

The Death of a Nation

by Doug Hamilton

In the early hours of Wednesday, November 7th, President Obama came out to accept his re-election before a crowd of thousands in Chicago. Here are the opening paragraphs from the official transcript.

Tonight, more than 200 years after a former colony won the right to determine its own destiny, the task of perfecting our union moves forward.

It moves forward because of you. It moves forward because you reaffirmed the spirit that has triumphed over war and depression, the spirit that has lifted this country from the depths of despair to the great heights of hope, the belief that while each of us will pursue our own individual dreams, we are an American family and we rise or fall together as one nation and as one people.

Tonight, in this election, you, the American people, reminded us that while our road has been hard, while our journey has been long, we have picked ourselves up, we have fought our way back, and we know in our hearts that for the United States of America the best is yet to come.

I was rather disturbed, not because of the election or the candidate, but of something that has been on my heart for quite some time. For the past few decades we have seen the country in decline, economically, morally, patriotically and spiritually. With every election the problems only intensify, a candidate is elected or re-elected, the greatness of the United States is boasted of and improvement is promised. It was in two or the phrases the President uttered that have been weighing on my heart..."we rise or fall together as one nation" and "the best is yet to come".

#1) Is it possible that we could fall as a nation?

As far back as I can remember, there has always been the United States. We were known as the land of opportunity and freedom. I have been to many nations of the earth. We have a great nation and a great people. We have a long documented history as a nation, including the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and Amendments. There is so much history over the past two hundred and thirty-five years, but the question remains, CAN WE FALL AS A NATION?

Nations are like people.

- A person is born into this world, goes through the normal stages of life and then dies in the end. Sometimes a person might die young, but some live longer. Some might take a little different path in life, but the basics remain the same. Sometimes people have good medical care and take vitamins, but in the end they still die. Birth, the stages of life and death is the pattern.
- Nations are also born, go through normal stages of life and then die. Some nations last longer than others, but no nation can permanently in place. Some nations take measures to preserve themselves, but in the end every nation will meet their end.

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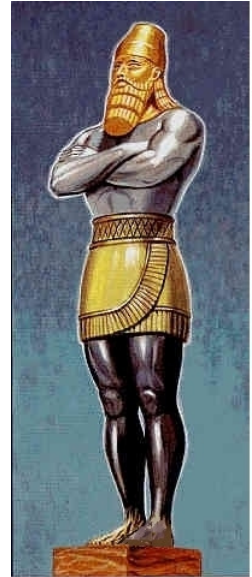
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#2) Is the best yet to come?

There have been hundreds of great nations since the beginning of time that have risen and fallen into the annals of history. Politicians proudly boast, "We are different. We are the greatest nation to have ever arisen." What in our national fabric permits us to pretend that will not end as a nation? Is the best yet to come or are we nearing the end of our life-cycle?

Four Great Nations, Four Great Deaths

Daniel 2:31-34 "You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome.³² "The head of that statue *was made* of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze,³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.³⁴ "You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them.



- Head of Gold: The Babylonian Empire
 - This was a great Empire that boasted the likes of the Hanging Garden of Babylon, the destruction of Solomon's Temple and the crushing of all the other nations around them. According to the Greek historian Herodotus, who wrote in the 5th century B.C., Babylon lay in the shape of a huge square, surrounded by 60 miles of walls, the greatest of which was 300 feet high and 87 feet wide. They had a population of more than 500,000 within the city walls. Nobody ever thought Babylon could fall until Cyrus, king of Persia, destroyed her in 539 BC.
- Chest of Silver: The Medo-Persia Empire
 - The Medo-Persian was known for their powerful army, their centralized administration and civil services. Nobody thought they could ever fall as a nation. That all changed when a young man name Alexander the Great crushed them in 331 BC.
- Thighs of Brass: The Greek Empire
 - The world had never seen anyone more battle savvy than Alexander the Greek. He quickly expanded his empire all the way to the Himalayas. Upon his death in 323 BC, the empire was divided into four and defended by its generals. This empire stood until Roman Republic began in 146 BC.
- Legs of Iron: The Roman Empire
 - Rome was not built in a day, but was firmly in power by the time of the death of Julius Caesar in 44 BC. The first Emperor, Augustus, set the tone of this Great Empire. They were known for their military, providential rule and structure. They in essence learned all they could from the previous empires and went from there.
 - It was during this time that the Christ would come (the stone cut out of the mountain) and begin the One True Kingdom, the church. Though the Empire continued for some time, the effects of Christianity had dominated.

