

GNITN

How America Dies

How America Collapses - Lawlessness

One Thing Leads To Another

As we saw in our last lesson, societies crumble for a lot of reasons, but most, like Rome, collapse from within more than they collapse from without. Once the internal decay does its damage, the external pressures are more than able to bring it to its demise. Yes, there are things that can't be avoided and certainly not stopped such as natural disasters and diseases, but for our purposes, we are limiting ourselves to things that were brought about by moral, social and cultural decay. Once that trifecta does its damage, failure to survive will not be far from happening. Greece thought itself to be far superior to its contemporaries because they were smarter and more refined and produced some of the greatest thinkers who could solve any problem. Rome had that same sense of superiority but also were so large and powerful that they simply forced their collective will on those around them. While there are a great deal of similarities in how many cultures declined, Rome is the one that shares the most with America. As such, they are the main focus of this study. And as the lead statement alludes to, it is a process that where one decision or another leads to making a mistake, that in turn leads to making another mistake, and the next thing you know, a nation finds itself looking in its proverbial mirror and seeing that they are on the brink of collapse. What are those decisions? Let's see how America is falling.

Lawlessness In America

Even Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. ([Rom 2:14, NLT](#))

Order in societies is something that gets lost in conversations, mostly because we just come to expect it, we've had it for so long. Little things like traffic patterns with our stop signs, traffic lights, speed limits and more keep us safe, as long as they are followed. If you are a pilot or know a pilot, you also know that there are rules to follow there, too. One can't just get into a plane of any size and just turn it on and go flying. To avoid accidents, there are rules to follow, procedures to adhere to that maintain safety in the skies. And, while it seems like second nature to us, societies have rules to follow that maintain its safety and supplies a social cohesion where freedom can occur. For Western societies we have the Ten Commandments. Sure, they've been around for some time, but they are tried and true, and just as they helped form the nation of Israel, they provide rules for any culture to be safe and free. Some would argue that they existed long before they were actually written down and that actually makes a bigger point for us, one that dovetails with another bedrock of successful societies and that is religion. For Christians we know that God created a conscience in us, an internal knowing of right and wrong that the Apostle Paul says makes us accountable before our maker. Our system of laws actually flow from that.

Knowing And Doing Are Two Different Things

As our good friend Shakespeare tells us, "Ay, there's the rub." It's as simple as telling a child to keep their hands out of the cookie jar and then catching them with cookie crumbs on their face. But are we in America seeing that sense of right and wrong being eroded? I'd have to say yes and, if you're intellectually honest, you would too. Thou shalt not steal is a foreign concept in California as we read in this [article](#) from the *Hoover Institution*:

Google "Shoplifting in San Francisco" and you will find more than 100,000 hits. And you will find lots of YouTube videos, where you can watch a single thief, or an entire gang, walk into an SF

Walgreens or CVS and empty the shelves. Most walk in, go about their pilfering, and then walk out, though at least one thief rode their bike into the store and departed the same way, carefully navigating their two-wheeler down a narrow aisle.

We probably shouldn't call it shoplifting anymore, since that term connotes the idea of a person trying to conceal their crime. In San Francisco, there is no attempt to conceal theft, and there is almost never any effort by store employees, including security personnel, to confront the thieves. The most they do is record the thefts with their cell phones.

Why is shoplifting so rampant? Because state law holds that stealing merchandise worth \$950 or less is just a misdemeanor; which means that law enforcement probably won't bother to investigate, and if they do, prosecutors will let it go... Because of this law, California is extending an open invitation to anyone to walk in and take. Just like that—since they know that police or prosecutors won't bother with a misdemeanor complaint and that store personnel won't stop them.

Breaking Laws Is The New Normal

The article goes on to note that all crime is on the rise in California, most likely because when crimes like shoplifting are allowed, people think anything else is ok:

Crime is rising almost everywhere in California, including violent crime. Homicides in California jumped 31 percent last year, making 2020 the deadliest year since 2007. The 2,202 homicides in 2020 represent an increase of 523 over 2019. Homicides in Los Angeles rose 40 percent to 332, and they rose 35 percent to 285 in San Francisco. Both San Francisco and Los Angeles feature district attorneys who are perceived to be soft on crime, and both are facing the possibility of a recall election. Gives a whole new take on defunding police, doesn't it?

And if you start prosecuting crimes and putting them behind bars, the prisons will become overrun leading to this from the same article:

These increases put the spotlight on California's recent legal change that provides shorter sentences for prisoners, including violent felons, largely because of budgetary issues (California prison costs are among the highest in the country at \$81,000 annually per prisoner), and also on Newsom's decision to suspend the state's death penalty law via executive order.

California will allow 63,000 prisoners, out of a population of 115,000, the possibility of early release. This includes death row inmate Richard Allen Davis, one of 737 murderers in the system, who was a released felon when he murdered Polly Klaas in 1993. Polly's father, Marc, who supports recalling Newsom, remarked, "The thing that really alarms me about what the governor did, is that it's a continuation of policies to undermine the criminal justice system, and to put dangerous people back out onto the streets."

