

GNITN

How America Dies

How Nations Collapse

All Things Die

I know that's a startling statement there. Ever since sin entered into the world in the Garden of Eden, nothing escapes its appointment with death. While some things only last for a brief amount of time, others can last a very long time. Methusaleh holds the record for longevity of human life weighing in at 969 years, but most people forget that Jared lived almost as long at 962 years. Noah clocked in at 950 years so he wasn't a spring chicken either. Interestingly, all three men lived longer than some of the greatest modern civilizations in history. Rome lasted 503 years, Ancient Greece lasted only 220 years, and the Ottoman Empire lasted about 600 years. Yes, other world powers lasted longer, but the point is that they all ended. And with few exceptions, they all followed similar trends with some even saying predictable trends. In these lessons we'll look at many nations that rose to world dominance to only cede their positions either by collapsing from within and/or without. And then we'll examine America and see if the telltale signs are in evidence here. Before all is said and done, I'll suggest if America can reverse these trends and, if so, how.

Nations In Decline

Author *Jim Nelson Black* is quoted as saying there are parallels in the collapse of the nations and what he sees in the United States. Here is a quote from his book *When Nations Die*:

As I have looked back across the ruins and landmarks of antiquity, I have been stunned by the parallels between those societies and our own. For most of us the destruction of Carthage, the rise of the Greek city-states, and the Fall of Rome are mere ghosts of the past, history lessons long forgotten. And such things as the capture of Constantinople, the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire, the collapse of the kingdoms of France and Spain, and the slow withering decline of the British Empire are much less clear and less memorable. Most of us do not remember much from our history lessons about the French Enlightenment or, for that matter, the issues that led to the American Revolution. But this is the legitimate background of our own place in history, it is vital that we reconsider the nature of life in those earlier times. For within those eras and movements are the seeds of the troubles we face today.

According to author and columnist *Kerby Anderson*, nations usually fall for three basic reasons: social decay, cultural decay, and moral decay and there are additional details in each category. *Anderson* uses the Roman Empire to make his points, but there are people who look at a variety of nations to make their points. I'll come back to *Anderson* when I discuss the Roman decline since it is so close to the path America is taking now. First, let's dissect more generic or unusual reasons.

Unusual Reasons

To be thorough, nations can rise and fall by no fault of their own. Many nations ended because of natural disasters such as flooding or cold. Crops are ruined and the food supply runs out or a volcano erupts or a massive rise in diseases occurs, all of which exacerbates or even causes internal strife. There are also the ups and downs of a stronger nation overrunning a less strong nation or people, which happens quite a lot, but in many cases the reason for not being strong enough is from an internal collapse. It could be economic, political, or societal struggles that weaken a nation and then they are conquered easily. It is the natural disasters that really can't be replicated so for the sake of clarity, I'm not including them in my discussions. Invasions are also not making the list of reasons,

since there will always be a bigger bully that will come along and nothing short of an act of God himself can change a nation's fate when faced with insurmountable odds like that. Only if I can point to other reasons to make them weak enough to be overpowered, I won't use them as examples. Trust me when I tell you that a lot of nations changed hands simply because of the natural ebb and flow of power.

Rome Is Really Our Best Model

It may seem like a little game of bait and switch here, however the rise and fall of the Roman Empire really shows us the roadmap for where America is headed overall. Yes, I'll mention other nations that closely resemble the patterns, but Rome is far and away the one empire or world superpower that checks off all the boxes of what not to do if you want to survive as a nation. As I start to give you details, you'll most likely begin to connect the dots to modern day America and what many see as her decline as well. But this diagnosis isn't just for the purposes of intellectual curiosity, but more of a doctor/patient discussion. The goal is to find the root of her national disease and give her a plan of action to address her malady, a plan that hopefully at least stems the spread. Any cure will need to have the necessary acknowledgment by the patient and then the discipline to enact the treatment, which, by all accounts may not be totally possible at this point. The wildcard in all this is the intervention of a higher power. Unlike many, I've consulted with the Great Physician who let me read the chart for America and there is still hope for improvement, but only if she will accept she is gravely ill and buy into the needed remedies.

