

The Collapse of Western Civilization

I had a startling dream last nite, and perhaps it was from the Lord. In my dream, I was walking thru a huge building that was made of red bricks. The massive walls were brick, as was the floor. Even the ceiling, way up high, was made of brick. It was a complex structure, with partial walls separating huge connecting rooms. And this building was disintegrating. Bricks were falling down, parts of walls were crumbling and falling to the floor. In one room the entire wall had crashed to the floor. And people were in this building. One person said it was a hotel. "Do you want a room? You can stay as long as you like." I said no, but feared for the safety of the people in this crumbling structure. Suddenly a couple of bricks fell from the ceiling and landed right where I had been standing a moment earlier. I thought I needed to get out of this place. Then I woke up.

I couldn't help but think about the meaning of this vivid and extraordinary dream. I suggest that the building was Western civilization. It is disintegrating before our very eyes. It's all man-made ("bricks," just like the Tower of Babel), complex (because we're more modern and more advanced than those who built the Tower), and imposing at one time. But now it's collapsing, so it's a very dangerous place. And we shouldn't be in it. Let's unpack my dream's significance.

We in the Church too easily suppose that Western civilization is a gift or blessing from God. We don't know that to be true, and probably we should disabuse ourselves even of the notion. Yes, the West has adopted biblical values into our traditions, and that certainly has enabled society to flourish. We in the West have had prosperity, peace, freedom, engineering progress and more, in part (we surmise), from having those biblical values. But Westerners don't necessarily live as followers of Christ. And we don't express those biblical values to glorify God, but to maintain a civil society. We suppose, further, that because we hold to biblical values, we're good people. And being good means we go to church on Sundays. It's the right thing to do; it's the American thing to do. There's nothing in Scripture to indicate or even suggest that Western civilization, this great edifice we've built over the past centuries, is of God. In fact it's *hubris* to believe that it is.

And now, it's crashing down onto us. These last few years, especially, has witnessed rapid deterioration. We're becoming pagan people in an explicitly pagan culture. Do I need to cite examples here to prove my point? Are my readers aware of the profound changes occurring in our nation? Consider these examples:

- Our colleges and universities are deliberately teaching young people that we must jettison not only biblical values but all civilization, because they are "evil."
- When abortion was the law of the land, it was easy and safe to be pro-life, but now that access to abortion could be taken away, suddenly everyone wants it to stay and be available. Americans want to be able to legally kill their babies!
- Anti-semitism is erupting widely in our institutions.
- Homosexuality is so normal in America that to say a critical word in public evokes dreadful consequences.
- Pornography – even violent porn – is available to anyone at any moment anywhere, without stigma, even to school children.
- Our culture's musical lyrics are too obscene (and too violent) to appear in print, yet they're popular everywhere.
- Our churches are now denying creation, apostolic authority, vicarious atonement, and the need for sanctification and evangelism.
- Respect for others has transformed into contempt for others. We've replaced forgiveness with vindictiveness.
- We are adopting as fundamental to our society what is basic to all pagan cultures, shame (censoring) and honor ("virtue signaling"); using fake images, people shame others for the thrill of it.
- Especially pertinent is widespread, often vicious intolerance of others that divides now even families.
- The spread of Groupthink, which is really thoughtless mob rule.
- Fraud and theft are becoming our nation's latest growing industry.
- At all levels of government, lust for power has replaced the pursuit of reasonable and propitious social policy.
- Our penchant for truth has vanished; fake voices, photos, and news, cheating, transgenderism, and love of ideological dogmas evidence a pagan love of that which is false.
- And more.

The present crisis has been gradually coming for a long time. Covid amplified it. Our nation has always been biased against faith in God. It was deliberately made a secular society with the rationale that no religious entity should be dominant. This effectively made us anti-theistic, because there is no such thing as neutrality toward God, toward good and evil. Atheists get protected from having to know about God; too bad if believers must yield and retreat into a bubble. "Woke" heightens and enforces this national, anti-theistic stance. The prosperity, peace and freedoms we cherish are to keep us happy and contented, while maintaining unbelievers lost in sin and believers concealed and captive in their bubble.

We needed secular Western civilization and its empire-building ethos to make possible the great missions movement of the last century. As the Church Age winds down, however, civilization is no longer necessary. And

we now revert to our pagan beginnings, as things were in the Book of Acts, the Times of the Gentiles, the foot of the Daniel 2 statue. Secular Western Civilization isn't God's will for the world. God's will for the world is Jesus and His Kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).

Some may protest: "Your 'collapsing' claim is an exaggeration. We are a huge nation and things that happen simply get hyped up by our media." No. Don't we understand that "civility" is only a thin veneer hiding an ugly, enslaving sin nature? We're really no different than that pre-Flood society that was hideously evil, except that we suppress our wicked natures by the traditions we've received, by our conscience, and of course by a well-developed legal system. Our inherent sin nature is rapidly becoming more overtly expressed as those restraints are being removed. (I submit that the Church's inability to see this indicates how assimilated with American culture it is.) And let's not pass off these evidences of collapse as due to deliberate Marxist disruption, nor as a normal process of history unfolding, nor as social challenges that can be reversed by a political process. We should instead understand current events within a God-centered worldview. It thus would be appropriate to regard America's rapid descent into paganism as God's doing, because end-times events are about to unfold.

