

The Death of a Nation

by Doug Hamilton

Part 2) How do earthly nations always fall?

As mentioned in the last lesson, the new nation of Israel was "...to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it (Dt 30:16). If they did not to do this, then the blessing of God would become a curse and the nation would not survive.

Applied and Natural Consequences

There are two types of consequences that exist in this life: 1) Applied Consequences and 2) Natural Consequences. When a person speeds in his car, an applied consequence is a police officer writing a ticket. The only damage is to the wallet of the speeder. A natural consequence of speeding might be losing control of the car and crashing. The damage in this case is to the driver, the car, some property and possibly some others whom might have been in his speeding path.

Usually there are natural consequences and natural blessings built into the commandments of God. Even if someone is ignorant of the commandments of God, there is still enough evidence in the natural creation of God to make good decisions.

- Romans 1:19-20 "...because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."

Paul would later on to say in Romans 2:14-15 that the "*Gentiles who do not have the Law*" could "*do instinctively the things of the Law...in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts.*" In other words, if a father, either a Christian or non-Christian, shows love and support for his child, both can benefit from God's natural laws built into parenting. They will both likely have a strong bond to their children. If both fathers neglect their children, both will likely have the natural consequences of a wounded relationship with the offspring. The bulk of the blessings and curses are built into the commands of God. *Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.* The law of the reaper applies to both the lost and the saved.

National Consequences

The same is true of nations, for they are made up of many individuals. Peter states in *Acts 10:34-35* "*I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality,*³⁵ *but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.*" When a nation embraces the natural laws that are easily evident through observation of His creation, things will likely go well for that country. When a nation goes against God intrinsic natural qualities, there will be a curse in its place and the culture will be at risk of decline.

What are the natural laws of nations?

We simply need to go back to where God revealed the Ten Commandments to the Jews. There are ten specifics that God required the Jews to embrace in order to bless the nation. If the failed,

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the nation would be cursed. The Ten Commandments were nothing more than principles being specified to the Jews.

- Exodus 20:5-6 "For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, ⁶ but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."

How does one go from the specific commands of the Law to the natural laws of God? Simple, we look for the principles built into each of them. God does not give commands without a reason (Is 1:18), but with Divine intent of protection and benefit to us. We are the child and He is the parent. He is looking out for us by showing the elemental principles that make nations strong.

Ex 20:3 "You shall have no other gods before Me."

Principle #1 "I will focus on this Creator of the Cosmos."

- The Law: The Jews were delivered out of Egypt and from their pagan god-system. The purpose of the plagues was to assault this god-system and begin the process of turning back to the God of the promise of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- The Principle: "I will focus on the Creator of the Cosmos." As mentioned a moment ago, the evidence of creation is all around us (Romans 1:19). It is intellectually dishonest to observe all we know of the Cosmos and come to the conclusion that there is not intelligent design of some sort. The more that is revealed through science, the more we know of our complexity, from the simplest single cell amoeba to the complex neuron of the human brain, we are *fearfully and wonderfully* designed (Ps 139:14). We cannot understand all there is to know about this intelligent Designer just from the evidence of the Cosmos, but we certainly cannot dismiss the evidence, for to do so sends us down a path for which there is no excuse. The natural evidence calls for us to seek to know about Whom this Creator is.

Ex 20:4 "You shall not make for yourself an idol"

Principle #2 "I will put nothing on this earth ahead of the Creator."

- The Law: The Jewish nation was told not to be involved with idolatry. This is when men take something from creation, remake it and then exalt it ahead of God. Jehovah would not tolerate this in any form.
- The Principle: "I will put nothing on this earth ahead of the Creator." Recognition of creation naturally leads us to believe we are dealing with someone or something higher than us. In fact the Creator would have to be the highest being of all in our minds for it is this Designer that brought us into being. Anything we exalt above this Intelligent Designer would be idolatry and would violate our conscience. It simply does not make

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sense to take something that He made and from it make something else to worship. There is no room in a successful society to do such.

Ex 20:7 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain"

Principle #3 "I will show the highest reverence for Him."

- The Law: The Jewish nation was never to invoke the name of God in their dialogue, risking reduction of value of His holy name. They were to let their Yes be Yes and their No be No (Mt 23:16).
- The Principle: "I will show the highest reverence for the Creator". Knowledge of a Creator and the logic to never put anyone or anything ahead of Him, invokes a life that demonstrates the highest reverence. We strive hard to search for the ways to generate respect for that which is holy or perceived to be thereof.

Ex 20:8 "Remember the Sabbath"

Principle #4 "I will dedicate time for the Creator."

- The Law: The Deuteronomy 5:15 account gives the primary reason the Jews were commanded to rest on the Sabbath, "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt..." They were slaves in Egypt when God delivered them. They did not have a day off, but worked all the time and as a result God made them take a day off.
- The Principle: "I will dedicate time for the Creator." The society that embraces the logic of a Creator and reverence for Him must also take time to be devoted to such. If the culture does not devote time to better understand Him, then the Creator is reduced down to less than He really is.