The Most Important Reason

Of all the warning signs and then root causes of a nation's decline, *Anderson* and many others tell us that no nation can survive without a strong religious foundation that is maintained from generation to generation. Take away that, and even an idolatrous nation like Egypt will crumble from the inside. In their book *The Lessons Of History*, *Will* and *Ariel Durant* note this:

"There is no significant example in history, before our time, of a society successfully maintaining moral life without the aid of religion."

They give us an expanded reason in this further quote:

To the unhappy, the suffering, the bereaved, the old, it has brought supernatural comforts valued by millions of souls as more precious than any natural aid. It has helped parents and teachers to discipline the young. It has conferred meaning and dignity upon the lowliest existence, and through its sacraments has made for stability by transforming human covenants into solemn relationships with God. It has kept the poor (said Napoleon) from murdering the rich. For since the natural inequality of men dooms many of us to poverty or defeat, some supernatural hope may be the sole alternative to despair. Destroy that hope, and class war is intensified. Heaven and utopia are buckets in a well: when one goes down the other goes up; when religion declines Communism grows.

The *Durants* are not Christians, but they recognize that the less religious a nation is, the greater propensity there is for decline. Here is another quote from *Farnum Street Media's* web site that sums up why the *Durants* believed this:

In the eyes of the Durants, the effect of this new moral law was to dampen the worst of moral disorder—sensuality, drunkenness, coarseness, greed, dishonesty, robbery, and violence.

Collapse From Within: Social Decay

Patterson expands on his three main reasons why Rome fell apart based, again on *Black's When Nations Die*. *Black* divides social decay into these trends: the crisis of lawlessness, the loss of economic discipline, and rising bureaucracy. Did I hit a nerve there, America? On the topic of lawlessness, we see that Rome eventually fell victim to becoming guilty of the very thing they

provided for nations they conquered: restoring law and order. Patterson, leaning on *Black's* thesis, says this about Ancient Greece:

"In ancient Greece, the first symptoms of disorder were a general loss of respect for tradition and the degradation of the young. Among the early symptoms was the decline of art and entertainment. The philosophers and pundits distorted the medium of communication. Rhetoric became combative and intolerant; intellectuals began to deride and attack all the traditional institutions of Hellenic society."

Without a moral code like the Ten Commandments to keep any nation from having a moral compass, things degrade pretty quickly. Patterson then says this about Greece:

New thinkers in the society argued for "fundamental change" and called for giving the youth a "voice in society." Without traditional guidelines, the young men grew wild and undisciplined destroying the old order. Slowly Greece devolved into a disreputable and lawless nation...

The Romans conquered Greece in 146 B.C. By placing everything under military authority, they were able to restore order and bring back the rule of law.

Collapse From Within: Cultural Decay

Patterson continues this analysis based on Nelson's writings by noting this:

Four important trends demonstrate cultural decay. They are the "decline of education," the "weakening of cultural foundations," the "loss of respect for tradition," and the "increase in materialism."

He turns to another author, Donald Dudley and adds this quote from him:

In his study The Civilization of Rome, Donald Dudley says that no single cause, by itself, would have brought the empire to its knees. Instead, the fall came through "a number of weaknesses in Roman society; their effects may be variously estimated, but in combination they must have been largely responsible for the collapse."

While restoring order to the nations of Carthage, Greece, and Egypt, they failed to stem the rot in their own kingdom. Patterson rightly made these observations concerning Rome:

The Roman poet Livy wrote that greed and self-indulgence led Romans to dangerous excesses. He said, "For it is true that when men had fewer possessions, they were also modest in their desires. Lately riches have brought avarice and abundant pleasures, and the desire to carry luxury and lust to the point of ruin and universal perdition."