Some well-meaning evangelicals disagree. They suppose that what America needs is another great revival. Baloney! It would be great indeed if certain individuals were to repent and trust Christ for salvation. But our entire nation is in "destruct" mode. Revival cannot save this crumbling structure. Nor a patch here and a patch there. Many evangelicals think that if elections have a different outcome, that is, if more conservative leaders took over, we'd become "great again." Baloney to that too. Can't we see what's happening? This era is coming to an end. Only God's deserved and fierce indignation awaits. The whole structure is about to collapse on us, perhaps in violent, bloody revolution. Perhaps in nuclear winter. Perhaps in total nation-wide loss of all electricity. Perhaps in collapse of our financial systems. Or some ghastly infectious disease. Or something else. We're in a terribly dangerous place. How do we get out?

The major, writing prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) were Jews. But they were uniquely commissioned by God to be distinct and separate, with a different set of values and a different worldview. And to be loyal to Him, serving Him by proclaiming salvation thru judgment to their own people. Judah was collapsing under the weight of its sins, but those specially-called prophets got out *attitudinally* in order to fulfill their assigned role. We followers of Christ likewise have been commissioned to a similar role. We proclaim the Gospel, which is a message of greater salvation thru judgment, not just to our own people out of which we've been called, but to the whole world. We too get out attitudinally by holding different values, a different worldview, and by being loyal to God by serving Him.

What's urgently needed is radical obedience to Romans 12:1,2. We desperately need a totally transformed attitude toward our nation, our culture, our surroundings, our life. Time is short, so what's needed has to be done with fervent zeal and commitment: We need to abandon the internet, politics, shopping for more things, enjoying the entertainment that's on offer, and more. We need to abandon *everything* we've gotten so used to that we thoughtlessly supposed that it's part of normal modern American life. And instead, let's saturate our minds with the Word of God and busy ourselves doing the one thing that Christ commissioned us to do, sharing the Gospel in our neighborhoods and around the world. This is how we get out of the world that's coming down on our heads.

Let's get serious about Jesus, His teachings and His commands. Let's get serious about our own character: we must be like Christ, now, in this life. Hey, do you own a house? Sell it! It would be the best thing you could do for your soul. There's only a limited amount of time remaining for us to demonstrate to the Lord our total devotion to Him. Christ sent His Spirit to empower us to live the radically transformed life He envisions for us . . . if we want to live it. If we do, we must work at it, because it doesn't happen automatically as if we're programmed robots. Heed the Scriptures:

"When the Son of man returns, will he find faith on earth?" [To ask this presupposes that He may not! Are we certain that what we suppose is "faith" is actually *biblical* faith.]

"There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves . . . lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them." [I suggest that the "form of godliness" referred to here is today's superficial version of Christianity. That last sentence forcefully reveals how important whole-hearted and uncompromising devotion to God is to Him.]

“Love not the world, nor anything in the world . . . The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.” [Don’t make the mistake of supposing that doing “the will of God” consists only of believing in Jesus!] **“You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God?”** [It’s impossible to make a more compelling statement than this; we absolutely *must* think carefully and then act decisively about what “the world” is, so as to avoid it.]

“Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash” [Jesus’ warning is more dire today than ever; it was necessary to keep a persecuted church faithful, but it’s especially needed right now as terrible times fall upon us.]

Dear reader, don’t suppose (as I suspect many of us do) that believing in Jesus, or that God shows only love and grace toward us, means that the above verses have no application to us. The Scriptures have been given to warn us that a day of reckoning is coming. Yes, if some horrible cataclysmic event wreaks death and destruction upon our nation, we’ll die too. When the cruel Babylonians came, Daniel and many righteous others were thrust into exile along with the unrighteous. But of vastly greater concern is having to stand before the exalted Judge, the Lord Jesus, and be evaluated. Let’s so live now that we can look forward to that day and to receiving a “Well done. Welcome into the joy of the Lord.”

And this: There’s no place in a Christian worldview for discouragement over unfolding circumstances. Yes, it’s OK to be disappointed. But no discouragement! Discouragement means we were too invested in the world.

Finally, whether my dream was from the Lord or not, let’s confidently rest in the truth revealed in Scripture that as sovereign Ruler He’s in total control of current events. We must have perfect faith in God as things get more and more tumultuous. With confidence in Him, we can have peace, and joy even, despite the chaos. Faith, after all, is a commitment, not to a propositional truth or doctrine (about which we can safely be passive), but to a Person, Jesus. And Jesus rules heaven and earth. He is doing something great in the world right now. If we love Him, we’ll be thrilled to have the privilege of not only watching Him at work but participating.