

“The Coping Christian in One Nation Under Satan”

by Doug Hamilton

Part XI) Seeing the Light at the End of the Tunnel

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.”

For the people of God there is always light at the end of the tunnel.

In 696 BC a twelve year old boy named Manasseh, the son of King Hezekiah, became co-ruler of the nation with his aging father (2Kings 21:1). Ten years later when Hezekiah passed, the twenty-two year old Manasseh began reversing all the policies against idolatry (2 Kings 21:2). 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.

- He rebuilt the altars to Baal and an Asherah pole to worship fertility gods (2Kings 21:3).
- He promoted ancient astrology to worship the sun, moon and stars (2Kings 21:3).
- 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)
- Witchcraft, divination, mediums and other abominable practices were promoted in place of God (2Kings 21:6).
- During Manasseh's fundamental transformation of Israel there was full acceptance and promotion of the lowest forms of immorality known to man (2Kings 23:7).
- Those whom did not go along with these changes were persecuted and killed on a mass scale (2 Kings 21:16).
- He encouraged practice the art of passing their children through the fire of Moloch (2Kings 21:6; 2Chr 33:6). The very spot which he had an altar built for this practice

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eventually became the location of what Jesus would use to describe *HELL* during his earthly ministry (Mark 9:24).

The nation was at an all-time low, but there is always light at the end of the tunnel for the people of God. The LORD would be able to use one young boy to change the life of hundreds of thousands.

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 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

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605 BC. By 586 BC the rest of the nation was carried away into captivity and Jerusalem was destroyed.

The minority can always make a difference in the outcome!

Lot

In Genesis 18:26–33 we find a revealing passage about this principle. God was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because of their wicked immorality. Abraham pleaded with God to spare the cities because his nephew Lot lived there.

- He asked God if there was just fifty righteous there would He spare them. God said he would, but there was not fifty righteous to be found.
- He asked God if there was just forty-five righteous would He still spare them. God said He would, but there were not forty-five righteous.
- Abraham asked if there was just forty, thirty, twenty or ten righteous would God spare the destruction. There was not even ten righteous found in the cities of the plain.

Even though the cities were destroyed by God, it did not have to be that way. If Lot would have spent some extra time in the word with his wife, that would have been two righteous. If they would have spent some more time leading the two daughters, that would have been four righteous. If they would have evangelized the two future sons-in-laws, that would have been six righteous. If they would have held a small-group Bible study in their home and invited just one guest apiece, that would have been twelve. Twelve is two more than ten and Sodom would not have been destroyed. Just one person could have made the difference, but nobody stepped up.

Joseph

He was the eleventh of twelve sons of Jacob, but God had big plans for him. His brothers sold him into slavery and wrote him off as a loss (Genesis). God worked with Joseph and delivered him from the depths of a prison to the right hand of Pharaoh (Genesis). In the end he delivered the same brothers, their households and even his father. They became a great people because of the promise of God and his faith. He was one man who chose to follow God, but made the difference for millions to come. There was light at the end of a dark tunnel in the life of Joseph.

Application:

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?

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

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Me.” We must take it serious or God’s blessings will completely abandon our nation. What does it mean to be fully committed to God?

1) Be Committed to Education from God’s Word.

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.

2) Be Committed to Contending for the Faith.

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.

3) Be Committed to Showing Love Towards All Men.

Josiah did this because he not only the people of God, but for all who dwelt in the land. He recognized that sin would ultimately destroy the nation if left unchecked. We also need to have a genuine love for all people because they are hurting souls like us.

- John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
- Matthew 5:44 “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...”
- Galatians 6:10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.
- Mark 16:15 And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”

Be the Josiahs of today and begin to strengthen ourselves, our families and our nation. Our nation may be coming 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.