

# The Death of a Nation

by Doug Hamilton

## Part 3) What a Nation Looks Like Before the Fall.

In the first lesson of the series "The Death of a Nation", we examined the truth that every nation has a birth, a life-cycle and death. The United States, regardless of the pride of her citizens, will go the way of all the other nations that have arisen and fallen in the annals of history. Far greater nations have come and gone before our nation and there may be many more in the future. God is well aware of the life-cycle of nations (Romans 13:1).

In the second lesson it was proposed that nations are simply groups of people that share a common bond of values. The supreme value system is found in the Ten Commandments in the principled form. When people value life, marriage, property, the truth and the contentment, that nation thrives. When nations go the way of acceptance of God's word, then they will tend to experience the natural blessings of that behavior. When they abandon the same principles it leaves the same nation vulnerable to the natural curses. This has been going on for thousands of years.

In this lesson we are going to examine what a nation looks like before the fall. There is an eerie pattern that surfaces in the decline and fall of nations and civilizations. The apostle Paul mentions to his protégé Timothy in his second letter of record about the moral decline of a civilization that will arise in "the last days".

**2 Timothy 3:1-5** But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. <sup>2</sup> For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, <sup>4</sup> treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup> holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

- Throughout the era of the early church, perilous times developed which seemed to indicate the end of an era. Though this appears to refer to the end of time, every generation of Christians, including Paul's, took the reliable perspective that the end of a civilization always occurs when the culture runs counter to the values of Christianity. They commonly referred to these moments of decline as "the last days" or something similar.
  - The Hebrew writer wrote concerning the coming of Jesus in Hebrew 1:2 2 "...in these last days has spoken to us in His Son..."
  - Peter wrote in 2 Peter 3:3-4 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts, <sup>4</sup> and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation."

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- John referred to it decades later in 1 John 2:18 "Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour."
- Jude reminded us in 17-18 that all the apostles warned of the "last time" where there "will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts."
- Ignatius of Antioch (about A.D. 108) writes: "These are the last times. Therefore let us be modest, let us fear the long-suffering of God," He also said later "For in the last days the false prophets and the corrupters shall be multiplied."
- Every generation of Christians for the past two thousand years have referred to the moral decline of the culture in which they dwelt as "the last days".
- When civilizations war with worldly values against the people of God, it will always seem to the Christian as if it is "the last days". They can see the end of their world as they know it. It so obviously runs counter-culture to what the Christian believes that the blessings of God surely cannot be on that nation.

The purpose for establishing this is not to engage in an eschatological argument, but to see the pattern of dying nations. Look closely at this list of national sins that Paul says will be accepted as normal.

- The culture will become lovers of self and lovers of money,
- They will become boastful and arrogant.
- They will revile others and even their parents.
- They will become ungrateful, unholy and unloving in their character.
- They will become irreconcilable, malicious gossips that exhibit a lack of self-control.
- They culture will become brutish, haters of good, treacherous and reckless in their behavior.
- They will be conceited and lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.
- They will attempt to display godliness all the while denying the source, which is God.

There is one word that describes such behavior better than any other, NARCISSISM. This is the *inordinate fascination with oneself; excessive self-love; vanity* (Merriam-Webster's). When one person in a society becomes narcissistic, it is unfortunate for him. When the majority of the people of a society becomes such, it becomes the death of the nation for all.

- Proverbs 14:34 Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a disgrace to any people.
- Is 60:12 "For the nation and the kingdom which will not serve you will perish, And the nations will be utterly ruined.

### The Problem of Narcissism and Nations

A nation cannot be strong when the individuals of that nation cannot embrace common values that respect the whole, like "Love Your Neighbor". When people are doing "what is right in their

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own eyes" instead "doing unto others as you would have done unto you", there cannot be unity among the people. Without a solid unity of purpose that nation will consume one another.

In the publication *Monitor on Psychology* (February 2011) there is an article (page 64) by Sadie F. Dingfelder titled *Reflecting on Narcissism*. In it she writes the following:

Imagine a country where everyone acts like a reality show contestant — obsessed with power, status and appearance, and is comfortable manipulating others for their personal gain. “I’m here to win, not make friends,” would be the national motto.

This society would have high crime rates — white collar and violent — as people take whatever they feel entitled to, says Christopher Barry, PhD, a psychology professor at the University of Southern Mississippi and lead editor of “Narcissism and Machiavellianism in Youth” (APA, 2010). Cosmetic surgery would be routine, materialism rampant, and everyone would seek fame or notoriety, he adds. It would also be a place with high rates of anxiety and depression. That’s because narcissists — people with an inflated sense of their importance and abilities — have trouble keeping friends, even though they are good at making them, Barry’s found. “A narcissistic society would be a deeply lonely place,” he says.

According to some researchers, that is precisely where America is heading. Self-esteem is on the rise, with 80 percent of middle-school students scoring higher in self-esteem in 2006 than the average middle-school student in 1988 (in the *Review of General Psychology*, Vol. 14, No. 3). Among college students, subclinical levels of narcissism have steadily risen since the 1970s, other studies suggest. And though the diagnosis may be dropped from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (see Narcissism and the DSM), young people are much more likely than older adults to have ever experienced Narcissistic Personality Disorder, according to a large-scale epidemiological study published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* (Vol. 67, No. 7).