In describing the decadence of the Roman Republic, historian Polybius wrote that this preoccupation with luxury led to carnal indulgences. "For some young men indulged in affairs with boys, others in affairs with courtesans." They paid a talent (roughly a thousand dollars) for a boy bought for sexual pleasure and three hundred drachmas for a jar of caviar. "Marcus Cato was outraged by this and, in a speech to the people, complained that one might be quite convinced of the decline of the republic, when pretty boys cost more than fields and jars of caviar cost more than plowman."

Collapse From Within: Government Corruption And Political Instability

Even secular news sites like *History.com* concedes that Rome lost control by just the weight of its sprawling size:

If Rome's sheer size made it difficult to govern, ineffective and inconsistent leadership only served to magnify the problem. Being the Roman emperor had always been a particularly dangerous job, but during the tumultuous second and third centuries it nearly became a death sentence. Civil war thrust the empire into chaos, and more than 20 men took the throne in the span of only 75 years, usually after the murder of their predecessor.

The Praetorian Guard—the emperor's personal bodyguards—assassinated and installed new sovereigns at will, and once even auctioned the spot off to the highest bidder. The political rot also extended to the Roman Senate, which failed to temper the excesses of the emperors due to its own widespread corruption and incompetence. As the situation worsened, civic pride waned and many Roman citizens lost trust in their leadership.

Class warfare doomed Greece as well as seen in this quote from *worldhistory.edu*:

As seen in many empires and civilizations, internal strife within the various Greek city-states ended being a significant factor in the fall of ancient Greece. The strife was primarily caused by a class war, which saw the lower classes rise up against the upper classes and ruling elites.

Often times those uprisings created a conducive environment for brutal rulers to cease power. And with that came more chaos and uprisings. As a result of those internal uprisings, the Greek city-states became even more vulnerable to external invasions.

Collapse From Within: Moral Decay

According to the article by *Patterson*, who relied on *Black*, three trends doomed more than Rome and they are the "rise in immorality," the "decay of religious belief," and the "devaluing of human life." Citing the seminal source for the fall of Rome, *Edward Gibbon's The Decline and fall of the Roman Empire*, he states this:

He "observed that the leaders of the empire gave into the vices of strangers, morals collapsed, laws became oppressive, and the abuse of power made the nation vulnerable to the barbarian hordes."

Turning to another historian, *Catherine Edwards*, we read her thoughts on Rome's moral decline in this quote:

British historian Catherine Edwards demonstrated that our current examples of immorality are not a modern phenomenon. In her study of the "politics of immorality" in ancient Rome, she says that contraception, abortion, and exposure were common ways to prevent childbirth in Rome. Husbands refused to recognize any child they did not believe to be their own. "Until accepted by its father, a Roman baby did not, legally speaking, exist."

Life Became Cheap And Morals Debased

In a rather long quote, we read this from *Patterson* where he ties a bow on these nations and their moral failings:

Life became cheap in the latter days of the Roman Empire. Burdensome regulation and taxes made manufacturing and trade unprofitable. Families were locked into hereditary trades and vocations allowing little if any vocational choice. Eventually, children were seen as a needless burden and abortion and infanticide became commonplace. In some cases, children were sold into slavery. Manners and social life fell into debauchery. Under Justinian, entertainment grew bawdier and more bizarre. Orgies and love feasts were common. Homosexuality and bestiality were openly practiced. Under Nero, Christians were blamed for the great fire in Rome and horribly persecuted. Similar patterns can be found in other civilizations. In Greece, the music of the young people became wild and coarse. Popular entertainment was brutal and vulgar. Promiscuity, homosexuality, and drunkenness became a daily part of life. And all moral and social restraints were lost leading to greater decadence.

In Carthage, worship turned from Baal to the earth goddess Tanit. "Sacrifices to the goddess of fertility were supposed to ensure productivity, long life, and even greater profits." Ornatly carved funeral monuments depicting infant sacrifice can be seen today along with thousands of tiny stone coffins to infants sacrificed to the pagan goddess.

From all of this we'll take a close look at the United States and see how it will die if nothing changes.