Obeying Laws Matter

When lesser rules are disobeyed and then not punished, it opens the floodgates for more disobedience as we've seen in California and New York and other places. The populace becomes bolder and bolder in what they try to get away with, and if there are no consequences, they will push the line back farther and farther. Fallen human nature needs laws to keep it in check whether we know the inner workings of our conscience or not. We can have deep theological debates over this, but when you lock your doors, you do so because you need protection from someone or some group of people from breaking into your home. Home security systems are mostly used to catch or prevent crimes from happening. This may sound trite, but when I was growing up, we never locked our house doors.

Why? Because people respected other people's property as much as their own. It was the golden rule and parents and grandparents enforced these standards. But what if one generation stops making that a priority? And what if, for political expediency, our leaders obey only the laws that benefit them?

Also, what if those in charge of keeping the peace are told to look the other way when certain crimes are committed? And then what occurs when a crime is committed; the person is caught and then the prosecutors and even the judge just decide not to press charges? I think you begin to see the point I'm making.

Mob Rule Is Rampant

I will now cite an [article](#) by author *Michael Snyder* to make this point:

In a series of shocking videos, NYPD officers can be seen being doused with buckets of water and pelted with projectiles as they tried to do their jobs (in one video, the officers were in the middle of making an arrest).

The stunning footage, which was first spotted online on Monday, shows the brazen young men in Harlem and Brooklyn dousing cops with water and, in one frame, an officer gets beamed in the back of the head with an empty red plastic bucket. The attacks on the officers started as they were arresting another young man, and in the video, they can be seen handcuffing the man while he was splayed out on the hood of a car...

He goes on to give another example:

Philadelphia police have released surveillance video showing dozens of teens vandalizing and stealing from a South Street Walgreens on the Fourth of July. The incident happened at the store on the 1800 block of South Street in the Graduate Hospital section of the city.

And then he gave this example making a mockery of the city called the city of love:

A gang of teenage girls filmed themselves targeting female strangers in random attacks on the streets of Philadelphia.

The disturbing video shows the girls approaching their unsuspecting victims on the street before proceeding to slap them and wrestle them to the ground.

The violent video sparked outrage when it was shared online.

Unfortunately, we all could give us instances we know.

More Examples Than I Have Time

Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction... (2 Thess 2:3, NASB1995)

I could give you pages and pages of examples on this lawlessness, but I would prefer to give you the spiritual side of all this, since this is what is behind what we're seeing. In an [article](#) by *Michael Brown* we read more about the spirit of lawlessness:

The Greek word anomia occurs 13 times in the New Testament and it literally means "lawlessness." As defined in one major Greek dictionary, anomia means "to behave with complete disregard for the laws or regulations of a society — 'to live lawlessly, lawlessness, lawless living' (Louw-Nida Lexicon). The spirit behind anomia is not from above, but from below.

There is nothing wholesome about anomia, nothing good, nothing positive. Rather, it is evil and destructive, producing chaos, not order, and resulting in destruction.

Brown goes on to note that the Apostle Peter and Paul both didn't give into this spirit when they had every opportunity to do so.

How This Spirit Affects Cultures And Nations

When leaders decide to obey some laws and disobey others simply because of convenience, greed, or political advantage, such actions will do more than trickle down, they create a flood of lawlessness that flows down to the smallest of towns or cities. A nation or kingdom cannot long survive when evil motivates those who are in charge. I turn to the same article from *Brown* to buttress this point:

We all agree that when a government is set on doing evil, as in Nazi Germany, for example, we resist their evil. But that godly resistance to evil is a far cry from the spirit of lawlessness, a spirit that scorns righteous authority and cultivates a spirit of disobedience.

A society without proper authority will quickly disintegrate, leading to violence, war and collapse. Even a family cannot operate without proper authority, and children who are not taught to obey their parents end up suffering for it later in life.

And when our lawmakers pass legislation that actually promotes this spirit, as the thievery in California, it only gets worse.

Learning From Scripture

We need boundaries and God institutes governments to enforce them. In an [article](#) on this from the web site gotquestions.org we read this:

God has a purpose for establishing human government: “to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right” (1 Peter 2:14). Rulers are God’s appointees to maintain order and promote righteousness in a civil society. “Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves” (Romans 13:2). In other words, lawlessness is condemned in Scripture.

The same article informs us that when laws are ignored, chaos will happen:

When a society ignores the law, lawlessness is the result, and chaos ensues. The time of the judges after Joshua’s death was marked by upheaval, oppression, and general disorder. The biblical historian puts his finger on the reason for the tumult: “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit” (Judges 21:25). The riot in Ephesus is a good example of lawlessness in action (Acts 19). The rioters were confused and unsure even of why they were rioting (verse 32); in their lawlessness, they were ignoring proper legal channels (verse 39) and, of course, breaking the law (verse 40).

We are seeing more and more rioting now, and the example from the Bible should warn us that what we are seeing is in reality the same antichrist spirit predicted to permeate the world right before the Tribulation. Yes, folks, the United States is hurtling down the same path as other great nations have gone as they spiral into oblivion and thrown onto the scrap heap of fallen societies. Literally I can say, God help us. Fortunately, He just might.