### The Destruction of Jerusalem and Israel

Matthew 24:1-2 Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. <sup>2</sup> And He said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.”

- Jesus was referring to the destruction of the capitol city Jerusalem. He said in 24:34 “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.” The nation only had one generation until Rome would destroy them and carry the survivors into captivity. This did not happen by random chance, but the recompense for the evil that had permeated the nation. Israel had once again become evil in God's sight and the nation would have to be destroyed. Listen to the charges levied by Jesus against

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the leadership of the nation just prior in chapter 23. They are an indictment against the culture of the charge of narcissism.

### The State of the Nation according to Matthew 23

- A Culture of Condemnation (13) They made religion void in the lives of the people. They weighed heavy burdens on others, yet would not even keep it themselves.
- A Culture of Cruelty (14) Only men could own property in the nation. When a widow without with male heirs faced starvation, the leaders of Jesus' day were notorious about foreclosing on the property for their own. This was the ultimate in cruelty by hurting the poorest of the poor and the neediest of the needy.
- A Culture of Contamination (15) They were not trying to make disciples of God, but more evil men than themselves. The next generation would be worse than the last.
- A Culture of Deception (16-17-22) The leaders were well-known for swearing false oaths before the people. They actually felt they would be okay in God's eyes as long as they did not "swear to God" something was true. They would swear by the gold of the temple or the altar of God just so that they might be more believable.
- A Culture of Neglect (23-24) They would make the sacrifices, but failed to live for God with the principles of justice, mercy and faithfulness. They would not give justice to the poor, mercy to the hurting and faithfulness in relationships.
- A Culture of Materialism (25-26) They were engaged in self-indulgence, doing what they wanted and when they could. Their god was their appetite and in their glory there was no shame.
- A Culture of Unrighteousness (27-28) They put on quite a show for the populace, but they were nothing more than hypocrites and law-breakers.
- A Culture of Persecution (29-33) They were no different than their forefathers in persecuting the righteous among the nation. Jesus was the most Righteousness that had ever existed in Israel, yet they wanted him dead. The apostles were sent out by Jesus to share the message of hope, but the same leaders would lash out against them.

Jesus made it clear to them that they had taken the narcissistic approach. Forty years from the prophecy of Jesus, in September 70 AD, over one million Jews died at the hand of General Titus and Rome. They reaped what they sowed.

### Dr. Jim Taylor -Adjunct professor of psychology, University of San Francisco

It's one thing to see that there is a growing number of narcissists in America today. But the real concern is not the individual narcissists among us, but when our society embraces and *accepts* narcissism as the norm. And that time may have arrived. That's when we have to start asking the next question, which is far scarier: What effect will this increasingly normalized culture of narcissism have on our society?...The answer that came most readily to my mind, and an apocryphal one at that, is a gradual yet inexorable tear in the fabric of our society. Think of all the qualities that enable us to form a

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functioning and vital nation -- respect, compassion, tolerance, selflessness -- and you will see that they don't exist in the narcissistic personality (or culture)...The indifference, egotism, disrespect and lack of consideration that are central to narcissism are also reflective of the increasingly polarized and vitriolic tone of our current body politic, recent unethical corporate behavior, the rise in cheating among students in school and the gamut of bad behavior among professional athletes. As Pogo noted so famously, "We have met the enemy, and he is us." (Narcissism on the Rise in America? Posted 5/28/11)

If the core values of God's word are adopted by a nation, then the natural blessings of Him will be upon them. The nation will be a better place for all.

- Thou shalt not murder naturally will protect all humans, unborn, the young, the middle-aged, the elderly, black, white, Asian and whomever else.
- Thou shalt not commit adultery will naturally strengthen marriages and families.
- Thou shalt not steal naturally protects private, personal and public properties by all.
- Thou shalt not bear lie protects the culture from false testimony, gossip and slander.
- Thou shalt not covet protects the heart from materialism, jealousy and indecency.

If the core values of narcissism are in place, then there shall be no value in anyone's life, anyone's family, anyone's possessions, anyone's perspective or anyone's goals. That nation will implode on itself and life as they know it will cease to exist. What remains is immoral chaos that nobody will want to be a part of in the end.

### Conclusion

- For decades we have been driving God out of the public square, out of the classroom and out of our children's lives. We have filled their education with things we know are not in the Bible and not according to our traditions. We taught them that whatever makes you feel good must be good.
- No longer do we come from a loving God, but ascended from primordial ooze. We allowed them to believe they came from animals and then became shocked when they act like animals.
- We handed out trophies for being average, taught them that sex can be anything our mind invents and sit them down in front of secular television programming and am amazed when they go the way of the world.
- We have had a couple of generations of degeneration from our core values as a country and a people of God. We are being taken over by the narcissistic culture and are surprised when mass shootings, mass abortions and mass drugs are running rampant in the culture.
- Do not be shocked in what you see in the news, for it will only become worse as the upcoming generation begins to breed and brings forth decedents twice as bad as before. We are in the early stages of the "last days" of our nation and the cup is flowing over. If we are not careful, there might not be anything we can do about. *1 Chronicles 7:14 and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face*

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*and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*