

The Death of a Nation

by Doug Hamilton

Review

We are at the close of the five-part series "The Death of a Nation". According to the Bible, we know that all nations will die. We know that the life-span of a nation is tied to the natural blessings in adapting God's principles to that government and people. We know the nation goes the path of narcissism that the end is near. We also learned that there is a patterned life-cycle of these nations. With all that in mind we must ask a most important question...

Part 5) What Can We Do About It?

Dr. Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975), a world famous British historian, wrote a multi-volume titled *A Study of History*. It is one of the major works of historical scholarship published in the twentieth century. The 12-volume "Study of History", published from 1934-1961, described the rise, flowering, and decline of 26 cultures including Egypt, Greece, Rome, Polynesia and Peru. His thousands of pages of writings are considered by many to be one of the greatest volumes on history to have ever been written. He summarized that "Civilizations die from suicide, not by murder." Simply understood, nations reach a tipping point from within its own people that leaves them vulnerable to collapse. Of the 26 civilizations that have appeared in human history, five remain, and twenty-one have fallen. Of the twenty-one to have fallen, nineteen collapsed when they reached the moral state America was in the 70s. Toynbee died in 1975, knowing our level of morality would further decline. As King Solomon would repeat over and over again in Ecclesiastes, "There is no new thing under the sun."

It must be known that Toynbee held a religious view of the world, but did not start out as such. He said "When I started, religion was not a prominent feature...In writing my study, I have been constantly surprised to find religion coming back to fill an even greater place." He continued: "So what does the universe look like?...It looks as if everything were on the move either toward its Creator or away from Him."

With his religious view in mind, Arnold Toynbee wrote: "The course of human history consists of a series of encounters... in which each man or woman or child...is challenged by God to make the free choice between doing God's will and refusing to do it. When Man refuses, he is free to make his refusal and to take the consequences."

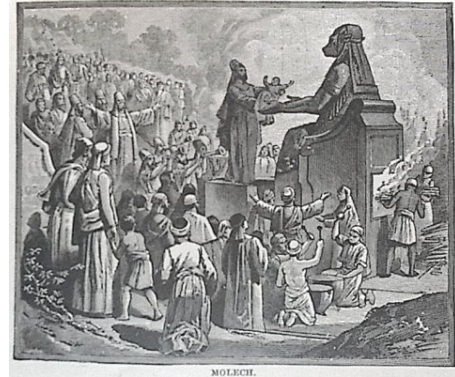
Israel at her tipping point

It was the year 696 BC in the southern Kingdom of Judah. A young twelve year old boy named Manasseh, the son of King Hezekiah, became co-ruler of the nation with his aging father (2Kings 21:1). Things went well while his father was still alive, but ten years later when Hezekiah passed, the twenty-two year old Manasseh began reversing all the policies against idolatry. *2 Kings 21:2 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel.* Though they had a long history of leaving God for the world, it was during his 55 year reign that immorality in Judah reached an all-time high. The following is an historical account of Manasseh's fundamental changes of Judah.

