 60s in reference to the coming of Jesus in judgment on national Israel. Peter wrote to these self-deceived Jews:

*Scoffers will come ... saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation” (2 Pt 3:3,4).*

- In the final years of national Israel in A.D. 70, Jesus made a very sad statement in reference to the family relationships that would occur during the final years of that civilization: ***“And children will rise up against their parents and will cause them to be put to death”*** (Mt 10:21).

Though this statement was made by Jesus at the time He sent out the twelve apostles on a limited commission during His ministry, in the context of the statement, He moved far beyond the events they would experience in the few weeks of their preaching on this tour (See Mt 10:16-23). When Jesus spoke of the “end” in the context of the statement, He was speaking of the end of national Israel (See Mt 10:22). The historical context is the end of national Israel that

would occur about forty years after Jesus made this statement.

What is significant is the family tension that would arise between those who would be parents and children at the time prior to the A.D. 70 consummation. At the time of the end of national Israel, the parents and grandparents, who originally lived and personally heard of these things directly from Jesus about forty years before, realized that the consummation was near. They had read the Old Testament prophets of Daniel and Ezekiel. Specifically, the Christian Jewish parents and grandparents believed the prophecy of Jesus that was recorded in Matthew 24.

The immediate parents believed in the faith of their fathers that led them to accept Jesus as the only Messiah. However, many of the children of these faithful parents forsook the faith of their parents and adopted the populace politics of the day. They believed in the self-proclaimed messiahs who were leading a rebellion against Rome. Family discussions around the dinner table, therefore, became tense, if not hostile. Children forsook the faith of their parents. The children no longer listened to the cries of their parents who realized that the end of Israel was near. The children ran after other self-proclaimed prophets who proclaimed that national Israel would survive the end about

which they believed their parents foolishly proclaimed. As a result, many parents said good-bye forever to zealous children who picked up a sword in A.D. 70 and packed off to Jerusalem to fight in the resistance against Rome.

In the consummation of the civilization of Noah's era, the consummation of the cities of the plain, and the final years of Israel in Palestine, we learn a very clear message: Civilizations that have embedded social norms that encourage social suicide and false religions always bring a civilization to its knees regardless of the faith of the parents. The false religiosity that prevailed before the end of all those civilizations was defined as wickedness, for in the behavior of the religious people, iniquity was played out in the consumerism of the day.

Since the love of money is always the foundation upon which wickedness is built (1 Tm 6:10), the behavior of those in a falling society is to gain a financial advantage over one's fellow man. The parents handed their children a college education in order to be successful, but that success drove the children to sacrifice the faith of their parents on their way to financial success. The parents desire that their children have a better life turned around to devour the inheritance of faith that the parents wanted to pass on to their children.

In the "wicked materialism" of the West, and those societies throughout the world who would clone their behavior after such worldly desires, all behavior is centered around getting gain. The religion of consumerism has spread across the face of the earth in the name of "development." Societies no longer want to be called "Third World," or "developing countries." They want a piece of the materialistic god of the West. In such a world economic environment, consumerism becomes the new religion. And for this reason, the children leave the faith of their parents in order to build themselves on the foundation of money.

There is a new god in town. As children are caught up in the materialism of the day, they forsake any faith that depends on God. Fasting, which is the outpouring of a people who seek to depend on God, is forgotten among most religions of the day. It is forgotten because the new god of consumerism replaces one's need for a God who can help the believer prevail in times of need. If there are no times of need, then there is no need for a God who can help one through needful times.

In the final years of a civilization, those parents and grandparents who lived by faith will lose many of their own children to the new idol god of financial security. When security in

life moves from the God of heaven to the god of money, then there is no need for a God who would take us through hard times. The faith of the children, therefore, will vanish amidst the flow of capital throughout the civilization. Children will have more faith in their 401K and the stock market than in God who can take us through the collapse of civilizations. Parents simply need to understand and be prepared for this god of the West. They need to remember that the rich elite of Israel were taken into captivity—the stock market of the rich collapsed. The rich Sadducean elite of national Israel had zero bank accounts after A.D. 70.

Many of our children will be lost to the god of material prosperity in a society that exalts consumerism. They will fall aside to their material investments on their way to the top. In their society, the Bible will no longer be studied. There will be more Bible studies in homes. Bibles will gather dust. And then, Bibles will no longer be found in the homes of grand children who have long forgotten the

God of their grandparents.

- The faithful must huddle close to the God of heaven. God has told us these things beforehand. He prepared the faithful of Israel for her consummation by telling the faithful through the prophets that the end would come. He told the people that their civilization was going to come to an end because the majority of the people had forsaken His moral and civil standards (Hs 4:6). Jesus also prepared His people for the end of national Israel in A.D. 70. “*Behold, I have told you all things in advance*” (Mt 24:25). These warnings were written for our learning. The Holy Spirit’s words in Romans 15:4 are as relevant today as they were when they were first inscribed:

*For whatever things were written before [in the Old and New Testaments] were **written for our learning**, so that we through patience and encouragement **of the Scriptures** might have hope.”*