

When Will We Return to Our Senses?

Sir John Bagot Glubb (1897-1986) was a British army officer, scholar and author of 21 books. His book *The Fate of Empires and Search for Survival* formed the inspiration for popular syndicated columnist Cal Thomas' *America's Expiration Date: The Fall of Empires, Superpowers ... and the Future of the United States*.

Glubb led and disciplined Jordan's Arab Legion from 1939 to 1956, developing it into one of the strongest armies in the Middle East, known as the Jordan Royal Army.

"Sir John Glubb," writes Cal Thomas, "was surprised to learn that the average age of a nation or empire's greatness is 250 years. 'The average has not varied for 3,000 years.' Let that sink in. Over the past 3,000 years, every great nation or empire lost its way in an average of a mere 250 years. I will do the math for you. On July 4, 2026, the United States of America will be 250 years old."

"What makes us think," Thomas wonders, "we will be protected from the fate of other great nations, which often collapsed under the weight of financial debt, moral rot and military overextension?"

Regarding the millstone of moral rot as dragging down a nation into disintegration, we can regard our own country as a bleak example. Founded in the words of the Mayflower Compact for "the glory of God and advancement of the Christian faith," ours is a nation that experienced a miraculous meteoric rise by positioning the Bible as the focal point to judge society and to produce a righteous culture. This same nation has now gone off the deep end by celebrating immorality in the culture, by social engineering and instilling X-rated values

in America's youth through government-run education, and by flaunting socialism as revolutionary elevation.

In understanding that the upper tributaries of culture direct downstream politics, we may once again paraphrase Mark Steyn: If public education is secularly radicalized; if the four horsemen of Apple, Amazon, Facebook and Google manipulate social media and impose censorship on those holding conservative and biblical worldviews, thereby setting in motion systemic violations of law, and subsequently anarchy; if Bill Maher, Howard Stern and Ellen DeGeneres are society's guiding lights illuminating customary beliefs, social forms and material traits in America's adolescents; if the latest du jour celebrity sex tape is America's infatuation—then having an 'R' behind a name isn't going to make much difference.

For God's perspective we turn to Deuteronomy 30:1-2 (CSB): "When all these things happen to you—the blessings and curses I have set before you—and you come to your senses while you are in all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you, and you and your children return to the Lord your God..."

Return to your senses.

In his commentary on the book of Deuteronomy, Peter C. Craigie puts it thus:

At some point, when disobedience brought on the curse of the covenant and the people were dispersed among foreign nations, there would come a turning point. The turning point would be followed by certain steps; the process described here was to influence in many ways the preaching of the prophets in subsequent generations.

(a) You shall return to your senses (v. 1)—the people would remember that the circumstances in which they found themselves were not the result of "fate," but an inevitable consequence of disobeying the covenant with the Lord, which resulted in the curse of the Lord.

(b) Return to the Lord (v. 2)—once they knew the reason for the curse that had befallen them, the course of action would become clear. In repentance, they must return to the Lord of the Covenant, individually and as families.

Having allowed, and even over the last century having set the stage for the Christian foundation and biblically based culture to break down, secularists now control America's spiritual, intellectual, educational, economic and vocational levers of powers. Repentance alone will not lead to freedom, as we are ruled by encroachers and contraveners.

American Christendom moving inside the church building, away from the culture, has significantly contributed to how we have ended up at this low point. It explains how church buildings have become the focal point and breeding place for a subculture that abandoned Jesus' kingdom assignment as defined in Matthew 16:18: "Upon this rock I will build my ekklesia, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it."

Theologically speaking, residing within the walls of a church building falls far short from Jesus' kingdom assignment to build His ekklesia. Contemporary Christendom's emphasis on butts, budgets and buildings, while the culture is in steep decline, has all the appearance of "having a form of godliness but denying its power," as it says in 2 Timothy 3:5. Jesus' ekklesia must be moved out of the building into the marketplace, if America is to survive, and that in short order.

Today's Christianity has to get back to playing the long game and provide an answer to Israel's sweet Psalmist's question in Psalm 11:3, as C.H. Spurgeon puts it: "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

Self-evidently, rebuild the foundations!

"When prayer engages God on our side, and when faith secures

the fulfillment of the promise, what cause can there be for flight, however cruel and mighty our enemies. ... There is no such word as 'impossibility' in the language of faith; that martial grace knows how to fight and conquer, but she knows not how to flee."

As to rebuilding the foundations, and choosing fight over flight, 44 California pastors, following a California Renewal Project event, declared last month they will be running in 2020 for local office—city council, school board, parks and recreation and so on.

Gideons and Rahabs are beginning to stand.