The Death of a Nation

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- He rebuilt the altars to Baal and an Asherah pole to worship fertility gods (2Kings 21:3). This caused further division as everyone had the "right" to worship whatever they wanted and for whatever reason they wanted to do so.
- He promoted ancient astrology to worship the sun, moon and stars (2Kings 21:3). The people continued doing that which was right in their own eyes instead of being unified
- He erected pagan altars in the Temple (2Kings 21:4-5) not only in direct violation to God's command, but also in a direct insult to God's holy name (2Chr 33:7; 2 Sam 7:13 He shall build a house for My name...). It was an all-out hostility against God's people.
- Witchcraft, divination, mediums and other abominable practices were promoted in place of God (2Kings 21:6). This resulted in further division of the culture.
- In the past when Israel cycled down into degeneration, at least the homosexual prostitutes were in the more remote locations of the land (1Kings 14:24, 15:12). During Manasseh's fundamental transformation of Israel there was full acceptance and promotion of such by allowing the man-whores to set up their trade openly in the Temple of God (2Kings 23:7). He had persuaded the religious culture into believing it was the right thing to do and the result was further division among the populace.
- Those whom did not go along with these changes were persecuted and killed on a mass scale (2 Kings 21:16). Jewish tradition even holds that Manasseh had the prophet Isaiah sawn asunder because he could not stand his presence. Obviously the country was further divided.
- He encouraged narcissistic majority to practice the art of passing their children through the fire of Moloch (2Kings 21:6; 2Chr 33:6) by doing it himself for an example because "it was the right thing to do". This was the practice of infanticide carried out by the radicals among them. At the valley of Ben-hinnom a couple miles outside of Jerusalem, Manasseh built a large metal furnace in the shape of Moloch with his iron hands extended out together. They would burn a fire from within the statue until the hands were glowing red. The pagan priest would convince a zealous parents to bring their newborns and lay them into the sizzling hands of Moloch. As the baby was being fried and crying out in agony, pagan priests would beat the drums to drown out the sound of the young infants. It was so hideous that only the most devoted idol worshippers carried it out. This location of Ben-hinnom would be the word which Jesus sometimes associated with *HELL* during his earthly ministry (Mark 9:24). Behaviors like this further divided the nation.



2 Chronicles 33:9 Thus Manasseh misled Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the sons of Israel. I am very graphic for you to stand in God's shoes in regard to His feelings toward the nation of Israel.

- 2Chronicles 33:11-15 “Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations, having done wickedly more than all the Amorites did who *were* before

The Death of a Nation

by Doug Hamilton

him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols; ¹² therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I am bringing *such* calamity on Jerusalem and Judah...'

- Jeremiah 15:4 "I will make them an object of horror among all the kingdoms of the earth because of Manasseh..."

Their cup was full (Matthew 23:32) and there was no turning back. The cancer of immorality and idolatry had spread to the entire nation and death was eminent. God's wrath would soon be at the doorstep of the nation. Though there was nothing which could reverse the outcome overall, there was something which could delay the inevitable.

The Josiah: Life Support for a Dying Nation (2Kings 22)

Josiah, the grandson of Manasseh, ascended the throne of Judah at age eight (2Chr. 34:1). For the next thirty-one years he would have another fundamental transformation on behalf of the kingdom of God. He is considered the most loyal king to have ever served (2 Kings 23:25).

- At the tender age of 8 he began a transformation of the innocence of a child into a clean life for God (vs. 2). His focus on purity was quite evident and God's judgment was delayed.
- At age 16 he set out on a path to further devote himself to God (2 Chr. 34:3). He wanted to devote all his heart, soul and mind to the Father, which he did. God continued to delay His judgment.
- At age 20 he began a cleansing of the land of idolatry (verses 3-7). He cleansed the Temple of idols, sodomites and practices. This would take years, but he continued it the best he could and God continued a delay in the judgment of the nation.
- At age 26 he began a restoration of the temple (2 Kings 23:23). For years it had fallen into neglect, but now it was returning to its glory. He showed reverence for that which his grandfather had abused and God was pleased to delay the judgment for the time being.
- At age 27, they found a copy of the Law during the Temple restoration. When it was read to him, he was so moved with fear of the coming judgment from God that he reinstated the Passover sacrifice (2 Chr. 35:1-ff). The initial reinstated Passover was the largest in centuries and it pleased God, so the judgment was delayed.
- His goal of making fundamental changes of good for the culture temporarily rallied the godly spirit of the nation. It all ended when he would die at the hands of a Pharaoh Neco at age of 39 in 608 BC.

His life-long reformations allowed the country to have a stay of execution. For three decades the nation grew closer to the plan of God, but the damage had already been done. *2 Kings 23:26 ... the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath with which His anger burned against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him.*

Jeremiah the prophet lamented for he knew the nation's stay of execution was over and the judgment of God would begin. *2 Chronicles 35:25 Then Jeremiah chanted a lament for Josiah. And all the male and female singers speak about Josiah in their lamentations to this day. And they made them an ordinance in Israel; behold, they are also written in the Lamentations. He summarized his feelings well on the matter in Lamentations 4:20 The breath of our nostrils, the LORD'S anointed, Was captured in their pits, Of whom we had said, "Under his shadow We shall*

The Death of a Nation

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live among the nations.” Because the nation was so fractured with division, they really could not unite together when Babylon decided to begin the early stages of deportation three years later in 605 BC. By 586 BC the rest of the nation was carried away into captivity and Jerusalem was destroyed.