Ex 20:12 "Honor father and mother"

Principle #5 "I will value the experience and authority of others."

- The Law: The youngest generation of the Jewish society was to honor the generation above them. In this case it would be the parents of the children that would teach this lesson to be applied for the good of the nation. *Leviticus 19:32* 'You shall rise up before the grayheaded and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the LORD.' If they failed to honor those whom were more experienced, then the result would be chaos (1 Kings 12:8).
- The Principle: "I will value the experience and authority of others." For a nation to function, they must show respect for the experience and authority of others, beginning with the parents and extending to even the most elderly. When that is the national principle in place, then the people will be have the natural blessings of God.

Ex 20:13 "You shall not murder."

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Principle #6 "I will value the life of my fellow man."

- The Law: The word is "murder", not "kill", hence referring to human life. The Jewish nation was to value the life of all people. They were not to murder their children (Lev 18:21), their fellow Jew (Lev 24:17), or even the sojourners in the country. To do so was a capital offense punishable by execution.
- The Principle: For any civilization to succeed, there must be protection extended for the people of that nation. When respect for human life is absent, disorder ensues.

Ex 20:14 "You shall not commit adultery."

Principle #7 "I will value sexual purity."

- The Law: The Jewish nation was to hold marriage as the highest covenant between human beings. They were taught that marriage was tri-fold: A Family relationship, a Life-long relationship and a Sexual relationship (Genesis 2:24). They were commanded to not be like the gentiles whom usually lived very immoral lives. Homosexuality, incest, bestiality, necrophilia, orgies or any other form of sexual immorality was to be sternly dealt with. The only sex that God permitted for His nation was that which was in the bonds of marriage.
- The Principle: "I will strive to be sexually pure." The nation that holds marriage in the highest regard will be strong. The offspring of that union will learn lessons of love, respect, sexuality and maturation to carry into their own marriages. When the national consensus says they will value the marriage covenant and keep it pure, then they will be strong. To not do so will lead to all manners of immorality.

Ex 20:15 "You shall not steal."

Principle #8 "I will value the personal blessings of others."

- The Law: The Jewish people were not to be a nation of thieves, for they must respect the property of others. They understood that God allows blessings to come into their lives and to respect that means to honor God.
- The Principle: "I will value the personal blessings of others." Any nation that does not respect the personal blessings of others will become chaos. When a politician levies class warfare, when a thief robs a house, when a bank defrauds a patron or a similar examples not valuing the personal blessings of others, then they are doomed to receive the generational curses contained therein.

Ex 20:16 "You shall not bear false witness..."

Principle #9 "I will value honesty in my life."

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- The Law: The Jewish nation was to be a people that walked in truth. God knew if what came out of their mouth was anything less than the truth would allow evil to creep in. *Ex 23:1 "You shall not bear a false report; do not join your hand with a wicked man to be a malicious witness."*
- The Principle: "I will value honesty in my life." For a nation to succeed, there must be a societal consensus of the value of truth. To not do so will breed distrust and chaos among the populace. It doesn't matter if you call it a half-truth, a black lie, a white lie, a mis-truth, an outright lie or any other combination of the same, it is a false witness. If lies are allowed to seep into the culture, then truth will not be there to protect them.

Ex 20:17 "You shall not covet..."

Principle #10 "I will value contentment."

- The Law: The Jews were not to be coveting in their heart for other peoples' lives. *Dt 5:21 'You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field or his male servant or his female servant, his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.'* God wanted them to be content with what they had, not being in wanton desire of others around them.
- The Principle: "I will value contentment". There is something to be said when a person is content in their life. They are not going to succumb to the earthly pulls of materialism or the throws of hedonism and excess. When this is not present, there is not dependence on God and we will go the way of the Laodiceans (Rev 3:17).

History teaches us that when nations embrace these principles, then they are more likely to be strong and prosperous. This is not necessarily because of intervention from God, but the natural blessings which He has built into the formula. When nations pull away from these principles, with secularism, irreverence and immorality, then they will not stand.

How do earthly nations fall?

The strength of a nation lies in shared societal values that reap the natural generational blessings which God built into certain behaviors. When a nation chooses to go down a path of secularism by denying the existence or importance of God, something or someone must take its place. If that nation reaches a tipping point, then violation of even more of these will come. The society begins to do what is right in their own eyes. They curse the Creator. They stop valuing the seasoned and experienced citizens; they devalue human life; they fall into immoral behavior; they become confused over personal properties; they make truth a catch phrase at best and they are drawn into rampant chaos. Some of the natural consequences as a result is the acceptance of inexperienced leaders, a devaluing of human life at every level, out of control immorality with disease, death and demoralization, people trusting their riches over God. The nation becomes a country of narcissists, each trying to seek one's own personal good. The national cohesiveness is permanently destroyed in the end and the nation implodes on itself from within.

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Nations fall when they collectively receive the natural consequences for not taking the God's advice for strong nations and the lives of those whom dwell in them. In the next lesson we will want to cover what are the recognizable steps of the dying nation.