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Just in that passage of scripture we find four great nations that met their demise. The leaders of all of these empires, from the boasting Babylonian named Nebuchadnezzar to the Roman emperors, had reached the end. Their leaders boasted to be a nation without end and their people the same, yet we know different. Nations die just like people die.

When will we learn?

We are told in *Romans 15:4* "Those things that were written aforetime were written for our learning..." The history of the Bible can teach us about our future, including the future of our nation, if we are simply willing to learn.

- *The famous German philosopher Hegel said, "What experience and history teach us is this: that people and government never have learned anything from history or acted on principles deduced from it."*
- *The famous Spanish philosopher George Santayana once stated, "Those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it."*
- *The historian Will Durant wrote, "So the story of man runs in a dreary circle, because he is not yet master of the earth that holds him."*
- *Writer E.A. Bucchianeri wrote "... the vintage of history is forever repeating ~ same old vines, same old wines!"*
- *Winston Churchill said it best, "The one thing we have learned from history is that we don't learn from history."*

The Challenge to the Christian:

We must be willing to take a deep look at history to understand what happened to the hundreds of nations that have fallen, how they fell, the steps in place prior to the fall and what if anything could have been done to extend those nations. The title of the series is "The Death of a Nation".

The Life-Cycle of the Nation of Israel

The year was 1470 BC and the location was on the west side of the Jordan River in Israel. Moses is preparing the Jews to finally enter the Promised Land after living as nomads in the desert for nearly forty years. What had been promised to Abraham more than four and half centuries prior was about to come to fruition.

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; ² And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; ³ And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

Abraham was old, married to an old woman, had no children to whom would be his heir, yet he was offered a promise from God. God told him to leave Ur, his father's house, his clan and go to the land we call Israel and God would make him a *GREAT NATION*. This is the history of a Nation.

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James 2:23 “AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS,” and he was called the friend of God. The promise to make Abraham a nation through which his descendents would number as the *stars of the sky* (Gen 15:5) and the *sands of the sea* (Gen 32:12). His descendents would first go into Egypt as predicted by God.

Genesis 15:13-16 God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. ¹⁴ “But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. ¹⁵ “As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ “Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.”

Everything was set in order by God:

- Moses sent to deliver the people for this new nation.
- The Ten Plagues free the people from the nation of Egypt.
- The new nation heads out to travel to their new location.
- The new nation doubts the promise of God and must wander the desert for four decades.
- The time was ready for the promised people of the new nation to take their Promised Land.

Moses outlined the terms of the new nation before they actually came into to possess the land.

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 “See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; ¹⁶ in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, 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. ¹⁷ “But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. ¹⁹ “I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, ²⁰ by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”

As long as they would be faithful to God, He would continue to bless them as a nation. If however they chose to be unfaithful to the commands of the Lord, He would deliver them over to another nation. Moses died and Joshua brought the people into the Promised Land. Before his death, Joshua would charge the people of this new nation to stay faithful.

Joshua 24:14-15 “Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. ¹⁵ “If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which

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your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

The plan was simple. Stay faithful to God or your nation would fall! For the next 1500 years the nation would be with God, turn from the ways of God and then be delivered over to an enemy nation through the natural consequences of the actions. They would cry out for deliverance, become faithful again and be delivered into nationhood. Time after time they went through this cycle only to fall to enemies, including the Moabites, Ammonites, Midianites, Canaanites, Philistines, Assyrians, the Babylonians and the Greeks. Sometimes their captivity was for a short time, but other times it was for decades. Each time the nation would spiral a little further from the original intent of God. Then in 70 AD the Romans surrounded the city of Jerusalem and utterly destroyed it and selling the survivors into slavery. This was the fulfillment of Jesus' words in *Matthew 24:2* “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.” There were so many Jewish slaves on the market that one could purchase five for every one gentile slave. They were wiped out as a nation, their temple was destroyed and the people were scattered throughout the world, stripped of an earthly promise.

Every Nation Will Fall, But One.

The Jewish nation of the chosen people of God was replaced by the nation that would bear the name of His Son. It is said of this new nation called the Christians “*But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God’s OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY*” (1 Peter 2:9-10). They would not be defined by location on earth, but a citizenship in heaven (Phil 3:20). The Christian nation does not have a capitol, but is located in the worship of Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). They would not be following an earthly king, a prime minister or an elected president, but a Savior (John 10:27). *Revelation 19:16* “...on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “*KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*”

Nations will come and go, but the Christian nation is here to stay! We simply have to make sure that we are already citizens of this nation. We must have that fact embedded into our soul before moving on to a deeper study of the failing earthly nations.

Up next: "How and Why do earthly nations fall?"