What about us in America?

Where do we fit into the equation of the death of our nation?

- About 1.5 million unborn babies are extracted from the womb every year. It is glorified as a good thing and is now even fully funded by tax dollars through our government. Innocent blood has been spilled at the plans of evil leaders. In its wake a generation of citizens with broken hearts, seared consciences and weeping mothers that will never hold their child.
- Sexual promiscuity has grown rapidly over the last couple decades with the support of the majority of the leaders and populace. Citizens whom believe that marriage is between one man and one woman are being ostracized by the media as out of touch and even as evil bullies. More of the "Christian" religions are caving to political correctness and actually promoting it from the pulpit and from the mouths of their clergy. Those "Christian" leaders will even joyfully carry out the matrimony as a sign of their endorsement.
- Fewer and fewer people every year in our nation claim an association to Christianity. There is a rise in that which is not Christian-based. Paganism, witchcraft, Satanism, Islam, polytheistic religions, Humanism and a number of others.
- There is a collective effort among our nation's leaders and judges to take the Bible out of the culture, just like in the days of Josiah. In the past we were united under biblical principles, today the greatest unity is against the Bible, against Christianity and against Jesus Christ. The children today are easily the most godless generation we have ever been brought forth in our history.
- We are more divided than ever. Politicians cannot unite to work out a budget. They take these differences and seek to splinter us even further as they seek to stay in power. The rich against the poor, men against women, blacks against whites, sinners against saints, the educated against the uneducated, the democrat against the republican and the Christian against non-Christian. There is more national division than at any time in our nation's history.
- Are things as bad as in the days of Manasseh? Probably not. Is it possible that we will soon be there? Yes, for we are nearing the tipping point. Just a few more factors to fall in place and we will be past the point of no return. Things are ripe for God to give us over to national collapse. We are more vulnerable than ever.
 - Just one more financial crisis
 - Just one more major world conflict
 - Just one more war
 - Just one more election cycle
 - Just one more Supreme Court Justice
 - Just one more round of sweeping laws
 - Just one more round of escalated persecution against God's holy ones
- All these things could push us past the point of no return. When this occurs there will be nothing to hold us together as a nation. I am not persuaded we have reached that level yet, but it is right around the corner. When persecution against Christians is heavily

The Death of a Nation by Doug Hamilton

escalated, then the tipping point will have been reached and the nation will be put on death row.

What can we do to reverse the course before we reach the point of no return? We must make sure to be a patriot for God's kingdom before we can be truly patriotic for our own nation. How can we be modern-day Josiahs?

1) Personally commit to God.

Just like Josiah in his day, we must also be willing to be personally committed to God on every level of our life. If God is not at the forefront of our lives, then make it so. This was and is still pleasing to God.

- Matthew 22:37 “ ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ ”
- Luke 9:23 “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

2) Educate in the ways of God.

Josiah sought out God early on in his life and at deeper levels the longer he lived. When he came across the lost copy of the Law, it was not neglected, but studied with the intent to apply it. That was and still is pleasing to God.

- Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
- 2 Timothy 3:14-15 But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. ¹⁵And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

3) Contend for the faith in God.

Josiah refused to let the culture of his generation to continue unchallenged in their idolatry, but fought it the best way that he could. He contended for the faith which he possessed and it showed in his actions. He did the best he could with what he had and this is what we are called to do as well.

- Jude 3 I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.
- 1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Be the Josiahs of today and begin to strengthen ourselves, our families and our nation. Our nation will come to an end, but we can put this off for at least a generation if we choose today. Grandparents, do it for the sake of your grandchildren. Parents, do it for the sake of your children. Children, do it for the sake of your own future.